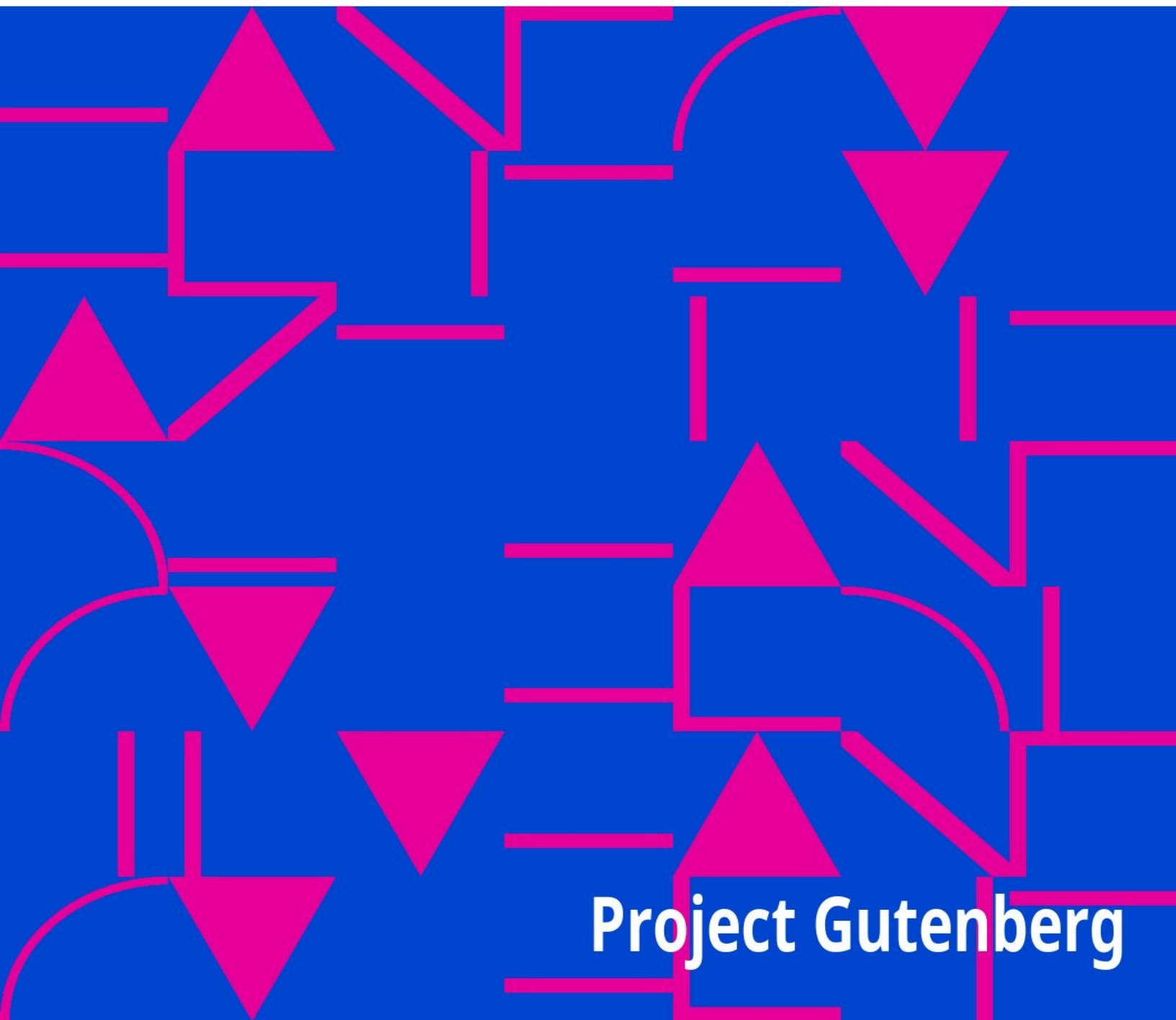


Famous Flyers and Their Famous Flights

Jack Wright

The background of the lower half of the page is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this is a repeating pattern of various pink geometric shapes. These shapes include triangles of different sizes and orientations, squares, rectangles, and curved lines that form partial circles or arcs. The shapes are arranged in a way that they appear to be floating or scattered across the blue field, creating a modern, abstract design.

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FAMOUS FLYERS AND THEIR FAMOUS FLIGHTS

By

CAPT. J. J. GRAYSON

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CONTENTS PAGE

- [CHAPTER I—Exciting News](#)
- [CHAPTER II—Captain Bill](#)
- [CHAPTER III—The Wright Brothers](#)
- [CHAPTER IV—Some War Heroes](#)
- [CHAPTER V—The Eagle](#)
- [CHAPTER VI—More About The Eagle](#)
- [CHAPTER VII—A Close Shave](#)
- [CHAPTER VIII—North Pole and South](#)
- [CHAPTER IX—Four Women Flyers](#)
- [CHAPTER X—Hawks and Doolittle](#)
- [CHAPTER XI—Hal Comes Through](#)

FAMOUS FLYERS AND THEIR FAMOUS FLIGHTS

CHAPTER I—Exciting News

Bob Martin stood outside the large red brick house and whistled. He whistled three notes, a long and two short, which meant to Hal Gregg inside that Bob wanted to see him, and to see him quickly. Something was up. At least, that was what it should have meant to Hal, but evidently it didn't, because no answering whistle came out to Bob, and no head appeared in any of the windows.

Bob whistled again, this time a little more shrilly, and he kept on whistling until a pale, spectacled face appeared at an upstairs window. The window was thrown open, and Bob shouted up before Hal Gregg had a chance to speak.

"Hey, what's the idea of keeping me waiting? Hurry up, come on down, I've got something great to tell you."

"Hold your horses. I didn't hear you whistle at first. I was reading," called down Hal.

Bob snorted. "Put it away and hurry up down. Books can wait. You should hear the news I've got to tell you."

"The book's swell," said Hal. "It's that new book on aviation I got for my birthday. Is your news more important than that?"

"You bet it is," yelled Bob. "And if you aren't down here in two seconds, I'm going to keep it to myself. And won't you be sorry!"

Hal laughed. "I'll be down in one second. I'm not going to have you knowing anything I don't know. You're too smart now." The dark head disappeared from the window, reappeared atop the narrow shoulders of its owner at the front door within a few seconds, bobbing about as he leaped down the front steps two at a time. Hal Gregg joined his pal Bob under the maple tree on the Gregg front lawn.

The two boys made a strange contrast as they flung themselves down in the shade of the tree. They were the same age, sixteen, with Hal having a little edge on his friend. But Bob could have passed for the other boy's big brother. He was a full head taller, his shoulders were broader, his complexion ruddier. He was the typical outdoor boy, with tousled brown hair, a few unruly freckles, and a broad

pleasant face. Hal Gregg was short and slight, with sloping narrow shoulders. His complexion was dark, and his large, serious eyes were hidden behind shell-rimmed eye-glasses. Yet though they were such a badly matched team, the two boys were fast friends.

Their friendship had begun strangely. In the first place, they lived next door to each other, on a quiet, shady side-street in the large city of Crowley. Bob had lived there first, while the red brick house next to his had been empty for a long time. Nobody Bob's age had ever lived in that house, and he had grown to look at it as an old fogey sort of a house, very dull, and fit only for grownups. It didn't seem as though young people could ever live in it. So he'd been pretty much excited when he found out that the house had been sold, and that a boy his own age was going to move in.

But his first glimpse of Hal was a disappointed one. "Oh, golly, just my luck," he said to his mother. "Somebody my own age moves in next door at last, and look what he turns out to be."

Mrs. Martin had also caught a glimpse of Hal as he had got out of the automobile with his mother, and entered the house. "He seems to me to be a very nice boy," she said quietly.

"Nice! That's just the point. He looks as though he's so nice he'll be as dull as ditchwater. I'll bet he's the kind that can't tell one airplane from another, and buys his radio sets all made up, with twenty tubes and all kinds of gadgets. Lot of fun I'll have with him!"

Mrs. Martin smiled and said nothing. She was a wise mother. She knew that if she praised Hal too much he would seem just so much worse in her son's eyes. So she resolved to let him decide for himself, just as she always let him decide, whether he wanted Hal for a friend or not.

For several days Bob saw nothing of Hal, but one day, as he rode his bicycle up the driveway that separated the two houses, he heard someone hail him. He looked over into the Gregg yard and saw Hal there, stretched out in a steamer chair, an open book in his lap. He looked very small and puny. Bob got down from his bike. He was embarrassed. Hal hailed him again. "Come on over," he called.

Bob got down and walked over to where the other boy was sitting. The meeting

between two strange boys is usually a hard one, with suspicion on both sides. But Hal seemed surprisingly pleasant. "I've seen you riding around," he said, "but I haven't had a chance to call you before. I'm Hal Gregg. You're Bob, aren't you?"

"Sure," grinned Bob. He was beginning to think that this Hal might not be such a bad sort. "How did you know?"

"Oh, I'm a Sherlock Holmes. Anyway, I've heard your mother calling to you. And if she calls you 'Bob,' that must be your name."

Bob laughed, "You're right, she ought to know," he said. But he didn't know what to say next. Hal filled in the gap.

"You go swimming a lot, and bicycling, don't you?"

"Sure," Bob replied. "That's about all a fellow likes to do in summer. Don't you swim?"

Hal's forehead wrinkled. "My mother doesn't like me to go swimming," he said. "I've never had a bike, either. You see, my mother's always afraid that something'll happen to me. She hasn't got anybody but me, you know. I haven't got a father, or any other family. I guess that's what makes Mother so anxious about me."

"My mother never seems to worry very much about me," said Bob. "At least, she never shows it."

Hal looked at Bob enviously. "You don't have to be worried about," he said. "You're as husky as they come."

Bob felt himself getting warm. This wasn't the way for a fellow to talk. All of his friends called each other "shrimp" or "sawed-off," no matter how big and husky they might be. None of them ever showed such poor taste as to compliment a fellow. He guessed, and correctly, that Hal hadn't been with boys enough to learn the proper boy code of etiquette. But he just said, "Aw, I'm not so husky," which was the proper answer to a compliment, anyway.

"You sure are," said Hal. "You see, I was a sickly child, and had to be taken care of all the time. I'm all right now, but my mother doesn't seem to realize it. She

still treats me as though I was about to break out with the measles any minute. I guess that's about all I used to do when I was a kid."

"With measles?" laughed Bob. "I thought that you could get those only once."

"Oh, if it wasn't measles, then something else. Anyway, here I am."

Bob's opinion of the boy had sunk lower and lower. He saw that they weren't going to get on at all. Why, the boy was nothing but a mollycoddle, and not much fun. "What do you do for fun?" he asked, curiously.

"Oh, I read a lot," said Hal, picking up the book in his lap.

Bob's mind was now more firmly made up. A fellow who spent all his time reading was no fun at all. And he needn't think that Bob was going to encourage any friendship, either. "What's the book?" he asked.

"A biography," said Hal.

"Biography!" thought Bob, but he looked at the title. It was a life of Admiral Byrd.

Bob's eyes lighted up. "Oh, say," he said, "is that good?"

"It's great," said Hal. "You know, I read every book on aviators that comes out. I've always wanted to be one—an aviator, you know."

Bob sat up and took notice. "Gee, you have? Why, so have I. My Uncle Bill's an aviator. You ought to know him. He was in the war. Joined when he was just eighteen. I'm going to be an aviator, too."

"You are? Have you ever been up?"

"No," said Bob, "but I'm going some day. Bill's going to teach me how to pilot a plane. He's promised. He's coming to visit us some time and bring his own plane. Dad takes me out to the airport whenever he can, and we watch the planes. I've never had a chance to go up, though."

Hal's eyes clouded. "I hope you get to be an aviator," he said, "I don't think that I ever shall. My mother'd never allow me to go up."

“Oh, sure, she would,” consoled Bob, “if you wanted to badly enough. Have you ever built a plane? A model, I mean?”

“Have I? Dozens. One of them flew, too. You’ve got to come up to my workshop and see them,” said Hal eagerly. “I read every new book that comes out. I think that airplanes are the greatest thing out.”

“You’ve got to see my models, too. I made a *Spirit of St. Louis* the year that Lindy flew across the Atlantic. Of course it isn’t as good as my later ones. Say, we’re going to have a swell time, aren’t we?” At that moment Bob knew that he and Hal were going to be good friends.

And good friends they were. There were a great many things about Hal that annoyed Bob no end at first. Hal was, without a doubt, his mother’s boy. He was afraid of things—things that the fearless Bob took for granted. He was afraid of the dark—afraid of getting his feet wet—afraid of staying too late and worrying his mother. And then he was awkward. Bob tried gradually to initiate him into masculine sports—but it irked him to watch Hal throw a ball like a girl, or swim like a splashing porpoise. But he had to admit that Hal tried. And when he got better at things, it was fun teaching him. Bob felt years older than his pupil, and gradually came to take a protective attitude toward him that amused his mother.

Mrs. Martin smiled one day when Bob complained about Hal’s awkwardness in catching a ball. “Well,” she said, “you may be teaching Hal things, but he’s teaching you, too, and you should be grateful to him.”

“What’s he teaching me?” asked Bob, surprised.

“I notice, Bob, that you’re reading a great deal more than you ever have. I think that that’s Hal’s influence.”

“Oh, that,” said Bob, “why, we read the lives of the famous flyers, that’s all. Why, that’s fun. That’s not reading.”

Mrs. Martin smiled again, and kept her customary silence.

The strange friendship, founded on the love of airplanes, flourished. The boys were always together, and had invented an elaborate system of signals to communicate with each other at such times as they weren’t with one another. Two crossed flags meant “Come over at once.” One flag with a black ball on it

meant “I can’t come over.” These flags, usually limp and bedraggled by the elements horrified the parents of both Bob and Hal when they saw them hanging in various intricate designs out of windows and on bushes and trees in the garden. But since they seemed necessary to the general scheme of things, they were allowed to go unmolested, even in the careful Gregg household.

The friendship had weathered a summer, a school year, and was now entering the boys’ summer vacation again. It was at the beginning of this vacation that Bob whistled to Hal and called to him to come down to hear his wonderful news.

“Well,” said Hal, “spill the news.” It must be said of Hal that he tried even to master the language of the real boy in his education as a good sport.

“Bill’s coming,” said Bob, trying to hide his excitement, but not succeeding very well.

“What?” shouted Hal.

“Sure, Captain Bill’s coming to spend the summer with us. He’s flying here in his own plane.”

“Oh, golly,” said Hal, and could say no more.

Captain Bill was the boys’ patron saint. It had been through his uncle Bill that Bob Martin had developed his mania for flying. Captain Bill Hale was Bob’s mother’s youngest brother, the adventurous member of the family, who had enlisted in the Canadian army when he was eighteen, at the outbreak of the war. When the United States joined the big battle, he had gone into her air corps to become one of the army’s crack flyers, with plenty of enemy planes and blimps to his credit. A crash had put him out of commission at the end of the war, but had not dulled his ardor for flying. For years he had flown his own plane both for commercial and private reasons.

As Bob’s hero, he had always written to the boy, telling him of his adventures, encouraging him in his desire to become an aviator. He had never found the time actually to visit for any length of time with his sister and her family, but had dropped down from the sky on them suddenly and unexpectedly every so often.

But now, as Bob explained carefully to Hal, he was coming for the whole summer, and was going to teach him, Bob, to fly.

“Oh, boy, oh, boy, oh, boy,” Bob chortled, “what a break! Captain Bill here for months, with nothing to do but fly us around.”

Hal did not seem to share his friend’s enthusiasm. “Fly us around? Not us, Bob, old boy—you. My mother will never let me go up.” Hal’s face clouded.

Bob slapped him on the back. “Oh, don’t you worry. Your mother will let you fly. She’s let you do a lot of things with me that she never let you do before. We’ll get her to come around.”

But Hal looked dubious. “Not that, I’m afraid. She’s scared to death of planes, and gets pale if I even mention flying. But that’s all right. I’ll do my flying on the ground. You and Bill will have a great time.”

“Buck up,” said Bob. “Don’t cross your bridges until you come to them. We’ll work on your mother until she thinks that flying is the safest thing in the world. And it is, too. We’ll let Captain Bill talk to her. He can make anybody believe anything. He’ll have her so thoroughly convinced that she’ll be begging him to take you up in the air to save your life. See if he doesn’t! Bill is great!”

Hal was visibly improved in spirits. “When’s Bill coming in?” he asked.

“Six tonight,” said Bob. “Down at the airport. Dad says that he’ll drive us both out there so that we can meet Captain Bill, and drive him back. Gee, wouldn’t it be great if he had an autogyro and could land in our back yard?”

“Maybe he’ll have one the next time he comes. What kind of plane is he flying?”

“His new Lockheed. It’s a monoplane, he says, and painted green, with a reddish nose. It’s green because his partner, Pat, wanted it green. Pat’s been his buddy since they were over in France together, and anything that Pat says, goes. It’s got two cockpits, and dual controls. It’s just great for teaching beginners. That means us, Hal, old boy. Listen, you’d better get ready. Dad will be home soon, and will want to start down for the port. Say, does that sound like thunder?”

The boys listened. It did sound like thunder. In fact, it was thunder. “Golly, I hope it doesn’t storm. Mother won’t let me go if it rains.”

Bob laughed. “I wouldn’t worry about you getting wet if it stormed,” he said. “What about Bill, right up in the clouds? Of course, he can climb over the storm

if it's not too bad. But you hurry anyhow. We'll probably get started before it rains, anyway."

At ten minutes to six Hal, Bob and Bob's father were parked at the airport, their necks stretched skyward, watching the darkening, clouded skies for the first hint of a green monoplane. No green monoplane did they see. A few drops of rain splattered down, then a few more, and suddenly the outburst that had been promising for hours poured down. Bob's father, with the aid of the two boys, put up the windows of the car, and they sat fairly snug while the rain teemed down about them. The field was becoming sodden. Crashes of lightning and peals of thunder seemed to flash and roll all about them. All of the airplanes within easy distance of their home port had come winging home like birds to an enormous nest. The three watchers scanned each carefully, but none was the green Lockheed of Captain Bill.

The time passed slowly. Six-thirty; then seven. Finally Mr. Martin decided that they could wait no longer. "He's probably landed some place to wait for the storm to lift," he said. "He can take a taxi over to the house when he gets in."

Reluctant to leave, the boys nevertheless decided that they really couldn't wait all night in the storm for Captain Bill, and so they started for home.

Very wet, and bedraggled, and very, very, hungry, they arrived. Hal's mother was practically hysterical, met him at the door, and drew him hastily into the house.

Mr. Martin and his son ran swiftly from the garage to the back door of their house, but were soaked before they got in. Entering the darkened kitchen, they could hear voices inside.

"Doesn't that sound like—why, it is—that's Bill's voice," shouted Bob. The light switched on, and Bill and Mrs. Martin came into the kitchen to greet their prodigal relatives.

"Hello," said Bill, "where have you people been? You seem to be wet. Shake on it."

"Well, how in the—how did you get in?" shouted Mr. Martin, pumping Bill's hand. "We were waiting in the rain for you for hours."

"I know," said Bill, contritely, "we tried to get in touch with you, but we

couldn't. You see, I came in by train."

"By train!" exclaimed Bob. "By train!"

"Why, sure," laughed the Captain, "Why, aren't you glad to see me without my plane? That's a fine nephewly greeting!"

"Oh, gee, Bill, of course I'm glad to see you, but—well, I've sort of been counting on your bringing your plane."

Bill laughed. "The plane's coming all right," he said. "We had a little accident the other day, and the wing needed repairing. I decided not to wait for it, but to come in on the train to be with you. So Pat McDermott is bringing the plane in in a few days. Is that all right? May I stay?"

"Yup, you can stay," said Bob. "But I want something to eat!"

"Everything's ready," said Mrs. Martin. "You change your clothes, and come right down to dinner."

"Sure thing," said Bob. But he did not change immediately. He stopped first to put two crossed flags in the window, which meant to Hal, "Come right over."



CHAPTER II—Captain Bill

Hal couldn't come right over. He had to be fussed over, steamed, dosed, and put to bed so that he would suffer no ill effects from his soaking that evening. But he was over bright and early the next morning. It had rained all night, and was still raining in a quiet, steady downpour, when Hal appeared at the Martin home, dressed in rubbers, raincoat, muffler, and carrying an umbrella to protect him on his long trek from his own front door to his friend's. Captain Bill would have been startled at the strangely bundled figure of Hal, but he had been warned, and greeted Hal without a blink of an eyelash. In fact, as soon as Hal had been unwrapped from his many coverings, and had spoken to them all, Captain Bill discovered that he was probably going to like this boy after all, and was pleased that his nephew had such good judgment in choosing a friend and companion.

They talked that morning, of course, about airplanes, and the boys told how they had been reading about the famous flyers, and of their hopes to be flyers themselves some day. Bill had been a good listener, and had said very little, but after lunch Hal said what had been on his chest for a long time.

"Captain Bill, we've been doing all the talking. Why don't you tell us a story?"

The Captain laughed. "I think that Bob's heard all my stories. I'm afraid that they're a little moth-eaten now. But how about the two of you telling me a story? Some of the things that you've been reading so carefully. How about it?"

"We can't tell a story the way you can, old scout," said Bob. "Anyway, we asked you first."

"All right, I'm caught," said the Captain. "But I'll tell you a story only on one condition. Each of you has to tell one too. That's only fair, isn't it?"

Bob and Hal looked at each other. Hal spoke. "I'm afraid I won't be able to," he said, blushing. "I can't tell stories, I'm sure I can't."

Captain Bill knew that it would be tactless at that moment to try to convince Hal that he could tell a story. It would only increase the boy's nervousness, and convince him only more of the fact that he could not spin a yarn. So he said, "Well, we'll tell ours first, and you can tell yours later. After you hear how bad

ours are, you'll be encouraged." Then Bill had an idea. "How about having a contest?" he said. "The one who tells the best story gets a prize."

"What prize?" asked Bob quickly.

"Now, you take your time. We'll decide on the prize later. We'll have to let Pat in on this, too, I suppose, but he's going to give us some competition. Pat's a great story teller. I'll tell my story first. Then Bob can tell his, after he's had some time for preparation; then Pat will probably want to get his licks in; and Hal will come last. He'll have the benefit of our mistakes to guide him. How about it?"

"All right with me," said Bob, eagerly. He was keen about the idea.

But Hal seemed less enthusiastic. His natural reticence, he felt, would make it torture for him to tell a story. It would be all right just for Bob—and he was even getting well enough acquainted with Captain Bill to tell his story in front of him—but this Pat McDermott—even his name sounded formidable. Captain Bill didn't give him a chance to say aye, yea, or nay, but went on talking.

"I think that we ought to choose subjects that you two know about," said Bill. "How about stories of the aviators—of Famous Flyers and their Famous Flights?"

"Great!" said Bob. "Gee, I want Lindbergh."

"Lindbergh you shall have," said Captain Bill. "What's yours Hal?"

"I don't know," said Hal. "I'll have to think it over. But—I think that I'd like to take the life of Floyd Bennett—if I may."

"Of course," said Bill. "I think that I'll tell about Admiral Byrd—do you think he'd make a good story?"

"Marvelous!" said Bob, with his usual enthusiasm. "What'll we leave for Pat?"

"Pat can take whomever he wants to take," the Captain said. "He'll have to take what's left. That's what he gets for coming late. But what do you say we wait to start the contest when Pat comes?"

“Yes, oh, yes, I think that that would be much better,” said Hal, relieved that the ordeal would at least be postponed, even if it could not be avoided altogether. “I think that we ought to wait until Mr. McDermott comes.”

The Captain laughed. “Don’t let him hear you call him ‘Mr. McDermott’” he said. “He’s Pat to everybody, and to you, too.”

“I’ll try to remember,” said Hal, miserably, thinking of what a complicated world this was.

It was still raining outside. The boys and the Captain, seated in the library, or rather, sprawled in the library, could see the streams of rain splash against the windows and run down in little rivers until they splashed off again at the bottom of the pane.

Captain Bill yawned and stretched. “Not much to do on a day like this. I’m mighty anxious to get out to the airport as soon as it clears up. What’ll we do?”

Bob had an idea. “Couldn’t we sort of sneak one over on Pat?” he said. “Couldn’t we have a story, one not in the contest, now? It wouldn’t count, really, and it would give us a little rehearsal before Pat gets here.”

“Who’s going to tell this story?” asked Captain Bill, looking just a bit suspiciously at his nephew.

Bob grinned. “Well, I thought that maybe you would. Seeing that you’re the best story-teller anyway.”

“Go long with your blarney. But I guess I will tell you one. It will be a sort of prologue to the rest of our stories. It’s about the very first flyers and the very first famous flight.”

“The Wrights?” asked Hal.

“The Wrights,” said the Captain. “Wilbur and Orville, and their first flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.”



CHAPTER III—The Wright Brothers

The Captain had first to fill his pipe, and stretch his legs before he began his story.

“Of course,” he said, “we can’t really say that the Wrights were the first men to fly, or to build a machine that would fly. Even in the middle ages Leonardo da Vinci drew up plans for a flying machine. Just before the Wright’s experiment Langley had stayed up in the air in a machine invented and built by himself. If he had not died at so unfortunate a period in his experimental life, perhaps he might have been the inventor of the airplane.

“The Wrights invented the airplane in the same degree that Thomas Edison invented the electric light. Men had experimented with both inventions for many years. But it took the genius of the Wrights, the genius of an Edison to bring together these experiments, to think through logically just wherein they were right and where they were wrong, and to add the brilliant deductions that brought their experiments to a practical and successful end. Edison’s discovery was dependent upon the finding of the proper filament for his bulb; the Wrights’ success hinged upon their discovery of the warped wing, which gave them control over their plane.

“The fact that the Wrights were not the first to fly does not detract from the thing that they actually did. At the time that they were making their first flying machine, any man who tampered with the subject of flying through the air was looked upon as crazy. And this was not more than a quarter of a century ago. Seems funny, doesn’t it? But they were not to be discouraged. They knew that they were right, and they went ahead. They had many set-backs. Their planes were wrecked. What did they do? They just built them over again, and were glad that they had learned of some new defect that they could re-design and correct.

“You notice that I always talk of ‘the Wrights’ as though they were one person; everybody does. In fact, they almost were one person. They were always together; lived together, played together, although they didn’t play much, being a serious pair, and worked together. They never quarreled, never showed any jealousy of each other, never claimed the lion’s share of praise in the invention. They were just ‘the Wrights,’ quiet, retiring men, who did much and talked little.

“From early childhood it was the same. Wilbur Wright, the elder of the two, was born in Milville, Indiana, and lived there until he was three years old with his parents, Milton Wright, bishop of the United Brethren Church, and Susan Katherine Wright. In 1870 the family moved to Dayton, Ohio, and in 1871 Orville Wright was born. From a very early age the two were drawn to each other. Their minds and desires were similar.

“When Wilbur decided that he would rather go to work after being graduated from High School, Orville decided that he, too, would give up his formal education, and devote himself to mechanics.

“They were born mechanics, always building miniature machines that actually worked. They did not stop studying, but took to reading scientific works that were of more help to them than formal education. In this way they learned printing, and built themselves a printing press out of odds and ends that they assembled. On this they began to publish a little newspaper, but they gave this up when another opportunity presented itself.

“Bicycles were coming in at that time, and the Wright brothers set up a little shop to repair them. From the repair shop they developed a factory in which they manufactured bicycles themselves. Their business was very successful, and they were looked upon as young men who were likely to get along in the world. This was in 1896.

“That year Otto Lilienthal, a famous German experimenter, was killed in his glider, just at the peak of his career. Wilbur read an account of his death in the newspaper, and discussed it with his brother. The event renewed the interest that they had always had in flying, and they set about studying all of the books that they could find on the problem of flight. They soon exhausted all that they could get, and decided that their groundwork had been laid. From then on their work was practical, and they discovered principles that had never been written, and which resulted in the first flight.

“The first things that they built were kites, and then gliders that were flown as kites. The Wrights were after the secret of the birds’ flight, and felt that they could apply it to man’s flight. Their next step was the construction of a real glider. But the country around Dayton was not favorable for flying their craft. They wrote to the United States government to find a region that had conditions favorable to their gliding. That is how the obscure Kitty Hawk, North Carolina,

came to be the famous place that it is. It happened to have just south of it three hills, Kill Devil Hill, Little Hill, and West Hill. Between the hills was soft drifting sand, that would provide a better landing place than hard earth in case of a spill. The winds were steady and moderate.

“To Kitty Hawk the Wrights went. Here they glided to their heart’s content, until they decided that they had learned to control their flights, and were ready to build a plane with power. They went back to Dayton in 1902. They designed and supervised the building of the motor themselves, one that would generate twelve horsepower. Satisfied, they set out once more for Kitty Hawk, with the motor and parts of their plane carefully stowed away.

“They got down there in the early autumn, but found so many difficulties to overcome, that they could not make the first tests until December. In the first place, they discovered that a storm had blown away the building which they had built to work in when they first got to Kitty Hawk. However, everything was at last ready, the weather favorable, and the plane was hauled up Kill Devil Hill, and guided toward the single track of planks that had been laid down the hill.

“Who was going to get the first chance to pilot the plane? Who was going to be the first man to fly? Orville insisted that Wilbur be the one; Wilbur insisted that Orville should be the first. They decided it by flipping a coin. Wilbur won. He got into the plane, unfastened the wire that held the plane to the track, and started down. He ended in a heap at the bottom of the hill, uninjured, but with several parts of the plane damaged.

“The Wrights were nothing daunted. They repaired the plane as quickly as possible, and on December 17, they were ready for the second trial. It was Orville’s turn, of course. He loosened the wire; the plane started down the hill; at the end of a forty-foot run it rose into the air. It kept on going, in a bumpy, irregular course, now swooping up, now diving down, for 120 feet, then darted to earth. The flight had taken in all just twelve seconds, but the Wrights had flown.

“I suppose you’ve seen pictures of that first plane. It wasn’t much more than a box in shape, a biplane, with no cockpit at all, just the wings held together by struts, and a seat in the center for the pilot. A man had to be tough to fly one of those planes. The wonder is that any of them escaped with their lives. They had to sit up there exposed to all the elements, and pilot the clumsy planes. And yet

they grew into skilful and expert pilots, and could loop the loop and figure eight in them! The Wrights themselves were excellent flyers. This seems only natural, with their natural born gift for mechanics. It was well that they were good flyers, because it was up to them to prove to the world that their craft was safe, and practical.

“It was hard at first. People were skeptical as to whether the Wrights really had a ship that flew. Some of their tests were unsuccessful, and they were laughed to scorn. However, France, who had been more advanced than the United States in the matter of experimentation in flying, became interested in the new flying machine, and sent representatives over to the United States to inspect it. With the French approving of it, the United States became more interested. The government offered a prize of \$25,000, for anyone who would build a plane that would travel 40 miles an hour, carry enough fuel and oil to cruise for 125 miles, and fly continuously for at least an hour, with two persons weighing together 350 pounds. The Wrights built such a machine, and the government not only gave them the \$25,000, but an additional \$5,000 besides.

“In the meanwhile Wilbur Wright had gone to France, where he participated in many flights, and won the hearts of the French people by staying in the air for an hour and a half. At the end of the year, 1908, he stayed in the air over two hours.

“The Wrights were showing what they could do. Flying became the rage. Society took it up, and traveled to the Wrights to see their planes. But the Wrights, no more impressed by this than they were by anything else, kept right on working. They were financed by a group of able financiers in the United States, and founded the Wright Aeroplane Company for the manufacture of planes, and they were content.

“After 1909, their point proved, the Wrights did very little flying. They spent their time in engineering problems, making improvements on the planes that they were designing and manufacturing.

“They did some more experimenting with gliders, but this was in order to perfect the art of soaring.

“In May, 1912, Wilbur Wright died, and broke up the famous partnership that had existed for so many years. Since his death his brother has lived quietly. He has not flown, and has acted as advisor to his company as they turn out more and

more modern planes. He is one man who has lived to see a thing that he started himself grow into a blessing to mankind. And if the airplane isn't that, I'd like to know what is."

"I think so," said Bob.

"Who are you to think so?" asked Bill, sitting up very suddenly.

Bob was non-plussed for a moment, but then saw that his uncle was joking, and laughed. They were interrupted by the ringing of the doorbell.

"Well," said the Captain, "who could be out in weather like this?"

They heard the front door open, voices, and then the closing of the door. In a short while the footsteps of Mrs. Martin sounded on the steps, and she entered the library.

"A telegram for you, Bill," she said, and handed it to him. "My, you three look cozy up here. I suppose you've been yarning, haven't you?" She gave her brother a playful poke.

Captain Bill, who had risen when his sister came in, offered his chair before he opened the telegram. "Join us, won't you, Sis?"

His sister laughed. "I really can't go before I see what is in the telegram," she said. "Of course, I suppose I should be polite and pretend not to be interested in it, but I am. We all are, aren't we, boys?"

Bob and Hal grinned.

"Well, then," said Bill, "I guess I'll have to see what's in it." He opened the telegram, and glanced hurriedly over it. "Pat's landing tomorrow," he said. "He wants us to be out at the airport to see the *Marianne* come in."

"Hurrray!" shouted Bob, and went into a war dance.

His mother looked at him tolerantly. She was used to Bob's antics. "What time is Pat coming in?" she asked.

"He didn't say. In fact, that's all he didn't say in this telegram. But I guess he'll

start out about dawn and get here around noon. Anyway, we'll be going down to the airport tomorrow morning to look around. We'll stay there until that Irishman rolls in."

"What will you do about lunch?" asked the practical Mrs. Martin.

"Why, we'll eat at the airport restaurant," said Bill. "Don't worry about us, Sis."

Mrs. Martin looked dubious. She glanced at Hal. She knew that Hal's mother liked to supervise her son's meals, and did not care to have him eat at strange places. Mrs. Martin felt that it would be a shame to spoil the expedition for such a trivial reason, so she said, "I have an idea. I'll pack a lunch for all of you tonight, and you can take it with you tomorrow. How will that be? You can eat it anyplace around the airport. It'll be a regular picnic. There are some nice places around the port that you can go to. How about that?"

Bob answered for them. "That will be great. Gee, Bill, do you remember the picnic baskets that Mom can pack? We're in luck."

"Do I remember?" said Bill. "How could I forget? You fellows had better be up pretty early tomorrow."

"You bet we will, Captain," said Bob.

Then Hal said, "I guess I'd better be going. My mother will be wondering if I'm never coming home. I hope that I can come with you tomorrow."

"Hope you can come with us? Why, of course you're coming with us. We won't go without you," Captain Bill said explosively.

"I'll see," said Hal. "I'll ask Mother. Maybe she'll let me go. But anyway, I'll let you know. I'll put up the flags in the workshop window. All right?"

"Sure," said Bob, and walked out with Hal. He saw the boy to the door, and warned him again to be sure to come.

When the two boys had left the room, Captain Bill turned to his sister. "Say," he said, "do you think that Hal's mother really won't let him come, or is the boy looking for a way out?"

“Why, what do you mean?” asked Mrs. Martin.

“Just this,” said Bill, and puffed vigorously on his pipe. “I’ve been watching the boy, and I think that he’s afraid.”

“Afraid of what?”

“Afraid of actually going up in an airplane. I feel that a change has come over him since there has been an actual chance of his learning to fly,” explained the Captain.

His sister looked pensive. “But he’s always been so interested in flying. That’s all the two of them ever talk about.”

“Perhaps. When there was no immediate chance of his going up in a plane. Now that there is, I think he’d like to back out.”

“There is his mother to consider, of course,” said Mrs. Martin. “She would undoubtedly object very strenuously if he merely went to the airport. You must remember that he’s all she has. She’s always so careful of him.”

The Captain snorted. “Too careful,” he said. “She’s made the boy a bundle of fears. Bob has helped him get over some of them, but I think that they’re cropping out now. It will be very bad for Hal if he funks this. I think that it will hurt him a great deal. If he succeeds in overcoming his fears now for once and for all, if he learns to go up in a plane, even if he may never fly one himself, he will be a new boy. He’ll never be afraid again. But one let-down now, and he will be set way back—even further back than when Bob first met him.”

“I think you’re right, Bill,” said his sister. “But what are we going to do about it?”

The Captain shrugged his shoulders. “I think the best thing to do with the boy is not to let him know that we know he’s afraid. Treat him just as if he were the bravest lad in the world. I’ll take care of that. But I can’t take care of his mother. I never was a lady’s man,” smiled Captain Bill. “You’ll have to attend to that.”

Mrs. Martin’s brow wrinkled. “I think you’ve taken the easier task,” she said with a wry smile. “I’d much rather teach a boy to overcome his fears than teach a mother to overcome hers. But I’ll try,” she added, and hoped against hope for

success.

Bob burst into the room. “How about something to eat?” he said. “I’m starved!”

“As usual,” said his mother. “I would like to hear you just once complain about being not hungry.”

“All right, mother,” said Bob. “If you want to hear me complain about that, you just feed me a good dinner now, and I’ll do my best to complain about being not hungry—after I finish it.”

“You’re an impossible son,” said his mother, but smiled fondly at him. She really didn’t believe it.



CHAPTER IV—Some War Heroes

Whether secret springs were put into operation by Mrs. Martin that afternoon or not, nevertheless Hal was able to join the party going to the airport early the next morning. It was a beautiful morning. It had stopped raining, and the sun, coming out strong and bright, had dried everything so thoroughly that only an occasional puddle here and there on the road showed that it had rained at all. The drive to the port was pleasant, too; the port being about a mile out of town, and at least five miles from the Martin home.

When they arrived, the day's program was in full sway. A huge tri-motored plane was loading passengers for a cross-country trip. As the three approached the port, they saw the great plane rise into the air and take off exactly on schedule. Smaller planes were flying about above the airport, and on the ground mechanics were working over several planes that needed overhauling. Captain Bill wanted to go first to the administration building, a large white brick structure, modern as any office building in appearance. He wanted to see the head of the airport, an old friend of his, and make the final arrangements for the care of his plane when it came in.

As they were about to enter the building, a tall, heavy-set man passed them, on his way out. Captain Bill started, and half turned. "Well, if that didn't look like —" he began, then turned and went on into the building. "Looked like an old flying buddy of mine. But of course, it couldn't be. Old Hank never was that fat. Never had an ounce of fat on him. All skin and bone. But you never can tell, eh, boys?"

"You'll be getting there yourself, some day, be careful," laughed Bob.

John Headlund, delighted to see Captain Bill, jumped up from his desk, and pumped his hands up and own. "If it isn't the Captain! Man, it's great to see you again!" Headlund and Bill had flown together in France, and although they had kept in touch with each other a few years after they had returned to America, the press of business had kept them apart, and they had not seen each other for years. Captain Bill presented the boys.

"They're going to bring new business for you, Headlund," said Bill. "Here are two of America's future flyers."

The boys grinned.

Headlund, after wishing them success, turned again to Bill. “Do you see any of the old boys?” he asked.

“Pat McDermott’s my partner,” said Bill. “He’s flying the old boat in this afternoon sometime.”

“He is! That’s great! And quite a coincidence, too. Do you know who was here—left just before you came in?”

“Not Hank Brown!” shouted Bill. “By golly, I thought I recognized that face! Old Hank! What was he doing here?”

“He’s got a ship down here in one of our hangars. It’s a beauty—a four passenger cabin plane, with the pilot’s seat up front—a beautiful job. Listen, Hank’s gone down to the hangar now to look it over. Maybe you can catch him down there. It’s Avenue B, the last hangar in line.”

“Great. I’d like to see Hank. Last time I saw him he was in an English hospital, eating porridge and not liking it at all. Who would have thought that the old skinny marink would have put on all that poundage? Old Hank fat! And flying in a cabin plane. Come on, fellows, we’ve got to go down there and see him.” He turned to Headlund. “I’m going to be in town all summer, Heady, and I guess you’ll be seeing plenty of me. What street did you say? Avenue B?”

Captain Bill and the boys hurried out, found the right road, and walked along it until they came to the last hangar. A beautiful plane, black and aluminum, stood outside. But as they approached, there was nobody to be seen.

“Ahoy, there!” shouted Bill. “Anybody here know Hank Brown?”

Hank himself appeared from the other side of the plane, where he had been conferring with a mechanic. “I’m Henry Brown,” he said, peering from behind gold-rimmed glasses at Bill and the boys. His face registered no sign of recognition at first. Then suddenly it lighted up, he rushed forward, and gripped Captain Bill’s hand in his, slapping him heartily on the back with the other. “Well, Bill! You old sock! Where on earth did you come from? What are you doing here? Where have you been?”

Bill, delighted to see his old buddy, laughed at him, and poked him in his now well-padded ribs. "One question at a time, Hank. What are you doing here? And how come you've got this grand ship?" asked Bill.

"I asked you first," laughed Hank.

They spent the next ten minutes telling each other just what they had been doing since their last meeting. They spared the details, but each was satisfied with the other's story. Hank had done well as the manager and later as president of his father's steel plant. Prosperity had ironed out the wrinkles that had always twinkled around his steely grey eyes, and contentment had added inches to his waistline, but he was still the same generous, fun-loving Hank that the boys had known in France.

"Listen," said Hank. "Come on in and try the plane. See how comfortable it is. Say, this is some different from the old rattletraps we used to fly, isn't it?"

"But we had some good thrills in them, didn't we," said Bill. This meeting with Hank was bringing back memories that had not stirred in him for many years.

"Let's get in here where we can talk in comfort," said Hank.

They mounted a little step that the mechanic set for them, and entered the side door of the plane. The inside was amazingly luxurious. Along both sides were upholstered seats, covered with multi-colored cushions. There were built-in fixtures, and everything to make for the greatest ease in traveling. The pilot's seat could be partitioned off by a glass sliding door up front.

The three men sat down on the seats at the side of the cabin. "Gee, they're soft," said Bob. "I could ride all day on these." He jumped up and down a little.

"Remember your manners," said Bill.

Bob stopped jumping and blushed. "Oh, I forgot," he said. He had really forgotten that Hank Brown was an important man, a millionaire. But Hank only laughed.

"How would you people like to take the plane up on its last ride this year?" he asked.

“The last ride?” said Bill. “Why the last?”

“Well, I’m putting her away,” said Hank. “That’s what I was talking to the mechanic and Headlund about. I was going to spend my summer up in my log cabin in Canada, fishing, and all that. But my wife wants to go to Europe instead. She’s going to take the two girls over to France and leave them there in school. That would mean she’d have to come back all alone. I’ve been intending to go back to take a look around ever since I’ve been back in America, so I thought I’d take the opportunity of getting over there now with her. I wouldn’t take the plane. I won’t need a big ship like this. If I want to fly I can pick up a little French or German bus. So I’m putting old Lizzie in the hangar. Seems a shame. But how would you like to go up now? Would you like to try her out?” he asked Bill. “Would I?” said Bill. He slid into the pilot’s seat, and looked over the instrument board, to familiarize himself with the instruments with which the plane was equipped. Then he turned back to the boys. “Want to go up?”

Bob was almost beside himself with excitement. “Take her up, Bill go on,” he squealed. “Sure we want to go up. Go ahead, Bill.”

Hal said nothing. His face was pale. Bill thought that it would be best to ignore him, and just take it for granted that he wanted to go up, too. And Hal, although he was by this time frightened to death, would not admit it. He decided to risk the going up rather than say that he was afraid.

The mechanic taxied the plane out into the open and took away the steps. Bill pressed the starter, and the great propeller began to move. Slowly the ship rolled over the ground, gradually gaining momentum. Finally it rose into the air. Bill handled the huge ship as though it were a toy. Higher and higher it rose. Bob, looking out of the window, saw the building of the airport whizzing by below them, then disappear into a whirling mass. Were they going? Were they standing still? Bob couldn’t tell.

“How high are we?” he shouted at the top of his voice to Hank.

“About 5,000 feet,” judged Hank. He was looking over at Hal rather anxiously. He thought that maybe the boy was going to be sick. But Hal manfully hung on, and said nothing.

“We seem to be standing still,” shouted Bob.

“We’re going, all right. Your uncle is a great one for speed!” shouted back Hank.

The plane was banking now for a turn. They were going back. In a short while Bill had brought the plane down once more into the airport.

“Well, how did you like it?” he said, turning around in his pilot’s seat.

“Great!” said Bob.

But Hal was just a little sick. He said nothing, and waited for the world to settle down again.

“You sure handle the ship like you used to in the old days,” said Hank admiringly to Bill.

“She’s a great ship,” said Bill, modestly.

Hank had an idea. “Say,” he said impulsively, “how would you like to fly her while I’m in Europe?”

“Gee, Hank, I really don’t think”—began Bill. He thought, the same old Hank, always generous, always impulsive.

But Hank was going on with his plan. “Listen, I won’t take ‘no’ for an answer. You fly my plane. And you can fly it up to the Canadian cabin if you want to. Then a perfectly swell vacation plan won’t be entirely thrown away. How about it? The cabin is all ready to move into. They’ve been fixing it up for me. What do you say? Are you game?”

“Game?” said Bill. “Gee, I’m crazy about the idea. But I don’t see why you should do this for me.”

Hank was embarrassed. “You’ve been pretty decent to me in other times, remember that, Bill, old boy,” he said.

“Forget it,” said Bill.

Hank turned to the boys. “Bill here shot down a Boche when the Boche was all but stepping on my tail. Those were the days, eh, Bill?”

“You bet,” said Bill. “We sure were glad to get back alive. Remember old Lufbery? Raoul of the Lafayette Escadrille? There was a boy who could shoot them down. Six out of seven in one day. Not bad flying, that. They used to get pretty close to Raoul themselves. He’d come in with his clothes ripped with bullets, but ready to go right out again with the next patrol. Then one day he got his, and there wasn’t a man there that wouldn’t have given everything he had to save him, either. He’d gone up after a German that nobody seemed able to down. Lufbery climbed up to get above him, and dove. But something went wrong with his plane—God knows what, and those who were watching from the ground saw it burst into flame. Then they saw him stand on the edge of the cockpit and jump. It was horrible. But it was the only way for Lufbery to die—with his plane. He wanted it that way.”

Then Hank said, “And Bill Thaw! There was another flying fool. Bill was great fun—always laughing and joking, just as if his next flight might not be his last. Remember what he did to those three German planes when they got fresh with him, Bill?” He turned to the boys. “Thaw,” he explained, “was coming back from his regular patrol, when he suddenly came face to face with three German planes. One of them maneuvered to his left, the second to his right, and the third dove below him to fire up. Well, Bill had to think fast, and he did. He side-slipped until he was directly over the plane below him, and fired down. One gone. Then he pulled himself out of a steep dive, and went after the second plane. A quick swoop, and a steep bank, a rapid burst of fire, and the second German went down in a burning nose dive.

“From then on it was nip and tuck, and each man for himself, dog eat dog. It was a pretty even battle. The German was plucky, and ripped into Thaw for all he was worth. But one lucky turn, one accurate shot, and Thaw had him. Down went his plane. Thaw, his plane in ribbons, his clothes bullet-riddled, limped home, stepped out of his plane with a smile, and a joke on his lips.”

“Golly,” said Bob, “that must have been great fun. I wish I’d been there.”

“What would we have done with a baby in swaddling clothes?” laughed Bill.

“Aw,” said Bob, “you know I mean if I was old enough.”

Hank was looking into the distance, with the far-away look that meant another story was coming on, and Bob stopped talking.

Finally Hank said, “Remember Luke and Wehner? What a team! You never saw two men so different in your life. Frank Luke talked a lot—not always the most modest fellow in the world, either, and made a great to-do about everything he did. But he sure did plenty of damage to the Germans. Joe Wehner was quiet, modest, never talked very much, and never about himself. But still they were always together. Came to be known as ‘The Luke and Wehner Duo.’

“They worked together, too. Went out on the same patrol and always stuck together. Luke’s specialty was shooting down Drachens. Those were the German observation balloons that they sent up behind their lines to observe what was going on in the American lines. Of course, the information they got caused plenty of harm, and anybody who shot down a Drachen was doing a lot of good. But the things were expensive and useful, and the Germans sent them up with plenty of protection. There was always a swarm of planes flying around them and ready to light into any stranger that came near.

“Luke and Wehner used to take care of that. Wehner would fly above Luke, looking out for any plane that might come to attack him. If one hove in sight, Wehner would go for him and engage him while Luke flew on and shot down the balloon. Balloon after balloon went down. The Germans were getting wary.

“One day when Luke and Wehner were on their way to see what they could do about three Drachens that were watching the American lines, they met up with a formation of Fokkers. Wehner dived into the uneven battle. Luke flew on, and shot down one, then the other bag. But the gallant Wehner had fought his last fight. One of the Fokkers downed him. Luke, who saw what had happened to his pal, left the remaining balloon and furiously charged the Fokkers. He fought like mad, zooming, diving, spurting fire into those German planes. Two of them hurtled to the ground. The others fled. Luke started for home. On his way he engaged and downed another enemy plane. It was a record that on any other day he would have boasted about. But not that day. His pal had been killed, and Luke was for once silent and speechless.

“Of course, he didn’t give up balloon breaking. He added up a goodly store. But one day he got his, like so many of them. He’d sent three Drachens down in flames that day, when his own plane was so badly crippled, and he was so badly wounded that he was forced to land. He wouldn’t let them take him, though, and he died fighting. When a band of German soldiers approached him, he pulled out his gun and shot six of them before he fell dead.”

It was Bill's turn. "Of course you boys have heard of Eddie Rickenbacker. There was an ace for you. If it was speed and trick flying that you wanted, Eddie was the man to give it to you. He had a bag of tricks that would get any pursuit plane off his tail. But he didn't always use them. He didn't have 26 planes to his credit for nothing. Eddie was a great ace and a great scout."

Hank interrupted. "Here we go gassing again like two old fogies. I feel like my own grandfather sitting on the front porch and discussing the battle of Bull Run. We are getting old, aren't we, Bill? These youngsters ought to be glad that they didn't have to fly those old buses that we used, though. The new planes are great to fly. You two are going to have a grand time. I'd rather fly than travel any other way. But I don't think that it would be quite the thing to suggest to my wife now that I would rather fly to Europe with her than take the boat. So old Hank will be a land animal this time. Or rather, a water animal, instead of a bird."

"A sort of—fish?" laughed Bill.

"Shut up, you," said Hank. "Now, listen, how about that offer of my cabin and my plane for your vacation? It'll be a grand trip, and I guarantee that you'll like the cabin on the mountain. Nobody around for miles, except Jake, who takes care of the place for me. In fact, there's no town for a hundred miles around. About the only practical way of getting there is by plane. Just think, old man, all of that beauty and solitude going begging. You can get right back to nature there, live a wild life, or have all the conveniences of home, whichever you chose. We've got the place all fixed up. It's a real man's place, and you'll love it. And I'd like to see somebody who'd appreciate it have it this summer. And I know you would."

Bill looked at Hank, who was talking so earnestly, with a puzzled look. "Listen, Hank," he said, "you aren't trying to persuade me to go up there as a favor to you, are you? Because if you are, you're crazy. It's certainly not you who should be doing the begging. We ought to be down on our hands and knees begging you for the place. The only reason I hesitate at all is because I think it's too much you're doing for us."

Hank snorted. "Then you're going to take the place."

Bill looked at him fondly, seeing through the strange marks that time had left on this man, the young, awkward boy whom he had befriended in France, when he

had been just a young fellow himself, but not so green as the other. Then he said, "What do you say we leave it up to the boys?" He turned to them. "What do you say, Bob? How does a vacation up in the mountains sound to you?"

Bob, his eyes shining, could hardly answer. He hadn't wanted to show too much eagerness before because he had remembered his manners just in time, and was watching Bill to see how they should respond to Hank Brown's generous offer. But now that he saw that Bill was favorably disposed, he breathed, "Oh, gee, I think that it would be great! Just great! Let's go, Bill."

Hank was amused and pleased by this enthusiasm.

The Captain turned to Hal. "How about you?"

Hal, who had forgotten his misery during the recital of the exciting stories of war aces, and was once more fired with ambition, now that he was safely on the ground, was almost as enthusiastic. "But," he said as an afterthought, "I don't know whether I could go, of course. My mother—" his voice trailed off.

Bill reached over and grasped Hank's hand. "We'll take it, old scout. Don't know how to thank you."

"Don't," said Hank. "I'm glad you're going to go. All you have to do is to wire to Jake when you're coming. He lights bonfires to mark the landing field, and there you are. I'm going to be in town for two weeks, so you can come up any time to make arrangements. O.K.? Now I've got to go. I've been spending too much time as it is. Wish I could stay and see Pat, but I can't. Tell him to come up and see me, will you?"

He bid them goodbye and left in his automobile which had been parked nearby. The next hour was spent in an exciting inspection of the various planes in the airport, from tiny two-seater monoplanes that looked like fragile toys, to huge biplanes; and in a growing impatience with Pat's delay. Finally a tiny speck appeared on the horizon, but the three of them had been disappointed so often that they did not dare to hope that this was at last Pat McDermott. But it was. He stepped out of the green monoplane and pushing up his goggles, looked around him. He spied his three friends immediately, and hurried to meet them.

"Hi, Irish!" called Captain Bill. "I want you to meet two pals of mine." He introduced Bob and Hal. "We're going to teach them to fly."

The two boys shook hands with Pat. He looked like his name, a tall, broad, husky man with a shock of curly hair that had probably once been red, but which was now brown, with a little gray at the temples; a young face—it was impossible to tell how old he was; and a broad grin that spread across his face and up around his eyes, disappearing into the roots of his hair.

“Well,” he said, without ceremony, as though he had been friends of theirs for years, “They’ll make good flyers if they’re not too lazy. And if anybody can make you work, I can. And I will.”

The Captain laughed. “Don’t take Pat seriously,” he said. “He’s too lazy to make you work very hard. But let me warn you that he’s trained army flyers, so you’d better not mind what he says, while he’s teaching you.”

The boys had gone over and were looking at the Marianne. She was a beautifully stream-lined craft, large yet graceful.

Pat noticed the boys’ admiration, and was pleased. “How about taking a ride in her now?” he asked.

“They just got down to earth,” said the Captain. He explained about Hank and Hank’s plane. Pat was delighted that their old pal had turned up, and decided that they would have to have a reunion very soon. He also decided on the spot that he was going along with them to the mountains.

“Try to keep me away. Although I don’t much fancy the riding on cushions, in a fancy plane. When I fly, I want to fly. But if you let me do the piloting, I’ll make the best of that.” Pat always decided things that way, but nobody resented his high-hand manner, since he looked, and was, the sort of man who could make good on any job he undertook. “Well, Bob, my lad,” he said, turning to the boy, “how about going up? It’s the first step in learning to fly. And don’t think that it’s going to be like cabin flying. You’ll notice the difference when you get up. Ready?”

“Sure,” said Bob.

Pat produced a helmet and some goggles. “It’s an open cockpit you’re sitting in,” he said. “And see that the goggles fit tightly.”

Bob wiggled them around. “They seem all right,” he said.

“All right, hop in,” Pat told him.

Bob climbed into the rear cockpit, no less thrilled by his second flight that day than he had been by his first. He waved his hand to the Captain and Hal who were watching them. Pat climbed into the front cockpit. “Ready?” he called.

“O. K!” shouted Bob.

Pat started the motor, which was a self-starter. The plane taxied gently across the field, and Pat turned her nose into the wind. Bob felt her lift from the earth; there was a bump—they hadn’t quite cleared; Pat speeded up, until Bob, looking over the side of the cockpit, could see the ground slipping by dizzily. Then the bumping stopped; they had left the ground. This time they did not again bump; the Marianne soared into the air.

Bob could feel the blast of air against his face, and he was glad his goggles fitted well. The motor roared, the wind screamed. Bob tried to shout, but could not hear himself uttering a sound. He looked down. The airport looked as it had from the other plane. Now he had more of the feeling of flying. There was a sudden bump. The Marianne dropped suddenly. Bob felt as though he were in an elevator that had descended very suddenly—there was the same pit-of-the-stomach feeling. Air bump, he thought, and it was. He looked over the side again, and could see nothing. They were traveling pretty high.

Then suddenly the roar of the motor stopped, and they began to descend at what Bob felt must be an almost unbelievable speed. At first Bob was frightened, but then realized that they were gliding down. Every now and then Pat turned on his engine again. Bob, looking over the side, could see the fields coming up to meet them. They landed so gently that he hardly felt the jolt of the wheels touching the ground.

How funny to stand on the stable ground once more! The sound of the motor was still roaring in Bob’s ears. He pulled off the goggles and helmet. “It was marvelous!” he shouted loudly to his friends.

“We can hear you,” said the Captain. “You needn’t shout!”

“Was I shouting?” laughed Bob.

“You are,” said the Captain.

But Pat had turned to Hal. “Well, lad, you’re next.”

But Hal said what he had been rehearsing for many minutes, in fact, ever since Bob had taken to the air. “Don’t you think it’s rather late? We haven’t had any lunch. Maybe we could go up again after lunch.”

Captain Bill, who knew the struggle that was going on in Hal’s heart, and who was getting hungry anyway, said, “Lunch. That’s the idea. We’ve got a great picnic lunch, Pat.”

“Lead me to it,” said Pat.

“Knew that would get you,” laughed the Captain.

They left the plane in charge of a mechanic, who was to look after it, and went over to the automobile that the Captain had parked. They decided, on Bob’s suggestion, to eat on a grassy slope from which they could see the airport.

“I’ve got an idea,” said the Captain. “You can start your story about Lindbergh.”

“I’m ready,” said Bob, “if you’re ready to listen. I think I know the story backwards and forward.”

“Begin at the beginning, always,” the Captain warned.

They reached the spot where they had chosen to picnic, and settled back contentedly in the long grass to hear part of Bob’s story before lunch.

CHAPTER V—The Eagle

“Well,” began Bob, “I guess my story isn’t going to be very new to any of you. Gee, I know it almost by heart, and I suppose everybody else does, too.”

“Don’t apologize,” said the Captain. “We’ll be only too glad to stop you if we’ve heard it before. I don’t think that we will, though. It’s a story that bears repeating.”

Bob’s eyes lighted up. “You bet,” he said. “I never get tired of reading about it.” He plucked at the grass beside him. “Gee, it makes a fellow want to do things. It makes him feel that the older folks don’t know everything—”

“A-hem,” interrupted Captain Bill.

Bob laughed. “You’re not old folks, old bean. Don’t flatter yourself. Anyway, they told Lindbergh that he couldn’t do it. They told him that his plane was carrying too much, and he’d never be able to make it alone.”

“Did he?” said Pat.

Bob looked at him disgustedly. “Did he! Don’t make fun of me, you old Irishman!”

The old Irishman looked grieved. “Well, I just wanted to know. I’m always willing to learn somethin’ new. And you’d better get started, or we’ll never know. We’ll be leaving the lad up in the air, so to speak.”

“Ignore that ape,” said Captain Bill, “and proceed.”

“Lindbergh didn’t listen to them. He just went ahead and did what he thought was right, and by golly, he was right. It makes a fellow feel that even if he is young he can do things. He doesn’t just have to sit around and do what everybody else has done before. There’s got to be a first every time. Lindy wasn’t afraid just because nobody had ever flown the Atlantic alone before, and the wiseacres said that it couldn’t be done. He just went ahead and flew it.”

“It wasn’t as easy as all that,” quietly remarked Hal.

Bob turned to him. "Of course not. Lindy had planned every move that he was going to make. He was prepared for anything. That's why he's always so successful. He has his plans all laid before he ever takes off. He's got all the courage in the world, but he's not reckless."

"Put that under your hat, my lad. It's a good lesson to know by heart when you're going into the flying game."

"You bet," said Bob. "Gee, it needed a lot of courage for him to make that take-off. I've got the date down here. It was May 20, 1927, on a Friday. That must have been an exciting morning down at Roosevelt Field. He made up his mind on Thursday afternoon. They told him that the weather was all right over the North Atlantic, and that it would be best if he started out the next morning.

"He didn't tell anybody about his plans. He never talks very much anyway. Everybody found that out later. It was all sort of secret. He just told his mechanics to get the Spirit of St. Louis ready, and keep their mouths shut. I guess he didn't want everybody messing around with his plans. But the men who delivered his gasoline weren't so secret, I guess, and somehow his plans leaked out Thursday night.

"That Thursday night was pretty awful. It was raining, and the weather could be cut with a knife. But once people found out that Slim was going to start, they began to come around to Curtiss Field, and at two o'clock in the morning there was a big crowd of them standing around in the rain and mud. Slim wasn't leaving from Curtiss, though, and they towed his plane by truck over to Roosevelt. They got there just about when it was getting light.

"There was a crowd over at Curtiss, too. But Slim didn't care. Crowds never mean much to him. He saw a whole lot more of them later on, too, but he never was one to strut or show off. He just got into his fur-lined suit, and waited for the men to start his engine. Somebody asked him if he had only five sandwiches and two canteens of water. 'Sure,' he said. 'If I get to Paris, I won't need any more, and if I don't get there, I won't need any more, either.' It was just like him to say that, but the real reason he didn't take any more was because he had too much weight already. He had over 200 gallons of gas, and the load was heavy. He had to cut down on everything that wasn't absolutely necessary.

"Well, they started his motor for him. The plane was standing on the Roosevelt

runway, which is pretty smooth, and five thousand feet long. The weather had cleared up a little. And there was the monoplane looking all silver and slick, roaring away for all it was worth. Lindy said goodbye to his mother, and to Byrd and Chamberlin and Acosta, who were planning their own trips across the Atlantic, and then he stepped into the cockpit, and closed the door.

“He raced his motor a little bit. She must have sounded pretty sweet to him, because he gave her the gun, and off he went. That start must have been one of the hardest parts of the whole trip. The Spirit of St. Louis bumped along that muddy runway, and the people watching thought she’d go over on her nose any moment. She was over-loaded. Her motor was pulling for all she was worth, but it didn’t seem as though they’d ever make it. She went off the ground a few feet, and bounced down again. But then the crowd held its breath. She was leaving the ground. They were up about fifteen feet. And there were telegraph wires in their path. If they hit those, the trip to Paris was over right then. But they didn’t. The landing gear cleared by a few inches. That crowd simply roared. But Slim didn’t hear them. He was on his way to Paris.”

Bob paused for breath. He had been talking very fast, carried away by his story. The others did not speak, but sat waiting for him to go on. They had all heard the story before, but as the Captain had said, it bore repeating, and they could hear it again and again. There was something agelessly appealing in the tale of that young man’s feat.

Bob was talking again. “I’m not much at poetry,” he said.

“You bet you’re not,” said Captain Bill. “I’ve read some of yours.”

Bob glared at him. “I never wrote a poem!” he said defensively.

The Captain looked contrite. “It must have been Hal,” he said. “I beg your pardon. Go on with your story. Where does the poetry come in?”

“I was going to tell you, before you interrupted, so rudely, that there’s somebody who’s written a poem—a lot of poetry, to music—a cantata I think they call it. It’s about Lindy’s flight, and it tells the story of the flight across the Atlantic. I guess it’s pretty thrilling. Maybe that’s the only way the story can be told—in poetry and music, because it always sounds pretty flat when you just say Lindy flew across the Atlantic in a monoplane. It needs music, with a lot of trumpets —”

“Go on, go on, my lad. More words, less music.” Pat seemed to be getting impatient. The sun was pretty high over their heads now, and bees were buzzing drowsily in the tall grass all around them. Hal had stretched out on his stomach, facing the little group, which was seated now in a semi-circle. “I’ll be falling asleep if you don’t get on.”

Bob laughed embarrassedly. “All right, you just stop me if I get to rambling. You keep me straight, Irish.”

Captain Bill leaned back on a hummock of earth, his arms folded behind his head. “I’m so comfortable, I could listen to anything, even to Bob telling a story. Go on, Bob.”

“One more crack, and you don’t hear anything,” said Bob. “Remember the rules, no interruptions from the gallery.”

“We stand corrected. Go on.”

Bob settled himself once again into the grass. “Well, we’ve got Lindy into the air. No sooner had he set out when people began reporting that they’d seen him. Some of them had. A lot of them were just excited individuals who’d heard a motorcycle back-firing. But somebody actually did see him flying over Rhode Island, and about two hours, nearly, after he had set out, they flashed back that he’d been seen at Halifax, Massachusetts. Then he dropped out of sight. Nobody reported seeing him. That was because he took an over-water route, and was out some distance, flying along the coast of New England.

“They saw him next over Nova Scotia, running along nicely, and then Springfield, Nova Scotia saw him. It was about one o’clock, and he was going strong. But he was getting into a dangerous region, cold and foggy. They had watchers looking for him everywhere. Lindy left Nova Scotia at Cape Breton, headed for Newfoundland. It was pretty stiff going, about 200 miles without sight of land, and over a pretty treacherous sea. But at 7:15 they saw him flying low over St. John’s, in Newfoundland. They could see the number on the wings, and sent back word to the world that he had passed there. And that was the last word that anybody received that Friday.

“The going had been pretty good until then. The weather was clear, and the ceiling pretty high. But as soon as it got dark, Lindy and his plane hit some pretty bad weather. It grew mighty cold, and a thick swirling fog came up and

swallowed up the plane. This was mighty tough, because if he flew low, he was bound to run into one of the icebergs that were floating in the icy sea. So he climbed up to about 10,000 feet, and stayed there. Flying high was all right, but it added another danger. Ice was forming on the wings of the Spirit of St. Louis, and if it got thick enough, it would break off a wing of the plane, and send the plane and Lindy into the sea.

“Lindy could have turned back, but he didn’t. He kept right on, through fog and sleet and rain. His motor never missed. It was a good pal, and no wonder he included it in his feat, and said later that ‘we crossed the Atlantic.’

“When morning came, a whole flock of cables came, too. It seems a whole lot of ships had sighted Lindy’s plane, or somebody’s plane, anywhere from 500 to 100 miles off the coast of Ireland, where he was headed. Nobody knew who to believe, but at 10:00 o’clock came the real news, that he was over a place called Valencia, Ireland.

“Lindy wondered where he was, himself. Flying blind as he had, he didn’t know just where he had come out. So he decided to ask the first person he met. Now you can imagine the air roads weren’t full of planes flying to Ireland, and Lindy had to wait until he sighted a fishing schooner. He swooped low and shouted out, ‘Am I headed for Ireland?’ The fishermen were so astounded that they couldn’t answer, so Lindy flew on his course, depending as he had all night, on his compass. Pretty soon he came in sight of land, and knew that it was Ireland.”

“Because it was so beautiful,” said Pat.

“No, because it was rocky, and his maps indicated that the land would be rocky,” said Bob.

“Oh, no doubt he could tell it was Ireland,” insisted Pat. “His mother was Irish, you know, and it needs mighty little Irish blood to make a man long for the ould sod.”

“Well, anyway, there he was over Ireland,” put in Bob, pointedly. “And from Ireland, on to England, and from England, on to France. Along the Seine, and then Paris. They were waiting for him at Le Bourget, and sent up flares and rockets, long before he got there. Maybe they weren’t excited when he flew into range! It was about 8:30, that is, French time, but about 5:30 New York time, when Lindy and the Spirit of St. Louis circled around the landing field at Le

Bourget and landed. Golly, I wish I'd been there. The first man in the world to fly the Atlantic, landing before my very eyes! He'd gone 3,640 miles, and had made it in 33½ hours. Some going!

"Well, he was there. And he got out of the plane. And you all know what he said when he got out. I—"

"I am Charles Lindbergh," said Captain Bill and Pat, not quite in unison.

"Yup," said Bob, "'I am Charles Lindbergh.' He thought that they wouldn't know who he was. He'd been flying pretty low over Ireland and England, and so far as he could see, nobody had paid much attention to him. So he introduced himself, just as though every man, woman and child in every civilized country wasn't saying that very name all through the day. Remember when we heard the news over the radio, Hal? We were so excited we nearly upset the furniture. Golly, that was a day.

"Well, that was Slim Lindbergh's flight, and now about Slim himself. He was born in Detroit, Michigan, on February 2, 1902, and that means that he was only twenty-five years old when he made his greatest flight, which is pretty young to become the most famous man in the world.

"His dad was Charles A. Lindbergh, and he died in 1924, when he was running for governor of Minnesota on the Farmer-Labor ticket. He'd been a Representative in Congress before. Lindy and he were great pals, and played around together a lot. Lindy's mother was Irish, and taught school in Detroit.

"Lindy went to school in Little Falls, and to Little Falls High School. He graduated from there when he was 16. He was good in Math and in other things he liked, but not in grammar.

"Lindy didn't go right to college. In fact, he didn't go until three years after he'd graduated from high school, and then he went to the University of Wisconsin, to take up mechanical engineering. He was good at that. He'd always liked to tinker, and he got his chance there. He did at college just what you'd expect him to do. He had some friends and acquaintances, but mostly he kept to himself. He was the same quiet, shy person that everybody got to know later, when he became famous.

"Slim didn't stay at Wisconsin very long, so we don't know what he would have

finally done there. He went over to Lincoln, Nebraska, where they had a flying school, and asked them to teach him to fly. They taught him the beginnings of flying, and from the moment his hands touched the controls, he knew that this was what he was cut out for. He just took naturally to those levers and gadgets, and could handle his plane like a toy.

“It seems that Lindy was born to be a pilot. He’s built for one, in the first place. Long and rangy, and slim. No extra weight, but plenty of muscle and endurance. He’s got a lot of nerve and never gets excited. He showed that when he got himself elected to the Caterpillar Club. But I’ll get to that later.” Here Bob paused, and looked up at the sun, which was just slipping a little westward. “Say,” he said. “Would you folks mind if I continued my story later? I feel just a little empty. How about the food?”

“I’ve been thinking that for a long time,” said the Captain. “But rules are rules. I didn’t want to interrupt you.”

Bob snorted. “Say, for food you can interrupt me any time. Let’s go.”

He jumped up, stretched himself, and made for the car, to get out the huge hamper of lunch. “Say,” he called back, “Lindy may have been satisfied with five sandwiches all the way to Paris, but darned if I couldn’t eat five right now.” He carried the hamper over to the knoll where the others were. They were all standing now, limbering up, stretching, sniffing the good air, and looking eagerly toward the food.

“Here, lend a hand,” said Bob. He plumped down the basket so that they could hear the rattle of forks and tin cups within, and sat down beside it.

“You’re the host,” said Hal, seating himself comfortably on the grass and looking on. “It’s your party. We have to listen to your story, so the least you can do is feed us.”

Bob had opened the hamper, and was viewing its contents eagerly. He dived into the basket. “Say, anybody who doesn’t help himself, doesn’t eat. Fall to.”

They fell to, doing much eating but little talking. Finally Bob sat back, a sandwich in one hand, a cup of steaming coffee out of the thermos bottle in the other. “I have a suspicion,” he said, “that you don’t like my story.”

“Don’t get ideas like that, Bob, my lad,” said Pat. “We love your story. We just like sandwiches better.”

“All right, then I won’t finish,” said Bob. “I’m going to be independent.”

Hal looked up. “Not finish? You’ve got finish any story you start.”

“One of the rules? There aren’t any rules. You just made that up.”

Hal was cajoling now. “Aw, come on, Bob. We want to hear the end. Come on, tell us the rest.”

Bob bit into a huge slice of cake. He shook his head. “Nope, no end.”

“Well, at least about the Caterpillar Club. At least you’ll tell us how Lindy saved his life by bailing out. We’ve got to hear that.”

But Bob was adamant. “I’ve been insulted. I’m not going on. Anyway, Lindy didn’t save his life once by bailing out of a plane.”

“He didn’t? You said a little while ago that he did.”

“I didn’t say once. He became eligible to the Caterpillar Club four times.”

Hal looked at Bob with disgust. “I must say that you’re being very disagreeable.”

Captain Bill, who had been looking on in amusement, suddenly laughed very loudly. “Don’t coax him, Hal. He doesn’t need coaxing. He’s going to tell the rest of the story, don’t you worry. Wild horses couldn’t keep him from finishing the tale. Could they, Bob, old man?”

Bob looked over at his uncle and grinned. “Why, you old sinner. What a way to talk about your favorite nephew. But now that you mention it, maybe I did intend to finish the story, seeing that I’d started it. Now, where was I?”

Pat was clearing up the debris made by four men eating a picnic lunch. “You’ve got Lindbergh at the Nebraska flying school for a long time.”

“Oh, not very long,” said Bob. “You see, he stayed there really a short time. In

fact, he never did any solo flying there.”

“Well, why not?” asked Hal.

“They asked for a five-hundred dollar bond from every student before he went up on his first solo flight. This seemed silly to Lindy, and he left the school.

“When he left, he did what so many of the flyers were doing then. He went out west, and did stunting, risking his neck at county fairs and air circuses to give the people a thrill. He did, too. He handled his plane like a toy, doing rolls, tail spins, and every kind of stunt imaginable. But the most exciting thing that he did, and it usually isn’t an exciting thing at all, was landing his plane. He could land on a dime, and as lightly as a feather. That’s really piloting, isn’t it, Bill?”

“You bet,” said the Captain. He was sprawled out on his back, enjoying his after dinner rest. “A landing will show you your flyer’s ability every time. Provided, of course, that he has a fairly decent landing field. Did I ever tell you the story that Hawks tells in his autobiography? Do you mind if I interrupt for just a minute, Bob?”

“Oh, no, go right ahead,” said Bob, witheringly. “Go right ahead. I was just telling a story.”

“Thanks,” said Captain Bill with a grin. “I will. Well, it seems that Hawks was stunting down in Mexico, and doing quite a bit of private flying. He got a commission to fly a Congressman and a General, I think it was, back to their home town of Huatemo. Have you ever heard of Huatemo? I thought not. Well, Huatemo had never seen an airplane close up, and the two high muckamucks decided that they’d give the natives a thrill by coming back via plane. Hawks had them wire ahead to have a landing field prepared. The native officials wired that they had a fine field, clear of all obstructions, but dotted with a few small trees. ‘Fine, says Hawks, but have them remove the trees immediately.’ The natives said that this had been done, and the party started out.

“After several adventures, Hawks flew over Huatemo, and prepared to spiral down to the landing field. Imagine his chagrin and surprise, my dear boys, when he discovered, that the officials of Huatemo had indeed cut down the Huateman trees, but had left the stumps standing!”

“Whew,” said Bob. “What did he do, turn around?”

“No, he couldn’t. And anyway, there was no other place to land. The field was surrounded by dense forests. He had to make it. He brought his plane down without hitting a stump, and then zig-zagged wildly from stump to stump like a croquet ball trying to miss wickets. And he missed them all, too, except one. The wheel hit it an awful smack, and collapsed. The plane tilted up on its nose, and came to rest with its propeller in the ground and its tail waving gayly in the air, not at all like a proper plane should.”

“And killed them all,” said Pat.

“Who, Hawks? Not on your life. He’s a lucky fellow. Not one of them was hurt. They climbed out of the plane, and were greeted by the natives, joyously and with acclaim. And not one of the natives seemed to suspect in the least that this wasn’t the way a plane should land. Or at least the way a crazy American would land a plane.” The Captain finished his story, and paused.

“Well,” said Bob grudgingly, “that was a good story, too. But, as I was saying, Lindy was a good stunter, and a good flyer. He decided that he wanted a plane of his own. He heard that there was going to be a sale of army planes down in Georgia, and he went down and bought a Curtiss Jenny with the money that he had saved from his stunting work. He fixed it up, and was soon off barnstorming again. But I guess the Jenny was too clumsy a boat for Lindy. He wanted to fly the newer, better planes that the army had. So he joined the army’s training school at Brook Field, San Antonio. This was when he was 22 years old.

“I guess he got along pretty fine at San Antonio, and he was sent down to the pursuit school at Kelly Field. He joined the Caterpillar Club there. It was the first time that he had to jump from a moving plane and get down with his parachute. I guess it was a pretty close shave.”

“Gee, how did it happen?” said Hal, his eyes wide.

“Wait a second, I’m coming to it,” said Bob. “He and another officer were to go up and attack another plane that they called the enemy. It was a sort of problem they had to work out. Well, Slim dove at the enemy from the left, and the other fellow from the right. The enemy plane pulled up, but Lindy and the other officer kept on going, dead toward each other. There was an awful crack, and their wings locked. The two planes began to spin around and drop through the air. Lindy did the only thing there was to do. He kept his head, stepped out on

one of the damaged wings, and stepped off backwards. He didn't pull the rip-cord until he had fallen quite a way, because he didn't want the ships to fall on him. When he'd gone far enough, he pulled the cord, and floated gently down. That was the first."

"And the second?" said Hal.

"The second," went on Bob, "happened in 1927, just about a year before Lindy flew the Atlantic. He took a new type of plane up to test her. He put her through all the stunts that he could think of, and she stood them all right. It seemed as though she was going to come through the test O.K., when Lindy put her into a tail spin. They spiraled down for a while, and Lindy tried to pull her out of it. She wouldn't respond and went completely out of control. Lindy tugged and yanked at the controls, but he couldn't get that bus to go into a dive. He did his best to save the ship, but it was no use. He didn't give up until they were about 300 feet from the ground, which is a mighty short distance to make a jump, if you ask me. But Lindy made it, and landed in somebody's back yard, the wind knocked out of him, but otherwise all right. That was the second."

"And the third?" asked Hal.

"We're getting ahead of the story. In fact, we're ahead of the story already. Before he made his second jump, Lindy had joined the Missouri National Guard, and was promoted to a Captaincy in the Reserve and Flight Commander of the 110th Observation Squadron. That's how he got to be a Captain, you know how he got to be a Colonel.

"Then Lindy joined the Robertson Aircraft Corporation, at St. Louis. While he was with them, he helped map out the first mail route from St. Louis to Chicago, and was the first pilot to carry mail along this route. Slim had a habit of starting things off. He was the first to do a lot of things. No sitting back and waiting for others to start things. It was first or nothing for him. Maybe it was his Viking ancestors, I don't know.

"It was while he was flying this route that Lindy had his third initiation into the Caterpillars. He took off one September afternoon from Lambert Field, in St. Louis, on his way to Maywood. Just outside of Peoria a fog rolled in, so thick you could cut it with a knife, Lindy could climb up over it for flying, but he couldn't land blind. He dropped a flare, but it only lit up a cloud bank. He saw

lights, then, through the fog, and knew that he was around Maywood, but couldn't get the exact location of the field. He'd circled around for two hours, when his engine sputtered and died. The tank was dry. Lindy quickly turned on the reserve gravity tank. There was twenty minutes of flying in that tank, and Lindy had to think fast.

"He tried flares again, but it was no use. When he had just a few minutes of gas left, he saw the glow of a town. He didn't want to take a chance on landing in a town and killing somebody, so he headed for open country. In a few minutes his engine died. Lindy stepped out into the blind fog and jumped. After falling a hundred feet, he pulled the rip-cord, and left the rest to chance. Every once in a while his ship appeared, twirling away in spirals, the outside of the circle about 300 yards away from Lindy. He counted five spirals, and then lost sight of the bus. He landed in a corn field, shaken, of course, but all right. He found his way to the farm house, and told the farmer who he was. The farmer, who had heard the crash of the plane as it smashed to earth wouldn't believe that this safe and sound man was the pilot of it. Finally Lindy convinced him, and they went in search of the plane, which the farmer was sure had landed close to his house. They found it two miles away, looking not much like a plane, but a heap of rubbish. The mail wasn't hurt. They got it to a train for Chicago, and the mail went through. It always does, you know."

"Yup, it always does," said Captain Bill.

"That reminds me of a story," said Pat.

"Hold it," said Bob. "I've got another parachute for Lindy."

"Fire away," said Pat. "But remember to remind me not to forget to tell you my own story."

"All right," Bob put in. "Now the fourth time Lindy jumped was not long before his big flight. He was still flying for Robertson's, carrying mail to Chicago. Just south of Peoria he ran into rain that changed to snow. Lindy flew around, waiting for the fog to lift, until he heard his motor sputter and die. He was up about 13,000 feet when he stepped out of the cockpit and jumped into the air. He landed on a barbed wire fence. Tore his shirt, but the plane was pretty much of a wreck. He grabbed the air mail; hurried to a train for Chicago, got another plane, and flew the mail through. A little late, but still, it got through. And he didn't bat

an eye. Not one of the jumps fazed him a bit.

“But it wasn’t as though Lindy jumped at the slightest sign of anything going wrong. He stayed with his plane until the very last minute, doing everything he could to save it. He hated worse than anything to have a plane smashed up. Look how long he stayed with that new plane he was testing out—until he was just 300 feet above the ground.

“Well, Lindy was one of the best mail pilots that the Robertson corporation had, in fact, he was their chief pilot. They could depend on him to go out in weather that no other pilot would think of bucking. He didn’t show off. Just knew that he could fly through anything, and he did.

“At this time there was a lot of excitement in the air. Orteig was offering his \$25,000 prize for the first man to cross the Atlantic, and there were a lot of aviators who would have liked the prize, and were trying for it. Of course, the money wasn’t the whole thing. There was the honor attached to it. And besides, there was the fact that crossing the Atlantic would make people sit up and take notice that flying wasn’t as dangerous as they thought. If a man could fly all that distance in a plane, maybe planes weren’t the death traps that some people had an idea they were. Lindy must have been thinking of this when he first decided that he’d like to try for the Orteig prize. Because everything that he’s done since his flight has been to get people interested in aviation.

“But it takes money to fly across the ocean. You’ve got to get a special plane and all that. Lindy had to have backers. He couldn’t get them at first. Everybody tried to discourage him. In the first place, he looked such a kid. He was twenty-five, and that’s young, but he didn’t even look twenty-five. The men he asked to back him all but told him to run home and wait until he had grown up.

“Then Major Robertson, Lindy’s Big Boss, tried to get backers for him. He knew that Lindy could fly and finally got some influential men to put up \$15,000 for his flight. Maybe Lindy wasn’t glad! He tucked his check in his pocket and went on a shopping trip for a plane. He tried the Bellanca people in New York, but they didn’t have what he wanted, so he skipped to San Diego to the Ryan Airways, Inc., and told them what he wanted. They put their engineers to work on his specifications, and designed him a Ryan monoplane, the neat stream-lined job that was christened the Spirit of St. Louis. It’s a graceful bird—but you’ve all seen so many pictures of it, you know what it looks like. It has a wing span of 46

feet, and an overall length of over 27 feet. They put in a Wright engine—a Whirlwind, 200 horsepower. It's a radial engine. You two probably know what a radial engine is, but Hal here doesn't." Bob paused and turned to Hal. "Do you?"

"Uh-uh," grunted Hal. "Do you?"

"Of course I do. It's one in which the cylinders aren't in a straight line or in a V, but arranged around an axis, like the spokes of a wheel. Lindy's plane had two spark plugs for each cylinder, so that in case one missed, there was another one ready. She could carry 450 gallons of gas and twenty gallons of oil, and she was loaded to the gills when Lindy took her off the ground at the Field.

"Suppose Lindy wasn't anxious about that plane. He hung around the factory all the time that it was being built, and made suggestions to help along Hawley Bowlus, who built the thing. You know Hawley Bowlus. The fellow who held the glider record until Lindy took it away from him—but that's later. Bowlus knows how to build planes, and Lindy swears by him.

"Well, they got the plane finished in 60 days, which isn't bad time. Out in New York, Byrd and Chamberlin and the others were getting ready to fly the Atlantic. It's wasn't really a race to see who would be first, but of course, there's no doubt that each one was anxious to be the first man to cross the Atlantic. Because after all, nobody likes to be second. So Lindy had to get out to the east coast as fast as he could. He could hardly wait for the plane to be finished. But at last it was, and all the equipment in place. Lindy climbed into the cockpit to test her out. The cockpit was inclosed. I don't know whether I told that before or not. Anyway, he could see out little windows on each side, but he couldn't see ahead, or above him. So it was really flying blind all the time, except for a sliding periscope that he could pull in or out at the side, in case he had to see straight ahead. But Lindy doesn't mind blind flying. He's a wonderful navigator.

"Well, Lindy turned over the motor of his new plane, and it sounded sweet. He hadn't got it any more than off the ground when he realized that this was the plane for him. It responded to every touch, although it was a heavy ship, and not much good for stunting. But Lindy didn't want to stunt. He wanted to fly to Europe.

"It was on May 10, I think, that he left San Diego. It was in the evening, not quite six o'clock. The next morning, a little after eight, he got into St. Louis.

Took him just a bit over fourteen hours, the whole trip. It was the longest cross-country hop that any one man had made up to that time. His old pals at Lambert Field were pretty glad to see him, and he spent the night at his old stamping grounds. But he didn't stay long. Early in the morning he got on his way, and made New York in the afternoon, in not quite seven and a half hours. Pretty flying.

"Nobody much had heard of Lindy until he started from San Diego. Of course, he'd been a dandy mail pilot, but they're usually unnamed heroes. Nobody hears about them, and they never get their names in the paper unless they crash. Not that they care. They've got their jobs to do, and they do them. But when Lindy flew that grand hop from San Diego to St. Louis to New York, people began to sit up and take notice. He didn't say much after he got to the Curtiss Field.

"Out at Curtiss he spent his time seeing that everything was ready, and all his instruments O.K. He had a lot of confidence in himself—he always has—but there was no use in taking chances. In back of the pilot's seat was a collapsible rubber boat, that he could blow up with two tanks of gas that he carried with him. It had light oars, and was supposed to be able to float him for a week in case he decided suddenly to come down in the middle of the Atlantic instead of flying all the way across. Then there were his regular instruments. He had a tachometer, and an altimeter, an earth inductor compass, a drift indicator, and—"

Captain Bill interrupted. "Just a minute, just a minute. You say those things pretty glibly. Do you know what they mean? What's a tachometer? Pat here doesn't know."

Bob looked embarrassed. "Well, they're all pretty necessary instruments. I've been meaning to look them up, that is, Gee, I really ought to know, oughtn't I?"

"You ought," said the Captain severely. "Do you mind if I interrupt your story for just a minute and give you a few pointers? This is mostly for you and Hal. You'll never be able to fly unless you understand what the instruments on the dashboard are for. Of course a lot of the old flyers, like Patrick, here, flew just by instinct, and stuck their heads out over the cockpit to see what was happening. A real pilot nowadays, though, can be sealed in his cockpit and never see ahead of him from the time he takes off until he lands, just so long as his instruments are working. He can keep his course over any country, no matter how strange. You've got to know your instruments."

“Well, tell us,” said Bob.

The Captain sat up. “I guess the first thing that Lindy watched was the tachometer. This is the instrument that shows the number of revolutions per minute, or R.P.M.’s that the engine is making. A flyer must know how many R.P.M.’s his engine must make to maintain a correct flying speed, or he’ll go into a stall, which is bad. I’ll tell you more about stalls later. The altimeter registers the height at which the plane is flying. It isn’t very accurate at low altitudes, but it’s all right higher up. You soon learn by the feel and the lay of the land how high up you are. The exact height doesn’t matter in ordinary flying, just so that you keep a good altitude. Then there’s that most important instrument, the earth inductor compass. This is much more accurate than a magnetic compass, and it keeps the ship on its course. It operates in regard to the electro-magnetic reactions of the earth’s field, and directions are indicated in reference to magnetic north. To steer by this compass, you have to set your desired heading on the controller, and then steer to keep the indicator on zero. If you veer to the left, the indicator will swing to the left, and to keep on your course you must bring your plane back to the right. When he changes his course, the pilot consults his maps and graphs, and makes a change in the indicator of the compass.

“Then there is the air speed indicator, which shows the speed of the plane in the air. This is necessary so that the engine is not over-speeded. A pilot never runs his plane at full speed as a general thing, because he’ll wear out his engine. He keeps it at about 80 per cent of its potential speed, which is a good safe margin.

“The turn and bank indicator also reads from zero, and deviates from zero when the plane dips. The bubble rides up to the left when the plane banks right, and rides up to the right when the plane banks left. When the ship is again on an even keel, the indicator goes back to zero. The pilot, when he isn’t flying blind, can keep his plane level by noticing the position of the radiator cap or top of the engine in respect to the horizon. But in a heavy fog, or if he can’t see over his cockpit, the horizon doesn’t exist, and a bank and turn indicator is his instrument.

“The instruments that are no less important than these are the oil gauge, the gasoline pressure gauge, and the thermometer, which shows whether the motor is overheating. If the oil gauge shows that the oil is at a good cool temperature, and the gasoline pressure gauge shows that the gas pressure is up, the pilot knows

that his motor is running nicely. The gas pressure gauge won't tell you how much gas you have left, though. It's always best to figure how much gas you're going to need on a trip, and then take some over for emergencies. Most planes also have an emergency tank, so that if one tank gives out, the other can be switched on, and will give the flyer time to maneuver about until he finds a landing place." Captain Bill paused. "Well, those are your instruments. I'll probably have to explain them all over to you again when the plane comes, and I start to teach you to fly."

"Oh, no, not to me, you won't," Bob said.

Hal sat quietly looking out over the valley below, saying nothing. He had listened intently to the Captain's instructions, but there was an odd expression on his face.

Finally Pat snorted. Bob and the others jumped.

"Hi, what's the idea. Is there a story being told, or isn't there a story being told? Get on with you."

"It's no fault of mine, Patrick," said Bob, looking meaningfully at the Captain, who appeared as innocent as a lamb. "I'm always being rudely interrupted. But I'll go on. Where was I?"

"The Lindbergh lad was at Curtiss Field, waiting this long time to be off," said Pat.

"Oh, yes. Well, when he got word that the weather was O.K., he got his sandwiches, his canteens of water, and started off on the greatest flight in aviation history. And I've told you about that."

"We seem to be right back where we started from," the Captain said. "Is that the end of your story?"

Bob laughed. "By no means. You've got a lot to hear yet. What do you suppose I've been collecting dope for all these weeks? I've got a lot to tell you. Lindy wasn't satisfied with one great trip. He's been flying since, and has made some pretty important jaunts. Things happened to him after he got back to America loaded down with about every kind of medal that one man can get. And I'm going to tell you all of them."

“I suppose we’ll have to listen. It’s part of the game,” Pat said. “But not now, my lad.” He rose stiffly from the grass. “You’re mother will be looking for us, and wondering what’s become of us. We’d better get for home.”

“How about continuing in the next issue?” laughed the Captain.

“O.K.” said Bob. “You get the rest of it tonight, whether you like it or not.”

Hal looked up fervently at Bob. “Oh, we like it, Bob. I think it’s a great story. A great story.” The boy’s eyes shown in his pale face. “Golly, Bob, it must be wonderful to be able to do things like that.”

Bob looked uncomfortable as they walked over to the car. “Well, kid, I don’t see why anybody can’t do great things if he’s got grit enough. That’s what it takes—Grit.”



CHAPTER VI—More About The Eagle

It was after dinner at the Martin's. Captain Bill, Pat, and the two boys had gone out to the garden. The Captain and Bob were stretched out in two deck chairs, the Captain's long legs sticking out a long way past the end of the low foot-rest. Pat lay in the glider, swinging himself lazily, squeaking in a melancholy rhythm at each forward and back push, Hal, who had got permission from his mother to eat dinner with the Martin's, lay on a rug thrown down on the grass. The dusk was turning to dark, and the Captain's pipe was beginning to show up as a dull glow in the fading light.

For a while nobody spoke. Then Pat said, "Well, Robert, tell us the end of your story."

"I've been thinking of where to start. We left Lindy over in Europe, coming back to the United States. He didn't come right back, though. He had to tour about some of the foreign countries, as an ambassador of good will, and get decorated with about every kind of medal that was ever made. It must have been pretty boring for him to go to banquet after banquet, and listen to all those speeches praising him. He must have blushed like anything at some of those flowery compliments. But he stayed calm, and didn't lose his head and get all swelled up over the receptions and cheers and everything. He knew that everybody meant every word he said, and that they were mighty pleased with him. They gave him all sorts of presents. He could have started a store with them. But I guess that most of them are in the Lindbergh museum now.

"Well, the honors they heaped on Lindy in France and England and Belgium were nothing to what was waiting for him when he got back to the United States. New York turned out, it seemed, to a man. They had a parade miles long, with Lindy the chief attraction, sitting on top of an open car, smiling at the mobs of screaming, shouting people all along the way. It rained ticker tape for hours, and people in offices tore up telephone books and added the bits of paper to the rainstorm. Nobody could do enough for the Colonel." Bob looked around at the group. "He wasn't the Captain any more," he explained. "He was now Colonel Lindbergh. Well, anyway, there were banquets and parties, until Lindy had to leave. St. Louis started where New York left off. After all it was St. Louis where Lindy had found his backers, and naturally they were pretty proud of him there. Slim took it all smiling, just as modest as he'd been from the beginning. There

was no fussing him. And the people loved it. Slim was the most talked-about hero the United States has ever adopted. Why, you remember that almost everything from candy-bars to swimming suits were named after him—and a whole lot of new babies, too. All the kids in America were crazy about him, and they all wore aviator's helmets and made plans to become aviators as soon as they were old enough. It seems that Lindy's plan was pretty successful. He wanted to get people to talking and thinking about airplanes, and believe me, they didn't talk or think about much else from the time he set out from Roosevelt field."

"You'd think that he'd be tired and ready for a rest after his flight, and his receptions, but even though he may have been tired, he thought he'd strike while the iron was hot, and follow up his good work, this business of getting people aviation conscious. And I guess, too, he felt that he owed something to the people of the United States for being so kind to him, so Lindy set out on a trip around the country. He stopped at almost every important city, and covered every state in the union. He traveled almost 20,000 miles. And that's some traveling. Just think if he'd had to travel that distance in a train! He'd be going yet. Well, every place that he stopped gave him three rousing cheers, and then some. You'd think that by that time he'd be pretty tired. If it had been me, I'd have turned around and bitten some of the welcoming committee. But not Lindy. He stuck it out, and smiled at them all.

"And after the country-wide tour was over, he took his Mexican and Central American and South American trip. It was this trip that clinched his name of 'Good Will Ambassador,' although he'd been one to all of the European countries that he went to. In December, seven months after his famous flight, he pointed the nose of the old Spirit of St. Louis south, and lit out for Mexico City.

"They were pretty anxious to see him down there, and the Mexican National aviation field was crowded long before Lindy was due to get there. Everybody knew that this was one flyer who always got places when he said he'd get there. He was never off schedule. So imagine how everybody felt when the time set by him to reach Mexico City passed, and no Lindy showed up. Well, they were all set to call out the reserves, when Slim Lindbergh winged into sight, and made a sweet landing on the Mexican field.

"There was some cheering—more, maybe than if he'd got there on schedule, although you don't see how that could be possible. They gave Lindy a chance to

explain that he'd been lost in the fog, and then they went on with their entertaining and celebrating.

"Mexico City was pretty important to Lindbergh, although nobody knew it then. Dwight Morrow was Ambassador to Mexico then, and he had a daughter named Anne. Well, I don't like to get sentimental—I guess I can't tell romantic stories—well, anyway, that part comes later."

Captain Bill saw fit to interrupt the story here. He saw that Bob was embarrassed, and saw an opportunity to rub it in. "What part?" he asked, innocently, knocking the heel of ash from his pipe as he did so.

"Oh, you know, Lindy's marrying Anne Morrow, and that."

"Well, we certainly demand the whole thing. You can't leave anything out," insisted Bill.

"Aw, all right, but it doesn't come in now."

"We can wait," said Bill, and settled back satisfied.

"From Mexico City," went on Bob, grateful that his ordeal had been put off, "Lindy flew off down to Central America. First he zig-zagged a bit to get in all of the little countries, and went from Guatemala City to Belize in British Honduras, and then back again to San Salvador, and from then on straight down the narrow isthmus to Teguci—Teguci—well, that place in Honduras."

"Tegucigalpa," said Pat.

"That's it," said Bob. "And from Teguci—and from there, he went on to Managua, and then to Costa Rica—San Jose. Now he was just about three hundred and twenty-five miles from the Panama Canal, as the crow flies—or rather, as Lindy flies, which is much better than any crow I've ever seen. He didn't have any trouble making the flight, and say that they weren't glad to see him down there, especially in the Canal Zone, where the Americans lived. They entertained him royally, and he went into the jungles of Panama for a hunting trip, which must have been great. They have all sorts of wild hogs, deer and pheasants, and it must have made grand hunting."

"But after all, Lindy couldn't stay anyplace very long. South America was

waiting for him. So he packed himself off, and flew to Cartagena, in Colombia, adding another continent to his list. From Cartagena he flew to Bogota, and then straight across the top of South America to the east coast. He stayed at Maracay, Venezuela. I never heard of it before, did any of you?" Bob paused dramatically for a reply.

There was only a dead silence for a second, and then, since none else spoke, Hal felt called upon to confess his ignorance, "I never did," he said. "And gee, Bob, how do you remember all these places that Lindbergh stopped at? I never would in a hundred years."

"Oh, it's easy," said Bob airily. He did not tell them of the long hours that he had spent memorizing the towns and cities that Lindbergh had stopped at in his good will tour, nor the hundreds of times that he had wished that Lindy had flown to some easy place like Canada, where the names were all pronounceable. But then, Lindy might have flown to Wales, and Bob, having seen Welsh names, thanked his lucky stars for such places as Tegucigalpa and Bogota. And now, having at least impressed Hal, he went on with renewed enthusiasm.

"Maracay," he said, "was the jumping off place for the thousand-mile jump to the Virgin Islands. You see, Lindy was on his way back to the United States. He hopped from island to island in the Caribbean Sea, stopping at San Juan, Porto Rico; Santo Domingo; Port-au-Prince in Hayti; and then to Havana. From Havana he made the biggest hop of all, and landed smack in St. Louis without sitting down once along the way. He made some twelve hundred miles in about fifteen and a half hours.

"Somebody figured up how long he had flown, and how long he took for the whole 'good will' trip, and found out that he'd made sixteen flights to fifteen countries, and had gone 8,235 miles in one hundred and a half hours. Of course, that was actual flying time. The trip had taken him just two months, because he got back to St. Louis on February 13th, and he'd left Boiling Field at Washington on December 13th. But in those two months Lindy accomplished a great deal. He'd made friends with all the little countries down to our south, and with Mexico, too. They understood us better, and we got to understand them better. Gee, wouldn't it be great if airplanes would make people friendlier? I mean, we're so close to each other now, it seems as though we ought to know more about each other, and like each other better. I may not be saying that so well, but you fellows know what I mean, don't you?"

“That’s a very good philosophy,” said Captain Bill, and Bob beamed as broadly as the moon that had risen over the trees and was shining over the little group in the garden. “Let’s hope that you’re right.”

“Well, Lindy palled around with his old buddies at St. Louis, and carried mail over his old route to Chicago. He broke up his flights with going to New York to get a medal from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation for international peace and understanding, and then he went to Washington to get the Congressional Medal of Honor. And he had to get a new plane, too, from the Mahoney people who made the Spirit of St. Louis. I guess Lindy hated to part from the old bus. It was still in great condition, even though he’d flown 40,000 miles in it. But they wanted to put it in the Smithsonian Institution, and he had to get another.

“It was just about this time, in April of 1928, that Lindbergh had to put his flying to a stiff test. He was in St. Louis when he learned that Floyd Bennett was very sick with pneumonia up in Quebec. Bennett was a great fellow, one of the most popular aviators of his time. He’d flown with Byrd to the North Pole, you remember. And in April, although he was sick, and knew he shouldn’t have gone, he flew up to help Captain Koebl and Major Fitzmaurice and Baron von Huenefeld, who’d flown across the Atlantic, and were forced down off the coast of Labrador. Well, he landed with pneumonia in a Quebec hospital, and they needed some serum in a hurry to save his life. Lindy offered to fly with it, and took off right away for New York. It was 500 miles from New York to Quebec, mostly through fog and snow, and blizzards, but Lindy made it in three hours and thirty-five minutes. The serum didn’t save Floyd Bennett, though. That plucky scout died the day after Lindbergh got there. He’d put up a great fight, but it was no use. The whole country felt gloomy over his death, and Lindy especially so, although he’d done his best to save his pal’s life.

“In June of that year, that is, in 1928, Lindy,—maybe I should call him Charles Augustus Lindbergh, was appointed the chairman of the technical committee of the Transcontinental Air Transport, the company sending planes cross-country. This gave him the chance to be right in on the ground—or rather right in the air—of aviation progress. It wasn’t just an office job, either, because Lindy flew almost as much after his appointment as before.

“In 1929 he kept right on flying. That’s not really news. If Lindy stopped flying, that would be news. But in February of ’29 he flew the first mail from Miami to Colon, in the Panama Canal Zone. This was the inauguration of the Pan-

American Airways.

“In February the Morrums announced the engagement of Anne Morrow to Charles Augustus Lindbergh. From then on the reporters and photographers hung around in order to be in at the wedding. But Lindy and Anne fooled them. They were married in April, and nobody knew anything about it. They just got quietly married, and left on their honeymoon in a yacht.

“From then on, whenever Lindy went on a trip, Anne Lindbergh went with him. She’s a great flyer, and helps Lindy fly on long stretches. She pilots while he rests.

“The first long trip they took was in ’29. That was the one through Central America to Belize, in British Honduras. That covered 7,000 miles. But they didn’t stop long at Belize. They’d gone there for a reason. They headed their plane over the Yucatan peninsula, looking for Mayan ruins. You know, the Mayan Indians had a wonderful civilization all built up long before the white men came to Yucatan. They had a huge empire, and big cities with buildings as large as ours. Scientists are always digging around down there to uncover the ruins, so that they can find out about the Indians, and how they lived, and all that. But it’s hard to find the places where the Maya Indians had their cities. The jungle has grown up so thickly all about them that it takes days and months to get to them. And those that aren’t on rivers are almost impossible to get to.

“So Lindy proved once more that the airplane was a help to science, and flew over the old Mayan hang-outs, looking for ruins. He skimmed his plane over the tops of the jungles, so low that it seemed he might almost reach out his hand and grab a branch of one of those giant trees that grow down there, and he flew slowly, too, so that the scientists that were with him could take pictures.

“They found what they were after, three cities that hadn’t ever been discovered before. And it took only four days, where it might have taken a party on foot months to do the same thing. Anne Lindbergh helped pilot the plane, and take pictures, too.

“There weren’t any more exciting flights that year, but early the next year, that is, in 1930, Lindy ordered a new plane. It was a Lockheed-Sirius, a monoplane with a Wasp motor. It had a flattish-looking nose, but it was graceful just the same. It had something new that Lindy had designed himself. That was two

covers that could be slid over the cockpits, so that the pilots would be protected in bad weather.

“Lindy and Anne had a use for the plane and the cockpit covers very soon. They flew across the country one day and broke the cross-country speed record that existed then.

“Hardly anybody knew what they were up to, and there were just a few people at the Glendale airport, where they started from. It was a terrible day, cold and rainy, and the sun hadn’t come up yet to dry things out. But the Lindberghs didn’t care. They had on suits heated by electricity, because they knew that it was going to be even colder where they were going.

“A basket of sandwiches, 400 gallons of gas, and they were ready. It was hard taking off, because the load was heavy, but Lindy got his flat-nosed Sirius into the air beautifully, and they disappeared from sight. Disappeared is the word, because for hours nobody saw them. They were looking for them, too, because you can bet on it that as soon as the Lindberghs took off, everybody knew about it. All over the west the cowboys and Indians were gaping up to see the blunt-nosed plane, but nobody saw it.

“Then suddenly Anne and Lindy dropped out of the sky at Wichita, Kansas, said hello, they’d like some gas, they’d be in New York about eleven, and sailed off.

“They were in New York around eleven, too, and New York was waiting for them, with auto horns, and whistles, and all the other noise that it can make for people who have gone out and done things. The Lindberghs certainly had done just that. They’d come across the country with one stop in 14 hours and twenty-three minutes and some seconds, and had clipped two and a half hours off the record then standing.”

“But what happened out’ west?” asked Hal. “Why hadn’t anybody seen them?”

“Because you can’t see 10,000 feet into the air, and that’s where the Lindberghs were flying. Way above the clouds, from 10,000 to 15,000 feet high, flying blind, with the cockpits closed to keep out the cold. It’s mighty cold 15,000 feet up in the air. Flying blind that way, they had to depend upon their sextant to keep their course, and Anne Lindbergh did her part by using this. She did all the navigating from the back cockpit, and took the controls part of the time when Lindy rested.

“Lindy and Anne hadn’t intended to set a record. At least, that wasn’t what they set out to do. They wanted to test out flying at high altitudes, because Lindy believes that planes in the future will fly high to avoid storms and wind, and that blind flying should be encouraged. That’s why they flew so high up, out of sight of all landmarks.

“There was no flying for Anne and Lindy after that for a while, because in June that year little Lindy was born. It seems awfully sad now to talk about all the excitement not only in this country, but all over the world when that baby was born. Lindy was the world’s hero, and his baby was adopted by everybody just as Lindy had been. Nobody could have dreamed what a terrible end the Lindbergh baby would come to.”

Bob paused. The events of the Lindbergh baby’s kidnapping, and the finding of its body a few months later, after the whole world had searched for it, were still fresh. In fact, they were too fresh for Bob to talk about then, and with the silent consent of all the men there, he passed over the horrible details of the case, and in a few moments went on with his story.

“The Lindberghs have another baby boy now and everybody in the country will protect this child. People all over the world were heartbroken at the death of their first baby.

“It was when the baby was a year old, and didn’t require so much attention, that Anne and Lindy started out on their longest trip, the flight across the Pacific to China and Japan. That was in July of 1931. There was some delay in choosing the route, because they had to consider all sorts of things, like chances for refueling, and over-water flying distances, but finally they decided that they’d fly across Canada to Point Barrow, in Alaska, and from there to Nome; then across the Ocean to Karaginsk, from there to Nemuro, and on to Tokyo.”

Captain Bill broke in. “Good for you for remembering that. Did you memorize the route?”

“I did,” said Bob proudly. “I even drew a map of it. They flew roughly northwest, and then south again, making the two sides of a triangle, with the point up at the top of Alaska.

“Well, the Lindberghs made their usual careful preparations. They needed more than a ham sandwich for this trip. The plane they chose was a low-winged

Lockheed Sirius with a Wright Whirlwind motor. It was a blunt-nosed ship, painted reddish orange and black. And since they were traveling over water, it had to be equipped with floats. These were a new kind of Edo float, which were grooved on at the bottom to make for less resistance of the water.

“In the tail of the plane they had a pretty complete emergency kit, which would pop out automatically if the plane went under. It had a folding life boat in it, that they could fill from a bottle of compressed air. It was pretty smooth, with a mast and sail and everything, and though they didn’t; have to use it, it was a mighty nice thing to have along in case they sat down in the middle of the ocean. Then, of course, they had food and water, and an emergency radio set, besides the one that Anne Lindbergh was going to use. This emergency one was ready for anything. You couldn’t hurt it by getting it wet, or by dropping it. In fact, they tested it by dropping it from a hangar, and then soaking it in water for 24 hours. I wouldn’t want anybody to do that to my radio set, but I guess nothing much happened, because the tough radio survived its tests, and went along with the Lindberghs to China. The rest of their equipment included fifty pounds of food, five canteens of water, blankets, and all that sort of thing.

“On July 27th, Anne and Lindy started out. Washington was their first stop, to make the first leg official. From there they went to New York, bound for Maine, to say goodbye to the baby. But there was trouble right at the start. About two hours after they had left New York, the Lindberghs had to turn back again. Somebody had tampered with their radio, and put it out of working order. But this was fixed up all right, and they started out again. They got to North Haven, Maine, in about three and a half hours.

“After spending some time at North Haven with Anne’s parents and the baby, they left for Ottawa, and from Ottawa for Moose Factory. Just out of Ontario, though, they disappeared. The newspapers ran big headlines, ‘Lindberghs Missing.’ But they weren’t really missing. That is, the Lindberghs knew all along where they were, but their radio was out of order, and they couldn’t tell anybody else. Pilots were sent out to search for them, and Pilot Clegg found them in Moose Factory, safe and sound.

“Moose Factory sounds awfully funny, doesn’t it? I’d never heard of it, before the Lindberghs landed there, but it’s quite a place. All one hundred of its people came out to cheer the flyers.

“On Sunday morning they left Moose Factory, for their 750 mile jump to Churchill Harbor, in Manitoba. The weather wasn’t very good for flying—gray and stormy, and the country was gray and flat. All in all, it wasn’t a very pleasant leg of their journey, and there was almost nine hours of it. I’ll bet they were glad when they flew into Churchill Harbor, and saw the whole town waiting for them. There were only 2,000 people in the town, but then, that probably looked like a pretty big crowd after all that flying over country without seeing anybody or anything. And those 2,000 made up for it by being awfully noisy.

“Baker Lake is 375 miles from Churchill, and that was the next stop. Just three and a quarter hours after they’d left Churchill Harbor, they got into Baker Lake. Everybody was waiting for them, and everybody in this case was made up of Eskimos. There are only about six white people in the whole place, but they were out, too, and took charge of the Lindberghs when they landed that night. So far so good.

“The Lockheed up to now was working perfectly—the trip was going off as scheduled—just as all of Slim’s trips go off as scheduled. From Baker Lake the going was to be harder. The next stop was Aklavik, on the MacKenzie River. Aklavik is pretty far north, just about 130 miles within the Arctic Circle, and the route called for a jump of over 1,000 miles across this cold country. But Slim and Anne made it. They did that 1,000 miles in eleven and a half hours, which was some going. They had the Aurora Borealis with them, because the farther north they went, the brighter the lights grew, and flying at night was as easy as flying by day.

“Aklavik may be cold, but it was warm to the Lindberghs. Slim and Anne saw a lot of things they’d never seen before, and they had what you’d call their first real taste of the arctic. There were all the people you read about up there—Mounties, and Eskimos and fur trappers, who’d trekked in from miles around to see the Lindberghs land. Eskimo kids trailed them around and grinned when they were spoken to.

“They had a lot of time to look around, too, because they had to stay at Aklavik for three days. The weather grounded them, but on August 7th, the sky cleared, and they were off again, now for Point Barrow. Nome was next. But before they got to Nome there was trouble.

“They’d started out from the Point in the morning, and flew all day. All they saw

was packed ice for miles around. A thick fog was raising. Finally at 11 o'clock that night the fog grew so thick that the Colonel and his wife thought it would be best just to sit down and wait for the fog to clear. So that's what they did. They sat down in Shismaref Bay, on Kotzebue Sound."

At this point Bob paused significantly, and waited. He had pronounced both words without hesitation of any kind, and he was waiting for the praise that he felt was due him. There was a strange silence. So Bob said again: "They sat down on Shismaref Bay, on Kotzebue Sound."

This time Captain Bill realized what was required of him. "Good work," he said "You got them both without a slip."

Now Bob could go on. "They sat down," he began.

"That they did," interrupted Pat. "They sat down on Shismaref Bay on Kotzebue Sound. What heathen names. But we've heard them, and get on with you, lad."

"I am," said Bob, and got on. "They had to wait for ten hours for the fog to lift, and it must have been mighty uncomfortable in the cockpits of their planes. When they finally did get started, they found that they couldn't get to Nome after all. The fog drifted up again, and they had to come down—"

Pat broke the silence with a mighty exclamation. "Not on Shismaref Bay!"

Bob was cold. "Of course not. This time they came down on Safety Bay, and please don't interrupt."

But there was another interruption, this time from Hal. "Where's Safety Bay?" he asked.

Bob stretched out comfortably. He was satisfied with himself and his story. "I don't know whether you're just trying to test me, or not," he said, "but I'm prepared for you. I've been over every inch of the Lindbergh trip with an atlas, and I know where everything is located, and how to pronounce it."

Hal, his pale face lighted up by the moonlight, was obviously impressed, and his large eyes beamed in the light. He was storing up notes for his own story that was to come later.

“Safety Bay,” said Bob, “is twenty-one miles from Nome, and mid-way between Nome and Solomon Beach. They call it Safety Bay because fishermen caught in storms out at sea used to come in to the bay for safety. It was a ‘safety bay’ for the Lindberghs, too, all right. They waited for the fog to lift again, and they finally got to Nome. Nome had been waiting so long for them that it gave them a right royal welcome.

“Nome was an important stop, because the Lindberghs planned to use this as their jumping off place for the hop across the Pacific Ocean to Karagin Island, off the Kamchatkan Peninsula. The Pacific has been crossed before, and was crossed later, too, by Herndon and Pangborn. But it’s a tricky place to cross, especially in the northerly part, where the Lindberghs were to cross. It’s a place of fog and ice, and quickly changing wind currents, so that a fog can creep up on you and blot out the world in a split second.

“Well, this was the ocean that the Lindberghs were going to cross. And they crossed it. On Friday, August 14th, they started out. They were the first to cross by that route, blazing a new aviation trail. For half an hour there was silence. Then the St. Paul Naval station in the Pribiloffs made the first radio contact. Anne Lindbergh signaled that everything was all right, the weather was good, and the flying fine. Every half hour the station sent out signals, and gave directions, because up north there, so near the magnetic pole, a regular compass is thrown way off.

“St. Lawrence Island was the first land in their path; then from St. Lawrence to Cape Naverin the route was over water again, about 250 miles. Finally the radio operator got the message that they’d sighted Cape Naverin, and that everything was O. K. They got to Karagin Island early in the morning. And that means they flew over 1,000 miles in less than 11 hours. Which is some flying over that treacherous route.

“The Lindys stayed at the Island for just a little while to rest up, and then took off for the southern end of the Kamchatkan Peninsula, for Petro—Petro—” Bob paused, embarrassed. “Say, what’s the name of that place at the southern end?” he asked.

Bill felt called upon to answer. “Petropavlovsk,” he said.

Bob tried it. “Petro—Petro-what?”

“Petropavlovsk,” repeated Bill.

They all tried it then, with varying degrees of success. Finally Bob got it. “Petropavlovsk,” he said proudly, and was able to go on with his story. “It was an easy flight, and they made it in about four hours. But Nemuro was next.

“Nemuro’s on the tip of Hokkaido Island, and to reach it the Lindberghs had to fly across the Kurile Islands, the worst fog trap in the world. There’s a warm Japanese ocean current that flows up here and hits the cold arctic blasts, so that there are sudden fogs that you can’t possibly see through. And besides, there are volcanic peaks that stick their peaks up but of the water. Some are dead and some are alive, but they’re all pretty bad news for an airplane if it happens to come in contact with one of them.

“The start was pretty good. The sky was clear, and the visibility good. But they should have known better than to trust such luck. They’d been out about 500 miles when a thick blanket of fog came up from nowhere and wrapped them around. A minute before they’d been able to see Muroton Bay, but when they turned back, it had disappeared. There were two things for them to do, and neither one pleasant. They could either fly on in the fog, and risk hitting a peak or losing their course, or land in the water. This was hardly better than going on, because the currents are very dangerous around there, and their plane might easily be capsized. But they decided that it was better to land. They landed on the sheltered side of a place called Kotoi Island, and put their radio to work sending out an S.O.S.

“It didn’t take long for somebody to get to them. The Japanese government ordered two ships to Kotoi to help them. One was the Shimushiro, and it stood by all night, while the Lindberghs spent the night doubled up in the cockpit of their plane. They stood by because of the danger. You see, the island is pretty wild, and is inhabited by Hairy Ainu, who live in caves. They’re white people, and they’re supposed to have lived all over Japan once, but they’re not very pleasant to have around, especially if you’re unprotected. But with the Japanese ship standing by, the Lindberghs were safe.

“In the morning the ship towed the Lockheed Sirius to Muroton Bay, and while it was sort of quiet, Lindy fixed up a wet spark plug and they were ship-shape again, and raring to go. But the fog wouldn’t lift. Finally it seemed to lift, and they started off.

“When they got to the island of Iturup a thick fog came up from nowhere and cut off their visibility again. Then a radio message told them that the safest place to land was at Shana, so at Shana they landed. And at Shana they stayed, too, grounded by the fog. But finally the fog lifted, and they were able to get to Nemuro.

“Tokyo next. And Tokyo was glad to see them! There were over 30,000 people at the airport when they landed. The Lindys were just as popular as ever, and just as much the good will ambassadors as ever. They were taken all over Tokyo, ate with chopsticks, lived through a little earthquake, and did as the Japanese did generally.

“Lindbergh told the Japanese people what he had set out to do, and that he hoped that there’d be a regular airplane route between Japan and the United States. He said that he thought the route would be from the north, too, but a little south of the one that he and Anne had taken.

“Japan liked the Lindberghs, but they had to leave, bound for China. That was in September. Japan and China hadn’t decided yet to go to war, but things were pretty bad in China, anyway. The Yangtze Kiang and the Hwai river had overflowed and flooded hundreds of villages and cities. Together they’d covered about 1,000 square miles of land, so you can imagine in what sort of condition China was then. Everything that goes with flood had come to China too, including starvation and disease. The Relief Committee was doing all that it could to help the inland people, but it couldn’t do much, because there was no way of communicating with them, and of finding out who needed aid, and what towns had been flooded.

“As soon as Lindy landed in Nanking, he volunteered to help the Chinese government by making surveys of the flooded land. The government accepted his offer, and Lindy flew over the country, making reports of districts that were under water. He found a lot of places that no one knew about, and did wonderful work. At one place he landed on the water in a village that was completely covered. He had a doctor and medical supplies with him, but the poor Chinese thought that he had brought food. They paddled over to the plane, grabbed the supplies and tore them to shreds, looking for something to eat. Lindy and the doctors took off as soon as they possibly could. As a result of this, Lindy advised that all supplies should be brought by armed guards, and that food was the most urgent need at the moment. Because of the good work that he did, the President

of China gave Lindy another medal to add to his collection, the Chinese Aviation Medal.

“In October the Lindbergh’s trip was suddenly cut short, in the first place, by an accident that might have proved pretty serious. The Colonel, Anne, and a doctor were setting out for a survey of the Tungting Lake district, and were to take off in the Yangtze. But just as they were about to leave the water the current caught one of the wings, and it crumpled up. The plane turned over, and threw them all into the river. They were all weighed down by their heavy suits, and could easily have drowned, but they were pulled out of the water. The Lockheed was pulled up on board a British carrier, and Anne and Lindy decided to go to Shanghai with it and wait while it was being repaired.

“While they were on board the Hermes, the aircraft carrier, they got word that Dwight Morrow, Anne’s father, had died. This meant that their trip was over, since they had to get back to the United States as quickly as possible. They took a steamer to Vancouver, and then flew across the country to Maine.”

“From then on the Lindberghs dropped out of the news, because they wanted to. And they didn’t figure in the news again until that terrible day when their baby was kidnapped. That was on March 1st, you remember. But in spite of everything that’s happened, Lindy is carrying on, and so is Anne Lindbergh. They’re still the country’s most loved couple.

“Lindy’s still working hard at aviation, and trying to make the world aviation conscious. That’s what he says his aim is, and that’s what he makes his trips for. He wants people to get so used to airplanes that they’ll ride in them just like they ride in automobiles, without thinking twice about it. He hasn’t had any serious accidents, because he’s always careful that everything’s in perfect order before he starts on a flight. That’s part of his program. He wants to make people see that if you’re cautious enough, flying isn’t dangerous.

“I think that Lindy’s succeeded in what he’s tried to do. The world, and especially the United States was never more interested in aviation than in the year that Lindy flew across the Atlantic. That made them sit up and take notice. The United States was way behind Europe in air service, but since it perked up and got interested in what could be done, why, its been getting ahead by leaps and bounds.

“And we mustn’t forget that the most important thing about Lindy is that he was born with wings. He wasn’t made a flyer, he just was one. I’ve seen him give an exhibition, when we went to see the air races, and golly, you could tell his plane from anybody else’s in the world. He handles it so easily, and takes it off like a thistle and brings it down like a feather. A plane’s just part of him.

“And besides that, he’s as modest as they come. Of course, that’s an old story. Everybody knows that. But it still strikes me as pretty marvelous that a man can make a big success when he’s only 25, and then go on as though nothing had happened, sticking to his work, only working harder than ever. If anybody gets my vote, it’s Lindy, even if he was running for President, and I was old enough to vote.” Bob stopped. “Well,” he said then, “I guess that’s the end of my story.”

It was pretty late. The moon had gone down, and the garden was dark, with the four men making four mounds of deeper black where they sat. Suddenly a light in the house switched on, sending out a stream of light that picked out Bob, his hair tousled, his eyes blinking in the sudden glare.

Hal started. “It must be late,” he said anxiously. “I’d better be getting on. The night air—I shouldn’t have stayed so long.”

The screen door of the house slammed, and a figure approached, then down the garden walk, strangely burdened.

“Hang around,” said Captain Bill, starting up. “This is going to be interesting.” He hurried down the path and met Bob’s mother, whose strange burden turned out to be a tray with glasses and a covered dish. He took the tray from her. “You can’t go now,” he called to Hal. “Look what we’ve got.” He set the tray down, and lifted the napkin from the plate. “Home baked cookies,” he said, and took one. “You should have joined our group sooner,” he said to his sister, between bites.

“Because I brought cookies, I suppose, if for no other reason,” she said with a laugh.

“Why, Meg, you know that you’d be welcome even without cookies. You should have been here to hear your son and my nephew tell a grand story in a grand way.”

Bob felt himself blushing in the dark. Praise from Bill was rare and much sought

after. “Aw,” he said, “it wasn’t anything.”

“It was a good yarn,” said Bill, emphatically.

“If it was a good yarn, then he’s your nephew, all right,” said Mrs. Martin. “There was never anybody like you for yarning. And good ones, too.”

Captain Bill laughed, and took another cookie. “If I can tell stories the way you bake cookies—”

He didn’t finish his sentence. Hal had been standing nervously at the edge of the group, waiting for a chance to break in. Now he broke in, chance or no chance. “I’ve got to go, really I do,” he said. “My mother will be worried. Thanks a lot for everything. Goodnight.” He broke into a run, and disappeared into the darkness.

Captain Bill looked after him. “Say, what’s the matter with Hal? What was his hurry?”

Bob was a little embarrassed. He hated to talk disloyally about his friend, but he felt that Bill ought to know. “I guess he’s afraid to be out so late alone. You see, Hal’s pretty much of a baby yet. He’s afraid of a lot of things he oughtn’t to be afraid of, and he’s always afraid that his mother’s worrying about him.”

“I think that it’s his mother’s fault,” said Mrs. Martin. “She’s pampered him and spoiled him until he can’t do a thing or think for himself. She just didn’t know that the best way to rear a boy is to give him plenty to eat and a place to sleep and let him take care of himself.”

“That’s why I turned out so well, isn’t it, Mother?” said Bob.

His mother laughed. “Oh, I don’t know about you. You must be the exception that proves the rule.”

Bill spoke suddenly. “There ought to be something done about Hal,” he said. “I like that boy. He’s got the stuff there, but he needs something to bring it out. How about it, Bob?”

“I think so, Bill,” said Bob, pleased that Captain Bill had seen so much in his friend. “I’ve been trying to help Hal, and I think that he’s getting much better

than he was, don't you, Mother?"

"I have noticed an improvement," said Mrs. Martin.

"There'll be more before I go home," said Captain Bill.

"Don't hog the cookies," said Pat, making his first, but most important contribution to the conversation. But Pat, though he had said nothing, had thought a lot.



CHAPTER VII—A Close Shave

The next two weeks were hectic ones for Pat, the Captain and their two friends, with Pat teaching the boys to fly, the boys learning to fly, the Captain generally directing all activities, and three of them planning and preparing for their flight to the Adirondacks. Hal couldn't go. It was with real sorrow that he told them that his mother would not permit him to go with them. Hal was beginning to enjoy better his flights into the air, and his companionship with his new friends. Pat did not frighten him at all now, and his happiest hours were those that he spent with him, Bob and Captain Bill. He knew that he would be very lonesome if they went off without him, but no amount of persuasion on his part would move his mother in her determination that he should not go. She had so many arguments on her side that Hal was completely floored when he tried to point out to her the reasons why it would be perfectly safe for him to go with his friends.

Bob was downcast. He knew that he would have a good time with Pat and Bill, but he knew too that he'd have a better time if someone his own age were along. After all, he couldn't do anything as well as Pat and Bill. He couldn't fly a plane, although he was learning rapidly, and would soon be able to take a solo flight; he couldn't shoot as accurately as they; nor land a mountain trout so well. Hal, who was also a novice, would have been just as inexperienced as he was at all these things, and would have made him feel not quite so stupid. And then there were always things to talk about to Hal that the others wouldn't be able to understand—in fact, Hal and he spoke a language of their own. It would have been fun if Hal could have come along—but if he couldn't go, he couldn't go. Bob decided that he'd better take the matter philosophically. So he joined in the plans of the Captain and Pat with all his usual energy. Hal helped, too. Even if he was not going with them, he wanted to get the thrill at least of being in on the start.

They were all down at the airport every day, rain or shine. Pat gave them a good background of ground work, and then let them fly with him. Bob, with his natural quickness, could have flown solo almost after his first flight, but Pat would not take the responsibility of letting the boy go up alone.

Hal, on the other hand, had more obstacles to overcome. The first was the terror that he had felt on his first flight. However, after repeated flights, and the feeling of power that he gained from actually having the controls in his hands, he overcame his fear enough to fly with Pat, and fly well.

Two days before their departure for the mountains, Pat and Bill decided that the boys ought to make their solo flights, so that Hal would have made a solo flight before they left him.

Pat had taken the Marianne up into the air, had “taken a look about,” and landed her again. He turned to the two boys and asked, “who’s first?”

“Me,” said Bob.

“All right,” said Pat, and Bob climbed into the cockpit smiling confidently.

“See you soon,” called Bob, and waved a hand in farewell. He taxied the plane out over the runway, turned her nose into the wind, and felt her rise from the ground. He felt a thrill of power as the machine responded to the slightest movement of the stick. He had control of all the boundless energy stored in that motor, and could direct this huge craft in any direction he chose. He felt the blast of wind against his face. He was off the ground now, flying low, just clearing a small tool house. He pointed the nose of the Marianne up and climbed slowly, then leveled off again. His instruments showed that he was flying at about a thousand feet up. The motor sounded good. The air was smooth. Bob felt a keen exhilaration. He wanted to shout in triumph. At last he was flying a plane, alone.

Again he pointed the nose up into the air, and climbed to about 5,000 feet. The sky was clear and cloudless. He lost all track of time and space. He seemed to be by himself in the universe. But he knew that he wasn’t. The others would be expecting him back. Reluctantly he banked and turned around, and headed once more for the airport. He throttled down the motor and glided swiftly to earth. He saw the grass below turn green as he approached it; he leveled off. In his excitement, he kept the tail of the plane a little too high, his front wheels landed too soon, and he felt for a breath-taking moment that he was going over on his nose. But the Marianne righted herself, and taxied docilely along the ground.

Bob jumped out, pushing back his goggles. “How was that?” he shouted to Pat and Bill, who came running up to him.

Pat glowered. “What a landing!” he said, in disgust. “Young man, is that the sort of landing I taught you?”

Bob’s smile faded, and he looked crestfallen. “I didn’t level off,” he said.

“Of course you didn’t. A blind man could tell you that.” Then Pat’s voice suddenly changed. “But you handled her like a veteran,” he said. “You’ve got the makings of an ace in you, lad.”

Bob’s ready grin spread quickly over his face again. “Did I really?” he cried. “Bill, what did you think?” He was perfectly willing to hear himself praised, now that he was sure that his performance has been good.

“Oh, you’re all right,” said Bill grudgingly. “How about Hal? It’s his turn now.” He turned to Hal. “You show this young fellow how to make a three point landing,” he said, and gave Hal a little clap on the shoulder.

Hal came forward. He was unusually silent, and his face was pale. He had struggled with his fear and he felt that he had conquered it. He had come to have confidence in his handling of the Marianne with Pat or Bill in the other cockpit, ready to take the controls if anything went wrong. Now he would have confidence taking her up alone. He set his jaw grimly and got into the cockpit. The motor was warm, and sounded good. Hal took the Marianne into the air with a grace that made Pat and Bill look at each other with surprise and congratulation.

“The kid’s got the stuff, all right,” said Bill. “I knew he had. Who said he didn’t have nerve?”

“He’s better for it, too,” said Pat. “It’s done him good, all right.” They watched the plane climbing into the cloudless skies. Then suddenly the sound of the motor ceased. “Good grief,” cried Pat. The others were too horrified even to cry out. They saw the plane stall, then fall nose down, spiraling as it went.

When he heard the motor conk, Hal’s heart stood still. He tried the stick frantically. The rudder, the ailerons, would not respond. The throttle brought no answering roar of power. The Marianne had become suddenly a mad thing, an enemy, bent on his destruction. She side-slipped, her nose dipped down, and she went into a tailspin.

Hal was frantic. His first impulse was to pull up on the stick, in order to bring up the tail. Then some glint of reason came through his terror, and he remembered Pat’s warning that this was the last thing he should do to pull himself up. But what had Pat said? He couldn’t remember. Then suddenly it came to him. Push forward on your stick! With an effort he made himself push forward. The

Marianne gave a convulsive shudder. But the action had taken her out of her spin. With a feeling of unutterable relief Hal felt her come out of her spin and go into a glide. He looked over the side of the plane. He was rushing toward a brick building, at the furthest end of the airport! There was nothing to do now but crash. He was too close to stretch out the glide!

With a last desperate movement, Hal opened the throttle of his engine. The motor caught! With a thrill of joy he heard the roar of the motor as it started again, and felt the stick respond to his touch. He pulled back the stick, the nose of the plane lifted, and he zoomed into the air.

Down on the ground Pat, Bill and Bob had gone through the tortures of the damned, watching Hal fall to what seemed certain death, while they stood helplessly below. When they saw him zoom once more into the air, their hearts bounded with him.

“The gas-line must have been clogged!” shouted Pat. “It cleared itself out when they dived!”

“Thank God,” said Bill.

Bob could say nothing, but kept shouting Hal, Hal, Hal, over and over again. Hal was gliding in, now, to land.

He got out of the cockpit, white and shaking. The others, beside themselves with joy, surrounded him, shaking his hand, hugging him, patting his shoulder. But Hal did not seem to notice what was happening.

“You handled that plane like Lindbergh!” shouted Pat. “Good boy.”

But all that Hal said was, “I’m never going up again.”

Pat had gone over to the plane to look it over. “It seems all right,” he said, turning off the motor that he had tested. “But there must have been a bit of dirt in the line leading from the gas tank. You had a lucky escape, lad. It was quick thinking that you did up there. I’m proud of you.”

But Captain Bill saw that Hal was in no mood for praise. He knew, too, that the best cure for the boy was to take him right up again into the air, so that he would have no time to develop a phobia against going up. But he would not risk taking

up the Marianne until it had had a thorough overhauling.

The Captain put his arm around Hal's shoulder. "You mustn't say that you're never going up again, Hal, old man," he said. "You proved yourself up there. You're going to make a great flyer."

"It was great, Hal, great," said Bob. "I would have crashed the old bus and killed myself. I couldn't have kept my head."

Hal said nothing except that he wanted to go home. Pat stayed behind with the plane while the other three went over to the parking lot to get their machine. "Don't say anything to my mother, whatever you do," said Hal. "I don't want her to worry. After all, nothing really happened to me, and why should she be frightened for nothing?"

Bob and the Captain promised to say nothing. In fact, they spoke very little on the way home. Hal was worn out emotionally and the others were occupied with their own thoughts.

The Captain was worried by the new turn that affairs had taken. He was disappointed that all the progress that had been made in Hal's education had been ruined on the first solo flight. It would have been all right if he had been able to take Hal into the air again, but he couldn't. Tomorrow they would be too busy with their preparations to do any flying, and the day after that, they would start for the Adirondacks, leaving Hal behind. Without his friends, and with the memory of his terror fresh in his mind, Hal would fall back into his old fears, and be actually worse off than ever. The time to cure Hal was at once, if at all.

Captain Bill had an idea. He thought about it rather carefully most of the way home, and when they were almost home, he broached his plan. "Say, Hal, how about coming over tonight—with your mother? I'm going to tell my story after dinner, tonight, and I thought maybe she'd like to hear it."

Hal was rather surprised. His mother rarely visited, and did not see very much of the Martins. In fact, she had been to the Martins only twice since they had been neighbors, and one of those visits had been to return Mrs. Martin's formal call upon her new neighbor when the Greggs had moved into the house next door. But Hal said, "Why, I'll ask Mother. I don't think she's busy, and I guess she'd like to hear your story, Captain Bill. I've been telling her about the stories, you know."

“Good,” laughed the Captain. “Don’t tell her too much, though. I want her to come to hear them.”

“I think she’ll like to come,” said Hal. Thinking it over, he felt convinced that his mother should hear Captain Bill’s story that night. He knew she would enjoy the evening with them all. They were a jolly lot, and Mrs. Martin often was lonesome when Hal went off and left her alone. She would be better for a night of company. And perhaps—well, Hal could not dare to hope—perhaps she would approve more of his going on a trip with these men if she knew how splendid they were. But then Hal shuddered. They were going to fly to the mountains. And he was never going to fly in a plane again. He felt that he would rather do anything in the world than put himself in a position again where he might experience the awful horror of feeling himself going into a nose dive.

They let Hal off at his home. When Bob and the Captain were alone, Bob asked why Bill had thought of inviting Hal’s mother to hear his story that night.

“Why, Mrs. Gregg’s a nice woman. Don’t you think that I should have invited her?” asked the Captain, with a twinkle.

“Oh, but you must have some other reason,” said Bob. “You don’t want her to come over just because you want an audience for your story.”

“Well, to tell the truth,” the Captain answered, “I have a motive. Can I count on you to help me?”

“If it’s not murder,” said Bob.

“Nothing like it,” the Captain said. “This is my plan, Bob. You know that we want Hal to come along with us on our trip, now more than at any other time. If we leave him now, all the good that flying and being with us has done him will be wasted, and Hal will be the same fraid-cat that he was before we began to educate him. Now, I’m going to tell the story of Byrd tonight. Byrd started on his adventures when he was very young. He had a brave mother, who saw that following his own inclinations was good for her son. That much is for Mrs. Gregg. Second—Byrd had to overcome a great many obstacles before he reached his goal. That part is for young Hal. Now, if the Gregg family takes my story seriously tonight, I think that we may have Hal with us on our flight. And Hal will be a new boy. How about it?”

Bob looked admiringly at his uncle. "Gee," he said, "that's a great idea. But I think that you'll have to tell a pretty convincing story."

"Don't you think that I can?"

"Golly, I'm not going to worry about that," said Bob. "I'm sure you can."

When they got in, they found Mrs. Martin sewing, and lost no time in telling her first the events of the day, and second, their plans for the evening.

"But why didn't you invite her to dinner?" asked Mrs. Martin. "I'm sure we'd enjoy having them with us."

"I didn't think of that," said the Captain, "or rather, I thought that I was taking enough liberty in just inviting somebody to your home for the evening."

"I'll call her," said Mrs. Martin firmly. A far away look came into her eyes. "You know," she said, "I think that I shall do some talking to Mrs. Gregg myself, I have some things to tell her about raising her own son. I suppose she will resent it, but I shall at least have the satisfaction of getting it off my chest, and perhaps of helping poor Hal."

"Hal's the one I'm interested in," said the Captain. "He acted like a real hero in that plane today. Kept his head, and saved himself and the plane. He's got the stuff, all right, and he can handle a plane."

"I'm with you, Captain," said Bob. "And with you and Mom on the job, I don't see how anybody can possibly get away with anything. You two could convince anybody of anything."

His mother looked at him speculatively. "Can I convince you right now that you ought to go up and wash? Believe me, young man, you can't get away with looking that dirty, if that's what you mean."

Grinning sheepishly, Bob went out of the room. "You win," he called. "And I'm betting on you tonight, too."



CHAPTER VIII—North Pole and South

Dinner was a jolly affair. Everybody was in excellent humor. Hal had quite recovered from his afternoon's experience; Pat had succeeded in getting the Marianne into perfect shape; Bill looked forward to his evening's plans with relish; and Bob was happy just on general principles, anticipating a great evening, and because he was usually happy. Mrs. Gregg, who often became lonely by herself, was glad of being in such pleasant company.

They went into the garden after dinner, and the Captain, after filling up his ever-present pipe, began his story.

"Well," he said, "there's only one way to begin the story of anybody's life. That's by telling when he was born, because after all, that's the first thing that happens to a man, isn't it? Well, Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd was born on October 25, 1888, in Winchester, Virginia, where there had been Byrds ever since anybody could remember. In fact, the first Byrd settled in America about 1690, and the name has been a prominent and honored one ever since. There were Byrds fighting in the Revolution and in the Civil War, so it wasn't from nowhere that our Richard Evelyn got his courage and grit that carried him through the dangers of being the first man to cross both the North and the South poles in a plane.

"He had a grandmother, too, who gave him a goodly supply of what it takes to do great deeds. That was Jane Byrd, who was the sort of person around whom legends spring up, and are carried down from generation to generation. In fact, one of them was a famous story of her killing of a huge blacksnake. It was during the Civil War. Her husband and her brother were both fighting for the Confederacy, and Jane Byrd was left alone to manage the great plantation and farm. And manage it she did. One day she went to gather the eggs in the chicken house, and found a great blacksnake had swallowed twelve prized guinea eggs that had been set under a setting hen. She clubbed the snake to death with a club, taking care not to strike the twelve bumps that showed all down its body the places where the twelve guinea eggs reposed. Then she cut the snake open and took out the eggs and put them back under the hen, without a bit of fuss or excitement. She took seriously the charge that she must take care of the estate while her men were away fighting.

“Richard Byrd couldn’t have had better ancestors to back him up in his adventures, but every ounce of courage, every bit of perseverance that he inherited, he needed. He was a man who met with hundreds of disappointments, and innumerable obstacles in carrying out the plans that meant so much to him and to the world. But he was never downed by them. Set-backs that would have made other men, men of lesser caliber turn from their paths and give up their plans, were just so much more of a spur to him.

“Dick Byrd was never a robust man. He had the physical handicap of a bad ankle to overcome, and his general build has always been slight. He is not the huge, strapping hero of story-book fame; he was the little Napoleon with a great determination that outweighed any physical weakness. A man doesn’t have to be big to get places. A little fellow, if he wants to badly enough, can accomplish a lot.

“And Dick Byrd certainly wanted badly to go to the Pole. Even when he was a kid in school, it was his ambition to be the first man to reach the North Pole. Somebody beat him to it. Peary got there first, but it took him a long time, and he had to go on foot. Byrd flew, and accomplished in a few hours what had taken days and weeks to do before.

“Not only did he want to go to the Pole—he wanted to go to all sorts of places, and he did, too. Before he was fourteen years old, Richard Byrd traveled alone around the world! That took nerve. And not only nerve on Richard Byrd’s part, but on the part of his mother! The trip wasn’t a regular round-the-world tour that anybody can make today on a boat that’s like a little palace, but it was a rough, adventurous voyage on an army transport, and a British tramp.

“It was like this. You see, Dick had struck up a friendship with Captain Kit Carson. After the Spanish American War, Carson went to the Philippines as a Circuit Court Judge. But he didn’t forget his friend Dick. They exchanged letters. In one letter the Captain mentioned that it would be a fine idea if Dick Byrd came down to the Philippines to see the exciting time that they were having down there. Dick took him up on the idea, and made plans to go. At first his mother was horrified at the idea, since Dick was not a strong boy. But with unusual intelligence, she decided to let him go, since the trip would be an educational one, and would do the boy more good than any possible harm that could come to him. The very fact that he wanted so badly to go, and planned his trip so carefully, made her feel that he had reached an age where he must be

allowed to decide for himself. This was a very wise decision on her part, since it was probably this trip, with its adventures in self-reliance that made Richard into the successful adventurer that he is.”

“The trip to Manila was made exciting by a typhoon that stuck the transport—something that the boy would not have wanted to miss, although the Captain of the transport could have done very well without it—he said it was the worst that he’d ever been through.

“They got to Manila, though, safe and sound, and Dick was greeted by his friend Carson. Manila was intensely amusing for a boy of fourteen. Amusing, and mighty exciting. The excitement included a lone combat with a gang of angry rebels armed with knives—from which the young Dick escaped only by the fleetness of his pony’s heels. That’s the sort of adventure young boys dream of, and that’s the sort they should have to look back on, if they are to live the full sort of life that Richard Byrd did.

“From Manila, Dick went visiting to Darim Island. On the island the cholera plague was raging, and Dick got exposed to the disease. They put him into quarantine. He didn’t get the cholera, but all around him men were dying in terrible agony. Finally the doctor managed to get Dick to the seaport, and he got a boat for Manila. They were glad to see him back, and he was glad to be back.

“After Manila, Dick went on his merry way around the world by way of Ceylon and the Red Sea to Port Said, where he reshipped for the last lap of his cruise. It was a wonderful trip for a boy, and there’s no doubt that it had a great influence on all that he did later.

“When Richard got back, and had settled down more or less, his parents decided that he should go to Virginia Military Institute. He was popular at the Institute, as he was popular wherever he went, for his spirit—that old spirit that carried him around the world, and later across both of the earth’s poles. It was the same spirit that made him try out for the football team at V.M.I.—and carried him to the position of end on the first team. It was at that time that an incident occurred which was to be very significant in his later life. In one game of the season he broke his ankle. This was not important in itself—but it happened to be the first break of an ankle that was going to bother Dick again and again—and almost at one time defeat him entirely.

“But I’m getting ahead of my story. After being graduated from the Military Institute, Dick Byrd went quite naturally to Annapolis. He entered in 1908. He carried his popularity and his success with him to this place. His grades were not of the highest, but he excelled in athletics, going out for football again, besides track, boxing, and wrestling.

“In his last year at Annapolis, Dick’s ankle made itself felt again. Dick was Captain of his gym squad, which was competing in the big exhibition of the year. Dick, as Captain, wanted to make a spectacular showing, and cinch the meet for his team. To do this, he invented an intricate, complicated series of tricks on the bars, calculated to stir up the most lethargic members of the audience. It would have been a great trick—if it had succeeded—but it didn’t. Dick slipped, somehow, and his hands failed to connect with the bars. Down he went—on the same ankle, breaking it once more.

“In 1912 he got his commission, and became an ensign. And he also began to formulate plans for his great adventures. Connected with the Navy—there was no telling what opportunity for adventure would come to him. But he reckoned without his ankle. It gave way a third time—this time while he was going down a gangway, so that he was pitched headfirst down. They tried to fix up the ankle—in fact, they joined the bones together with a silver nail. That is, Byrd thought that they had used a silver nail—and when he discovered that just a plain, ordinary nail had been used, he felt very much deflated. Nail and all, Byrd walked with a limp, and an ensign with a limp was just useless, so far as the Navy was concerned. So Byrd was retired.

“That must have been an awful blow to him. Not only was the only career open to him cut short, but he had been married the year before, to Marie Ames, a childhood sweetheart from Winchester. So that his retirement affected not just himself, but another as well.

“It might have floored a lesser man. But not Dick Byrd. In 1917 the United States went into the World War, And Byrd, who had been rejected by the Navy, and who doubtless could not have found a place in the army, decided to go into the branch of the service that wouldn’t ask questions about his bad leg—because it didn’t matter whether he had a bad leg or not—in aviation. So to aviation he turned.

“He entered the Naval flying school at Pensacola, Florida. It was a lucky day for

Byrd and for aviation that he took to the air. It seems that the air was where he belonged. He was a Byrd by birth, and might have been born with wings, for the ease with which he took to flying.

“He became assistant superintendent of the school, and was on the commission to investigate accidents. There were a lot of them, then. The planes were not so highly developed as they are now—and the green youngsters who were entering the service could not handle them. You can imagine how horrible it was to see some friend’s plane come crashing down into the ocean, and have to be the first to go out in the rescue boat, in order to do what was possible to rescue him, and to discover what had caused the accident. A warning from the observation tower—somebody was in tailspin. A deafening crash! And the rescue boat would be put out before the waves from the great splash had subsided. At this work Byrd learned that more than half of the accidents could have been avoided with care—either in inspecting the machine before going up, or in handling it up in the air.

“Dick Byrd was just too good. That was his tough luck at this point in his career. He was too good to be sent over to France, where he wanted to go. He was sent instead to Canada, where he was chief of the American air forces in Canada. At this job, as well as at any other that he undertook, Byrd acquitted himself admirably. And even though he chafed at being kept in America, he did his job well.

“But his mind was soaring across the ocean. As early as 1917 Byrd wanted to fly the Atlantic. But there was always something that interfered. After the war, he petitioned the Navy again about a cross-Atlantic voyage, and was given permission to go over to England and sail the ZR-2 back to America. How tragically this may have ended for Byrd you can see. The ZR-2, on a trial flight suddenly burst into flames and crashed into the Humber river. Forty-four of the passengers were killed, among them friends of Byrd. It was Richard Byrd’s task to investigate the wreck that might very easily have claimed him for one of its victims.

“In 1924 his hopes seemed about to be realized at last. He was assigned to the dirigible Shenandoah, and was to fly it across Alaska and the North Pole. But the Shenandoah, too, met with disaster, and Byrd’s hopes were again dashed. The Navy rejected his petition to go with Amundsen on the trip that he planned over the Pole, and all hope seemed gone. In fact, as a final blow, Byrd was retired from the aviation service altogether.

“But he was as undaunted by this setback as he had been by his retirement from the Navy. He set about immediately to organize his own Polar expedition, which was to be climaxed by his flight over the Pole in 1926.

“Floyd Bennett, whom Byrd often said was the best man in the world to fly with, helped him plan his expedition which was to be the realization of all his boyhood dreams and visions. It wasn’t easy to plan, and the foresighted planning, they knew, would mean the success or failure of their project.

“They chose a three-motored Fokker monoplane, with 200 horsepower Wright air-cooled motors. It was 42 feet 9 inches long, with a wing spread of over 63 feet. It was capable of a high speed of 120 miles an hour.

“That was the plane, the Josephine Ford. Their ship was the Chantier, given him by the Shipping Board. The crew was made up of picked men, and Byrd knows how to pick them. Not one of them failed to live up to his expectations on that trip.

“On April 5, 1926, all of the plans being completed, and the last supplies of food to last fifty men for six months being stowed away, the Chantier sailed from New York for King’s Bay, Spitzbergen. They got there on April 29th, after an uneventful trip, and anchored in the Bay. But the problem of getting the plane to shore arose. They solved it by building a huge raft, loading the heavy ship onto it, and towing it to shore through the choppy, ice-blocked water.

“When they got the plane onto the shore, the wheels sank into the snow, and they had to replace them with skis, which seemed ample to sustain the weight of even that great craft. How frail they really were was to be proved later.

“Byrd and his men set up camp, and prepared for the take-off to the Pole. They had to work fast. The Amundsen-Ellsworth-Nobile Expedition with its dirigible the Norge was well on its way with its preparations, and while there was no bitter rivalry between the two expeditions, nevertheless the distinction of being the first to fly over the Pole was one not to be sneezed at. Everybody worked—eighteen hours a day, with meals taken on the run. And nobody thought to complain—the morale never broke once. That’s the sort of man Byrd picks to take with him—and that’s the sort of respect they have for a man who chooses them. Byrd’s a leader. No matter where he has come in contact with men, he has won their love and respect, and has got more work out of them by his kindness

and gentleness than anybody else could have by slave-driving. They worked for Byrd because they liked to, not because they had to. He imbued them with his spirit of adventure, so that every man of them was determined that his expedition should be successful, and that Byrd should be the first man to fly across the Pole.

“One of the hardest jobs of all was packing down the snow into a hard, smooth runway for taking off. They had to take off going down hill, since there was no level stretch of snow for their start, and this hill had to be smoothed and leveled. The first attempt at a take-off was disastrous. The plane landed in a snowdrift, with a broken ski. The carpenters worked for two days and nights to make new skis, and the ship was ready for its second attempt.

“The second trial flight was a huge success. The ship rolled down the incline and took gently and gracefully into the air. At least they would be able to get off. The landing, too, was beautiful. So far, so good. They discovered by this trial flight that they could make the North Pole and return without landing once, as they had planned before.

“The Josephine Ford was a mighty heavy craft, and loaded with fuel and supplies, which they would need in case of a forced landing and overland trek, she weighed five tons. This accounts for the terrible job getting her off the ground and into the air.

“Well, finally everything was ready, the weather was just right; the motors had been warmed up, and Bennet and Byrd climbed into the plane, ready to start. Down the runway they coasted. There was a tense moment. Would she lift? With a groan, the men on the ground saw her lurch, roll into a snowdrift, and all but turn over.

“A lesser man, as I said once before, would have been discouraged. But not Byrd! He got out, inspected the plane, and found to his joy that it had not been damaged. No delay! Off again. They lightened the load as much as they dared by taking off some fuel, then taxied the Josephine Ford up the hill again. The men worked like Trojans to get the runway lengthened and smoothed out again. At last everything was ready.

“Byrd and Bennett decided to stake everything on that last trial. They decided to give the engine all the speed they could, so that at the end of her run she’d either rise into the air, or crack up once and for all. Even as they planned, they hoped

against hope that it would be the former, and not the latter. The weather was perfect. It was a little past midnight. The men of the expedition were gathered about, anxiously awaiting the take-off. Byrd and Bennett shook hands with them, stepped into the cabin of the ship and started down the runway. The great ship rose laboriously into the air. There was a shout from their comrades. They were off for the North Pole! Those on the ground cheered lustily. The Great Adventure, for which one of those men in the air had been preparing all his life, had begun.

“They had to navigate first by dead reckoning, following the landmarks in the vicinity of King’s Bay. They climbed to a good distance so that they could get a perfect view of the land below them, and looked down upon the snowy mountains, scenery grander than any they had ever seen before, and terrifying, too. In a short time they left the land behind, and crossed the edge of the polar ice pack.

“There are no landmarks on the ice, and when they reached the ice pack, they had to begin their careful navigating. In the first place, they had to hit the Pole exactly, chiefly because that was the place they had set out for, and then because if they didn’t hit it exactly, they would have no way of reckoning their path back to Spitzbergen, and would be lost in the arctic wastes.

“But expert navigating was Dick Byrd’s strong point. He had developed a sextant by which the altitude of the sun could be gaged without reference to the horizon line, and that was exactly what he needed now, because due to the formations of ice, the horizon was irregular. But figuring out position by means of the sextant requires at least an hour of mathematical calculation, and by the time the position had been figured, the men in the airplane had advanced about a hundred miles or more. So they used a method that they had learned, whereby their position could be judged by means of taking the altitude of the sun and laying down the line of position on a sort of graph.

“Their compass was of little value. They were too near the North Magnetic Pole, which had a tendency to pull their magnet from the geographical Pole to its own position, about 1,000 miles south. So they used a sun compass, that indicated their position by means of the sun. Of course, the fact that they had sun throughout the whole trip was an advantage. I doubt if they could have made it otherwise. Navigating up there is too difficult. Then they had to figure on wind drift. The wind, blowing pretty hard, say, about 30 miles an hour at right angles

to their plane would cause it to drift thirty miles an hour out of its course. This they were able to make up for by means of the drift indicator, which compensated for the drift.

“Bennett piloted first. He would glance back to the cabin where Byrd was busy with the navigating instruments, and Byrd would indicate to him how to steer his course by waving his hand to the right or the left. When they were certain of their course, Byrd looked down on the land that he had desired to see since he had been a boy in school. Below them, stretching for mile upon mile was the ice pack, criss-crossed with ridges, seeming like mere bumps in the ice from their altitude, but really about 50 or 60 feet high. Every now and then they saw a lead, opened by the movement of the water—those treacherous leads that had led many a hardy explorer to his death.

“Byrd took the wheel. He steered with one hand while he held the compass in the other. Bennett poured gasoline into the tanks, and threw overboard the empty cans, to relieve the plane of weight. From then on they took turn and turn about at the wheel, Byrd navigating incessantly, until he had a slight attack of snow blindness from looking down at the snow so constantly.

“Soon they came to land where no man had ever been before. It was then that Byrd felt that he was being repaid for all the planning, all the hard work and heart-breaking disappointments that he had experienced. The sun was shining, the Josephine Ford functioning perfectly.

“Perfectly? Just a minute. They were about an hour from the Pole. Byrd noticed through the cabin window a bad leak in the oil tank of one motor. If the oil leaked out, the motor would burn up and stop. Should they land? No. Why not go on as far as they could, perhaps reach the Pole? They would be no worse off landing at the Pole than landing here, and they would have reached their goal. So on they kept. Byrd glued his eyes to the oil pressure gauge. If it dropped, their motor was doomed. But they would not land, or turn back.

“Luck was with them. At about two minutes past nine o’clock, they crossed the Pole. It takes just a minute to say it, but how many years of planning, how many years of patiently surmounting obstacles had prepared for that minute’s statement!

“Below them was the frozen, snow-covered ocean, with the ice broken up into

various formations of ice fields, indicating that there was no land about. Byrd flew the plane in a circle several miles in diameter, with the Pole as a center. His field of view was 120 miles in diameter. All this while he was flying south, since all directions away from the Pole are south. And now, his purpose accomplished, his hardest task faced him. He had to fly back to Spitzbergen.

“Soon after he left the Pole, the sextant that he was using slid off the chart table, breaking the horizon glass. He had to navigate the whole trip back by dead reckoning! With the oil fast spurting out, and the motor threatening to stop any minute, and no sextant to show his position, Byrd had his hands full. They lost track of time. Minutes seemed like hours, hours like ages. Then they saw land dead ahead. It was Spitzbergen! Byrd had flown into the unknown, 600 miles from any land, had turned about, and come back to the very spot from which he had started.

“Maybe you don’t realize what wonderful navigating this was. But anybody who has navigated a plane by dead reckoning knows that it was a feat that called for great skill.

“Nobody was prouder of what Byrd and Bennett had done than the men who had worked so hard to make the trip a success, and who had stayed behind at Spitzbergen, without glory or reward except in knowing that they had been a necessary feature in the success of that journey. The whistle of the Chantier blew a shrill whistle of welcome. The men ran to greet Byrd and Bennett, and carried them in triumph on their shoulders. Among the first to greet them were Amundsen and Ellsworth, whom Byrd had beaten in the race to be the first to cross the Pole by air. But they shook hands with vigor. They were glad that it was Byrd who had beaten them, if it had to be anybody. Byrd affects people that way. He’s just as well liked after successes as before them. That’s the sort he is.

“They were pretty glad to see him when he got back to the United States, too. There were plenty of whistles blowing, plenty of ticker tape, and parades for the returning hero. But Dick Byrd stayed modest through all of it. In the first place, he never gets fussed. He isn’t a southern gentleman for nothing. And in the second place, he realized that the shouting wasn’t so much for him as it was for the thing that he did. He had brought the United States the honor of sending the first men over the Pole. And the United States was applauding the deed, not himself. But he seems to have forgotten that if it hadn’t been for his years of planning, striving and struggling the deed never would have been accomplished.

“Well, Dick Byrd had accomplished his life’s ambition. But it didn’t mean that he was ready to quit. There were new fields to conquer. How about flying the Atlantic? He’d always wanted to fly the Atlantic. Anything that was all adventure appealed to him. So when they hoisted anchor at Spitzbergen after the flight across the Pole Byrd said to his companion Bennett, ‘Now we can fly the Atlantic.’

“The plan to fly the ocean had its origin in the same motives that the North Pole flight had. Byrd wanted to make America aviation conscious; and he wanted to make American aviators conscious of the benefits of careful planning. Dozens of lives had been lost in unsuccessful trans-oceanic flights—the lives of young men full of the love of adventure, who made hasty plans, or no plans at all for spanning the ocean—who had no qualifications except a great ambition to see them through the great grind that was before them. Byrd wanted to show all fool-hardy young flyers that care, care, and more care was needed in their preparations. He had to prove to the United States, too, that if care were exercised in these flights, they were not necessarily dangerous. All this Byrd had to prove. And in the meantime he’d have the time of his life, steeped in the adventurous sort of work that he craved.

“So Byrd and Bennett started their plans. The first step, of course, was the choosing of the plane. Opinion was in favor of a single-motored plane for a cross-Atlantic flight, since a single-motored plane would have a greater cruising range; offer less resistance in the air; and be less complicated to handle than a multi-motored craft. But Byrd held out for the tri-motor, the same type of plane as the Josephine Ford, which had carried him over the Pole. There was this to say for it: if one motor stopped, the other two would still function; and it might be the solution to the problem of what kind of plane would cross the Atlantic in the future, when planes ran on regular schedule. They wanted a bigger plane than the Josephine Ford, though. So they had one designed with a wing spread of 71 feet, which meant that they got an increased lifting power of about 3,000 pounds. That enabled them to take along about 800 pounds of equipment above what they actually needed, to show that a pay load could be carted across the water in a plane.

“They needed plenty of equipment, though. There was a special radio set, rockets to shoot off as signals if anything went wrong; two rubber boats for the crew; and emergency food and equipment of all sorts for forced landings; and even a special apparatus for making drinking water out of salt water so that they

would not go thirsty. In fact, they could have survived for three weeks in case of an accident. They? Why, Byrd decided that besides himself and Bennett, they would take along passengers, also to prove something—this time that passengers could be carried across to Europe by plane.

“They successfully petitioned the Weather Bureau to make predictions for the trans-Atlantic flights, and for the first time in history regular weather maps for aviation were made of the North Atlantic.

“At the end of April, in 1927, the plane was ready for its factory test. Byrd planned to make his flight in May, which he figured was a good month. It happened that there were at the time several other planes preparing to cross the ocean. Byrd was in no race, however. Of course, it would have been nice to be the first man across the Atlantic, as he had been the first man over the Pole—but he encouraged the others who were preparing and made no effort to be the first to start. However, his plane was ready before the others.

“Byrd, Bennett, Noville, who was going with them, and Fokker took her up for her first flight. Fokker was at the controls; the other three, passengers. Everything went smoothly. She took off well; her motors functioned perfectly. But as soon as the motors were turned off for the glide, they felt her nose dip. She was nose-heavy. When they tried to land, they knew definitely that she was nose-heavy, and zoomed into the air again to plan what they should do. However, they couldn’t stay up indefinitely—they hadn’t much fuel. Down they glided again. The wheels touched the ground. Fokker jumped. But the other three were caught.

“Byrd felt the fuselage heave up. The plane went over on her nose, turned completely over. Something struck him with an awful impact, and he felt his arm snap. They had to get out of this! They were trapped in a mass of wreckage which might at any moment burst into flames and burn them to death before they had a chance to escape. Noville, beside Byrd, broke a hole in the fabric with his fist, and they crawled out. The wreckage did not burn. Someone had turned off the switches of all three motors.

“Bennett? He was hanging head down in the pilot’s seat, unable to free himself. His leg was broken; his face bleeding. He was badly injured—so badly that for a week it was thought that he would never recover. But he did—of course. His iron nerve and grit pulled him through. But any thought of his going on the trip was

out. This was a blow to Byrd. There was no man he would rather fly with than Bennett, Floyd Bennett, the cheerful companion, the willing worker, himself an expert pilot, and able to divine instructions before they were even given. Tough luck!

“But tough luck, too, was the fact that the plane was almost irreparably damaged. Byrd set his arm on the way to the hospital, had them put it in a sling so that it would be out of the way, and went back to the factory to supervise the repairing of the America. It took over a month of work night and day to repair the damage that had been done, and re-design the nose so that the craft would be balanced.

“May 21st was set for the christening of the plane. The christening was changed into a celebration of the successful flight of Lindbergh. Bennett was pleased with Lindy’s achievement, since Lindy had proved the very things that Byrd himself had set out to prove—that with careful preparation, the ocean could be spanned; and that a successful ocean flight would stir the imaginations of the people, making them more conscious of aviation and its strivings. Then, too, Lindbergh cemented relationships between France and the United States, which was one of Byrd’s purposes in flying to France instead of to England, or any other country.

“Well, after the ocean had been crossed, there was no need for hurry. Not that Byrd had been in a rush; but there was a great deal of criticism concerning the delay of his trip. Nobody knows how these things start, or why. It seems that it should have been Byrd’s, and Byrd’s business alone, as to when he chose to cross the ocean. After all, it was his life being risked, and his glory if the flight were successful. But a great many people in the United States felt that there must be some ulterior motive in his not starting immediately; and that he had been bested by a mere boy when he let Lindbergh be the first man to conquer the ocean.

“But Byrd didn’t care. He knew what he was about. He was a southern gentleman, and he said nothing to his defamers. And he went on completing his preparations. Chamberlin, with his passenger Levine, broke the world’s record for flying to Germany, in a remarkable flight. Byrd hailed their success.

“Then at last, on June 29th, early in the morning the weather man reported that weather conditions, while not ideal, were favorable. Dick Byrd decided to delay no longer. He called together his crew, and met them on the field at 3:00 o’clock

in the morning. It was a miserable morning, and a light rain was falling. By the light of torches the crew was putting the finishing touches on the huge 'America'. There she was, atop the hill that they had built for her, so that she would get a good fast start. And a good fast start she needed, all 15,000 pounds of her. Think of the speed they had to get up in order to lift that bulk from the ground! They'd have to be going a mile and a half a minute!

"Bert Acosta was at the wheel; Noville, recovered from his serious injuries in the trial crash, sat with his hand on the dump valve, by means of which he could dump a load of gasoline if they didn't rise into the air; Bert Balchen, the young Norwegian relief pilot and mechanic, was busy with the spare fuel.

"The engines were warmed up. The great ship was ready—no, not quite ready. But she was eager to be off. The America broke the rope that held her, and glided down the hill on which she had been held. It was a tense moment. Would they be able to get this great hulk into the air? Along the ground she sped, gathering momentum. Her wheels lifted. There was a shout. She had cleared the ground. But the danger was not over. They must fly to at least 400 feet. Then the America showed her metal. She climbed on a turn, and they were flying at an altitude of 400 feet. They were off!

"On they sped to their destination at last. The wind was behind them, helping them; the weather was disagreeable, and slightly foggy, but this did not bother them. They reached Nova Scotia easily. But when they got there they got a horrible shock. They had run into a fog. But what a fog! One so thick that they couldn't see the land or ocean under them. And they flew for 2,000 miles like this, absolutely blind, with black towering clouds ahead of them, below them, and when they ran through them, all around them.

"The strain was terrible. In addition, Byrd calculated that they had used more fuel than he had expected, because of climbing so high to get over the clouds, and they might not have enough to take them to Europe. But they did not want to turn back. They would take their chance. Balchen and Acosta piloted with great skill, and Byrd took his turn at the wheel while they slept. The wind was with them, and they made excellent speed. Radio messages came to them clearly. They judged their position, and their gas supply, and found that they had underestimated their remaining gas. They could get to Rome.

"On the afternoon of the second day they came out of the thick fog, and saw the

welcome water beneath them. They were bound for France, and they hit the coastline at Finisterre. They headed for Paris. Then they radioed ahead for the weather report. Fog! Fog and storm, with its center at Paris. This was the worst thing that could possibly have happened to them, this arriving at their destination in a fog. But they went on. It would be a triumph, and an addition to aviation knowledge if they could land in a storm, after coming all the way from America.

“They figured finally that they must be almost over Paris. But suddenly the fog below them was pierced by a queer light. It was the revolving signal of a lighthouse! Their compass had gone back on them, and they had made a circle, coming out not at Paris, but back to the coast of France.

“They turned around, after adjusting their compasses, and made once more for Paris by dead reckoning. They were above Le Bourget. But what could they do? They could see nothing below them, only an inky blackness that nothing could penetrate. Landing would have meant not only death to themselves, but perhaps to many people who had gathered to watch their triumphal landing. Their gas was getting low. Byrd saw only one solution. They turned and flew once more back to the coast. They were heading for the lighthouse that they had come upon accidentally before. They flew very low, over the sleeping towns and villages that they knew were below them, but which were shrouded in pitch blackness. A revolving light pierced the blackness, and they were at the seacoast. But over the water it was just as inky black as over the land.

“Balchen was at the wheel. Byrd gave the signal to land. They threw over a line of flares that gave them some idea as to where to land, then descended. The force of their impact with the water sheared off the landing gear. The plane sank to the wings in the water, and the fuselage filled rapidly.

“Byrd was thrown into the water. He swam to the plane. Noville was climbing out. The other two were nowhere to be seen. Byrd called to them. He swam over to the plane, which was almost submerged. Balchen was caught in the wreckage, but managed to extricate himself. Then Acosta swam up from nowhere. His collar bone was broken. But a hasty survey assured Byrd that the others were all right. Almost exhausted, they got out the collapsible boat, blew it up, and paddled to shore. It was a mile to the village, and they trudged wearily on.

“They certainly did not look like a triumphal parade when they got to the village, four tired, wet, dirty men, who looked more like tramps than aviators. They tried

to arouse the villagers, but they could not. A small boy riding by became frightened when they spoke to him, and scooted away. Finally they approached the lighthouse, aroused the lighthouse keeper and his wife, and made them understand what had happened.

“From then on, all was beer and skittles. There wasn’t enough that the villagers could do for the Americans who had landed so unceremoniously in their midst—or practically in their midst. They rescued the plane, and the mail that was in it.

“Paris was next, and the real triumphal parade started then. The flyers were almost overwhelmed with the wonderful greeting that the Parisians gave them. It was worth all of the hours of agony that they had gone through. They had accomplished what they had set out to accomplish, after all.

“Then America. Once more the American people welcomed Dick Byrd back as the hero of the moment. He had excited interest in aviation; he had proved many valuable scientific facts; he had proved a hero under trying circumstances; he had added to the friendly feeling felt by the French for the American people; in fact, he had done all things except one. He had not extinguished his spirit of adventure.

“No sooner was Admiral Byrd back from his trip across the Atlantic when he was planning another voyage, this time reflecting again the boyish dreams of his early youth. He planned to go to the South Pole to make certain scientific studies, and to fly across the Pole when he was there.

“Very carefully he began to plan. He first obtained his ships. The *Larsen* and the *Sir James Clark Ross* were to be used as supply ships. *The City of New York*, once an ice breaker, was to be his chief ship, and the *Eleanor Bolling*, named in honor of his mother, was to be the chief supply ship. He took, too, four planes, three for observation flights, and the huge three-motored Fokker, the *Floyd Bennett*. Every division of the expedition was equipped with radio sets. Every division of the expedition was further so equipped that in case of accident, or in case it should be separated from any other unit, it could rescue itself.

“Among the preparations was the purchase of about a hundred eskimo dogs, which were to be used in the arctic. Ships, planes, cameras, radios, footgear, and a thousand other details Byrd had to plan carefully. Almost a million dollars had been spent before the ships even left New York.

“In the midst of the preparations Admiral Byrd received a terrible blow. This was the death of Floyd Bennett, that someone has already told about. Bennett flew to the aid of Major Fitzmaurice, Captain Koebl and Baron von Huenefeld, who had been forced down in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, during the first east to west crossing of the Atlantic. At Murray Bay, Quebec, he developed influenza, which turned into pneumonia. He died in Quebec. Colonel Lindbergh rushed to Quebec with serum to save his life, but it was of no use. Floyd Bennett, whom everybody loved, and one of the greatest pilots of his day, had flown his last flight.

“It meant a loss to all aviation, but to Dick Byrd especially, since the two men had been close friends. There was no man with whom Byrd would rather have flown over the South Pole, as he had flown over the North. In memory of his friend, Byrd named the plane with which he was to fly over the Pole the *Floyd Bennett*.

“Preparations had to go on. It came time to choose the crew and staff which was to go with Byrd, to be gone for such a long time in the arctic wastes. The prospect does not seem inviting—the leaving of comfortable homes, of families, in order to spend a year in the coldest climate that will sustain life. But so great is the spirit of adventure in man that 15,000 people volunteered to go on the expedition. The men who were finally chosen were picked men—all physically in perfect health, and mentally alert. True, some of them shipped in positions in which they had had no training, but Admiral Byrd could safely say that he had made a mistake in no case. Every man that he chose proved himself worthy of the choice.

“Finally all was ready. On August 26, 1928, the *City of New York* started out. *The Eleanor Bolling*, a steamship, started later, as did the supply ship, the *Larsen*. *The City of New York*, a sail boat, got to New Zealand about the middle of November, the last to arrive. The *Larsen*’s cargo was shifted to the other ships. On December 2, the *Eleanor Bolling* and the *City of New York* sailed for the ice pack. In about two weeks it came into sight. Then the latter ship took over the former’s cargo, and while the sail boat sailed back for New Zealand, the steamer went on to penetrate the ice pack and steam at last into the Ross Sea.

“The ship and its precious cargo went on to the ice barrier, and it was on the ice barrier that Little America, the base of the expedition, that was to be the home of Byrd and his men for a rigorous year and a half, was built.

“The village they built was complete in every detail. As soon as they landed, the men started in with the building program. There were three clusters of buildings set in a circle about a thousand feet around. These included the Administration Building, containing living quarters, dispensary and radio reception room, a meteorological shelter, etc. Then there was the general dormitory, and the observation igloo. Other buildings included the store houses and medical supply store-house; a Mess Hall, which was reached by a tunnel, and contained the dining room, and more living quarters.

“The community was a comfortable one. There was plenty of work, of course, but there was time for leisure, too, and the men could listen to the radio, play with the dogs, read one of the books of the large library; play cards, in fact, do any one of a number of things. The food was good. Dried vegetables and fruits had been taken down in quantities. There was plenty of meat, both smoked, and fresh killed seal meat. They had electric light, and plenty of heat to keep them warm. In fact, the life was pleasant if anything.

“Of course, the most significant part of the whole expedition was Byrd’s flight over the Pole. As in the other flights, the building of the runway was the greatest task, and one of the most important. It took the whole crew of 60 men to keep the runway in condition. On January 6th, the Commander made his first flight in Antarctica, making many photographs from his plane. After that, many trips were taken, new land discovered, and scientific observations made.

“The long night set in, and meant less activity, but in the Spring the sun rose once more, and activity broke out with renewed vigor, especially around the planes. Men had been sent ahead to cache food for emergency, in case of a forced landing of the *Floyd Bennett*. Byrd, Harold June, Bernt Balchen and Ashley McKinley were to make the flight. Everything was at last ready, and they were waiting only for favorable weather conditions in order to start.

“On November 27, this was in 1929, came a weather report that satisfied Byrd, no fog, and plenty of sun. The next day was bright and fair. The plane was given a final overhauling. It was carefully warmed; the oil was heated and poured in. Into the cabin went the dogs, and the dog sledge, the food and other supplies that the men would have to use in case of a forced landing. Into the plane, too, went Ashley McKinley’s camera, which was to take records of the crossing of the Pole.

“Finally Byrd gave the signal. *The Floyd Bennett* was rolled out of its hangar to the runway. Balchen was to pilot first. He opened the throttle of all three motors. There was a roar, and they were on their way.

“Away they flew, into the cloudless sky. June and Balchen piloted, Byrd navigated. They flew high, and in spite of their load of 12,000 pounds, almost as much as they had had on the *America*, they attained an altitude of some 10,000 feet. This was necessary in order to clear the highest of the glaciers. On flew the *Floyd Bennett*, gayly as a bird.

“The craft had left Little America just before three o’clock in the afternoon. In ten hours she had covered 700 miles. Then suddenly they were over the Pole. They circled around in a great circle, whose center was the South Pole, and then turned back. At a little after ten the next morning they sped wearily into camp at Little America. In nineteen hours they had been to the South Pole and back, and Dick Byrd, even though he couldn’t have been the first man at the North and South Poles, nevertheless found himself the only man in the world who had flown over both the North and South Poles.

“There was a let-down in the community’s enthusiasm. The great task had been accomplished. They awaited the City of New York which was to come to take them home. Preparations were made for the homeward journey. It was with joyous cries that the steamer City of New York was greeted, and with pleasure that the men left Little America for New Zealand. By April they had left hospitable New Zealand behind, too, and had started for the United States.

“Once more his countrymen turned out to honor Byrd. Dick Byrd was now Rear-Admiral Byrd, but the same Dick Byrd as he had always been before. There were banquets, and medals, and many honors heaped upon him. All over the world movies which had been taken of the expedition were shown to entranced millions. Everybody shared in the work, the good times, the adventures of that group of men.

“And here was little Richard Evelyn Byrd, who had been the undersized, delicate boy, with a will of iron, and a spirit for adventure, the leader of it all, the prime force behind the whole expedition. He accomplished all that he set out to accomplish, and more. The scientific data that he collected proved valuable; and interest in aviation was beyond a doubt stimulated. And that’s that. How’s that for a little fellow with a bum ankle? Pretty good, eh?”

Nobody answered the Captain at first. There seemed no answer. Each of them was busy with his own thoughts. Or her own thoughts, because the feminine minds in that gathering were working very fast.

“Well,” said Mrs. Martin at last, “I am usually the last person to point a moral, but I do think that there’s a moral in that story.” She saw her opportunity at last. “I think that Dick Byrd’s parents were responsible for the boy’s success. If they had squelched his adventurous spirit at the beginning, he would probably never have got any place.”

Mrs. Gregg smiled to herself in the darkness. “Do you believe in young boys going off by themselves, Mrs. Martin?”

“It teaches them self-reliance,” said Mrs. Martin firmly.

“Do you think that they ought to fly planes by themselves?”

“And why not? After all, there isn’t very much to flying a plane, if you keep your wits about you. And I’m sure that both of our boys have their wits about them. I think that the earlier you learn a thing, the better it is for you. It makes everything else easier, too.”

There was a silence for a while. Then Mrs. Gregg said, with a laugh in her voice, “I think that I’m being worked upon. First by the Captain with his story, and then by you. I’m afraid I have no defense.” She turned to Hal, who had not spoken at all, but who had been thinking a great deal during the story of Byrd, and the obstacles that he had overcome. “Well, Hal,” she said, “what do you think? Shall we yield to these people? Shall the Greggs yield to the Martins?”

Hal had not seen his mother so light-hearted and gay for a long time. The pleasant evening and the story had had a decided effect upon her.

Hal didn’t know exactly what to say, But his mother went on, “I think we’re beaten, Hal. Do you want to go to the mountains with your friends?” Nobody there knew the effort that that sentence cost Mrs. Gregg, but she had said it, and she stood committed.

Hal was at a still greater loss as what to reply. His heart was beating wildly. There was nothing that he desired more now than to go to the mountains, but he felt the effort that his mother had put behind her words. Should he go? He

wanted to. He wanted to show them that he wasn't afraid. And he wouldn't be afraid, either. Not any more. Other people, little fellows, too, had done things, had gone places, and they weren't afraid. So Hal said, "Well, I'd like to."

"If you wish to, you may," said Mrs. Gregg.

Bob, who had listened breathlessly to this conversation, could restrain himself no longer. "Whoopee!" he yelled. "Hal's coming along! Hal's coming along!" He jumped up and started to execute a war dance, dragging Hal after him.

Captain Bill was pleased. His story had made a hit—more of a hit than he had even hoped for.



CHAPTER IX—Four Women Flyers

Mrs. Martin, too, was pleased. She had gained her point, and now had another surprise for the company. “Did it ever occur to you that there are famous flyers who aren’t men? It’s just like you to neglect the women altogether.”

“Aw,” said Bob, “we can’t go telling stories about women. We’re sticking to men.”

“It seems to me that the women oughtn’t to be neglected,” said his mother. “After all, when we women do things, we like to be recognized.”

The Captain broke in, then. “Well, how about some of the women? he asked. Of course, being a woman yourself, you can’t enter our story-telling contest, but you can amuse us from a purely amateur love of getting in your feminine licks.”

Mrs. Martin smiled in the dark. “You think that I won’t,” she said. “But I will. I’ve been doing reading of my own, you know.”

“Tell away, Mater,” said Bob. “You’re better than any of us.”

Mrs. Martin began her story. “There are four women who stand head and shoulders above the rest in the United States,” she said, “when it comes to flying. They are that oddly-assorted group—tall, slender, boyish Amelia Earhart, who’s Amelia Earhart Putnam, now; little Elinor Smith, who doesn’t weigh much over a hundred pounds: medium-sized, gracious and charming Ruth Nichols, who belongs to the Junior League; and short, sturdy, daring Laura Ingalls.

“Amelia is probably the first lady of the land, or I should say, first lady of the air in the United States now, since her solo trans-Atlantic flight on May 20, 1932. It was fitting that she should make her flight on the fifth anniversary of Lindbergh’s flight to Europe, because she’s always been called the Lady Lindy. She looks like him, you know—long, lean, blonde, with a shock of unruly curly hair, and a shy, contagious smile. She has even his modest nature, and the ability to win the hearts of everybody with whom she comes in contact.

“The solo flight wasn’t Amelia Earhart’s first trip across the ocean by plane. You remember her first flight, when she went as a passenger on the Stultz-Gordon

flight in 1928. She's the first person now who has ever crossed the ocean twice through the air. Amelia is a real pioneer—she must have adventure and excitement in life—that's why she gave up social service work, and made flying her profession. It wasn't easy for her to learn to fly—she just had evenings and Sundays to get in her practice flights, but she stuck to it, and finally had a sufficient number of hours in the air to get her pilot's license. Of course, she is interested in the progress of aviation. Everybody who flies has this interest at heart—but the love of adventure is uppermost in her mind when she makes her record flights.

“It was that that sent her across the Atlantic, through storms and sleet and fog, with no thought of turning back, in spite of decided defects in her motor that threatened to land her in the middle of the ocean and send her to certain death.

“There wasn't much publicity before her flight. Since it was going to be for her own satisfaction, she wanted to keep it to herself. She took off quietly from Harbor Grace, Newfoundland. The weather was fairly good, but when she got out a few hours, she met with the same terrifying flying conditions that her solo predecessor, Lindbergh, had. Fog enveloped her plane. She could not see in front of her, or to either side. Ice formed on the wings of her plane, and threatened to break them off. Gradually the temperature rose, and the ice melted. But new dangers threatened. A weld in the exhaust manifold broke, and the manifold vibrated badly; leaks sprang in the reserve gas tanks in the cockpit, and then—the altimeter broke.

“Now the altimeter, as I suppose you all know, records the altitude at which the plane is flying. Amelia Earhart had never flown without one, and now she realized the hazards of not knowing how high she was flying through the fog. Sometimes she would drop so low that she came suddenly out of the fog, but so close to the water she could see the white caps on the surface.

“The girl realized that she must make a landing as soon as possible, and that was when she reached Culmore, Ireland, a tiny place five miles from Londonderry. She landed in a field, scaring a team of plow horses, who had never before seen a woman landing after a trans-Atlantic flight. She went by automobile to Londonderry, and there received the rousing welcome that was due her.

“Europe entertained her royally. She was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross; she was received by the Prince of Wales; she was partied and banqueted.

And through it all she kept her poise, and modestly accepted the acclaim that was showered upon her. She was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic, but not only that, she had set a new speed record for the North Atlantic Ocean, flying a distance of 2,026 miles in about thirteen and a half hours. She had at the same time broken Ruth Nichols' long distance record for women, which had been set at 1,977 miles from Oakland, California, to Louisville, Kentucky.

"Ruth Nichols has a habit of setting records. She started to fly at about the same time that Amelia Earhart started, and has kept nip and tuck with her, except for the fact that proposed plans of hers to fly the Atlantic have not as yet been carried out. She was graduated from Wellesley College, and was a member of the Junior League, which rates her pretty high in the social scale, but her overwhelming desire for adventure and pioneering, led her, as it led Amelia Earhart, to choose aviation as her profession. Ruth Nichols held the long distance record for women until it was broken by Amelia Earhart. She holds the altitude record for women, though, and broke the altitude record for Diesel engines in 1932, at a height of over 21,000 feet.

"Elinor Smith was, in a way of speaking, born in an airplane cockpit. Her father was a pilot; Elinor made her first flight as a passenger at the age of eight; took over the controls at twelve; and made her first solo flight at fifteen. She was so small that her head did not reach over the top of the cockpit, and the other pilots called her 'the headless pilot.' It was a funny sight to see a plane land gracefully on a field apparently with no one to guide it. Then out would pop Elinor, a grimy little girl, covered with grease from the motor, and with a cheerful grin on her impish face. It was Elinor, who at seventeen, set the women's solo endurance record by staying in the air alone for 26 hours and 21 minutes. Elinor should do great things in aviation. She knows her planes inside and out; she's had the opportunity such as no other woman has had, to learn the technicalities of aviation when she was young that she absorbed them as part of herself. Elinor Smith is one of the most popular women in aviation now.

"Laura Ingalls is the stunt flyer of the women. She came out of the middle-west, from Missouri. She took to music and dancing first to express her restless spirit, and then found that it was flying that would express her best. So she went to a government-approved school, and became an expert, daring flyer. She is the holder of the record for loop-the-loops for women, and of the barrel roll record for both men and women. She is interested in the progress of aviation, but gets a great thrill out of merely flying for its own sake."

Mrs. Martin paused. "I guess that gives you an idea," she said, "what women are doing nowadays."

"Women have always done the great things in aviation," said Mrs. Gregg. "They stay home and wait while the men are risking their lives. Waiting is harder than doing."

"Women haven't a monopoly on that," said Bob. "What about Mr. Putnam, who waited at home while his wife flew the ocean?"

Everybody laughed. "You're right, Bob," said Mrs. Gregg. Then she added, "It's getting pretty late. How about our going, Hal?"

The two of them cut across the garden to their home.



CHAPTER X—Hawks and Doolittle

The next day was spent in a pleasantly muddled state, getting Hal ready to go with them, and putting the finishing touches to their own equipment. Stout boots, fishing lines, flies, everything on their lists was gradually being checked off. Late in the afternoon they had a breathing space, and Bob remembered that it was Pat's turn to tell his story.

"Come on, Pat, you might as well get it over with," said Bob. "We haven't anything else to do, anyway."

"You're mighty impudent for a young one, Bob, my lad," said Pat. "Just because you've made a solo flight doesn't mean that your wings are dry yet. You might know that any story I'd tell would be good."

"Oh, Patrick, you'll have to prove that," said the Captain. "I've heard some pretty awful ones from you. Haven't I?"

"It must have been two other fellows," said Pat. "But I'll begin. And I won't take so long, either. I'm not one of these long winded story tellers," he said significantly.

"Get on, get on." This from Captain Bill.

"My two boys are the speedy two, all right," began Pat. "Speed was their middle name. Their real names were—well, you probably have guessed. It's not a secret—Frank Hawks and Jimmie Doolittle. Beg pardon, maybe I had better say Lieutenant Commander Frank Hawks of the United States Naval Reserve, the holder of some 30 inter-city aviation records, etcetera, etcetera; and maybe it would be more proper to talk about James Doolittle, M.S.; D.A.E.. But what's the use of the titles? They're just Frank and Jimmie, two of the squarest shooters in the game.

"Frank was born, of all places for a flyer to be born, in Marshalltown, Iowa, on March 28, 1897. Iowa's flat, you know. Wouldn't think that there'd be much inspiration for flying out there. But maybe all that flat prairie was just so much inspiration to get away from it all, and get up into the air. Anyway, young Frank put plenty of grey hairs in his mother's head with his love for climbing. Just

crazy about high places. Always up a tree, so to speak.

“Little Frank was mighty pretty, I guess. Maybe he wouldn’t like my saying it, but he must have been a smart kid, too. At a very tender age, my lads, our friend Frank Hawks was playing children’s parts in Minneapolis. But then the family moved to California—maybe to live down the scandal of a performing son, and Frank got serious, being mightily busy just going to high school.

“Maybe it was fate, but something happened that changed Frank Hawks’ ideas about what he wanted to be when he grew up. The Christofferson brothers, who were pretty great shakes in those days, and pioneers in flying, set up a shop on the beach outside Frank’s home town. They took up passengers. But they charged plenty for it, and Frank, while he hung around a lot, never had the money to go up, although he was mighty anxious to fly.

“Finally he got an idea. If he couldn’t get up in the usual way, he’d find a way he could go up. So young Frank got himself a pencil, a notebook, and a mighty important look, and approached one of the Christoffersons. ‘I’m from the newspaper, Mr. Christofferson,’ he says, ‘and I’d like an interview with you.’ And he interviewed him just as serious as you please, with Christofferson pleased as could be, thinking of the publicity and the new passengers he’d get. Then young Frank asked if he couldn’t go up, in order to write his impressions of an airplane ride. Of course, of course.

“So Frank Hawks got his first ride in an airplane, and decided on his future career. Aviation got a recruit and Christofferson waited a long time for his interview to appear. In fact, he waited indefinitely.

“The problem for Frank then was to get another ride. He finally went to the flyer, and told him what he had done. He was forgiven, and worked out his passage for that ride and other rides by working around the flying field. It was then he learned to fly. But business was not too good, and the brothers moved on. Frank Hawks went on with his high school work, and was graduated in 1916. Thought he ought to have more book learning, so he went on to the University of California.

“But the war stopped that. When he was twenty, Hawks joined the army, the Flying Corps. He was too good, though. Too good for his own good. They never sent him to France, where he wanted to go. Instead, they made him an instructor,

so that he could teach green recruits how to fly. At the end of the war he was discharged, with the title of Captain.

“The five years after that were hectic ones. Aviation was still new—interest in it had been stirred up by war flying, and all sorts of men, young, old, every kind, bought up old planes from the government and went barnstorming around the country, taking people up on flights, stunting, flying in air circuses, balloon jumping, and doing anything they could to make money with their tubs. Some of these planes were no more than old junk, and the flyers no more than the rankest amateurs. But there were some of them who were good, and one of these was Hawks. He went dizzily stunting around the country, until’ he got himself the reputation of being just plain crazy, but a great flyer.

“There were ups and downs, to be sure. And I don’t mean to be funny, either, my lads. The people in the United States were getting just a little weary of going up in airplanes just for the fun of the thing—they were getting too common. But—there were people down in Mexico who had never seen a plane, much less flown in one, so down to Mexico went Hawks. He gave Mexico plenty of thrills, and Mexico gave him some, too. The country was unsettled at the time, upset with revolutions. Hawks got a job flying a diplomat from Mexico City to his ranch, because they’d be safer in the air than going by automobile through the mountains. Hawks even tried ranching for a while, but it didn’t work.

“He decided to go back to the United States, and when he went back he married Edith Bowie, who hailed from Texas. Down in Texas Hawks flew over the cotton fields with arsenic to kill the boll weevils. He worked in the oil fields, too, as a driller. It was good experience for him. They found out that he could fly, and he got a job piloting officials of the oil company from place to place in the oil country. They found that they were saving time and money.

“At this time Lindy flew over the Atlantic. Hawks bought the Spirit of San Diego, which was the sister ship to the Spirit of St. Louis, and flew across the country to greet Lindbergh when he came back. He flew 4,000 miles on a National tour with the Spirit of San Diego, and then 7,000 miles criss-cross.

“Luck was with him. He was going to reap his just rewards. He became a member of one of the country’s richest oil companies, as their technical flying expert. He advised them in buying planes, and chose their pilots for them, and in addition, had to sell flying to the country.

“And maybe he didn’t set out in earnest to make the country sit up and take notice then! There was a Wasp-motored Lockheed Air Express monoplane at the manufacturers’ in Los Angeles, and it had to be flown to New York. Hawks got the bright idea that he could fly it across the country without a stop. And he did.

“It was his first cross-country flight, and his hardest. In the first place, it was February, and the weather was pretty bad for flying—so uncertain that they couldn’t predict what he’d run into. But he decided to take his chance. This was in 1929. Of course, its being 1929 didn’t make it any harder, but I just thought I ought to tell you what year it was. The start from Los Angeles wasn’t bad. He had a mechanic with him to keep filling the gasoline engines, a fellow by the name of Oscar Grubb. They hadn’t flown for very long when they ran into a fog. Hawks thought he’d try flying below the ceiling—but he ran into a snow storm. Then he tried climbing above it. He couldn’t get over it.

“And in the midst of all this terrible strain of flying through fog so thick that he couldn’t see the nose of his plane, the engine began to miss. The tank was empty. He switched on the other tank. It was empty, too. Why hadn’t Oscar warned him that the fuel supply was out? What had happened to it? Hawks looked back. There was Oscar, sprawled out, fast asleep. But he woke up. Pretty lucky for Oscar Grubb that he did, and typical Hawks luck. The tanks were filled, and on they flew through the murk and fog. The fog cleared a little when they got to Kentucky, but Hawks didn’t know where he was, anyway. It wasn’t until they got to Washington that he recognized his position, by the Capitol dome. From there he sped to New York, where everybody was glad to see him. No wonder. This speedy gentleman had made the trip in 18 hours, 21 minutes, breaking all speed records then existing for non-stop cross country flight.

“It got to be a habit, this record-breaking. His next venture was New York to Los Angeles and back. He left Roosevelt field at 8 o’clock in the morning, and was in Los Angeles in the evening. Seven hours later he turned back and in 17½ hours more he was back again at Roosevelt field. It was dark coming down, and he broke a wing, but he escaped unhurt. He’d broken the east-west, west-east, and round trip records, all of them, making the round trip in 36 hours and 48 some minutes.

“Hawks never let people forget him for long. He was out to sell speed to the country, and he knew that the way to do it was by speeding. In July everybody began to hear about the ‘mystery ship’ that was being built for him. It was a

monoplane. On August 6th, it was a mystery no longer. Hawks was going to race with the sun. The sun had always beaten him so far, and he wanted a return match, for revenge.

“So he lifted his monoplane into the air in New York, just as the sun was rising, at about 6 in the morning. He flew right with that sun and got into Los Angeles before it had set, or just about 10 minutes before 6 o’clock in the evening. He’d beaten dat ol’ devil sun, all right. One week later, and he was on his way back across the continent again, and got to New York in less than 12½ hours.

“Well, he’d proved how quickly you could get across the United States in an ordinary plane. Then he showed how you could cross with a glider, towed by an engined plane. Why, you ask. Well, in the first place, it attracted attention to gliders. And gliders are important in aviation. And then, if towed gliders are practical, they might solve the problem of carrying pay loads in cross-country flights. The glider could be loaded up, hitched to an airplane, and go from New York to any point west. That was the idea. Well, Hawks did attract attention. It took him six and a half days to get from San Diego to New York, stopping off at a lot of cities, and just generally bumming around the country.

“In 1930 about the only spectacular flight that Frank Hawks made was the tour with Will Rogers, when they flew around the country seeking help for the drought victims. They covered 57 cities in 17 days, which meant a lot of work, because they put on a show wherever they stopped. Hawks, with his stage experience behind him, fitted in perfectly with the plan. He not only could fly, but he developed a patter, modeled after Will Rogers’ and came out chewing gum and swinging a lariat.

“In 1931, having about exhausted record-breaking in the United States, our friend Mr. Hawks left these shores, and went off to Europe to sell speed and airplanes to that continent. No sooner had he landed than he started to break their records, too. The first one to fall was the speed record from London to Berlin, a distance, of 600 miles, which he made in 2 hours and 57 minutes. This was just about half the time that the regular passenger planes take. He had a light tail wind behind him, to help him, and a bad fog over the channel to hinder him. He flew the whole distance by compass.

“About a week later the United States again heard from Frank Hawks. They heard that he’d dined in three European capitals on the same day. Left Bourget

before breakfast, had breakfast in London, kippers, I suppose, or kidneys, at the Croydon Field. That was about 9:30. He left Croydon for Berlin, and got there 3 hours and 20 minutes later, in time for lunch at the Tempelhof Airdrome. He flew back to Paris, for tea at Le Bourget, and then motored into the city for a good dinner. The dinner he didn't pay for. It was on some friends who had bet him that he couldn't make it. He did. Don't bet against Frank Hawks. It isn't good business.

"The next month, on June 17, Frank felt hungry again, and maybe tired of the food he'd been getting, anyway. So he got into his plane, at London, just after breakfast; had luncheon in Rome, and got back in time for tea in London. He'd made the round trip in 9 hours and 44 minutes, actual flying time. Of course, a man has to take time out to eat. Getting to Rome and back meant that he'd beaten the Alps twice. He enjoyed that trip. He'd had a head wind with him all the way, and was pretty glad about beating the Alps. They look less mighty and dangerous when you're looking down at them from a safe plane, in the cleat sunshine. Almost gentle.

"Speedy Hawks decided to come back to America. But he didn't come back to rest. He went right on breaking records, and making up new ones to be broken. In January of 1932 he flew from Agua Caliente to Vancouver, British Columbia, in 13 hours and 44 minutes. That was called his famous three-flag flight. It was a grand flight, too, and the first of its kind to be flown in one day. It wasn't non-stop; he'd stopped at Oakland, California and Portland, Oregon, both on the way up and the way back, for fuel. The trip was about 2,600 miles long, and he'd averaged about 180 miles per hour.

"Hawks is certainly accomplishing what he set out to do. He's never had to bail out, and he's never had a serious accident. He was pretty well banged up when he didn't clear the ground and crashed into some wires early in 1932, but he pulled out of that all right. Flying fast was no more dangerous than flying slowly, if a man could handle his plane. What the country needed was speed and more speed, and Hawks gave it to them. It helped, too. The whole commercial system in the United States has speeded up. Two hours have been cut off the transcontinental trip, and more will undoubtedly be cut off. In June of '32 Hawks was made Lieutenant Commander Hawks. And it's no more than he deserves. He's a great lad.

"And so is Jimmie Doolittle. There's some say that Jimmie is the greatest flyer

of them all, but he says he isn't. I don't know whether we should take his word for it or not. He may be prejudiced. Anyway, he's one of the best liked flyers in the country. James Doolittle is a little fellow. That is, he's short. Just 5 feet 2, but every inch a scrapper, and every inch nerve.

"Anybody who talks about Doolittle likes to tell the story of the time he went down to Chile for the Curtiss Company to demonstrate a new type of flying plane to the government. The Chilean government was pretty particular. It wanted only the best, so it decided to have five countries compete in a mock fight, England, France, Germany, Italy and the United States, and the plane that won the battle would be the one bought for the Chilean army.

"Well, Curtiss asked the Army Air Service if they could borrow the Army's crack test pilot, Jimmie, and the Army lent him. Doolittle went down there all set to win. But there was a party for the aviators before the battle, and the aviators, all being young, and good fellows, got very jolly, and decided that each of them would have to put on a stunt to entertain the others. Now Doolittle decided that his best bet was acrobatics, so he balanced on the window ledge, to show his best handstands and other tricks that he'd learned in college. A brace or something on the window gave way, and down went James into the street, landed on both feet, and broke both ankles. Just before the big show! Well, they took him to the hospital and put both ankles in a plaster cast.

"The show went on, and the hero wasn't there. But was he resting peacefully at the hospital? He was not. With the help of a friend, he cut off the plaster cast, had himself hoisted into an ambulance, and taken to the field. When he got there, they strapped his feet to the rudder bar, and he was all set to go into his act. Only the German plane was in the air. Doolittle zoomed up, and there followed one of the prettiest dog fights that anyone there had ever seen. Doolittle maneuvered and bedeviled that German plane until it turned tail and retired. James circled around once or twice to show that he was cock of the walk, and then came down to get the Chilean contract for the Curtiss people. That's the way James Doolittle does things.

"How did he get so scrappy? Well, he was a born fighter. And then, he grew up in a gold camp in the Klondike, and if there was any place harder than a gold camp in Alaska in those days, it would be hard to find. Jimmie was born in Alameda, California, in 1896. His father was a carpenter and miner, and left for the Klondike in '97, the year before the big rush to Dawson in '98. Well, two

years later he sent for his wife and the boy James.

“Jimmie’s first scrap was with an Eskimo child. He drew blood, and was so frightened that he cried as loudly as the Eskimo warrior. But he never stopped fighting after that first fight. Maybe it was because he was so small that he had to fight. Anyway, he usually was fighting boys bigger than himself, and he got so good that he’d whip them to a frazzle every time. It gets to be a habit, you know, and any way, he was born scrappy. Ask anyone.

“The Doolittles left the Klondike, and moved back to California with their obstreperous son, and I imagine the Klondike parents breathed a little easier. In California Jimmie went to school, and on the side became Amateur Bantamweight Champion of the Pacific Coast.

“When he’d been graduated from High School Jimmie went on to the University of California, same college that Hawks had attended. He went on fighting, still in the bantamweight class. But one day down in the gymnasium, the boxing coach put him in the ring with a middleweight for some practice. Jimmie knocked him out. And he knocked out the second middleweight, and the third middleweight. So the coach, seeing that he had struck gold, entered Jimmie in the match with Stanford, but in the middleweight class. The crowd roared when they saw the little bantam getting into the ring with a pretty husky middle. The middleweight thought that it was a joke on him, and was careful not to hit hard. But he needn’t have been so kind. Jimmy Doolittle retaliated by knocking him stiff and cold in a few minutes.

“Jimmie didn’t graduate. In 1917 he married Jo, and settled down to serious things, such as going out to Nevada and becoming a gold miner, and later a mining engineer. I might say a word about Jim and Jo. They’re known as the inseparables. They’re always together. They’ve got two kids, who are thirteen and eleven years old, and who can fly in their daddy’s footsteps. The family leads a gypsy life, flying from one army field to another, but they have a great time.

“Well, I’m getting ahead of my story. Let’s get back to the War. Because the war broke out then, you know, and Jimmie joined the air service. His first lesson, they turned him over to an instructor by the name of Todd. They were still on the ground, when they heard a crash, then another crash. Two planes had collided in the air. First one dropped, then the other, close to Jimmie’s plane. One of the

pilots was killed; the other pilot and his passenger were badly hurt. Doolittle helped them out, and went back for his first lesson.

“Jimmie, like Hawks, was just too good. They didn’t send him to France at all, but made him an instructor at Rockwell Field, San Diego, where he became known as one of the star aviators in the air service. He was pretty angry when he found that he couldn’t go to France. He went out to relieve his feelings. He picked out an innocent soldier walking down the road, and made for him. He didn’t have any grudge against that soldier, just against the world. But that soldier had to bear the brunt. Jimmie swooped down on him. The soldier wouldn’t move out of the way or flatten out. Jimmie swooped closer and closer. The soldier stood his ground. Finally Jimmy came so close that his wheels nicked the soldier, and down he went. And away flew Jimmie, but so low that he couldn’t rise again in time to clear a barbed wire fence at the side of the road. He got caught in the fence and smashed up. They gave him a month in the barracks to think over how smart-aleck he’d been, and then Jimmie was out again. The soldier had a bump on the head to remind him that he’d been in the way when Jimmie Doolittle was mad.

“Jimmie had other crashes. One was just before he made his famous flight in 1922 across country from Pablo Beach to San Diego. On his first attempt at a take-off one of his wheels struck some soft sand, and over he turned, being thrown into the water, plane and all. His second take-off was more successful—in fact, it was perfect. He got to San Diego in 22½ hours.

“Jimmie’s greatest achievements have been in testing and experimenting. After the war he went to the Army technical school at Dayton. He got an honorary degree from the University of California, and then he went to Boston with Jo, and entered the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. With Jo’s help he did four years’ work in three, and got the degrees of Master of Science, and Doctor of Aviation Engineering—the first flyer to get the D.A.E. degree there.

“He resigned from the army to join the Shell Petroleum Corporation, Curtiss borrowed him again, though, and he went to Europe to demonstrate speed planes for Curtiss to 21 European governments. He’s a marvellous tester. He got the D.F.C. for his transcontinental flight. In 1925 he got the Schneider Cup in the International races, and in 1929 the medal of the Federale Aeronautique Internationale for his outstanding achievements in aviation.

“I haven’t told you the most outstanding, feats, Doolittle was one of the pioneers in blind flying. He experimented for the Guggenheim Foundation, testing instruments to be used for blind flying. He also tested the stress and strain that flying has on the human body. He would go into right spirals, risking his life, in order to see under what pressure a man becomes unconscious. It’s a dangerous business, but great for aviation.

“In September, 1931, Doolittle won the air derby, flying from Los Angeles to New York to establish a new transcontinental West to East record on 11 hours and 15 minutes. He won at the same time the Los Angeles-Cleveland Bendix trophy when he crossed the finish line of the National Air Races at the Cleveland airport. His time to Cleveland was 9 hours and 10 minutes, an average speed of 223 miles per hour. As if that wasn’t enough, he flew back to St. Louis to sleep, making a trip of 3,300 miles in 19 hours. He’d broken Hawks’ record then standing. Both the boys are still going strong. You never knew when you’re going to wake up and find that one of them has flown across the country so fast that he ended up right where he started from, only two hours earlier. But now I’m getting fantastic,” said Pat. “I must be getting tired, and no wonder. It’s time we were getting to bed, if we want to leave at any hour tomorrow.”



CHAPTER XI—Hal Comes Through

The day of their departure dawned bright and clear. There was a high ceiling, the air was crisp and cool, with a fresh wind blowing. The boys could hardly control themselves in their impatience to be off. Bob's parents and Mrs. Gregg drove down to the airport with them to see them off. In spite of the excitement of the boys, there was an undercurrent of restraint in the group. Nobody talked very much except Bob and Hal, who never stopped talking.

The cabin plane had been taken out and warmed up by the mechanics of the port. It looked sleek and beautiful in the early morning light. Pat was going to fly her. He walked over to the Administration Building to make final arrangements with their friend Mr. Headlund. He took a short cut across the field. The port wasn't very busy. But there was some activity—activity that Pat, intent upon his business, did not notice. A student pilot, taxiing his plane across the field for his first solo flight, was coming straight toward him. Pat did not notice the student, the student was too rattled to see him.

Bob was the first to notice what was happening. "Look put!" he screamed. "Pat, look out!"

The student pilot suddenly saw Pat. He veered his plane, but a corner of the wing just grazed Pat's head, and knocked him flat. He was already getting to his feet when the others got to him.

"Are you hurt, old fellow?"

Pat was rubbing his head. "No, I don't think so. That is, no, I'm not at all. Just nicked me. I'll be all right in a second." He shook his head to clear it. "Gave me a bit of a bump. I'll be all right."

The student pilot, white and shaking, came over to them. "Hurt badly?" he asked anxiously.

Pat laughed. "No such luck, lad. You missed me that time. Better luck next time. You might try picking on somebody who's not so tough, next time."

Pat was himself again, and the others, thankful that he had not been seriously hurt, watched him go into the Administration Building. When he came out, Bill

asked. "Do you want me to pilot?"

Pat looked scornful. "Since when did a little bump on the head put me out of commission? I'm driving the bus."

All the baggage stowed away, the boys, the Captain and Pat got into the plane. They waved good bye to the others outside, the huge craft taxied over the field, turned into the wind and rose into the air. It was pleasant being off at last. There was the grand trip before them, and then the vacation itself, fishing, swimming, shooting. Hank had filled their heads full of the glories of his private mountain, as he called it. The cabin with its huge open fireplace built of stones, the bunks in two tiers like the berths on a pullman. Bob and Hal had already decided that they would have to take turns sleeping in the upper one, because surely the upper one would be the most fun.

Their thoughts kept returning to the cold mountain streams filled to the brim with scrappy fish, and the waterfall that Hank said he used as an outdoor shower. A whole month of it! The boys could hardly sit still on the leather cushions.

"Want something to eat?" said Bill.

"Of course," they said, almost together.

Bill reached for the lunch hamper. Then something seemed to go wrong. The plane lurched. But they hadn't struck an air pocket. Its nose fell, and the three were almost thrown into a heap, one atop the other. The plane was going into a spin! Beyond the glass partition, Pat lay slumped over his wheel.

Something had to be done at once. And it was Hal who did it. He pushed open the glass partition, and got somehow to the pilot's seat. With all his strength, and his excitement gave him a strength that he had never before possessed, he pulled Pat out of his seat, and pushed him through the door, where the Captain and Bob were waiting to take him. Hal slipped behind the wheel, and neutralized all controls.

Thank God, they had been flying at a high altitude. The spin wasn't a tight one, but a loose one. Hal pushed her nose down. That was what Pat had told him, wasn't it? Don't try to pull her nose up. Push it down, and she'd come out of it and go into a glide. At first nothing happened. Hal was trembling, not so much with fear as with exaltation. He felt the great ship respond. They were coming

out of it! They were gliding swiftly down to earth. He had her perfectly under control. Slowly he pulled her up, then, and they were flying quietly and steadily with the horizon again.

The Captain was at the door behind him. "You're great, Hal, you're great. You had more guts than any of us. I knew you had it in you, and you've showed us, Hal."

Hal was happier than he had ever been in his life. He felt that he was master of the world now. He'd saved his pals, and now he would never have to be afraid of anything again. "How's Pat?" he asked.

"We're turning around. He hasn't come to," said the Captain. "I'm afraid he was hurt more badly than he thought."

Hal banked and turned. It was good to feel the ship respond to him, dipping one huge wing slowly, and turning about gracefully in a great circle. If not for Pat, his happiness would have been complete.

They got Pat to the hospital, where it was found that the nasty crack on the skull had given him a slight concussion. But you couldn't keep Pat down. It merely meant postponing that trip, not cancelling it.

Hal was the hero of the day. The newspapers, who got the story at the airport, hounded him until he conquered his shyness, just to get rid of them. They made the most of the story, and Hal was almost afraid to leave the house, for fear some of his friends would meet him in the street, because Hal was still the same modest retiring soul that he had been.

But he did leave the house to go down to the hospital to see Pat, along with Bob and Captain Bill. Pat was sitting outside in a wheelchair when they came, and they sat down on the grass beside him, and talked about their postponed trip.

"Do you know," said Captain Bill, "when we come back from our trip, there's something that's going to keep me busy."

"What's that?" asked Bob.

"I'm going to collect all of those stories we told into a book. What do you think of that for an idea?"

“Great!” said Bob. “All of our stories? Mine, too?”

“Sure, all of them.”

“But Hal won’t have a story. He hasn’t told one,” said Bob.

“Hal’s going to be the hero,” said the Captain.

THE END

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