

Fish and Gyps

WITH A "FLYING CIGAR" FOR DESSERT



Von Sputz walked away with a big gap in his front teeth.
When 'hat Pfalz kissed Mother Earth, he'd kissed the
instrument board.

"HAIL, THE CONQUERING HERO COMES!" TO THOSE ROUSING STRAINS, THE BRASS HATS PARADED PHINEAS BACK TO THE STATES. AND SO, GARRITY REJOICED AS PEACE FINALLY REIGNED ONCE MORE ON THE DROME OF THE 9TH. BUT HOW WAS THE MAJOR TO KNOW WHICH WAY THE PINKHAM PARADE WAS HEADED? AND WHO'D HAVE EXPECTED THE VON SPUTZES TO SUPPLY THAT PARADE WITH ITS MAIN "FLOAT"?

ANOTHER "PHINEAS PINKHAM" LAUGH PANIC

By Joe Archibald

With Illustrations by the Author

THE little word "if" packs more punch than a Howitzer. Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham, the ace who was generally in the hole, became strongly aware of that fact in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighteen.

If Phineas had not flushed up a certain wellborn Von back of the Yankee lines one blithe day in May, and *if* he had not brought said Von to earth with quite a thud, the Allies would hardly have known much about that new threat to the democratic world. *If* the Yankee lieutenant had lost the decision in the brief brawl with the flaxen-haired Heidelberg alumnus, the miracle man from Boonetown, Iowa, pride of the Pinkhams and exponent of all the doubtful arts of hoodwinking, skull-duggery, and legerdemain, never would have found himself in dear old London seven days later. But let us start at the tip of the tale, as the flea said when it hopped aboard a passing canine—

Herr Leutnant Ludwig Friedrich von Sputz was on his way back from a snooping assignment over the Yankee backyard when he ran into Lieutenant Phineas Pinkham over Framerville. Phineas had tarried in the scraposphere that morning after Captain Howell and the rest of "A" Flight had gone back to the Ninth, satisfied that the Krauts had overslept. The patrol had been a dull one, and like a fisherman who hates to go home without so much as a minnow in his basket, the Boonetown pilot had chosen to remain in the ozone.

After his Mercedes power plant had been given an acute case of asthma by a dose of Vickers lead. *Leutnant* von Sputz decided to concentrate on discretion rather than valor. So he dived down to the Allied linoleum not far from Blercourt and piled his Pfalz against a stout apple tree. The Von was slightly used up when he reeled away from the wreck, having lost a bicuspid or two in a head-on collision with the instrument board of his Pfalz. A small patrol of Yank infantrymen were holding him down when Phineas came running from his landing site.

"Wee gates!" Pinkham neighed at von Sputz. "Well, both of us could not win, huh? Haw-w-w-w! Let the Heinie up, bums! Where is your hospitality?"

"There's one over by Souilly," a pint-size dough piped up, "but it's too far to carry him. Maybe we could just bandage him up here, sir."

"The ignorance in this army is awful," Phineas sniffed. "I guess you've got to git up, Hans, an' follow me. I've got to have plenty of proof when I knock off a crate. If I didn't forget so easy, I would have brought my Brownie with me. C'mon, let's *allez vite, Mein Herr.*"

PHINEAS brought his prisoner to the Ninth Pursuit Squadron two hours later. Strangely enough, Major Rufus Garrity did not seem to be displeased with Lieutenant Pinkham despite the fact that Captain Howell had been beefing to him for an hour anent the man from Iowa. As a matter of fact the Old Man's face was decked in a grin, but if Phineas had bothered to peer at Major Garrity closely, he would have detected a dirty undercurrent behind it.

"I'm gittin' sick of you running out of the flight!" Howell hollered at his errant flyer. "Am I the boss— or are you, you freckled son-of-a-sea-gull? Let me tell you—"

For answer the prodigal pilot pointed to the alien he had brought in on the hoof. He sniffed, "The idea of my bein' over here is to capture Vons, ain't it? Or should I just wash windows an' mow the lawn? Haw-w-w-w! Where is *your* day's catch, Captain Howell?"

"I demand a little respect around here!" snorted the flight leader.

"I am givin' you as little as I can," Phineas retorted obligingly. He turned to *Leutnant* von Sputz. "Ya see what I have to put up with. No wonder you enlisted with Germany. Have a chair, *Mein Herr Leutnant*, and I will scare up a bottle of coneyac or three."

Ludwig Friedrich von Sputz, late of His Imperial Highness' Air Corps, proved to be a garrulous Kraut. He leered at the Yanks who formed a semi-circle around him and boasted of his lineage in broken king's English.

His bragging included reference to the latest piece of ingenuity that had waked to life in the Rhineland. It proved to be a revelation that knocked the Allied peace of mind into a state bordering on *non compos mentis* (early Italian for nuts). For days the brass hats had been kidding themselves that the bombing of the Limey sub in the Channel had been the result of an accident, that the high test egg had been unloaded in a hurry and had just happened to tag the E-17. The E-17 had been browsing about the bathosphere seventy feet down!

Seeing and enjoying the discomfiture of his captors, *Herr* von Sputz amplified his boast. "*Ja, das ist der aggsident, nein! Ach, ve Chermans, was ist ve do him nexdt? Der Von Sputzes idt ist, Mein Herrs. Mein Fader ist vhat drops idt der bomb by der untersea boadt vunce, ja! Mein brudder giffs by der gross Zeppelin L-72 alzo. Hah, sigs odder Englander untersea boadts ist kaput! Ho! ho! ve haff idt der zounding inztruments und der telescopic zights vhat shows by us vhere ist der boadts unter der vasser.*" He paused when Phineas Pinkham handed him a bottle of Frog pep juice and took a prodigious haul at it. The potent brew of the grape of Sunny France enhanced his loquacity.

"*Der big Zeppelin, vhat did idt—ah das ist der besser vun vhat der Kaiser gets, ja. Alzo maybe she flies by America und drops idt der bomb yedt.*" Von Sputz was growing in his own estimation as his stomach expanded with firewater. "*Der Tag ist close, Schweinhunds!*" he yowled. "Look—I am of *der* von Sputzes. Look vunce, *das ist der* von Sputz crest I haff." The Teuton pulled a circular silver disc from the chain of a watch half the size of a turnip and handed it to his capturer.

"Haw-w-w-w" guffawed Phineas, his fingers appearing quite restless as he bent an appreciative gaze on the trinket. He waited for von Sputz to down another half quart of cognac before he returned the disc. By that time the *Herr Leutnant* was too goggle-eyed to attach it to the silver chain and Lieutenant Pinkham volunteered to help him. It was not until hours later, when the *Bocke* headed for a stockade, that he discovered the coat of arms of the von Sputzes to be missing from the little disc. Also the disc he now had was no silver affair, bending double under very little pressure of the Heinie's fingers. The words on the bogus silver piece read: *First Prize, Sack Race, Boonetown Fair 1912. Phineas Pinkham.*

"*Gott in Himmel!*" wailed von Sputz to a Yankee guard. "Robbed I haff been yedt."

"Oh I'll call a cop right away," chirped the lantern-jawed corporal. "Shut up or I'll conk ya!"

NOW not long after von Sputz had been taken to the Allied hoosegow, Major Rufus Garrity called Phineas Pinkham into the Operations Office. The smile was still on the Old Man's face so that *if* Phineas had only been on the *qui vive*, he would have noted ulterior qualities about it.

"Well, it's about time I was appreciated around here," began Lieutenant Pinkham after a very careless salute. "I thought sure I was goin' to have trouble with you again about leavin' forma—Haw-w! When I get to Paree the next time, I will bring you back the best cigar in town an' it won't be loaded, sir. Well, I have things to do in my hut so if we can get down to—"

"Pinkham," Major Garrity ground out, and with every word he smacked his lips as if he were tasting honey, "you are not going to Paris. You are going back to the U. S. A. in just a day or so. Of course, it is going to be hard on us here—being left behind while you become the toast of the people—"

"Huh?" the victim gulped. He even forgot to plant the loaded bon bon on the Old Man's desk. "Y-you're kiddin', haw-w-w-w! Boys, at times you can be droll, sir. Haw-w-w-w!" And he swaggered hopefully.

"I was never more serious even when I got myself married," the C. O. assured him. "It seems that the brass hats have decided that you have become a hero of this Great War—that you will spur men to enlist in the air services in two countries. Yes, sir, the Allied bosses have decided that you have risked your life often enough for the cause of Democracy. So-o-o, even though I don't see why it should worry them if you get bumped off, they have decided — why. Lieutenant, you don't seem very grateful to—"

"It's a frame-up!" Phineas howled. "They tried that once before on me but it didn't stick. Oh, I'll show them fatheads. That is what I git for all I've done, huh? Speakin' pieces in town halls, ugh! I will resign. I will join up with the Frogs even. I know my rights as a citizen. I will see a lawyer— give me some paper an' ink. I will quit right now. I thought you was actin' too much like a human bein', you old—er—sir! I—"

"Try an' crawl out of it, just try!" the Major dared him. "Just try to get near a Spad from this minute on. I have given orders that you be shot if you get within twenty yards of one," he gushed like a sperm whale. "Sergeant Casey and two other non-coms are carrying two guns like western movie villains. Ha! ha! You're booked for a Chatauqua circuit, Mr. Pinkham, and the public will not be disappointed! Thanks for the cigar just the same."

"Nuts to the public," blazed Phineas, jumping up and down as if he were stamping out a fire. "I—oh, awright, awright! Wait until I talk. I will not only scare everybody out of

the *guerre* who *wants* to git in it but I will make the bums desert who are in it. I will tell about the awful way the Heinies mangle up prisoners and how guys like you tie raving maniacs into Spads every morning. I'll tell 'em how the Krauts come over every day and drop smallpox germs in the trenches and about the poison gas—oh, I'll show 'em. Boys!"

"It's all right with me," chortled Major Garrity. "They will shoot you for that. Now get out of here. I am expecting some brass hats."

"Uh—er—gettin' worried about the Kraut gas bag, huh?" the unquenchable Phineas tossed out. "Haw-w-w-w-w! Somethin' just struck me funny. It means that the *guerre* will still be on when my speakin' tour is over, as once the Limey subs are washed up, no more transports of doughs can get over. Well, that does not make it so bad. Adoo, Major, and I will send you my newspaper clippings every week. You'll wish before long that a Pinkham was here in your darkest hours as only a Pinkham can—"

Major Garrity missed his tormentor with a full inkbottle. He should have known better than to expect to hit that target. The missile broke up near the door and spilled its contents all over a freshly cleaned tunic that he had draped over the back of a chair.

"Tsk! tsk!" Phineas tsk'd, sticking his head in through the door again, "now look what you went and did! I will not forget the cigar if I can find one in a leper's pocket. Adoo for now!"

THE Old Man was still apoplectic when the brass hats arrived on the drome. They wanted to hear more about the Heinie Zeppelin which von Sputz had bragged about.

"I told you all I know," the Major moaned. "Do you think I would keep secrets from you? What's the matter with the Intelligence Corps? Did you expect the Heinie to leave blue prints of the job with me—charts and geodetic surveys of, the Channel and the location of the Limey subs? Bah, you know all there is to know."

"Now don't get all heated up. Major," growled a colonel. "We expect you to be civil even if you are a C. O. of an air squadron. We thought you might have forgotten something—Chaumont, as you may realize, is in quite a dither."

"I can't remember when they weren't," the Old Man pushed out. "Maybe you think I'm not. What do they do but get an idea that one of my best men must go back to the States to—"

"Oh, Pinkham, huh?" interrupted a brigadier, eyes widening. "Why—we—we thought you would like that, Major. In a way it is another disciplinary measure to— teach— Lieutenant—"

"Hah," Garrity laughed like the audience at a Class D vaudeville show, "did those guys ever try to teach a puma not to spit?"

"We came here to discuss the Zeppelin L-72, Garrity," bristled the colonel. "This is perhaps the gravest situation that has arisen—"

"I will talk to the Germans," sputtered the Old Man. "I'll appeal to their better natures. I'll ask them flatly if they think it is fair to blow up submarines. They'll be so ashamed—"

The brigadier got up and motioned to his cronies. "We will waste no more time here," he said majestically. "Don't be surprised, Garrity, if in two weeks you are just a civilian again. Good day to you!"

"Put that in writing!" the Major called after them.

THE Pinkham orders came through — despite the skepticism of Phineas' fellow buzzards. In forty-eight hours the Lieutenant was to leave the Ninth Pursuit to head for the States via London.

Then, the night before his departure he dispelled all trace of heart ache that might have prevailed on the drome by plunging himself into an orgy of skull-duggery. Sergeant Casey found his brand new kicks nailed to the floors when he began to dress for an evening in town. The Old Man, at mess, sprinkled a generous portion of paprika over his mealy white mashed spuds and found in a moment that it was snuff. Bump Gillis tore into the medico's shack shouting for an emergency operation after swallowing a couple of tadpoles with his cough syrup. In the middle of the night smoke began to billow from the line of huts known as Rue de la Pays. Groundhogs came in answer to the summons bearing pyrene extinguishers and every other bit of fire-fighting apparatus available on the drome. After they had all gathered,

Phineas appeared—keeping a good distance—and told them to go back to bed.

"It was just a smoke bomb that got loose on me," he grinned. "Don't git . excited as it will wear itself out in time."

The rest of the night Lieutenant Pinkham perched in a tree. Once he contemplated the theft of a means of locomotion and began to descend. But Sergeant Casey had decided to sit up with Phineas. The Boonetown warrior had no sooner hit the ground than a gun boomed near "A" Flight's hangar. A bullet thudded into the bole of the tree and the escaping Yank zoomed into its branches again.

"Gripes!" he heard Casey wail. "I missed. Wouldn't that bust ya?"

A booming voice burst from the farm-house just then. "What's going on out there? Who—?"

"Lieutenant Pinkham was tryin' to steal a Spad!" Casey hollered in explanation. "I shot at him."

"Good work!" Garrity thundered and a window slammed down.

"It is a pretty pass I have come to," Phineas groaned. "Well, it's strong milk that don't turn sooner or later. I'll show these bums!" He squirmed on his roost to favor a sore spot on his empennage. TT was mid afternoon next day when •*• Phineas Pinkham departed. The squadron car pulled out of the drome, a great lettered banner flying in the wind, to wit:

ADOO, ADOO, HA! HA! ADOO!

ADOO TO PHINEAS PINKHAM! WHATEVER TUB HE SAILS UPON

WE HOPE THE HEINIES SINK 'EM

The knight departing to conquer home dragons had eyed the banner askance but had not removed it.

"That's very funny," he had sniffed. "Like a baby in a crib caught in a log jam! Awright, bums, I will remember it. I know who my friends are now. To hell with all of you!"

Captain Howell had dug up an old trombone in Bar-Le-Duc and Bump Gillis was blowing the insides out of a harmonica. Sergeant Casey cooperated with a piccolo to murder an ear-splitting rendition of Tosti's *Goodbye* very smartly. There were many notes from Howell's trombone that sounded much like the well-known Bronx "bird" to the departing ears. Altogether it was quite a ceremony.

"Go ahead—have your fun," Phineas said airily as the car rolled out into the Frog road. "But wait until Glad Tidings Goomer makes you the next batch of biscuits. Haw-w-w-w! There is roach powder in that flour sack. Adoo, and I hope

it's for good, you fair weather friends!" He pulled a long narrow pasteboard cylinder from his pocket. From inside the container that had arrived in the morning's mail he withdrew a small publication entitled, *One Thousand and One Up-to-The-Minute Parlor Tricks*.

"Boys," he enthused, settling down to absorb "How To Be Entertaining and Not a Wall Flower."

Hours later Phineas alighted from a 'boat train in the Victoria Station, London. He bounced out of the station in true Pinkham fashion and hailed a hack.

"Garson! Er—haw—I mean 01' Chappie! Blimie if I don't want to see the jolly old worse side of Lonnon— pip pip! To Limehouse, old thing, where I shall hob-nob with the hoi polloi."

"If yer arsk me," the cabby nasaed, "Hi think yer a bit orf in the 'ead. It ayn't syfe down there fer a cove like yer, but, blarst hit, hit yer wants ter go, hit ayn't no business of 'Aroid Flimkin's, hit ayn't. Giddap, Disraeli!"

"I have never seen Limehouse," Phineas called out when the hack crawled away from the curb. "I have always wanted to see them make lime juice. Don't spare the horse, Marmaduke!"

"What did yer call me? Strike me pink, Hi'll—"

"Haw-w-w-w-w!" guffawed the passenger. "It's just a pleasantry, my man. Have on with it—haw-w-w-w! Stop at the first fish an' chips shop in Lime-house."

Phineas had no way of knowing that the cabby did not take him to the requested section of the aged city. But the place where his vehicle finally stopped was disreputable enough for the most hardened slum addict. The fare dismounted and paid up, then looked about him. Fog was settling down as thick as pea soup and the smells were even thicker. The Boonetown flyer on the loose groped his way to a fish and chips shop and walked in. His nose twitched. The interior of the ill-lighted place devoted to the purveyance of fried finned denizens of the deep was reminiscent of a glue factory.

"Gor blimie, a flyin' orfiser," a little cockney squeaked with awe. "Strike me balmy, tyke a look, 'Arriet. 'E's a 'omely blighter, ayn't he? "

"Bong swar," Phineas grinned a greeting to the motley group of eaters. "I'd hate to light a match in here," he added

sotto voce. "Everybody is grease to the ears." He stepped up to the small counter and asked for a sack of the national viand. A bit of the fish as a sample proved not half bad and Phineas hied to a gloomy corner of the stall to finish the rest of his purchase. Soon a little man wearing a cap and a muffler around his neck sidled up to the Yank. What little face appeared above the muffler showed a nose as hooked as a Turkish carving knife and eyes huddled closer together than a couple of scary old maids in a haunted house.

"Evenin', gov'nor—lootenant," began the Limey. "It's a fair treat to meet hup with a 'igh clarss cove—yus. But hit ayn't syfe for a gempman like yer to be alone down hin Jippin' Street, hit ayn't. Yer needs a cove ter see yer abaht. Fer a shillin', Lootenant—"

"Sure, ha-w-w-w! You can be my man Friday," assented the trouble-hunter.

"Lorks! An' hit bein' only Chewsdays," exclaimed the cockney. "Yer could git kilt a dozen times, Lootenant, 'fore—"

"Just let it pass," Phineas sighed, heading out into the foggy street. "Come on, garson, we'll *allez*. I don't think they will like the soap chips I put in them bags of fish on the counter!" Again the Yank failed to see the gleam in that pair of eyes. The fog hid the Limey's expression very well. On a nearby corner the escort stopped and pointed at the figure of a bobby that loomed up in the soup.

"Yer know, Lootenant, Hit's 'im that 'as got a son in the Hair Force, too. Blimie, I bet yer 'e would lyke ter arsk yer abaht the Boche han' hit yer knows the lad. Go hon, Guv'nor—Hi'll wait 'ere for yer!"

NOW Lieutenant Pinkham was a babe in the London woods. How could he know that the cockney was contemplating a solo raid on a jam dump close by? He couldn't. So he went over to the bobby and bade him a pleasant good evening. He introduced himself and the bobby lost all interest in his beat, forgot his duties included looking in on the jam factory every fifteen minutes. And he talked for half an hour with the Yankee Spad pusher.

"Yus—my lad is with the King's Hair Force," he repeated again and again. "Givin' the Boche bloody 'ell fer a fack, me lad. Lootenant Ronald 'Ammershead is his nyme. Yer got to look the lad hup—yuh—ugh—ugh— blimie!" His eyes had caught a glimpse of a strange light in the window of the jam

dump. His boots started into motion when he heard a lot of other ones pounding against the cobblestones. A knot of figures loomed up in the mist.

Somebody was yowling, "Catch the bloomin' orfiser! The blarsted cove put soap in me fried mullet—'ave at 'im!"

"Wha-a-a-a?" yipped the bobby. "Orfiser—why yer bloomin' liar! Yer stands me hup 'ere talkin' while yer blinkin' pal goes orf to rob a syfe!"

But Phineas Pinkham was not paralyzed. It was enough to have the fish and chips circus hot on his tail without being forced down in the name of the King. He hedge-hopped to Alders-gate Street and fairly flew to Southwark Bridge. Everywhere whistles were blowing. He changed his course and ducked through a labyrinth of lanes under cover of the fog and soon came to a landing on the curb of London Bridge itself.

"Well, I'm seein' the town," he grinned, making a beeline for a motor cab. He leaped in and yelled, "Anywhere out in the country, guv'nor. And step on the petrol. Oh, that Limey— makin' me an accessory! Boys, it's the King's bastile if I—hey, what's the trouble with this boiler? Have its arches fallen? Ohh—"

"Hi'm doin' forty," the cabby yelled back at him. "Flyin' gempman, ayn't yer?"

"Haw-w-w-w! That's what I thought. Have at it, my good fellow, and don't stop for even a coal barge."

BO-O-OM! CRA-A-A-A-SH!

"What in h——?"

"Gor blimie hif hit ayn't the bloody Boches!" howled the cab driver and his hack crabbed toward a lamp post. " 'Ere's where yer stop orf, guv'nor. Blink it, I ayn't playin' no tag with bloody Zeps, naw."

"Well, adoo," Phineas yipped as the cab stopped and the scared Limey headed for the nearest cellar. "I bet 111 get more out of this jilopi than you did.

Aadoo, God save the King—the Queen an'—" He stepped on the starter and threw the hack into gear. Stabs of light flashed into the sky, sirens screamed, and the streets became as empty as a

Scotch poor box. Zep eggs were cracking up all around the neighborhood through which the Pinkham chariot was tearing at maximum speed.

"Some guerre!" he yipped. "It chases you when you try to leave it. I—"

BO-0-O-O-OM! CRASH! BANG!

The Yankee pilot of the Limey land bus looked on. The beam of one light kissed the belly of a Teuton airship.

Shrapnel was biting the fog to shreds when Phineas found himself out of petrol far beyond the outskirts of London. He leaped out of the hack and kicked at a fender. Somebody grabbed at him.

"Thank heavens, my good fellow," a voice tossed at him and Phineas turned to look into the face of a British officer. He saw the red tabs on the fellow's tunic and not far away from him crouched two British fighting busses. "Jolly well thought you'd never get back! Let's go—we'll knock one of the blighters down or my name isn't Yates-Smythe—by gad!"

"Uh—er—" stuttered Phineas, for a moment nonplussed, "the fog is a bit thick, eh? Uh—well, huh, it's better to 'go west' than speak pieces at old dames' afternoon clubs. I don't know Camels very well but I will try anything once, as the monkey said when it stuck its tail into the meat chopper!" Tossing off his trench coat, the Yank obligingly headed for one of the Camels. A mechanic almost knocked his bellows dry in the fog.

"Blarst it," yipped Phineas, "I'll jolly well—look smart, guv'nor—er— my good fellow—'and me the—er— hand me the flyin' togs. Pip pip, an' all that. Jolly bombardment, what old bean?"

"Drunk!" he heard somebody conclude.

A prop roared and one of the Camels shot across the sod. Phineas was assisted into flying leather and boosted into the other Camel's pit.

"Good luck, sir," yelled an ackemma. "Knock orf their blarsted 'eads!"

"Yeah—haw-w-w-w-w-w!" and the Yank at strange controls gulped as he fumbled around them. The prop was turned over, caught a spark. Phineas waved and gave the Camel the gun. It slid across the field, took off with one " wing almost scraping berries from a gooseberry bush. He

fought it to even keel and managed to miss a church steeple at the cost of half the landing gear.

"I would just as soon handle a drunken sailor," he breathed as he drilled up through the mists. "When you blow on the stick, it goes into loops. A Camel they call it—haw-w-w-w, I bet Aunt Sarah Pinkham's nephew goes more than seven years even without drinkin'. Well, here goes—ugh!"

NOT fifty yards in front of his trucks a great shape loomed up. Lights from the ground illuminated great numerals on its torso. L-72! The sound of its Maybach engines drowned the sullen grumble of the Camel engine as though it were nothing but a humming bird's love call. Desperately Phineas zoomed and there was nothing to spare between him and the top of the Zep. A high angle machine gun ripped bullets through his wings and wiped a strut away as if it had been a mere stick of uncooked spaghetti.

"That pea shooter is no sissy," the Yank yelled as he side slipped, "but wait until I get started, you Heinie— von Sputz is it? The von's papa, haww-w-w-w! Fancy meetin' him in dear ol' Lunnon! The world is small." Snap! Phineas felt a tightness in the region of his pantry give way and the blood in his veins became sherbet. He felt himself parting company with the Camel.

"Adoo everybody!" he choked out. "Here I come! Boys, if—I could—only see—that batch of biscuits Glad Tidings Goom—"

Down—down! Then kerplunk!

But Phineas knew that it was not the ground that he had hit. The ground could not lip, "*Mein Gott!*" And it would not be hot like the thing over which he was half draped. It was the business end of a machine gun and a Kraut was clawing at his throat. That was unpleasant so the Yank decided to do something about it. He banged the helmeted Teuton on the nose, hit him three times in the same place and was rewarded by seeing the Kraut slump into an inert heap. Phineas then shook his head savagely and looked his position over.

"Well, I'm a cock-eyed—haw-w-w-w! It ain't my time to 'go west.'" He saw that he was in the open turret on the roof of the Kraut Zeppelin. Below him was a yawning passage down through which an iron ladder was visible. The seconds were

very important, like at a major operation, thought the nomad of the air. He tugged and hauled until he had removed the outer shell in which the Boche gunner was wrapped. It was working under difficulties with the ever-present risk of a Heinie making his way up the iron ladder. That very thing happened just as Phineas was preparing to struggle into the confiscated Boche regalia. A face appeared out of the confines of the Zep. Not for long, however, for the Yank made a dead shot with a heavy boot. The Boche sighed and tumbled down to the catwalk.

Shrapnel banged around the Zep. A Camel got in close, hammered for several breathless seconds at the bag and then went sweeping away into the soupy ozone. A shell broke up close to the big cigar's short ribs and there was a crazy lurch. The gunner Phineas had deprived of his marbles started to slide away. His ankle was the nearest thing to the Pinkham fist and therefore was firmly grasped. Hauling the groggy Kraut close to the gun mounting, Phineas hurriedly tied him to it with a heavy wire produced from his tunic pocket.

"If it don't hold, it is not my fault!" grinned the miracle man from Iowa. "I —why, if he's not wearing the crest of the von Sputzes! My, my! Haw-w-w-w!" As he was speaking Phineas was bundling himself hurriedly into the stolen livery. The flying suit liad no buttons. The boots were felt-soled. With a woolen scarf wound around his face close up to his eyes, the Yank started to descend into the belly of the Zep. At the foot of the iron ladder another Boche was looking at the limp figure which had vanished from sight at the impact of the Pinkham hoof. He looked up at Phineas and stared wildeyed.

"Ja," the Yank guttured, "*Dumkopf!*" He slid along the catwalk, met two more agitated Krauts near the huge fuel tanks. Phineas translated enough of their thick jargon to know that the fuel was giving out. A Zep without fuel is as helpless as a one-armed man fighting a bobcat. He yelled at a big Von, "*Der gun—kaput—ja!— Mein Fader—?*"

CRASH—BA-A-A-ANG!

The big bag swayed sickeningly. Phineas noted that the Krauts were nearly gaga by the rigors of the flight from the Rhineland. He handed them a bar of chocolate which they grabbed at eagerly.

"Eat an' eat hearty, *Mein Froinds*," he chuckled as he made his way to the control pit up forward. "You will sleep like little Boy Blues, *ja!* Cripes!"

BLAM—BLAMETY—BLAM!

"Boys, that one was close enough to singe my eyebrows. If they ever light this gas—it is—well look at the bums tossin' things through the hatch! Why it's guns—grub—winches—even their shoes. Haw-w-w-w! Who's afraid of even lions that have their teeth yanked out. Oh, boys!"

"Rudolph! *Ach, Gott sie dank!*" a voice bellowed from the passageway leading into the big egg-shaped gondola. "*Ach, das ist badt. Ofer der Channel ve iss und der tanks empty.*" A big Dutchman with a face as long as a giraffe's grabbed at Phineas. One eye was monocled, the other half closed. Some shrubbery around the chin emulated a goatee with its point amputated. His nose could not have been covered even by a hand as big as the Pinkham paw.

"*Himmel!*" breathed Phineas. "In *der* car I go, Mein, Fader, for der Faderland. You let me down *und* I tell you where *ist* ve are at, *hein?*"

"*Ach*, Englander *ist* you talk *mit* all *der* time, Rudolph. I vish you nefer vent by Oxford—bah! *Sehr gut, Mein brafe zon, zo ist das.*" He barked out orders into the confines of the big ship. A little Heinie, shivering with the cold of the high altitude, appeared out of nowhere, it seemed, and strung off a line of German. Phineas saw von Sputz stiffen and heard what he knew to be some rich, round Teuton oaths.

"*Dumkopfs*, Hans he says they go to sleep yet, Rudolph. They shouldt be dropped ofer *der* side *mit der* machine guns. Br-r-r-r. Cold *ist*, budt high oop ve moost stay, *Mein Rudolph. Ach, slow ve go! Der telescopes, der hear instruments, they holdt us. Himmel*, budt nefer shouldt ve ledt idt them go, new. Back by Chermany moost ve go, Rudolph, *ja*,. *Ach*, der shells, they coom closer *mit!*"

PHINEAS PINKHAM alias Rudolph von Sputz took something from his pocket and handed it to the Zeppelin commander before he stepped into the little observation car that was to be lowered by a wire cable down through the swirling mists that obscured the angry drink that was the Channel.

"For *der Faderland!*" he yipped. To himself he wailed, "I don't know what I asked for this for" when the little cockpit

sank deeper and deeper into the mist-shrouded wide open spaces. "Boys, if they cut that cable! For *der Faderland!* The bums, well, I won't hit like I am sittin' on an eiderdown pillow. Ugh—what? *Ach*, high oop ve are wnd *der* shore line by Belgium I see, *ja*," he growled into the 'phone. "*Das ist gut? Nein?*"

"*Ach*, Rudolph, *das ist gut*. Ve be home vunce already."

Phineas guffawed, but the Kraut Zep boss did not hear it. The Pinkham mirth was a little strained when a gun boomed from a ship in the water below. A shell broke up and a hunk of melted-down stove lid bounced off the lofty crib of the first-born of the Boonetown Pinkhams. Riddled in many places, the Zep was losing buoyancy fast. But the swirling fog still prevented a view of terra firma from the control pit of the L-72.

"Rudolph," came Papa von Sputz's stentorous voice. "It gets varmer, *ja?* Are ve close to *der* ground, Rudolph? You hear Papa, Rudolph *hein?*"

"Dry t'ousand feet I bedt you *mein* life," yipped the pseudo-son, his voice thickened by three inches of wool. "*Der cinch ist!*"

"Vhat?"

"*Der* winch, *Fader*," Phineas corrected himself, "*das ist*. Lower I should go yedt."

The swaying, flimsy pit dipped down. Phineas said a prayer and began to speculate on his future—of which there didn't seem to be much left. Time dragged like an anvil hitched to a turtle.

But finally dawn began to break and with it the mists began to lift. Once Phineas spotted scenery through a rift and swore that if he ever got down to it again he would eat a quarter of an acre of grass raw. He hoped it would be Switzerland. There would be snow on the ground and he was thirsty.

"Rudolph," came the voice of Herr von Sputz. "*Ist* you dere, Rudolph?"

"*Ja*," replied Phineas in a sleepy voice. "*Der* banks of *der* Rhine I see. *Ach das ist gut, ja!*"

"*Gott sie dank*," came the reply into the ear phones. "All *ist kaput* almost oop here. Dey ist asleep yedt, Rudolph, *Himmel!*"



"Das Pingham!" yipped Rudolph. "Ach, Fader, vhere ist der deffil?"

Phineas removed his head phones and chuckled. They were not more than a thousand feet up and still sagging. Hydrogen was escaping all over France. That chocolate bar—the thought of it made him guffaw. But if Phineas had known what was transpiring in the gondola of the L-72 he would not have bothered to laugh. An indignant half-frozen Kraut with a duelling scar across his left headlight was barging into the control pit. Clad in a heavy union suit and nothing else, he faced a stupefied Herr Papa.. A disc hung from his neck, bearing the crest of a well-born Junker tribe.

"Rudolph—how *ist* you climb oop from *der* car, *hein*?" snapped Herr papa. "*Gott—Downer und Blitzen, was ist?* Put idt on *der* suit. You catch him death *mit* cold, Rudolph!"

"*Das Pingham,*" von Sputz the" younger blurted out. "He falls on *der* Zeppelin, Fader, *und* steals *mein* suit. *Der* chocolate *mit der* sleep stuffink he giffs by *der* crew. *Ach,, ein* piece I find *und* he smells like *der—Fader, gedt* idt *das* Pingham. *Vhere ist?*"

"*Ach, bummer! Schwein!*" von Sputz Senior yelled. "*Der* cotters, Rudolph! In *der* million pieces he goes by *der* ground yedt. Ho! Ho! Calls me *Fader, hein?* 'Ofer *der* Rhine, Fader! *Das ist gut, Gott! Mach Schnell,* Rudolph, *und* ve cut idt *der* car loose vunce. Ho! Ve gedt idt *das* Pingham. *Budt vhere ist*

he gedts idt *der* coat uf arms of *der* von Sputzes, *hein? Der* Deffil he *ist*." Then Herr papa, yelled into the communicating phone.

"Hah, *Herr Leutnant* Pingham, *hein?* Smart *ist* you are. Veil, *Auf Wiedersehn, Herr Leutnant*. Ve giff you der fast landink, *ja. Schweinhund*, you hear me vunce?"

"Vunce is enough, Herr Bum!" retorted Phineas, looking down at the ground with a sinking sensation. A hundred feet—no more. It would take the Krauts—those who were still on their feet—several minutes to cut the heavy cable through. Fog was hanging low over Frog real estate, settling down from the higher shelves of the ozone. The spinning, lurching cockpit plunged into a thick gob of that fog.

IT was Major Rufus Garrity who first saw that strange sight on the drome of the Ninth Pursuit Squadron. He had arisen early and opened the window of his chamber to gulp big chunks of air. When that thing swept toward him, he almost fell out of the window. It was like an airplane cockpit suspended on a wire and somebody was in it. Atop the passenger's shoulders appeared the unmistakable Pinkham physiognomy, goggle-eyed now and with teeth bared. The Old Man reeled back into his room, pawed at his eyes and then went tearing down the stairs. Three pilots getting ready for the dawn patrol were in the big room below when the C.O. fell down the last three steps.

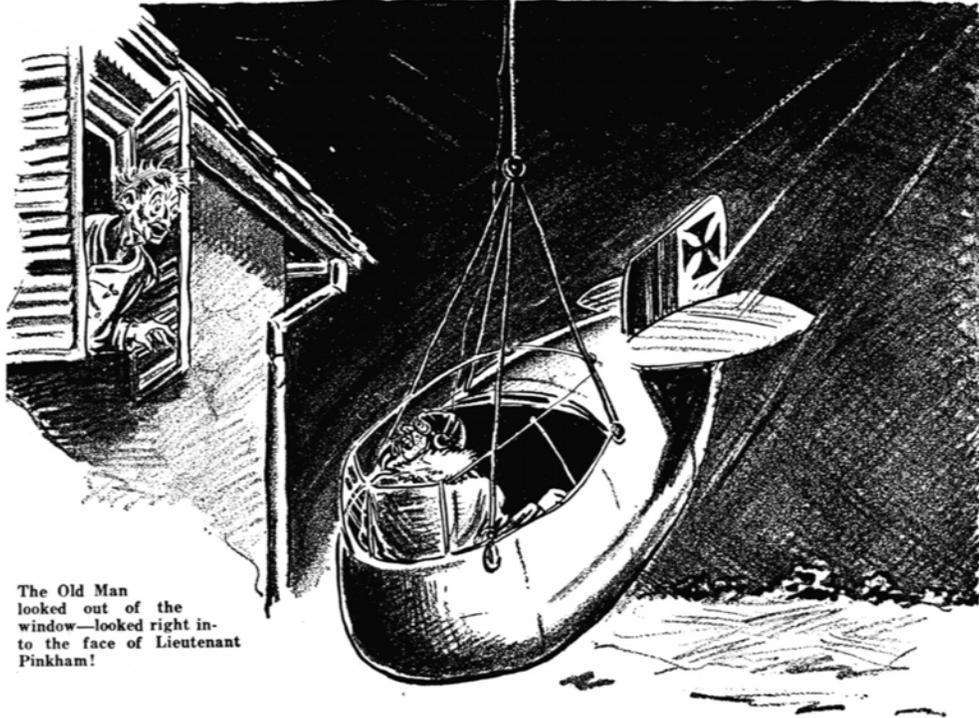
"I'm nuts—I've gone nuts!" Garrity gibbered. "I saw Pinkham—in a Spad with all of it eaten away but the cockpit. No wings, no engine—no tail! Take me away before I get violent. Don't look at me like that—I know I'm cracked—but I saw the baboon! Oh," he moaned, "I knew I should've quit this outfit long ago. Gawd! I'll never forget that. face—laughin' at me—the fat-head."

Just then Sergeant Casey came staggering in. "I gotta go to a horspital," he' howled. "Where's the C.O.? I'm nuts. I gotta be observed. I seen somethin— an' I ain't drunk. I wisht I was, honest fellers. It was hangin' by a wire. I heard some funny sounds up in the fog. Lootenant Pinkham reached out an' tapped me right on the dome an' says, 'Haw-w-w-w-w!'"

The Major grabbed Casey. "Y-you mean that? Then I ain't nuts?"

"Nossir—I didn't say so. I says I'm nuts, sir! As plain as anythin' I seen—"

Phineas Pinkham was laughing when he stood up in the Zep go-cart and picked out a soft place to land. Too late, the Krauts had tumbled to the joke-smith's ingenuity. The great gas bag was close to the ground now. Dead ahead there loomed a steeple of a Bar-Le-Duc church. The car at the end of the cable suddenly fell loose and Herr Pinkham fell twenty feet into a load of Frog vegetables. Mules snapped their traces and headed for parts unknown. Cart, vegetables, and Frog driver pancaked in the middle of the muddy road.



The Old Man looked out of the window—looked right in to the face of Lieutenant Pinkham!

Phineas crawled out from under some cabbage, spat out a gob of parsley and looked around him. Overhead the crumpling L-72 was floating straight for town.

"*Chien!*" screamed the Frog peasant. "Ze wagon she ees *pouf!* Boche *oui?* Fall out of ze balloon, non? Ah, I keel you. I br'ak ze *tete avec ze tres big rock*, son of ze peeg!"

"Not *ce matin*," decided Phineas, hitting the Frog in the chops with a turnip as big as a Spad's nose. When he got up, he could not run in the bulky, fur lined Boche high-flying ensemble. A motorcycle's staccato roar spun him around. A Yankee dough rode up and peered through the early morning fog at Lieutenant Pinkham. He peered a second too long for a turnip bounced off his nose and he back-flopped

like a circus clown out of sight into a Frog pond just off the road.

"Haw-w-w-w!" enthused Phineas. "It was quite a night. To Barley Duck, my faithful iron horse to nip the Krauts in the bud. Haw-w-w-w-w! If I live to see the Sphinx rot, I will never forget the Old Man's face when he saw me in tha>, tub—oh, boys! An' Casey— it's killin' me!"

AT the Ninth Pursuit Squadron every vehicle was being brought into play. Bump Gillis grabbed the Pinkham bicycle and followed in the wake of a truck, two squadron broilers, and three motorcycles. Wires were buzzing along the front. The L-72, driven off its course after a raid on London, was floating lazily over France and losing altitude helplessly. Certain brass hats, having heard the report that Phineas Pinkham was dangling from it, threatened to place a ban on all strong drinks the length and breadth of the front.

The L-72 cracked up against a church steeple in Bar-Le-Duc and settled like a dachshund with its wind knocked out. Five Heinies went gaga when the control gondola kissed the side of a butcher shop and plunked against cobblestones. *Herr* von Sputz tore into it from the catwalk, trumpeting, "*Der* charts—*der* plans—*der* inztruments mach Schnell for Deutschland. Rudolph, *der* charts in *der*—I"

"Oh, *ja*?" came a grim voice from the window of the wrecked gondola. "*Hoch* the hands, *Mein* Froinds. I haff the roman candle not made in Rome, haw-w-w-w! There's lots of gas still oozing out and if I just light the tip of this and start it poppin'—even for the *Faderland*, von Sputz, it is foolish to git fried' like fish an' chips, *hein*? Thanks for the buggy ride out of London, *Mein Herrs*."

"*Gott—das Pingham!*" moaned Herr von Sputz. "In *der* air he yoomps in *der* ship *mid der* coat uf arms of *der* von Sp—*Donner vetter—Himmel!*"

An' don't forget *Blitzen!*" yelled Phineas. "Now that's bein' a good Dutchman as just think if you got stubborn, you wouldn't ever see any more beer gardens again. Climb aboard, my hearties, an' collect the swag," he yelled at a dozen doughs who had swarmed around the mashed sausage. "Search good as there's a lot of sleepin' beauties in the wreck somewhere. Haw-w-w-w, that was good chocolate, von Sputz. Why don't you feed the suckers an' then they wouldn't bite so quick like hungry guppies?" As he

spoke, Phineas broke the little card-board cylinder in two with his hands. It was hollow save for a piece of paper he had shoved in one end.

"Fooled ya, haw-w-w-w!" he cried to the sputtering Krauts. "Just long enough so's you wouldn't tear up the papers an' save the brain child that was goin' to wash up the Limey pig-boats. Well, be seein' ya when the jails are out after the *guerre!*" He turned away to look into the gaping mouth of Major Rufus Garrity.

"You should have them out," he advised the C.O. "Them tonsils are filled with carbon. Oh, I must tell you why I—er—huh, I was just goin' through London—"

"So it was you, you big lunkhead! In that thing," the Major gasped. "How in the name of—did you get into that—? Look here, talk fast! You were sent back to—"

"The cigar here put a stop to my speaking tour," the culprit interrupted, jerking his thumb. "I had to go high for it, haw! Boys, look at the band on that cigar, L-72. It's lost its filler, though, an' the wrappin' is a little frowsy, but I got it for ya! Let me see you bite off the end, Rufe—er—sir. You look just mad enough to. Well, if you'll let me by, I think I'll go to a hospital an' get checked up. It's a caution what I've been through."

PHINEAS PINKHAM'S story of his latest amazing exploit was like the old tale of the big stuffed fish hanging in the trophy room of the anglers' club. A little gink came in and looked at it, then shook his head and said, "It's a lie. Nobody ever caught a fish that big."

Over near the front, the Commander-in-Chief of the A.E.F. was told how Phineas Pinkham had downed the L-72 with his-bare hands.

"I don't believe it," the General is quoted as having said. "Don't be silly."

Foch said, "*Voila*—somebody ees a leetle *cafard, ouit*"

And Haig contributed, "Raw—ther!"

But the Kaiser did not scoff. Emperor Bill stamped across a polished floor in the Royal Palace, skimmed his spear-tipped hat out of an open window, and swore he would get a slice of the Pinkham throat if he had to enlist in his own army to get close enough to the Yankee upstart to do it.

"*Himmel*," he groaned. "Vhy *ist* he vas not born a Cherman? A year ago *und* I vould haff been by Paris, *Ach!*"

Herr von Sputz and his son corroborated the Pinkham feat to the letter and the Boonetown hero received confirmation for the Kraut stogie.

Coming out of a binge later, Major Garrity was stopped by a salute from Sergeant Casey. "I—I'm glad, sir," the boss ackemma said, "that we really seen Pinkham. We know we ain't nuts, huh, sir? It's quite a load off—"

"I'm still not sure," the Old Man muttered as he walked away, shaking his head as though there were a bee in it.