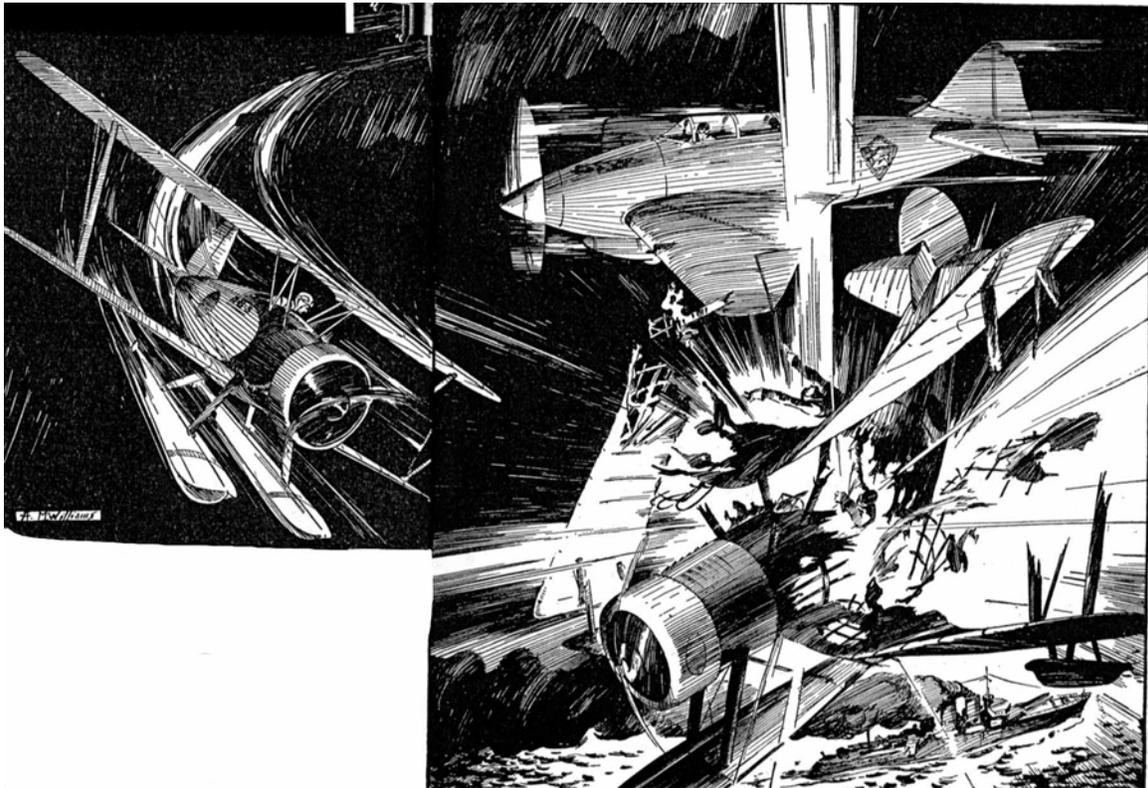


Sea Hangar Snare

ANOTHER "GRIFFON" MYSTERY NOVELET

By Arch Whitehouse



Author of "Code in the Cockpit," "Zeppelins Vanish!" etc.

In those dark waters off Point Judith drifted the battered wreckage of a proud foreign fighting plane bearing the bullet-riddled body of a noted pilot. Propped on the instrument board before that stark form was a compass card which carried on its back a cryptic message. Upon that message depended the naval safety of America. Yet that dead pilot had never known that penciled scrawl existed; the person who had scribbled it had not understood what he had written there—and the man to whom it was addressed could not understand what he read there.

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IN the office of John Scott the air was tense. Four men sat and eyed one another like strange animals that had been driven into a cave by a

storm. John Scott, heavy, genial and ponderous, attempted to be reasonable. But his pilot-fish, Drury

Lang, was exercising his full D. of J. powers.

Lang spat and snarled, his eyes drawn into narrow slits that reminded Kerry Keen of the vents in a Christie tank. The flat-foot continued to eye Keen with a sidewise glance, as though he expected that any minute the dapper ballistics expert would make a false move and give himself away.

The most interesting figure of the four was Barney O'Dare, Keen's man of all work. He sat bolt upright in a stiff-backed chair, allowing his eyes to move neither left nor right, but focusing them in an unbroken stare upon an infinitesimal line at the corner of Keen's mouth, meanwhile puffing away at a massive black cigar.

Had Drury Lang and John Scott been really alert, they would have noticed that Barney O'Dare was making use of his cigar smoke to exchange signals with Kerry Keen, with short jets and puffs taking the form of dots and dashes, . Bu Scott and Lang were helpless in the hands of these two, and they both knew it—which only made matters worse.

Keen, cool and somewhat aloof, studied the toes of his neat hand-turned shoes and let Lang rave. He selected a gold-tipped cigarette now and again from a silver case embossed with a strange enamel-and-gold emblem. The lid of the case had a small spring hinge; and while Keen appeared to be nervously fingering it, he was actually replying to Barney's smoke puffs with the same code, clicking the dots and dashes by depressing, the lid and allowing it to spring back again.

"**ALL** right all right," fumed Lang petulantly. "You don't know nothing about that recent case of the dirigibles, and you don't know nothing about the fifty grand that was in that safe ready to be turned over to those two unknowns for their part in the affair"

"You mean Pulski and Ginsberg?" asked Keen with a bored swish of his cigarette.

"Pulski and Ginsberg! Yes, Pulski and Ginsberg— if there are any such guys."

"But you say that someone came in and took the money," Keen paried.

"Yeh! The Griffon!"

"Oh come, Lang. You just said it was the Griffon who left the papers explaining the mystery of those dirigibles that were attempting to raid New York City."

"He did! Yes, sir, he left those papers."

"All right, then. It is very evident that the Griffon is entitled to the money. He just came and took it to save you the trouble of—"

"Of what?" both Lang and Scott interrupted.

"The trouble of making a pretty speech of presentation pictures in the paper and all that sort of thing," said Keen with a grimace.

Lang almost blew up, but John Scott soothed him off and switched the subject.

"Let's stop fencing, Keen," Scott said quietly. "I called you in for something entirely different. We'll get the Griffon later."

"Call me in when you get him, will you?" smiled Keen.

"Right now I want to go over your past history a bit," Scott said referring to a sheaf of papers. "It's nothing much, but considering how often we call on you for help it might be handy to have in our files—just in case anything happens to you, some day."

"Very thoughtful," muttered Keen languidly.

"Now let's get it straight," Scott went on. "You were born in New York City in December 1902. Your early life was spent in travel but you managed to prepare yourself for college at Phillips Exeter which you entered in 1915. Right so far?"

Keen was more than interested—and very puzzled. Barney was blowing a long plume of smoke that was almost capable of screening them all.

Scott continued with a smile :

"You entered the Massachusetts institute of Technology in 1918 and your course included research work' with the United States Navy as well as regular class' room courses. As a matter of fact, you were something of a marvel in certain sciences at M.I.T. and your name is still spoken of with awe by a number of the professors there who still remember you."

"I don't quite understand how you learned all this," said Keen snatching at another cigarette. He was no longer quite so dapper and at ease. Barney looked as though he wanted to cut loose, but Keen held him down with a glance.

"You assisted in a general way with several important Naval devices and also lectured on ballistics. You devised certain valves and pumps for submarines and later perfected a folding wing suitable for use on small scouting planes such as are today employed on the Baracuda type subs. Is that right?"

"I thought you didn't know anything about airplanes?" Drury Lang barked.

"You may check these dates if you care," broke in

John Scott, slipping a sheet of paper over to Keen.

Keen eyed it, studied the notations and the dates— but he also noted that it did not carry his name anywhere. He frowned, looked over the top of the sheet, and saw Lang and Scott exchanging knowing glances.

"What about it?" asked Scott.

"Well, in a general way it's right," Keen said thoughtfully. "But I can't understand where you got it."



SCOTT reached over, took the sheet, then picked up a large photograph that had lain face down on his desk. He glanced at it, holding

it in such a way that neither Keen nor Barney could see it.

"Do you know a volume called Service Tactics and Battle Plans," Scott suddenly bellowed.

"The title is familiar in a general way," Keen replied. "What is it? A Navy brochure of some sort?"

"It happens to be the secret book on fleet strategy recently compiled by high officials of the Navy Department. Only a few very responsible officers are allowed to see it or have copies."

"Very interesting," said Keen. "Go on."

"A copy of Service Tactics and Battle Plans has been stolen from the Navy Department—and sold to a foreign power."

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"I read about that in the papers a few days ago," smiled Keen. "Don't tell me you want me to get it back."

"The book itself is of no use to anyone," said Scott with an air. "It is certainly of no earthly use to the power that purchased it, since it's printed in the Wardley unbreakable code—unless, of course, that power gets hold of the key."

"So what?" said Keen.

"Unfortunately, the key has now been stolen. As a matter of fact, the man who stole the book also stole the key to the code at the same time—and after accepting a huge sum of money for the secret volume, is now believed to be holding up the buyers for more money for the key."

"Very clever," admitted Keen.

"Not very. You see, while he was phenageling around, they nabbed him," Scott added.

"That's all, then," said Keen, relieved. "The book is no good without the key."

"But unfortunately," smirked Drury Lang, "the guy escaped from the jail at the Brooklyn Navy Yard."

"What?" gasped Keen. "Still holding the key?"

"That's just what happened. And strange to relate, his history fits yours so close it isn't funny, Keen."

"What do you mean?"

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"Did you ever know a man named Gerald Winston Wandsworth, Keen?"

"Is that the name of the guy?" said Keen. "If so, I never heard the name before. Why?"

"That's the name of the ex-M.I.T. expert who at one time assisted Navy technicians on many important jobs. He was born in New York City in 1902 and went to Phillips Exeter in 1915. He is the man who stole the Navy battle plans—the man who escaped yesterday from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, still holding the key to the code."

Keen could not quite understand what Scott was getting at.

"Doesn't it seem a little strange," Lang chipped in, "that this guy should have exactly the same background as you, Keen?"

"Strange? It's damned uncomfortable! But where do I fit in?"

"You're elected to pick up this man Wandsworth and recover the secret key to the code. Keen," Scott said coolly.

"Why?"-

"Because we believe you know who he is. It is pretty evident that if your paths have run so close for so many years, you should know him pretty well—very well in fact."

"What does the code key look like? What is it printed on?"

"We don't know," said Scott, eyeing Keen closely.

"But I say. I can't go looking for something like that.

It might be a small book, it might be engraved on a silver plate, or it may even be secreted inside—inside anything. One can't work in the dark, you know."

"I'm sorry. Keen, but the Navy Department wants this man Wandsworth—and the code key. We think you can get both. Of course," Scott added with a glance across at Lang, "if you should miss up for any reason—"

"What reason?" snapped Keen.

"We wouldn't know what reason. Keen. We just want Wandsworth—and the key to the code."

"What he's really saying. Keen," Lang chipped in again, "is that unless Wandsworth is turned over to the Navy Department, complete with the code key, someone is going to do some tall investigating about the plans of a very strange plane that were found in Wandsworth's rooms."

"What are you driving at?" Keen snapped.

"Well, strange to relate, Keen," Lang went on, "a very unusual plane took part in that dirigible case. In fact, the wreckage of that plane was found near where the airship Ludendorff crashed—not far from your place, out on Long Island."

"But I was out cruising at that time," Keen argued.

"We'll agree to that, but what we can't make out, is that this man Wandsworth had a set of plans of a plane—or at least part of a set—which carries details corresponding in many ways to those of the one that crashed the Ludendorff."

Barney was sending out decided signals of distress.

"This time," said John Scott, "there are too many funny angles to your story, Keen. We believe you know something about that plane that crashed the Ludendorff.

We also have every reason to believe you know this man Wandsworth."

"I'm sorry, but I never heard of a man with that name," Keen protested. "Do you happen to have a photo of him?"

Barney's big cigar had been torched to its finish by now, but he gave Keen a last dying effort. He had caught sight of the photograph on Scott's desk.

"His picture?" smiled Scott. "Sure! Here he is."

He handed a large print over to Keen. And that print took Keen by surprise in spite of Barney's

warning— surprise as blinding as daylight in the eyes of a sleeper.

"Remarkable!" he said, trying to smooth over his amazement. "He looks like someone we've seen in an advertisement somewhere, doesn't he?"

But inside Keen was boiling with excitement. Barney was looking about for an available window. They knew that if this man were caught— well, they'd be in a hell of a fix.

"So this is the man you want me to nab?" Keen fenced as he stared at the photo. "Police pictures never quite bring out the best in a man, do they?"

"He's a tough-looking egg, eh?" Lang said. "But I'd give ten bucks to know just what you're actually thinking."

"Pay up!" Keen suddenly said.

Lang smirked, drew a ten-spot out of his pocket, and tossed it on the desk. Barney snatched at it before Keen could answer. Lang was left breathless.

"I was thinking," said Keen with a gay smile, "that nothing would give me more pleasure than to turn this man and the code key over to you— but I can't do it unless I have a perfectly free hand for, let's say, the next twenty-four hours."

"This will buy just three bottles of O'Doul's Dew," Barney said, folding the bill carefully.

"Get the hell out of here. Keen," scowled Lang.

They both got up covering up their amazement at viewing the

photograph of Gerald Winston Wandsworth.

IN a sheltered cove not many yards from the tip of Point Judith, which lies near Narraganset Pier, a queer, old and massive houseboat slobbered in the greasy swells. It may have been just coincidence that Point Judith is close to New London and the submarine training ground, and that the houseboat likewise nestled near considerable Navy activity about Block Island, Martha's Vineyard, and the island of Nantucket. It may have been—but there were too many such coincidences to make it reasonable.

The houseboat was painted a tin-roof red and the years had not been kind to the pigment. The windows were all battered up with unpainted slabs of boards. Under the stern deck, one might still discern her name. Galleon's Goal—a name that it no doubt once bore proudly upon Narraganset Bay. But it had been years since anyone had ever used the title. Motor boats had puttered by and watermen had long given up contemplating its history or future. Nothing ever seemed to change the outward appearance of the Galleon's Goal. There was, however, quite a flurry of activity when a large gleaming cabin cruiser made three night trips to the warped gunwales of the Galleon's Goal to transfer strange bundles, crates, and packages. That went on for hours— then came strange silence again.

No one knew what was taking place in that vessel.

Few persons would have believed their eyes could they have seen through the thick walls of the super-structure.

It was now midnight and the waters about Point Judith were an inky black. A last-quarter moon hung dismally in the sky and small stake buoys swayed and flashed in its wan light. And now, as the harbor's whistling buoys sang their nautical dirge, a small indistinct object moved through the water toward the seaweed-garnished sides of the Galleon's Goal.

It moved deliberately for a time, then seemed to halt, as if it had heard a warning signal from somewhere. Finally, it advanced again, cautiously, toward the old houseboat.

Suddenly, it made a slight splash; then there came a warning cry from the houseboat. A narrow light slashed out of a window shutter, then there was a crack of a rifle.

Water spurted up with a distinct "chug." The black something threw up two talon-like arms, slipped under the water. There was a final series of radiating rings upon the surface, then silence for what seemed minutes.

The figure with the rifle now turned to slip back through the narrow doorway. But when he did so he stiffened with surprise. A man in black, dripping and oily-sleek, stood before him with a gun—a particularly offensive looking gun. This man reached over quickly, snatched the rifle away from the man, and let it drop into the water.

"All right. Get inside," the man in the black silk suit ordered.

They went inside and the man in black shook himself like a wet greyhound. He followed the small chunky man toward a bench over which flickered a small light fed from a Pyrofax gas tank.

"Sit down," the man in black ordered.

"Who are you?" the chunky one muttered, still somewhat awed by the surprise his nocturnal visitor had given him.

A particularly damp card was drawn from the waist-band of the man in the black coverall and dropped on the bench. The small chunky man stared at it, muttered the letters over to himself, then gasped:

"The Griffon!"

The other man nodded: "You, I presume, are Sykes —Arthur Sykes. Where is Aird?"

"Yes, I'm Sykes. Aird, you say? . . . Mylon Aird? I don't know where he is."

"You're lying, Sykes. You know that Mylon Aird's real name is Gerald Winston Wandsworth and that he's wanted by the United States Navy. You do know that, don't you?"

"I I didn't know it until until I saw the newspapers this morning and saw the phonograph."

"Where is he?" the Griffon demanded.

"I don't know," replied Sykes sullenly.

"I do not expect him. But he might come here. How can I tell?"

"You know he'll come here, don't you?"

"He'll come to get this, won't he?" And the Griffon turned and indicated a sleek black monoplane that stood in the rear portion of the ample boathouse.

Arthur Sykes peered at it with a warm light in his eyes. It was evident that he loved that beautiful plane. He had built the greater part of it with his own hands.

"Yes, he'll come and get it, I suppose—unless the man who ordered it comes for it, a man named Ginsberg."

"You realize you're in a tough spot, don't you, Sykes?" the Griffon went on. "If you're connected in any way with the man known now as Wandsworth you'll wind up in a Federal prison for about thirty years."

"They'll never get me!" spat Sykes, his eyes blazing, "They'll never get me, I tell you."

"They'll get you just as they'll get Wandsworth," the Griffon taunted. "Is this plane finished?"

The man named Sykes looked at the black folding-wing amphibian and nodded. "I tested her last night."

"Okay. You can help me put her over. I'm taking it with me," the Griffon said with authority.

"You? But this man Ginsberg paid for it!" Sykes gasped.

"I'm afraid Mr. Ginsberg, whoever he is, will have to buy another. I'm

taking this with me. On which side do you put her over?"

"We let down the walls over there," Sykes said unpleasantly. "But how did you know about all this?"

"I'm too busy to argue with you now," the Griffon snapped. "Get a move on."

Sykes, covered by the black gun in the hands of the Griffon, began loosening the bars and clamps that held up the portable sides of the houseboat. He moved slowly, and his captor realized that he was stalling for something.

"Come on," he snapped again. "Hurry it up!"

"I am—but you can't rush this sort of thing. The whole place will tumble down on me, if you do."

BUT the Griffon was anxious now. He sensed more than ever that he was treading on dangerous soil.

He watched his man like a hawk through the narrow slits that formed the eye-holes of his close-fitting mask.

Somewhere he could hear a low throb, an indefinable throb. It might have been his own heart beating under the muffling fabric of his tight-fitting coverall. He tried to identify the throb, and while Sykes lowered a second panel that opened out on the inky blackness between the houseboat and the distant shore he peered about and satisfied himself that the single light was using gasoline and was not using current from a dynamo.

He glanced at intervals at the beautiful black amphibian. It was almost an exact replica of the Black Bullet that he had used so well against the pirate dirigibles that had attempted to destroy New York City. It stood on its sleek pontoons, its wings properly folded back. He smiled as he pondered on the strange situation that had arisen as the result of the building of this plane. It was strange that he should have selected Gerald Winston Wandsworth, the man the whole United States was seeking, to build him a second Black Bullet.

But there was something going on somewhere. He could tell it by the strange, suspicious movements of Sykes, who continued to glance over his shoulder as he removed the clamps and metal dogs to release the great wall panels.

Finally, the Griffon could stand it no longer. He started to move toward the wall to peer out. But just as he started his second stride, three bland, grease-streaked yellow faces slipped into the opening of the first panel. There was no time to open fire—for the snouts of two portable machine guns were shoved over the edge. The Griffon was caught flat-footed!

He backed up slowly, placed his gun on the bench.

Then two of the yellow men, who were evidently sailors, clambered over the low rail of the houseboat and came aboard covering him carefully as they advanced.

Sykes leered and came up to the Griffon.

"You were just a little too slow that time," he snarled. "Just a little too slow. So you wanted to hi-jack this plane, eh? I'd still like to know how you knew it was aboard here."

"Sykes!" a voice rasped out. "Who is that man?"

The Griffon peered over Sykes' shoulder, spotted a medium tall man in a baggy blue suit. His face was puffy and had an unhealthy pallor. He wore a light felt hat with a black band which was awry. There were black greasy fingerprints all over the hat. His shirt, which had once been white, was wrinkled and dirty. His cravat was wretchedly tied with the short end carelessly stuffed inside the shirtfront. The man had black bushy eyebrows irregularly arched over eyes that were feverishly bright. A small black mustache, scraggy and untrimmed, marked his upper lip.

He took a quick look at the figure in black.

"What's this guy doing here, Sykes?" he asked as he fumbled through papers, charts, and sheets of blue-prints. A yellow-faced man in naval uniform approached and stared up at the Griffon's strange make-up.

"I don't know," Sykes answered. "He came aboard suddenly a few minutes ago and asked for you."

"For me?"

"Yen. He asked first for Aird, then for Wandsworth. He seems to know the whole layout."

The Oriental officer moved closed.

"Who is he?" Wandsworth barked, still fumbling feverishly through the papers.

"I know who this gentleman is," the officer snapped with a cruel grin. "He is known to the world as 'The Griffon'—a highly publicized character who interferes unexpectedly in matters which do not concern him. We have been very fortunate, Meester Wandsworth."

"The Griffon?" gasped Wandsworth, looking up for the first time from his disordered desk. "What the hell!"

"Let's see who he really is," the officer smirked, moving closer.

"Wait a minute!" barked Wandsworth. "We got something much more-important first. Ah, here they are! My glasses!"

Wandsworth found an eyeglass case under a pile of papers and carefully snapped open the lid. He put the glasses on and peered through them as though testing their bi-focal lenses. Then he slipped them off and carefully put them back in the case. The Oriental naval officer watched the operation with interest.

"Anything new, Sykes—outside of your visitor?" demanded Wandsworth.

"Just this telegram. It came this morning," Sykes said, picking up a yellow sheet from the jumbled pile. "You know all about it by now, of course. That guy Ginsberg sent it. He was supposed to come tomorrow for his plane."

The Griffon watched Wandsworth with interest as he picked up the

telegram and read it off quickly. He smiled to himself, in spite of the strange and unpleasant situation he had found himself.

"Ah yes. Well I am afraid Mr. Ginsberg is out his fifty grand, Sykes. We'll have to be moving now, eh?"

"She's all fueled and ready," Sykes said. "But what about this guy? We can't leave him here."

"Just a minute just a minute. Let me think," said Wandsworth with a nervous gesture, "Ah yes, I've got my glasses and we're all set. She'll swing over easily, eh, Sykes?"

"Easily. She's all set. You'd better move fast now, Wandsworth."

"Um, yes. Move fast. That's it."

"But what about this Meester Griffon?" demanded the officer.

"Ah, yes, the Griffon chap," Wandsworth said, moving away from the desk. "Let's have a look at him before we shove off. You can start getting the ship over, Sykes."

The Griffon stiffened as the grinning Oriental came up and started to slip his fingers under the face mask that shielded his features.

"Ah, he is very worried, Meester Wandsworth, I feel certain we have made a rare capture. One that may be second in importance only to the key to the code of which we were so anxious."

The Griffon now stepped back another pace and was halted by a bench.

His would-be unmasker moved up like a cat, reached up again. The

Griffon now moved like lightning. His knee came up and the Oriental dropped like a log.

At this the two-armed seamen charged forward, their automatic guns aimed from their hips. They snarled and the Griffon stiffened for the expected burst of bullets. But none came. Instead, two pistol shots cracked out and the two Japs rolled over, their guns clattering across the greasy floor. Instantly the place was plunged into darkness as another shot hit the gasoline lamp. Then there came a puff of flame, a surge of blinding light, and the lamp's tank exploded.

The Griffon let out a low cry, darted to an opposite corner and picked up a gun. He sprayed lead across the house-boat. Then he darted in the other direction, reached up for a fire-extinguisher, and turned and directed its Foamite stream into the flames that were running across the floor like blue-green snakes.

It was several minutes before he had the blaze under control, and then he was still in darkness. But in the mean-time he heard shouts outside and the roar of a motor boat.

The Griffon crept along the shelter of the wall, felt for his small automatic gun again, and made his way to one of the wall openings. He lay there several seconds, then peered out over the water.

Not forty yards away gleamed the sleek superstructure and conning tower of a submarine! The small boat he had heard was gliding in a half circle toward the slatted boarding deck of the undersea boat.

The Griffon took in the outline of the submarine, swore softly under his breath.

He knew, then, that Wandsworth had escaped. And he knew that he had escaped somehow with the key to the code of Service Tactics and Battle Plans—the secret battle plans of the U. S. Navy.

He peered about in the darkness, tried to focus his eyes on things and get an idea of how many men had escaped.

"Pulski!" he muttered. "Pulski!«

There was no answer.

"Pulski!" he called louder.

No reply.

"PULSKI!"

Only the lapping of the greasy waves against the side of the houseboat answered him.



THE Griffon crept about the floor of the houseboat and inspected the two bodies that lay near the pontoons of the new plane. Both were stone dead with bullets through their foreheads. The Griffon tried to figure out where the man who had fired those two shots had stood. He

tried to reconstruct the scene, and finally presumed that his saviour had stood somewhere outside on the houseboat rail and had fired through a small open window just above one of the benches.

"Good shooting, Pulski," the Griffon observed. Then he went to work and completed the lowering of the houseboat sides. With the aid of the small steel winch fitted inside the houseboat he swung the new ship overboard and let her ride on the lapping waters. Then he raised the cockpit hatch, climbed in, and started the motor before he swung the wings into position. He let the motor idle through the Skoda mufflers and then twisted, the wings up and over on their pivoting main spars and raised the wing-root sections until the whole ship was ready for flight.

As he worked he watched about him carefully. The submarine was nowhere in sight now and he continued to call, "Pulski" softly, in hopes of picking up his man. At last, the plane was ready and the thermometer indicated that the engine was warm enough. He gave her the gun and took off.

The speed indicator climbed to 280 once he was clear. Then as the pontoons were drawn up into their retracted positions, the speed indicator went up another ten notches. He flew in a wide circle over Block Island.

"That must have been him," the Griffon pondered as he circled, testing out the controls carefully. "No one else would have hit those two guys like that. No one else could have shot like that under those

circumstances. But where the devil did he go?"

Somehow he did not care to leave the area, so he spent several more minutes checking the mechanism and striking array of dials and levers that smothered the big instrument board. There was the new device for raising the pontoons and the dial which indicated their position. There were new gun triggers and register needles which showed how many rounds of ammunition were left in the various ammunition cans. There was a new arrangement for cutting in the Skoda mufflers, also a control lever which would change the pitch of the prop blades for varying performances. All in all, the new Black Bullet was perfect—except that Pulski was not in the back seat, presiding over the two movable Brownings and the control lever of the Chatellerault hidden away in the tail-wheel housing.

The Griffon now turned back and went low over the houseboat again in hopes of catching some trace of the submarine—or Pulski.

"He might have been hurt and unable to call," the Griffon pondered. "On the other hand, he might have been nabbed by Wandsworth's gang and taken aboard the submarine."

Below he could see the houseboat, one lone light marking its stern. There was a short stub mast at her forepeak from which wriggled a small white light. The Griffon, not having noticed that before, became instantly curious.

He frowned, then let the muffled Bullet skim down toward the rust-red

houseboat in hopes of picking up some more enlightening information.

Then without warning the new Black Bullet got her first baptism of fire. It came so suddenly that the Griffon was taken completely off guard. A terrible torrent of lead battered into the sleek new Bullet and sent agonizing throbs through every rib and strut. The Griffon snatched the Skodas out to get full power, ripped the stick over. He almost slithered into the water, but the new Avia motor dug in, pulled the black amphibian out, and swept her up the sky like a slow-starting rocket.

Crang! Crang!

Two more short bursts hammered into the black dural wings and the Griffon realized that he was in for it.

Who was it? Who had picked him out of the air at night in this manner?

He wriggled the ship out, tried to retaliate. But the mysterious attacker held his position in such a deadly manner that the Griffon realized that he was taking a beating. He raged within himself, flew as he had never flown before. He missed Pulski in the back seat.

Another burst of fire swept over his head and he feared the three-blader prop had taken a dose, but the Avia purred on contentedly.

"Where's Pulski?" the Griffon continued to mutter as he flew in narrowing circles in an effort to get a bead on his adversary.

He gave his instrument board a quick look-over and for the first time caught sight of a new control. It was marked "Rear Chatellerault" and the

now Griffon realized that he had still another gun at his command.

"Golly, I forgot all about that tail weapon. Here's as good a time as any to see how it works."

He swept back into a wider circle, then saw for the first time what it was that was hammering at him.

"Whew! No wonder I can't get away from that baby. It's a British no a *Canadian* Hawker Fury!"

He caught the trim outline of the bi-plane fighter that carried the British red, white, and blue insignia. Across the silver engine cowling could be discerned a green Maple Leaf with the figure "4" embossed on it in gold.

The Griffon's amazement was intensified as the ship slashed up the sky and prepared to nose down on the black bullet.

"I'm fast, but I can't climb like that interceptor and I might as well admit it," he growled. "But I'll do my best."

THE Fury turned gradually, set itself for a final death-dealing dive. There was no question as to the skill of the pilot, whoever he was. He whipped around suddenly, made a fainting move, and suddenly nosed down from an acute angle. The Griffon held his position as long as he dared, then suddenly kicked his tail around and nosed down.

He peered ahead and watched the reflection of the oncoming fighter as it sparked at the nostrils. The Griffon held his ground, then suddenly yanked the tail-gun release.

There was a strange throbbing behind as the French high-speed weapon spat out. The Griffon hung on, then kicked his pedals twice on each side, spraying his fire to the left and right. Then he whipped up, half rolled at the top, and came out beautifully, just as a terrific explosion rocked the skies.

The Griffon peered through the shatterproof glass of his cockpit and saw the wrecked Fury stagger through a puffball of smoke. Then it dipped, flashed its knife-tail through a surge of sparks, and with one wing folded back and the other fluttering' badly, it nosed down for the water.

Almost instantly, the Griffon drew the hydraulic pontoon handle back and started the mechanism that lowered his floats for a water landing. As he spiralled slowly to give the floats time to take their correct position, he saw the wreckage of the Fury hit the water about a mile away from the houseboat Galleon's Goal. He steadied the raging Bullet, drew in the Skodas again, and doused his navigation lights.

Within twenty seconds, he was down alongside the wreckage, nosing his pontoon gently against/the fuselage of the demolished fighter, which was now slowly sinking by the nose. He snapped off his motor, clambered out and along the pontoon, and hooking one foot around the forward strut he held onto the Fury wreckage and peered inside.

The pilot was stone dead with a burst of bullets in his skull that had evidently slammed along the top of the dural cowling. The Griffon

yanked at him, frantically searched his pockets, and grabbed at the maps. on the board. Then he gave a gasp—for the man was not a Canadian. His features and uniform tunic indicated that he belonged to the airforce of a Central European nation. The papers in his pocket indicated that he was a Captain N. F. Gallas.

"What the devil is this?" the Griffon muttered. "Flying a Canadian military plane over American waters—and shooting at *me!*"

He made another grim effort to learn something that would give him an inkling of what it was all about, and finally as the Fury began to slip away from him completely, he snatched at the compass card set above the instrument board. It was almost an involuntary gesture, but he was more than repaid; for on the back of the compass card was scrawled the phrase:

All I can make of it is that the evening mist is to be contacted tomorrow at midnight. Sounds nuts, I know, but that's it—Pulski.

The Griffon read it quickly by the light of his pocket torch and smiled. But where was Pulski now and what was all this rot about contacting the evening mist? Was Pulski going poetic on him?

The Griffon stuffed everything in his still-damp coverall pockets and let the wreckage slip away gently. He wanted to stand erect and flip a final salute, as it sank, but there was no time for such dramatics. So he clambered back into the Bullet, very puzzled, very annoyed, and very upset.

He kicked the starter, opened the big 1,000 h.p. Avia, and eased away from where the Fury went down. Then he took off again, climbing in easy circles; and without bothering to raise the pontoons, he turned for the Block Island light and from there picked up the beam that swept out from Montauk Point. Meanwhile, his mind was jumbled whirl of insane facts and fears.

He kept the Avia properly muffled and cut wide opposite the Long Island shore until he was ready to ease back and let her glide in toward his private landing at Graylands. The Black Bullet went down again and touched the water almost without throwing a ripple. The Griffon eased her up so that her wheels touched the hard packed sand, then he set his amphibian wheels for a ground landing position, with the stern end of the pontoons up, leaving a clear line to the tail wheel. Then as the tail settled back gently, he ran her up the sand and across the arbor-screened turf to the face of the rock garden. The big Avia simply purred like an expensive motor car engine, while the Griffon climbed down and pressed a secret button on the arbor gate-post. He smiled as he realized how well Wandsworth and his helper, Sykes, had followed his building instructions.

As he climbed back in again, the rock garden parted in the middle and its two halves swayed back on well-oiled hinges, presenting an unbelievable sunken hangar. The Griffon ran the Black Bullet in and kicked another switch which closed the doors again.

Then, weary and worn, the Griffon patted the sleek nose of the new plane, went through a steel doorway, made his way through a wine cellar, then went upstairs to his study. He clambered out of his black coverall, undressed, and leaped under a shower. In ten minutes he came out completely refreshed and a new man—Mr. Kerry Keen, the dapper young gentleman-about-town, to be precise.

FOR two hours Kerry Keen sat and studied nautical books and pored over shipping lists. He consulted Brown's Nautical Almanac and Lloyd's Register seeking the name of a vessel.

He had no luck, so he went downstairs, climbed into a suit of overalls, and went over the damage to the Black Bullet. He welded over the most dangerous spots and made several other minor repairs. Then he completely refuelled the plane and checked the ammunition in the tail-gun magazine. Finally, he went upstairs to bed.

His man. Barney, was not on hand to awaken him and bring in his breakfast, but Keen was up bright and alert half an hour before his regular time. He partook of coffee, toast, and orange juice, then changed into a neat morning suit. He made one more effort to check his nautical data. But ultimately he gave it up, went out, and stepped into his Dusenbergs roadster. An hour later he was crossing the Queensborough Bridge into Manhattan. Soon he was hurrying south through heavy traffic to the shipping district 'downtown.

Here he spent another two hours trying to check a vessel named the Evening Mist—it was the only point Keen could make out of Barney's note scrawled on the back of the Fury's compass card. But there was no such vessel listed in any of the offices he visited.

He finally gave up and tried a new angle. He drove uptown, parked his car, and wandered around to 134 East 70th Street where he called on the consulate of a certain European nation. He was cordially received and presented to one of the secretaries.

"I just dropped in," Keen explained casually, "to inquire about a Captain N. P. Gallas. I believe he is connected with your Air Service."

The young secretary stiffened and eyed Keen carefully before answering. Keen went on:

You see, I have been in touch with Captain Gallas concerning an idea for a gun that would work under the frigid conditions—such as one would experience in the Alpine areas."

"Go on," said the secretary.

"What I am getting at is that I have not heard from him in some weeks," Keen went on, taking out a gold-tipped cigarette, "and I have heard in a round-about way that he was on his way to the United States."

"Tha's right," nodded the official. "He came over here three weeks ago to take part in the National Air Races. But haven't you heard the story?"

"No—what do you mean?"

"Captain Gallas was the chief pilot of an acrobatic team sent over by our government to take part in the air program."

"I've been very busy and haven't much time to read the newspapers," Keen explained, offering his cigarette case. .

"Well, the rest of the story is very strange—and very embarrassing to our government."

"The show didn't go over according to your plan—a crash?" suggested Keen innocently.

"No, not that. They did their show all right—and well too! But early yesterday morning Captain Gallas disappeared from his room at the hotel and a Royal Canadian Air Force plane belonging to No. 4 Fighter Squadron, which had been flown by Flying Officer Norman A. Quelch at the Races, disappeared at the same time. We have every reason to believe now that Captain Gallas used some excuse—possibly a forged note—and obtained the plane for a flight. It was all very irregular, of course; for Flying Officer Quelch seems to know nothing about it at all."

"How unfortunate. Have you any idea why Captain Gallas would do such a thing? Was it a new type plane?"

"No. It was a regular Fury—a Hawker Fury Interceptor. We have seen them many times in Europe, and we cannot understand what made him do a thing like that. Of course, if he is found, he will be summarily dealt with according to Army regulations."

"I am very sorry," Keen said, assuming a worried air. "Do you think he will be found?"

"Found? Yes most certainly." the young secretary snapped. "In all probability he has had an accident somewhere and is trying to get the machine repaired so that he can fly it back and return it."

"I hope so," said Keen rising. "I do hope he turns up, because I seem to be getting somewhere with the idea we had in view."

"Oh, I'm sure you will. By the way, what did you say your name was? Just in case I am able to get in touch with Captain Gallas later on."

"Ginsberg is the name. Quentin Ginsberg," Keen said without a blush.

"Ginsberg?" the secretary said gripping the arms of the leather covered chair. "I'm most amazed . . . Ginsberg! Most astounding!"

"Isn't it? I'm sometimes astounded about it myself. Good-day, sir!"

And with that Kerry Keen hurried out of the Consulate and walked to his car which was parked around the corner.

"**NO**, I've found out absolutely nothing," Keen said to Drury Lang as they sat over lunch at the New Yorker, a late lunch, by the way.

"What have you done so far?"

"Not much but read the papers looking for an idea."

"Now don't go telling me you're worried about that Eastern Power training ship which has been in New

York for a few days. That's out—because we've had it watched like Tiffany's front window."

"Training ship? What do you mean?"

"So you've been reading the papers—yet you don't know that an Oriental training ship is in New York harbor on a good-will tour and that the town is full of their bluejackets. As a detective, you're a swell plumber."

"Wait a minute," snapped Keen. "What's the name of that ship?"

"How the hell do I know? One of them crazy names that looks like something off a chop suey restaurant sign. Here's a newspaper. Let's look."

Lang fumbled with a paper he had in his coat pocket, finally unfolded it to an inside page.

"Here you are. She leaves about 9 o'clock tonight. The officers and midshipmen are guests at a garden party out on Long Island somewhere this afternoon. Why don't you go snooping around there? You might find Wandsworth togged out as an admiral," smirked Lang.

"What's the name of the ship?" fumed Keen. "What's the name of the ship?"

"Here it is," Lang floundered. "It's the *Yugiri*—a remarkable vessel which represents an attempt on the part of Far Eastern naval designers to combine, with a displacement of 2,890 tons, speed and offensive power little inferior to the *Kuma* and *Natori* types. It carries an unusual feature—an airplane hangar set forward and under the bridge with a

catapult above the forward gun turrets; whatever the devil all that means."

"You're *sure* that's the name?" Keen pressed, trying to read the article over Lang's arm.

"Sure it is. Look—*Y-U-G-I-R-I*. What the deuce are you driving at, anyway?"

"Nothing. I'm looking for something else, that's all."

"You should—and it had better be Wandsworth," Lang leered.

"Have they decided to let on what that code key is written on?"

"No. It's too risky. But if you can get Wandsworth, you'll be well on the way."

"Never mind. I think I have the right track. There is a possibility, of course, that someone may attempt to get the key to the code aboard this training ship right here in New York city."

"That shows you don't know Wandsworth," Lang said with pride and over-show of assurance. "Do you think he's gonna give up a chance to get out of the country like that? He's around here somewhere and he'll make some sort of a deal with someone which will include a passage out of the country. You don't think he's going to risk staying about here, do you—after they pay him a quarter of a million for his stuff."

"That's a swell idea, Lang," beamed Keen. "All you have to do is to watch this training ship and see that Wandsworth," Lang said with pride and over-sail."

"Okay, sap! And suppose he does? Do you think a first-line nation like that would pull such a boner? Suppose he was caught going aboard with this information, don't you see what a stink that would cause. They couldn't write that off and say they knew nothing about it. It would be slapped right in their laps."

"Don't bark at me. I'm just trying to learn something," Keen said with a crestfallen air. "You're right, of course. He'd never try to go out like that. But suppose he tried to board it some-where out at sea—outside the twelve-mile limit, or whatever limitation they use in cases like this?"

"Now you're getting smart, Keen," beamed Lang. "That's one angle I never thought of. He could do that, of course. But it seems very unlikely. He'd have to charter a boat—or plane run by someone willing to risk such a contact. No-o-o-o-o, that'd be risky."

"All right," Keen said with finality, "we both agree he will attempt to get out of the country. And right now his best bet would be that training ship, if he could get aboard. But it seems that as far as the harbor is concerned, there's no chance. But there might be a chance if he waited until the Yugiri got out to sea."

"Listen, you mug," Lang growled. "If that guy Wandsworth gets out of this country aboard that trainer, you'd better start swimming toward the Azores. I'll tell you something—just to put a little ginger where it'll do the most good. It may interest you to know that on the night of that Ludendorff affair, one of the survivors, who unfortunately has

since died, declared that he saw two men in parachutes descend from the sky, take to an inflated life-boat, and paddle toward a place along the Long Island shore known as Graylands. You wouldn't know anything about that, would you, Mr. Keen?"

"Why is it, Lang?" smirked Keen, "that whenever you almost get something on me, as you put it, your informant always just dies, or disappears at the wrong time? Or are you still trying to pin the 'Griffon' tag on me?"

"Listen, you," snorted Lang. "If I even believed you have ever been near a plane—or even touched-one—I'd run you into the Tombs so fast, you'd be strangled by the speed. And if that guy of yours, Barney O'Dare, doesn't show up some time soon so that we can give him the 'questions and answers' business again, I'm going to pinch you anyway."

"If he doesn't turn up soon," reflected Keen, "you'd better pinch me for safe-keeping, at that. I'd give a few kopeks to know where he is myself."

Lang gave his luncheon partner a strange glance: "Is that on the level?" he asked.

"Straight as shooting. He disappeared early last night and hasn't shown up yet. I don't know where he is."

"Heaven help Mr. Wandsworth!" muttered Lang, reaching for his hat.

KERRY KEEN was a weary young man as he drove back to

Graylands. His amazing world was tottering about him, threatening to engulf him in a wild shambles. His mind was a maze of facts and half-facts—undeniable facts that left him with no answer. For the first time, he was afraid that the blundering Drury Lang was about to close his talons on him.

He realized that he had taken a long chance in getting the man he had once known as Mylon Aird to build him a new Black Bullet, but it was a chance that had to be taken. At the time, it seemed like the most logical thing to do. How could he know that Mylon Aird was to turn out to be a dangerous spy? It was true that Aird had not known for whom he was building the plane. All that had been arranged *sub-rosa* through confidential agents for a man by the name of Ginsberg.

But his greatest blow was the unexplainable disappearance of Barney O'Dare. They had approached tin houseboat, Galleon's Goal, together under a clever pre-arranged plan. It was Barney who had been fired on by Arthur Sykes. But if it was Barney who had killed the two Japs during the scuffle aboard the houseboat, he must have escaped Sykes' bullet—must have simply made believe he was hit while in the water.

"How the devil he found that Fury in the short time that elapsed between leaving me to "approach the houseboat from the east side, is a mystery to me," Keen muttered as he roared through Southampton. "But he must have run into it somewhere about there, and overheard Gallas talking to someone about this

mysterious 'evening mist.' It might have been Aird—or Wandsworth. Then, when they were not looking, he made use of our old gag and scribbled what he had heard on the back of the Fury's compass card."

But where was Barney now? He must have disappeared with Wandsworth and the Orientals—else he would have answered when Keen called. There was nothing left to work on—except the motor boat Wandsworth had escaped in—or the submarine!

Keen stiffened at that, realizing for the first time that the crazy Irishman might have attempted to get aboard the submarine, unseen. But why? The risk was far too great! If he were caught, it meant that the whole show would be given away completely.

"Those fellows would put the screws on him," Keen reflected, his stomach muscles constricting into gnawing knots at the thought of it. He'd be game to the limit and hold out—but you can't hang on when they really get working on you."

Something, perhaps it was intuition, a hunch, or just plain luck, made a great decision for Kerry Keen. He would contact that submarine somehow, if he had to use up every gallon of fuel in the Metropolitan area!

"If I could only dig up that 'evening mist' thing," he fumed, "I'm sure I'd be getting somewhere. But Damn it, there's no vessel named Evening Mist listed anywhere. Who the hell would call a ship anything like that anyway, except except say! Why didn't I think of that before?"

He raced the Dusenbergs up the curving driveway at Graylands and slammed on the brakes just as she threatened to go clear through the garage. He left her, raced through the doorway that led into the house, and charged on into his study. Perspiring and panting, he reached up for a large blue covered volume, *Jane's Fighting Ships*, the companion volume to *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*. Here was a complete listing of all the world's Naval vessels. He flipped the pages to the Far Eastern section and went through the pages headed "Second Class Cruisers." His fingers ran down the list of these vessels, then to the footnotes below.

"Just as I thought," he finally said with a sigh of relief. "The *Yugiri* is one of the vessels that has poetic names. It actually means, 'Evening Mist.' "

For a moment, Kerry Keen simply stood and stared out of his window upon Long Island Sound. He drew the newspaper Lang had given him from his coat pocket, checked the sailing time of the *Yugiri*, then went over to his desk and took out the Fury compass-card.

"They're to contact the *Evening Mist*," he reflected, "at midnight. She leaves her anchorage off 50th Street at 9 o'clock. In three hours she can be wait a minute, where's she going?"

He glanced through the news story again and found that the cruiser was headed for Europe. That made Keen purse his lips. It probably meant at least one courtesy call upon Captain Gallas' country—and

Gallas had been contacting someone near the *Galleon's Goal*. What did all this add up to?

Keen took a chart and began working out the *Yugiri's* possible course out of the harbor and past Ambrose light, following the accepted radio-beacon course to Fire Island light and on toward Nantucket light. She was a 33-knot vessel, but it was certain that she would make no such time as that until she was well past Fire Island. In the meantime she would probably hit between twenty and twenty-five knots.

He then calculated that in three hours the *Yugiri* would be somewhere about fifty miles out, so he drew a circle on his chart indicating where she might possibly be found at midnight. It would not be far beyond Fire Island light, at the best.

As he stood idly turning the pages of the big nautical volume, his eye suddenly caught something else. It was the photo and silhouette of a new Oriental submarine. The strange, clean lines of the conning tower and the absence of all surface equipment that might mar the racing lines of the long hull, caught his eye at once—and with it came the realization that this was the submarine he had seen the night before off Point Judith!

The sub was the 1-2, a Kawasaki boat capable of amazing cruising range and while the statement was not taken from official information, it was hinted that the boats of the 1-2 class all carried a small, folding-wing seaplane.

"Just to make it harder," muttered Keen, closing the big volume.

He was certain now that Wandsworth was aboard the submarine and that it was to make contact with the *Yugiri* at midnight.

All he had to do was to nab Wandsworth, get the key to the code, and rescue Barney from an unknown mess. He smiled, glanced at the clock. It was well after 4 p.m. so he simply slipped out of his clothes, took a warm bath, and climbed into bed. He was asleep within three minutes after hitting the pillow.

IT was 8 o'clock when he awoke, plainly refreshed and rested. He dressed, pulled on a pair of overalls, and went downstairs to the hangar. There he went over the new Black Bullet for the second time and checked everything. Then he removed two dural plates from the under side of the wings and revealed small but well-designed bomb racks. To these he fitted four long dart-like bombs, designed for piercing armor plate and carrying delayed-action fuses. Just the thing for puncturing the double walls of a submarine and then exploding after reaching the vital parts of the interior.

Perfectly satisfied with everything, he went upstairs, taking a bottle of champagne of a very impressive vintage and a brown stubby bottle of O'Doul's Dew from a case on the floor.

"The Scotch is for you, Barney," he mused to himself with a reflective

smile —"when we meet later tonight."

He prepared a light but tasty meal, popped the cork of the champagne and filled a crystal glass to the brim. His hand was sure and the glass was raised before a frame set high on the wall. It carried a wooden panel on which was painted a weird coat of arms. It represented a dented shield, divided by a broad green chevron. In the upper part, outlined in silver, was a gold helmet crossed with two sleek battle-pikes. In the lower section, a griffon rampant, and below, a garter across which was embroidered: "O'Dare of Kerry."

"Here's to you, Barney O'Dare—and to every O'Dare. Tonight the Griffon will return the compliment," he said, heels together and eyes aflame.



THE interior of a submarine offers the most amazing experience attainable in any Naval vessel.

Barney O'Dare discovered that ten minutes after he clambered aboard the 1-2 from the small motor boat during the excitement aboard the houseboat *Galleon's Goal*. Commander Yosiyuki Yamaki, the

submarine commander, was under the impression that the dripping man in the dark overalls was Arthur Sykes, Wandsworth's chief mechanic, while Wandsworth, mistook him in the darkness and wild escape, for one of the Oriental mechanics. He certainly looked like a submarine man.

As a result, Barney was able to slip aboard with the rest, clamber down the conning-tower, and drop into the main control room where the First Officer stood at the periscope eye-piece.

Bells clanged, pumps rumbled, and air hissed. Long white tubes, seemed to throb along the grease-filmed walls as orders were barked and repeated into wall phones. Heavy boots clattered down steel ladders and a wild array of dials under blinking electric lights, flickered, spun, and glistened. Barney mixed with the rest of them and headed forward past the Second Officer who stood by the hydroplane rudder control wheels.

Someone shoved him and yelled. Barney threw a salute and hurried on past the seated wheelmen, who had no eyes for him. They were all ears for the orders that were coming over the tube communication system connected with the great telephone helmets they wore during dive operations.

Two seamen in white blouses and blue denim trousers stood before the main battery switch board, and farther along this amazing array of gadgetry, two more sat, staring at their dials on the auxiliary switch board.

A steel box about the size of a ward-robe trunk partially blocked Barney's way through the next bulkhead door-way, so he slipped around it, then saw that beyond was what appeared to be the Officers' locker room. He turned half right and sighted a narrow steel door. He yanked quickly at the iron handle and the door came open.

Peering inside he saw that it was the upper portion of a cable locker. A length of heavy chain came up from a pile of some sort below and was fitted to a ring in the ceiling of the locker. As quick as a flash Barney slipped inside, drew the door to, and slid down the greasy chain. He dropped gently for about ten feet and then his feet came upon the rest of the chain piled up in the bottom of the locker.

"Well," he panted excitedly, "this will do for the time being."

He glanced at the radium-tinted dial of his wrist-watch, then curled up on the hard bed of steel links.

"Let's see," he mused, "I came down ten steps of the conning tower ladder.

That's approximately ten feet. Then I went down seven more into the main control room. That makes about seventeen feet. That battery room back there :)" was only about six, so there must be a compartment above that, forward of the conning tower, that's at least eleven feet high. That can only mean one thing."

Satisfied that he had worked one point out at least. Barney quietly went to sleep and prepared himself for a heavy day.

IT was early the next morning before the sub men sensed that something was wrong. They were a man short at roll call. Immediately, Commander Yamaki ordered a thorough search of the vessel. For more than an hour they searched the sub from the forward torpedo tube room back to the aft trimming gear chamber. But the missing man could not be found.

In the officer's quarters' aft of the main control room. Commander Yamaki sat with his watch officers and Wandsworth, discussing the strange situation.

"I do not like this," Yamaki said, showing his perfect teeth.

He was a short husky man, with a face that seemed to have been carved out of a chunk of ancient amber. He had a decided amount of character in his jaw and mouth, for after all, had he not been selected of all submarine flotilla commanders to carry out this delicate job? His eyes were distorted somewhat by the typical Mongol fold, but they were keen eyes—eyes that focussed on what was desired and eliminated the unnecessary.

"But I don't think anyone got aboard who shouldn't have," Wandsworth said, frowning as he tried to recall the events of the night before.

"The Watch Officer counted six men, as we came aboard. So far we can only account for five. Two of our seamen did not come back. You saw what happened to them. Who did that?" demanded Yamaki.

"I have no idea. All I saw was that you went down when you, tried to pull the mask off that fellow. Then there were two shots and your seamen both dropped in their tracks. Then a lamp went over and someone sprayed us with one of the guns your seamen took aboard."

"You are sure you do not know who that man is—that 'Griffon' fellow?"

"I know no more than you do. He seemed to know me, though. He knew that plane was there, and that it was ready for delivery. I wonder how he knew that?"

"You were building it for a man named named Ginsberg?"

"That's it, Ginsberg. But I never saw the man. I was doing business through an exporter chap by the name of Pulski. Their money was good and I needed some dough to keen in with the people who meant something in Washington. You can understand that, of course."

"Ginsberg Pulski," repeated Yamaki. "I am not satisfied, Mr. Wandsworth. Until we find out what happened to that sixth man, I shall not feel assured that we are safe."

"What are you worrying about? We have the what we came for, haven't we?" Wandsworth argued.

"I agreed. We have, but my Government does not have it yet, and I am not going to be satisfied until we have turned it over to Baron Tokiti aboard the *Yugiri*."

"Don't you realize, Mr. Wandsworth, "Yamaki explained, with Oriental seriousness, "that one man aboard this submarine can

finish the lot of us—if he knows, how to handle' things. What would happen to the key to the code then?"

"But no man would be damn fool enough to risk his life like that," protested Wandsworth.

"No? Hundreds of men have died for far less important matters. A lever pulled at the wrong time, a hammer blow on a torpedo head—and where would we be?"

Wandsworth went white.

"What what are your plans?" he said. "Remember, I've got to be taken care of. You're not going to dump me."

Commander Yamaki eyed Wandsworth for several minutes. Then, smiling, he barked an order out of the doorway. "You are afraid you will be given what they call the double-cross, Mr. Wandsworth. You were not above attempting it on your friend Captain Gallas, were you?"

"Oh, that dumb fool. He he wasn't after anything concerning this Navy thing. He was after the new Browning electric gun gear."

"You lie, Mr. Wandsworth!" Commander Yamaki suddenly stormed. "We knew a week ago you were negotiating to sell his government a copy of *Service Tactics and Battle Plans*. And later it was to be turned over to a power which for years has been our bitterest enemy!"

"You mean you mean he was going to turn it over to?"

"That copy would have been handed over to Kommissar Miekevitch, Chief Soviet Minister of

Marine and War. And you know it, Mr. Wandsworth!"

Two young officers came into the small, oil-filmed compartment and stood at attention. One was small and dumpy and looked like Commander Yamaki in miniature. The other was fairly tall and well knit. He wore the badge of a naval aviator on his jacket. Yamaki barked at them, cackled on for several minutes. Finally they both nodded and sat down.

Wandsworth stared at Yamaki trying to read what was in his mind. He cursed himself for making that one mistake of attempting to cash in twice on his big deal.

"I have been explaining to my First Officer that we will remain submerged here for two more hours. Then we will risk going to the surface, clearing the hold, and filling our compressed air bottles. We can't risk it too long, but neither can we risk staying submerged for so long. It is very hard on the men."

"I understand," nodded Wentworth.

"Then, immediately it is dark, I shall go to the surface again and shall put Lieutenant Itimiya off aboard the Aichi seaplane, so that he can contact the *Yugiri* direct. He will carry the key to the code to Baron Tokiti, personally. I do not care to risk it any longer than I have to."

"But where do I come in?" pleaded Wandsworth.

"You will be placed aboard the *Yugiri* by direct contact a few miles outside the Fire Island lightship.

Ultimately, you will be disembarked at a North Africa port with the sum of money agreed upon, paid in francs. Is that clear?"

"It's clear enough. How can I be assured that you will carry out your promises?" demanded Wandsworth.

"As sure as we can be that you have not already turned over a copy of Service Tactics and Battle Plans to someone connected with Captain Gallas' government," smirked Commander Yamaki.

"And now, will you turn over the key to the code to Lieutenant Itimiya?"

"How soon will he be leaving?"

"As soon as it is dark enough to take off."

"I'll give it to him as soon as he starts to dress for the flight," answered Wandsworth.

"I am sure you will keep your word," said Yamaki.

"I guess I'll have to," muttered Wandsworth under his breath.

IT was well after dark before the *Black Bullet* was run out of its hidden hangar and allowed to roll gently into the waters of the Sound. Then, with the big Avia motor completely muffled, Keen ran it clear of the motor-boat anchorage buoys, then gave her the gun and climbed away like a wailing banshee.

He went well out to sea first and climbed her gently, searching all the time for traces of the submarine he knew would make the all-important contact. He circled, out beyond the

Fire Island lightship and climbed higher, his mind still trying to piece out a plan whereby he could nail Wandsworth and the code-key before it was turned over to someone aboard the *Yugiri*. He was sure, how, that the contact would be made at sea; for they would not risk it in the harbor or at the dock where the training cruiser had been tied up.

He checked his watch and circled back and forth for some time, using his night glasses to scan the sea below. He raced away finally, heading for Ambrose Light, and churned back and forth watching for the broad-chested, cruiser which should now be well on its way out of the Narrows and entering the broad stretches of the Atlantic.

Suddenly, he caught a flash of something below and he tried to interpret it. A blinding semaphore had beamed out. And now he caught sight of the *Yugiri* hurtling at top speed about three miles east of Ambrose.

Keen circled, then went down. He knew if a contact was to be made it would happen at any time now. He glanced at his watch and was surprised to see that it was not much past eleven. Rather early for a showing of this sort. What was all the semaphoring about, anyway?

He soon found out.

As he swept around to get into a position ahead of the *Yugiri*, he suddenly ran almost smack-bang into two silver seaplanes that were making knots!

As he wheeled into position, they both opened fire on him from narrow angles and Keen had to rip his

Skodas out and run full-out to clear. For a minute | or so he did not attempt to fight back but tried to figure out the move. Why had these two Nakajimas 90-11 seaplanes been released from the catapults aboard the *Yugiri* so close to the harbor? That was certainly taking a risk. There must be a reason for it.

He wheeled again and tried to see what was going on aboard the *Yugiri*, but the prize cruiser was still running at full speed, and it was obvious that no surface contact could be made while it continued its present speed.

Then he suddenly remembered the submersible 1-2 and her seaplane. Was this a blind to/allow Wandsworth to get aboard via folding-wing seaplane? He made a frantic twist to get a better view of the goings on below, and just then one of the Nakajimas slammed a long thunderous burst into him. Keen twisted clear and let the Nakajima have a burst from his tail gun. Then he whipped around and poured a long burst into the other.

"What's going on?" Keen pleaded to the sky, "What's going on, anyway?" He fought hard, sighting with one eye and peering about for a sign of a small seaplane with the other. The two 90-11's hammered away at him with everything, and Keen was making the most of his tail gun to keep them off while he inspected the general layout.

Below, the *Yugiri* was hurling herself through the water at express speed. Behind, she threw a wide smoke screen as she plunged on through the seas.

The Nakajimas came in again and Keen took another wicked burst in his tail section. Then as he rolled the Bullet out of that stream of lead, he tried the rear gun again and breathed with relief when he sensed its vibrations jangle along the longerons.

But hardly had he recovered from that roll when the first speeding Nakajima wheeling under him suddenly disintegrated in mid-air, blasted by a terrific explosion that sent glinting dural and spattering flame in all directions.

"What the ?" gasped Keen. "What did that?"

But before he could make up his mind, a tiny white single-seater seaplane came clashing through the crazy screen of wreckage and Keen caught the outline of a pair of trim biplane wings, two small racing floats, and a snub-nosed radial engine cowling.

"Why, that Aichi took that Nakajima out of the play," he muttered clearing with a careful move. "What sort of a game is this, anyway?"

Then as he curled over, Keen sensed what had happened. A full throated yell battered the roof of his cockpit:

"O'Dare! You crazy Mick, you!"

There was no question about it now!

No one flew exactly like the wild Irishman. No one fought like him. No one lived like him. He stood out in this welter of crash, flame, and bloodshed like a Kerry man at a Donnybrook Fair. Keen tried to yell

again and then reached down in the cockpit, held up a stubby squat bottle, and waved it out of an open portion of the cockpit cowling.

"Look, O'Dare!" Keen yelled. "O'Doul's Dew! A whole bottle—all for you, Barney!"

He saw the Mick raise his arm and wave back—and then something happened.

"Look out!" screamed Keen. "Look out. Barney!"

But the Mick had looked on the bottle at the wrong instant. Out of a corner of his eye, Keen had spotted the remaining Nakajima taking one last chance. The Oriental had nosed down, tilted his seaplane skillfully, and poured a terrible burst into the unsuspecting Barney. The torrent of lead caught the little white Aichi cold, and she staggered, fell off, spurted a plume of white-blue smoke, and went into a sickening side-slip.

"Your switch, Barney!" screamed Keen. "Your switch!"

He watched Barney's plane wobble down the skies. Then the maddened Keen suddenly whipped over, gave the Avia everything she had, and went for the Nakajima with his Darns and Chatelleraults spitting — everything that fired forward!

The Nakajima took it, seemed to halt in its mad charge across the smoke-streaked sky, and then rolled over on its back like a lazy winged reptile. It hung there for a few seconds, puffed a fan of yellow flame, and caught fire.

Then it broke up in a horrible explosion. Its gas tank, too, had been plugged.

That was the last Keen saw of it. All that was left was flying wreckage and the kicking outlines of two bodies. He nosed down and tried to find the Aichi, but it was nowhere in sight.

"Barney! Barney!" he yelled at the top of his lungs.

He circled the Black Bullet through the drenching storm of Nakajima wreckage and sought the little white seaplane. The *Yugiri* had turned now and her plume of black smoke lay above the rollers like a massive black shawl. Keen went through it twice and sniffed at the stinking odor.

But where was Barney? And where was the submarine?

"**THAT'S** it," Keen stabbed. "They're turning around to get Barney. He must have sneaked off that sub somehow with the plane. But how in heaven's name he managed it, I don't know."

In Keen's present state of mind, the key to the code was forgotten. Lang and Scott could go to hell. Let them devise a new volume of *Service Tactics and Battle Plans*. That would only take a couple of years. Barney was far more important than a book.

The Black Bullet again shot through the smoke screen and came out over the array of funnels put up by the *Yugiri*. He jerked the bullet up as a spume of machine gun fire bathed him from the fore-deck of the cruiser.

He slashed back and sought the sub which he knew must be in the

area somewhere. He staggered through, a wild fire from some other angle and then realized that the submarine was crawling up to the *Yugiri* through the smoke screen! Yes, there she was!

With a low cry, and a steady hand on the stick, Keen wheeled over and with a cruel calculating smile he poised the Black Bullet for the kill. As he held her ready to go down in her death dive, he saw the white Aichi bobbing in the swells about 150 yards off the sub's port quarter. They were easing the sub toward the Aichi when Keen let out his war cry.

Down went the Black Bullet out of the smoke and dim light of the night. He held her steady and true all the way down until it seemed that he must take the top of the conning tower off. Then he pulled the bomb plug and two death darts shot out of the rack.

There was a hiss of speed like the charge of a rattler and the Black Bullet jerked. Keen ripped her up out of the way as the delayed fuses ignited the wicked explosive in those two long, narrow bombs.

The explosion came with a dull thud at first, and then a terrific crash resounded across the wide expanse of water. Keen peered back as the Black Bullet shot up the sky and saw a dog-tooth flame fang out of an indistinct gash forward of the sub's C. T. He smiled, gave the Aichi another glance, and went over and came out in another dive. He was icy cold now and charged with a strange surge of revenge. The Black Bullet, trim and eager, was going down

screaming like a black banshee and again he held her in check like a skilled horseman before a fence. The outline of the flame-tipped sub came into the cross-wires and again he drew the bomb release back. Once more the Black Bullet jerked, and again Keen drew her up clear.

Brr-oom! BR-A-A-A-WWWW! That was it! That was it! There's no explosive sound in the world like that belched when a magazine is hit. A confined, bursting thunder that rips steel sheets apart to at last emerge from its confinement with a bellow of heated triumph.

Keen knew what had happened on the undersea boat, and there was no time for investigation or personal triumph. There was a man down there in a bobbing Aichi. The gunners aboard the *Yugiri* were taking it out on him now, but he nevertheless released the under-carriage retraction handle and sensed the gears whirling that would lower the pontoons. He circled in wild dips and sideslips to evade the terrible fire that was being hammered at him ceaselessly through the broken patches of smoke screen.

It took nerve, iron nerve. But Keen was out for one thing now—to get Barney out of there!

The Black Bullet steadied herself. Now she neared the water, slithered upon a gentle roller, and came up with a surge near the bobbing Aichi. A man in naval uniform and wearing glasses was crawling up the fuselage. One pontoon was dragging behind in a crazy swirl of greasy water. Keen looked and drew a gun. He peered over, as another torrent of

shrapnel peppered the water all about them.

For a second or so, he was uncertain what to do. Then from the man on the bobbing wreckage came the unbelievable voice of Barney:

"Well, if you're going to sit out there all night watching the fireworks, will you please heave that bottle of O'Doul's across and let me be comfortable?"

"Barney!" gasped Keen. "Those damned glasses. They fooled me."

"Yeh? Well they fooled Wandsworth and the rest of them aboard that sub too."

"Was Wandsworth aboard that sub?"

"Sure. Heading for that cruiser. They were taking him out of the country."

"Come aboard," gasped Keen. "We've got to mark that spot. And for the love of Pete, take those glasses off."

Barney took off the silver rimmed spectacles and shoved them in a pocket of his jacket. Then he slipped off, swam across to Black Bullet, and climbed up while Keen eased the amphibian away. In a trice Barney was clambering into the cockpit and Keen was hammering the Black Bullet across the rollers and climbing away.

He circled the *Yugiri* once and made a careful check of the position of the great oil splotch that marked the resting place of the 1-2. Then he turned back toward the Long Island shore, with a final grimace at the *Yugiri*, and said: "We'll let you get

away this time, Baron. But if we catch you in these waters again, we may get real tough, eh, Barney?"

But the Irishman was pulling the cork out of the squat brown bottle with his teeth. He had nothing to say.

THEY landed quietly, ran the Black Bullet up into her secret hangar, and went upstairs. Barney still clutching the neck of the brown bottle. They hurried through the formality of folding the wings and closing the hangar doors and then settled down for a long explanation. But it was not nearly as long a story as Keen had expected.

Barney explained how he got aboard the 1-2 and where he hid. Keen nodded and closed his eyes to better picture the layout.

"Then I awoke and climbed up the chain to a door further up than the one I entered," Barney then went on. "I came out in what I decided was the sea-plane hangar. So I just moseyed about and got the lay of things. I guess they were looking for me, too. But the moving around I'd done must have put 'em off the trail. I was out of the chain locker when they got there."

Barney took another swig of Celtic nectar.

"I was messing about wondering what to do next when I suddenly realized that we had come to the surface and that they were preparing to send this seaplane off. I hid behind a tool locker and heard them entering the hangar."

"Who?"

"Wandsworth, a guy named Yamaki, and another bird I figured was the sea-plane pilot. I watched and listened. Wandsworth was squawking about turning something over, but the Commander was tough, too. Anyway, Wandsworth agreed to something and I heard him say, 'be sure that you do not take them off until you see Baron Tokiti and then make full arrangements for my being taken aboard. You are not to give them to anyone but the Baron, understand?'

"The seaplane guy evidently understood; for he nodded and started to get ready. He put on a pair of glasses and Wandsworth and Yamaki left the hangar." Barney went on.

"Did you see Wandsworth give this seaplane man anything at all?"

"No, I had to lay pretty low—didn't see everything."

"But you did see the pilot putting on his glasses."

"Sure. Half of them babies is got bad eyes. I guess he needed them to fly with."

"Go on."

"Well, the minute the other guys went out, I slipped out and coshed Mister Pilot with a wrench. He folded up. I grabbed his coat, pulled it on, then decided to make it a good show by snitching the glasses."

"The same glasses?" gagged Keen.

Sure, and I stuffed him in the locker and climbed in the cockpit before anyone realized what had happened. Then they eased me out,

on the catapult ramp, opened the wings, and gave me the signal to go."

"And you went, still wearing the glasses?"

"Sure. They were just ordinary glass; I guess. But they were good enough to use as goggles, so I just kept 'em on."

"Barney," said Keen, with a strange grin, "give me those glasses."

The Mick took another swig from the bottle and felt in his pocket. He brought out the glasses, and handed them over.

"Get the car out, my typewriter, and some, wrapping paper," Keen said. "And move fast."

Then he walked over to his desk, pulling on the glasses and peering through them as he went. He turned his head several ways, as if trying out a pair of bifocals. Then he suddenly-stopped, and held his head back so that he was peering at an angle down the lenses. As if by magic, the words, (READ RIM, L. to R. for Z-Code) came out distinctly.

He nodded, and said: "Same idea as those changing glass advertising signs one sees in windows, Barney. I kept wondering why Mr. Wandsworth didn't put his glasses on last night when Sykes asked him to read that telegram. While he was very particular that he have his glasses, yet in a poor light, he read a very important telegram without them."

"What's it mean?" Barney asked amazed.

"Look here," Keen said taking up a strong reading glass. "Look at the engraving around the silver rims—but don't read too much. The Navy might not like it."

Barney looked through the glass and gasped.

"Whew! It's almost like the Lord's Prayer engraved on the head of a pin. Golly, what a job."

"Yes, I'm afraid this is what Mr. Wandsworth was trying to get away with. On the rims of these glasses. Barney, has been engraved the key to the code of *Service Tactics and Battle Plans*. Our good friend Admiral Rawlinson will be delighted to see these again."

THEY broke all existing records on their run to New York City. They stopped once in Columbus Circle, roused out a Western Union messenger service man, and left a small parcel there. Then they raced down to 55th Street and entered Keen's town apartment.

They had hardly made themselves comfortable with coffee and sandwiches—to say nothing of a complete change of clothes and careful shaves—when Drury Lang came hammering on the door. They let him in and offered him a drink. He took it and scowled.

"Well," he snarled. "You ain't got much time, have you?"

"Oh, we'll get out on that job sometime tomorrow," said Keen. "I've been chasing after Barney."

"Where was he?"

"In a gin-mill downtown. Been seeing some old pals off on a cruise, and got a little gay, eh, Barney."

"A swell brannigan, I had on," agreed Barney soberly.

"Well, the *Yugiri* cleared okay, and we didn't find anything wrong there," Lang argued.

"Well, that's that, then. I guess Wandsworth got away clear?"

"If he has," Lang frowned, "you two guys are going to do a long stretch somewhere. Where was this gin-mill where Barney was putting on his act?"

But there was no time to answer. There was a low knock at the door and Lang leaped up and drew a gun. He waved the muzzle around and indicated that Keen should open it. "I ain't taking any chances on you two guys," he snarled.

Keen got up and opened the door. A sleepy-eyed Western Union messenger stood in the hall.

"Package for a Mr. D. Lang sign here," he said in a monotone.

Lang stared from Keen to Barney and finally let his curiosity get the better of his pride. He stepped forward, grabbed the package and the boy's book. He signed, stared at the sheet, and said: "Say! It's a package from that guy Ginsberg. What the hell is this'?"

"Open it. It ain't tickin' is it?" Barney grinned.

On hearing that crack, the boy closed his book, backed away, and hurried off forgetting to wait for a tip. Lang undid the parcel and out rolled a pair of glasses wrapped in tissue

paper. With it was a note. But Lang did not read it at once. He snatched at the glasses, peered through them and carefully wrapped them up in his handkerchief.

"What's it say?" demanded Keen.

"Read this! You guys needn't worry about Mr. Wandsworth now."

Keen took it and read:

Dear Lang:—Here's Admiral Rawlinson's glasses. I am sure you will see that he gets them safely. Your Mr. Wandsworth will be found at 73:20 W.—40:43 N. at any time. He'll be quite a ways down, but you'll find him there all right. Regards—THE GRIFFON.

"What's that?" barked Lang.

"A message from your old friend, The Griffon," Keen said with a puzzled air.

"No, I mean those figures."

"Oh, that's a chart position. That would be somewhere northeast of Fire Island Lightship," explained Keen looking up at the map over his desk.

"What the hell does that mean?" Lang spluttered.

"I haven't the slightest idea, unless Mr. Wandsworth went down in a bathysphere."

"Bathysphere? Are you nuts?"

"Well, that's the only way he could be quite a way down at that point—unless he was in a submarine."

"Hey! I'm getting out of here before you two guys have me completely goofy. Beside, I have something very important to get to

Admiral Rawlinson, Chief of Naval Intelligence. He will be very pleased, I am sure."

"Don't let us detain you," grinned Keen. "What about that code key business?"

"Oh, forget it. Take a vacation, Keen. You needn't worry about us any more. I guess you ain't the Griffon after all."

"Thanks. Take care of those rims, won't you?" Keen said quietly.

"What? Well I'll be" Lang gasped. "So you knew all the while, eh say? oh, hell! I give up!"

"Good-night, Mr. Lang," taunted Keen. "And don't forget the guy in the submarine."

"Shut up!" snarled Lang, banging the door.

Flying Aces – November 1936