

# THE PULP ERA

issue #66

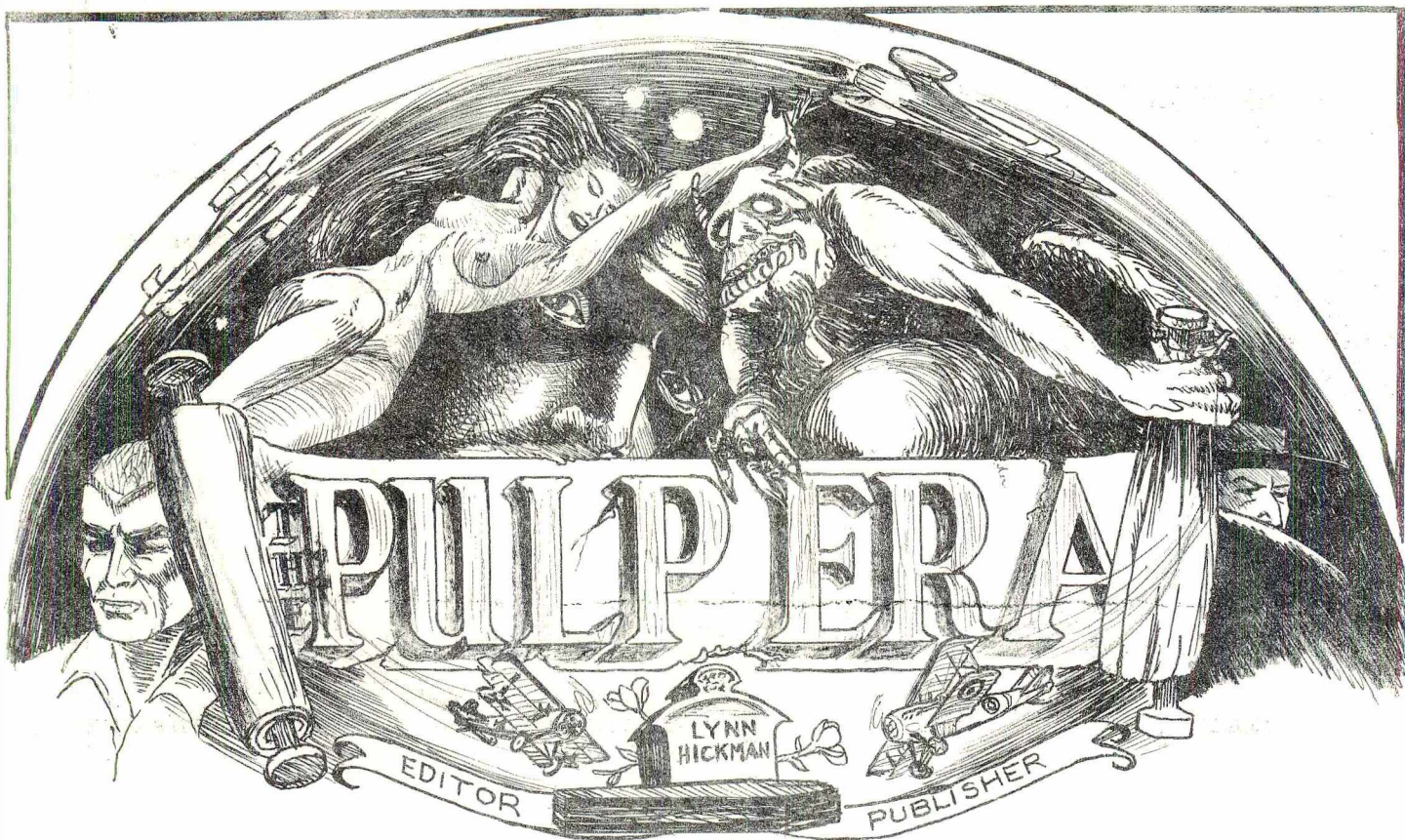
Mar.-Apr.  
1967



Luke's Last Victory 9/29/18

PROSSER 66





Issue number 66

March - April 1967

## Contents

Argassing.....	Lynn Hickman	3
The Blue Max.....	Dave Prosser	5
Flying Aces.....	Dean Grennell	9
Air War 1914-18.....	Dave Prosser	16
The Spider.....	Mac McGregor	40
News and Views.....	Gary Zachrich and Lynn Hickman	53
Letters.....	The Readers	64

Front cover design by Dave Prosser. Back cover design by Gene Duplantier. Interior illustrations by: Dave Prosser (2), Plato Jones (3, 40), Gary Zachrich (48, 57, 63), John Rackham (53), and Jay Kinney (58, 60, 61). Artfolio by Dave Prosser.

The Pulp Era is published every other month by The Pulp Era Press at 413 Ottokee Street in Wauseon, Ohio 43567. Lynn A. Hickman, Editor and Publisher. 50¢ per single copy. 5 issue subscription \$2.25. 10 issue subscription \$4.00.

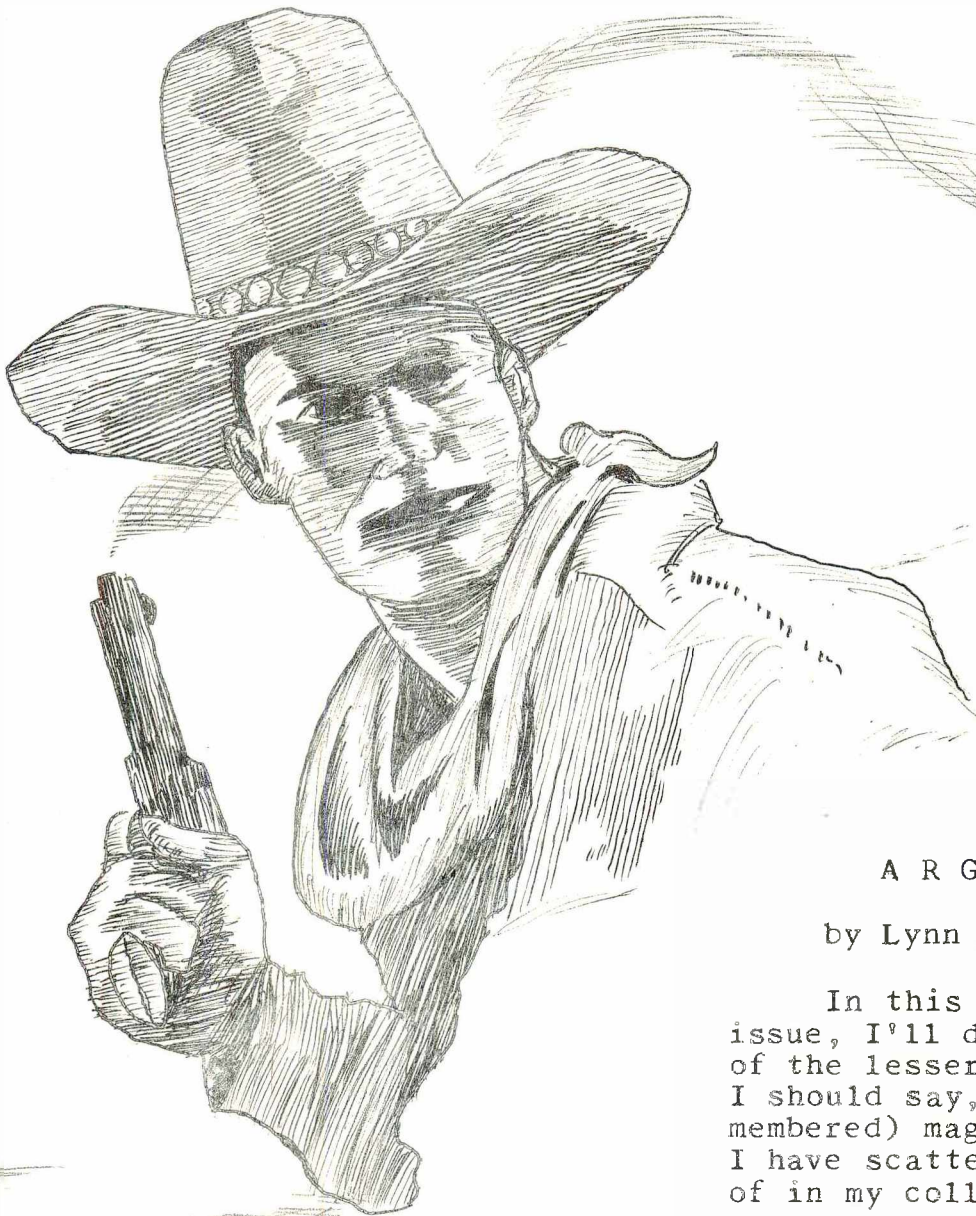
Be sure to send any change of address at once. Returned copies will not be resent unless additional postage is sent. Be sure to include your zip code.

Please Notice: Please turn to page 52 for an announcement on subscriptions and to see whether your subscription is expiring with this issue.



# Ace-High<sup>1</sup>

## MAGAZINE



design by Plato Jones from the cover  
of the second September issue, 1930

### ARGASSING

by Lynn A. Hickman

In this column each issue, I'll discuss some of the lesser known (or I should say, lesser remembered) magazines that I have scattered issues of in my collection.

I don't know how many of you read or remember Ace-High, but it was one of the more popular magazines of the late twenties and thirties. I have approximately 100 mint copies

and thirties. I have approximately 100 mint copies in my collection, the dates ranging from 1928 through 1935. Ace-High was published (through its life) by several publishers. The copies I have from 1928 through 1931 were published by Clayton, the 1934 and 1935 copies were published by Dell. I believe that the title was then sold to Popular in 1936 who then published 2 different magazines, Ace-High Western and Ace-High Detective.

Ace-High Magazine as we will discuss here was the Clayton Publication. I've chosen 4 issues at random from 4 different years. The 1928 and 1929 issues feature Western Adventure and Sports stories according to the cover blurb, while the 1930 and 1931 issues feature Western, Action and Sports Stories.

The 2nd March Number, 1928 (Ace-High was published semi-monthly) featured a western cover by H. C. Murphy. It contained a complete novel, "The Gun-Slingin' Gringo" by William Colt MacDonald, a serial, "The Colorado Streak" by W. D. Hoffman, and 6 short stories. All stories but one were western, the other a story of the north. Other magazines published by Clayton at this time were Ranch Romances, Cowboy Stories, The Danger Trail, Clues and The Five-Novels Monthly.

The 1st June Number, 1929 featured a western cover by F. T. Everett. It contained a complete novel by Johnston McCulley, "With Guns Aflame", 2 serials, "Buffalo Bill -- Frontiersman" by Frank Winch and "Guns of Fury" by Nels Leroy Jorgenson. There were also 6 short stories, 3 western, 1 sport, 1 lumbering, and 1 animal. Other magazines published at this time by Clayton were Ranch Romances, Cowboy Stories, Wide World-Adventure Trails, Clues, Five-Novels Monthly, Three Star Stories, Air adventures, Rangeland Stories, Big Story Magazine, Miss 1929, and Forest and Stream. Clayton claimed sales of over a million and a quarter magazines per month.

The 2nd September Number, 1930 featured a western cover by Jerry Delano. The complete novel was "Gunman Gorge" by Grant Taylor. The serial novel was "West of Piute Pass" by J. Irving Crump. This issue also featured a novelette of the north country "Feud of the Huskies" by Howard E. Morgan, plus 4 short stories, all western. Other magazines published were Ranch Romances, Cowboy Stories, Clues, Five-Novels Monthly, Rangeland Love Story Magazine, Astounding Stories, All Star Detective Stories and Western Adventures. Clayton now claimed sales of over two million copies per month.

The first June number, 1931 featured a western cover by Fred Craft. The complete novel was "Two of a Kind From Texas" by J. Irving Crump. There was a Mountie novelette, a western serial, a western article, a western poem, 3 western short stories, and 1 baseball short story. Other magazines published were the same with the addition of Western Love Stories.

All copies of Ace-High Magazine in my collection are for sale or trade. All copies but 4 are absolutely mint and the other 4 are good to excellent. Will sell at \$2.50 per copy or will trade for Argosy, Air Adventures, Buck Jones Western, Pete Rice Western, The Lone Eagle, Sky Fighters, etc. Same condition.



## "THE BLUE MAX"

Some thoughts and observations...and a comment or three

by Dave Prosser

This is being written for inclusion in the air war edition of "The Pulp Era" and while some might quibble it has no place therein, it deals with the period, the war and the subjects which took up a great deal of the space in the pulps dealing with these matters.....probably as much as 25-30% or more considering the years these zines were available. So there are many I feel sure, who will, as I do, recall with nostalgia the days of the 1914-18 "War in the Air", when there was, for a time at least, still a touch of chivalry, the aircraft were tributes to the courage and abilities of those who flew them, and there was and is, an almost indefinable "something" about the planes themselves which, for those of us this feeling has entered, can never be replaced or altered. I remember too, the delight I felt in reading the "Phineas Pinkham" stories by Joe Archibald, the most excellent covers by Blakeslee on Dare-Devil Aces and others, etc..... and enough of this!

This is not a detailed analysis of plot, acting, or the usual movie review. Taken as a whole, the movie should be recommended most highly to anyone interested in the WWI flyers and their machines. I believe this film captures more than any other the spirit of the times, the appearances of the airfields and landscapes, the vehicles and materials, of the period.

The color is beautiful, the photography beyond reproach, and some of the battle scenes in the air are truly breath-taking and I can't remember a film that captures ~~the feelings of vastness or~~ ~~"aloneness" of the sky~~ as does the opening scene above the clouds.

The reconstructions of the aircraft are most excellent generally, but the booklet sold in the lobby pertaining to the film which states "--the Blue Max" aims at authenticity in the smallest details" must be taken with a few grains of salt. Let me explain that for the person who is not very familiar with the aircraft of the period, there would be nothing to note; I'm sure they will accept all of this in good faith and so should we all really, for the effort and money, the time and work put into the recreation of these planes and all the aerial scenes has produced miraculous effects and sage realism. My own commentary here is mainly a recounting of my own thoughts and reactions to the film and some comments which may appeal to some of the more technically minded.

For the film there were reconstructed several precisely accurate aircraft which will bring joy indeed to the hearts of those familiar with them. There were at least 2 Fokker Dr. 1 Triplanes; (The one painted red for Richtofen's appearance was undoubtedly redone for appearance later in proper camouflage markings) 3 or 4 Fokker D7s, a couple of British S.E.5s and Pfalz D3s.



Naturally, they couldn't rebuild or gather 2 or 3 entire squadrons of the original planes, so the methods adopted are quite feasible and well-done....and only noteworthy, perhaps, to a person deeply engrossed in the aircraft of the period, or one who is a perpetual griper (which I hope this article won't classify me). In scenes where a flight of planes is shown, the most authentic of the rebuilt planes are shown closest to the screen, the "secondaries" farther away where differences from reality are not so noticable. The only real gripe I could mention is that they used quite a few biplanes of which the wings were "swept-back"; whatever they were intended to be, the effect is lost for I believe it can be truthfully stated that no aircraft of WWI---at least the major fighting planes---had such a wing formation. This is the poorest thing, but compared to all the fine points, a very minor one, and should not really bother anyone's enjoyment.

Some more technical points; some of which should have been done differently:

1. The first plane Stachel (George Peppard) downs is an S.E.5 while in the air; however, the scene of the crash shows the rudder to be of something completely different. S.E.5 rudders were standard, not varying with modifications and were flat-topped as shown here:



The rudder quite closely seen in the film, however, is high and somewhat pointed, as seen here:



and completely different from the plane it represents.

2. Surprisingly enough, the smoke trails from "shot-down" or damaged planes is still---in this film at least---being done generally by smoke-pots attached beneath the plane or to the landing gear. Not only does this make the source of the smoke quite obvious in many shots but the smoke-cylinders are also obvious as little tubular attachments on the landing gear in some shots...especially while planes are on the ground.
3. In the scenes of the dogfight which Stachel leads the flight into against orders not to engage the enemy (immediately following the strafing of the Allied troop column) I believe were strips of colored fabric attached to Stachel's plane, which generally indicated the flight leader (or squadron leader) which is wrong, for the squadron leader was with them on this mission and should have had them on his plane.
4. I knew something was bothering me about the Fokker D7s but not till halfway through the film did I realize what it was. I read somewhere that the majority of D7s never wore anything



but the standardized "straight-edged" German crosses (mainly because of their entry date into general usage). All D7s and all other German planes in the film wore the original "cross Patee" (often erroneously called the "Maltese Cross")



This brought on the realization that there was another problem of time: The cross patee, in black, was used as the international marking of Germany on its aircraft from the beginning of the war until the end of 1917. HOWEVER, from January 1, 1918, the order was to abandon the cross patee and use only the straight edged Latin Cross. This is quite similar to the German insignia used in WW2, except that the width of the WW1 markings were less, making the cross appear to have longer lines. Therefore, since the body of the film took place in 1918, the Latin Cross should have been used exclusively in the film.

5. For the first time, I believe, the German planes were camouflaged in the true hexagonal patterns. Camouflage began to be used in 1916; the original method was irregular patterns of green and red/brown or mauve and green, the shades varying greatly. April 12, 1917 brought an order to discontinue use of the red/brown due to mistaken identity due to its use; some of the German pilots had been attacking their countrymen. From then on the colors used were combinations in generally hexagonal patterns of green, from sage to dark olive; mauve varying from lilac to indigo. Other colors occurred occasionally, as well as other patterns, including a sprayed pattern of green and brown, so as to give a cloudy, blurred effect. Undersurfaces of body and wings usually sky blue, although there were instances where the camouflage patterns were used on bottoms of wings also. The patterns and variations used in The Blue Max are most authentic and a real pleasure to see so beautifully done.

6. While the D7s seen in this film are excellent copies of the original, obviously different engines are used from the original, for while the original D7 had the propellor shaft at the bottom of the "nose" of the plane, those in the film are at the top.

7. The plane intended to represent the R.E.8 British Observation plane has had seemingly little attempt made to redo it to look the part, except for the gunners cockpit and gun and mount. It is simply a bi-wing plane of (I believe) British make, one of those probably used for training pilots. I have the feeling too, (without checking), that the planes with swept-back wings might well be made by the DeHavilland Co.---perhaps their "Gypsy Moth" for this name keeps coming to me, but these are about the same thing as is the R.E.8.

8. The British markings on this "R.E.8" are basically sound



though I can find no proof that such squadron markings as these were ever used by an R.E.8 squadron. All information indicates that the two white bars, one on either side of the cockade, slightly angled inward at the top, were used by fighter squadrons. It might be possible that some squadron used them, however, since when a new identification was adopted by a group, the previous one seems to have been adopted occasionally. The "A 8590" marking on this plane is quite proper.

These are all relatively unimportant things really, and I hope they will not influence anyone against seeing the film, for they would be cheating themselves of a real treat. This commentary is intended to be of interest only to those of a more technical mind and nature, of whom I feel there are still some around. If it gives interest and pleasure to others, all the better. This film is a real gem at least as far as the air-war part of it goes.....and I for one hope they'll find this one profitable enough to consider doing another.....perhaps about the Red Baron... though how they'd doctor up the character to make him have a more general appeal I don't know. Carl Schell's brief appearance in the film, as Richtofen, reminded me of Ted Cogswell, just off his motorcycle. But enough of this; all has been said which was intended. As a final thought, some excellent source material for some of this type thing can be found in:

Camouflage - '14-18 Aircraft by Owen G. Thetford (Harborough Pub. Co., Allen House, Newarke St., Leicester, England. 1943

"W.W. I Aircraft Finish" -- a series of articles beginning in the Nov. 1957 issue of the English magazine, "Aero Modeller"

David Prosser

\*\*\*\*\*

Argassing (continued from page 4)

New subscriptions are still coming in at a surprising rate so I have increased the print run for this issue by 10%. It is very gratifying to me that so many like the magazine as well as they do.

You will notice on the contents page that the price has been increased to 50¢ per copy. The readers vote on the price increase ran in the high 90's for the larger magazine and the larger price. The price increase will also mean that I can use photo-offset plates more often than in the past and that I can now send the zine out in envelopes.

With this issue I am enclosing a questionnaire that I hope you will all fill out and return. It will help us in our efforts to bring you articles on the magazines, authors, and artists that you want to read about. Please return it at the earliest possible time.

(Continued on page 39)



## FLYING ACES

by Dean Grennell

I started buying Flying Aces sometime around the middle of 1936 but it was several years old at that time. I have the impression that it started out as one of the conventional shag-edged pulps in the familiar 6 3/4" x 9 3/4" format favored by Dare-Devil Aces, G-8, and all the rest.

However, by the time I started buying it, they had switched to the format that was about the same as the Astounding of the "blanket-size" era; that is, about 8 3/8" x 11 3/8" with most issues running between 80 and 96 pages.

By the time I had read through and accumulated a stack of these about 30" high, there was a war on and the Allies were in such desperate straits I no longer felt I could conscientiously withhold my support. Since I didn't know just when I might be back, indeed if ever, I fobbed off nearly a hundredweight of mint-condition Flying Aces on an old codger in Fond du Lac, name of Billy Something-or-other. He ran a little, fly-specked hole-in-the-wall "restaurant", frying up tiny little hamburgers to order and serving flat, warm cokes in chipped glasses. It was that sort of place; Andy Young would have stamped his approval on it after the hastiest glance. Billy had a few shelves in the back where he kept a few old magazines and I used to buy, sell and swap with him. I don't recall just how many I had nor how much he gave me apiece but I think I netted around 75¢ in the deal.

Right now I'd cheerfully give 75¢ to have them back; a buck even.

A revenant of Flying Aces still haunts the newsstands in the form of something called Flying Models. I have occasionally flipped through a copy of this but the oldtime magic is gone, all gone.

The old Flying Aces had a sort of quasi-fannish flavor all its own. There never was and perhaps never will be another magazine quite like it.

(reprinted from the May 1961 issue of Yandro. This first appeared as an installment in the series, "The Fallen Mighty".)



Like a lot of the other pulpzines of that time, they had a club (called "The Flying Aces Club", fittingly enough). You joined by sending a coupon from the magazine with a stamped self-addressed envelope. After you were once enrolled -- and they claimed an enrollment of over 50,000 -- you could then accumulate coupons till you had three, send these with a dime and get a pair of Cadet wings. Having got these, five more coupons and another dime got you a pair of Pilot wings. Then if you enrolled five new members, you got an Ace's Star and became eligible for membership in the Flying Aces Escadrille and, once a member of that exalted body, you could hopefully aspire to such awards as the Distinguished Service Medal and the Medal of Honor. Club news, covering a few pages of each issue, ran pix of members decked out in improbable uniforms (of their own design, one presumes) and identified, for instance, as "Captain William Forbes, F.A.C., D.S.M., who represented our F.A. outfit on the recent 'pilgrimage' to Europe made by the American Legion." It sounds corny and perhaps it was but it was calculated to give the readers a sence of participation and it did. I never joined -- not wanting to chop up my magazines, for one thing.

I have at hand only three copies of the pre-war Flying Aces: March 1938, August 1938 and September 1940 and perhaps I should say "pre-Pearl Harbor", since there was some sort of war going on somewhere when all of these appeared. The invasion of Ethiopia, The Spanish Civil War, the Chinese-Japanese fracas (remember the "Panay"?) and, by September of 1940, the opening rounds of WW 2 were well under way...this is a lame sentence...I mean to note that all of these conflicts were contemporaneous with the various issues and received a lot of attention in the pages of FA.

Lacking a larger file, I can only go by these and my notoriously fickle memory in describing the magazine. When I say that I do not remember ever seeing any fiction by anyone except Donald E. Keyhoe, Joe Archibald and Arch Whitehouse in FA -- the blanket size, I mean -- I stand ready to accept correction from anyone who says different.

A glance at these old issues is enough to prove that Don Keyhoe did not have to write about flying saucers to qualify as a dullard and a bore. He contributed a pedestrian and interminable yarn about a trepid birdman named Richard -- sometimes "Dick" -- Knight to each and every issue. They were weary, trite and tedious in the worst pulp traditions. Even in the days when my sense of wonder burgeoned like unto the green bay tree, I couldn't stand the damned things. The mere concept of rereading one now for the purpose of this article is enough to make me break out in siphuncles. Let us pass quietly over Dick Knight. R.I.P.

Practically anyone who remembers the old Flying Aces remembers Phineas Pinkham very well indeed. A Pinkham yarn appeared in every issue, illustrated and written by Joe Archibald. The action took place in France in the first world war and Phineas was a Spad-pusher with the Ninth Pursuit Squadron, out of Bar-le-Duc, Major Rufus Garrity commanding. The stories were pitched at a pace of

feverish hilarity which strikes my ripened literary tastes as a bit exhausting but I admit that in those days I ate it up and faunched for the next issue.

Pinkham was an ardent practical jokester and in between bringing about the downfall of some arch-enemy among the "krauts" -- in those happy, faroff, unenlightened days when all men weren't necessarily brothers, it was perfectly de rigeuer to refer to former enemies by such uncomplimentary epithets -- he made life utterly damnwell intolerable for his squadron-mates with his exploding cigars and similar devices. Among his peers, Pinkham had a popularity rating considered lower than that of a mosquito in a nudist colony. Nobody loved him but the readers.

Joe Archibald was a prolific pulpster in those days. He contributed countless dead-serious stories to the numerous sports-pulps and most of his stories were quite devoid of humor but he gave his whimsy free rein and slashed it across the flanks with a buggywhip when he turned to the monthly Pinkham yarn. Broad puns and long-winded similies cavorted capriciously among sly slapstick and hairy hyperbole. I purloined one of Joe's similies once when the English teacher asked for one in a quiz. "Quiet as the main street of Glasgow in a charity drive", I put down. He marked it wrong. "The main street of Glasgow is never quiet," he observed firmly. He had no sense of humor to speak of, that boy.

Every issue featured numerous short pieces and erticles on full-sized airplanes; on building model aircraft and on various phases of military and civil aviation. There was a memorable series in 1938 by George Lyle called "Learn to fly with Jack Conroy", which related how, under the tutelage of brusque old instructor Chet Macklin, Jack eventually won his wings. This was remarkably interesting and it still strikes me as well-written even today. George Lyle was listed as being a "Transport Pilot and Flying Instructor" -- it may have been a pseudonym -- but I don't recall ever encountering anything else by him. With a writing style like that, it's a shame he didn't do more.

The Conroy series, as well as all of the Whitehouse stories and several factual departments were illustrated by Alden McWilliams. Science Fiction fans will recognize the name as that of an occasional illustrator in the s-f mags as well as the artists for a short-lived s-f comic strip called "Twin Earths". McWilliams was a pretty fair-to-middling draftsman and his pen and ink work had a clean, sure quality I've always liked.

Arch Whitehouse flew in the first World War with the Royal Flying Corps, first as a gunner, later as a pilot in Sopwith Camels, perhaps the most treacherous single-engine pursuit ship ever designed; their heavy rotary engines -- that is to say, a considerable part of the engine went around at the same speed as the propellor, being fastened to it -- gave them a ferocious torque that had to be fought every inch of the way. A moments inattention and your Camel was spinning madly for terra ever-so-firma and a Camel in a spin had a single-minded strength of purpose not even



surpassed by a mink in rut. That Whitehouse, flying one of these fiendish contraptions, managed not only to survive but actually shot down a number of enemy planes established his credentials as an authority on combat flying pretty firmly in my book.

One further scrap of Sopwith Camel folklore that I can't resist quoting here: "If you can take a wildcat and balance him on the bushy end of a broom and balance the other end of the broom on the end of your left index finger which has been liberally coated with grease -- and do this blindfolded -- and carry the whole business without once dropping it clear across a large hangar, the floor of which is covered with broken glass -- and do this barefooted -- then... you might stand half a chance of being able to learn to fly a Camel."

Whitehouse served as a newspaper and magazine correspondent in the second World War and has since written more magazine articles and hard cover books than anyone would care to have to read in a single week. In the pages of Flying Aces he wrote on alternate months about a character called "The Griffon" -- of whom more later -- and about a peregrinating aircraft salesman named Crash Carringer. I believe Carringer superceded an earlier alternate named Coffin Kirk but do not have any issues at hand containing a Kirk story so I won't swear to that.

Crash Carringer flew about in, tried to sell and occasionally sold a jazzy little pursuit ship called the Hale Hellion. In appearance it resembled a cross between a P-38 Lightning and a P-39 Airacuda (or was that the Airacobra? -- my memory really is getting motheaten!)...that is, it had the twin booms of the P-38 with a single pusher prop powered by a motor behind the pilot in the P-39 manner. It was a hot little ship, naturally. The stories were pleasant to read but had no enduring flavor, no prominent features worth commenting on at this late date.

Not so the Griffon yarns! Some continuity characters have a warmth and stature that others can never hope to attain. Holmes and Watson had it; so have Nero Wolfe and Archie Goodwin, but Perry Mason hasn't a trace of it. The older "Saint" stories of Leslie Charteris from the thirties and early forties have it to a high degree; the James Bond books of Ian Fleming have more than almost any continuity-character of the present day.

I suppose if you had to boil down this trait and call it by a single word, you might choose "empathy", a sense of reader involvement and identification. You feel well-aquainted with a character that has this and you can't work up much interest in one that lacks it.

I've heard Holmes fans aver that one of the most enjoyable facets of the Holmes saga is the glimpse you get at the start of each story of the routine, day-to-day life of Holmes and Watson in their flat on Baker Street between cases. In the case of characters having some quantity of inherent charm, such as Holmes and Watson, this is a desirable thing. In the case of characters such as "The Shadow", which are little more than crude manikins

jerkily moving through their roles in some sort of improbable pseudo-life, the less homelife shown, the better.

The Griffon's eyrie was a palatial estate on Long Island called "Greylands". Like all pulp-borne crimefighters, he was quite well-off, financially. Supposedly, he made his stack as a ballistics consultant -- a theory I, personally, find somewhat implausible. At any rate, he Had It Made and there was an adroitly concealed underground hangar and, at the touch of a hidden switch, an innocent-looking rock garden would roll silently to one side and out would taxi an ominous-looking black amphibian called "The Black Bullet" (there were at least two, perhaps three of these, over the years). Its motor would be purring throatily through special Skoda mufflers (how the sound of the prop was silenced was never revealed) and it would taxi down to the water's edge, out into the sound, the throttle would open up, and with Skoda cut out, the sleek amphib would get up on the step and launch itself into the gathering gloom.

From that time on, such international spies and other malefactors as might be abroad in aircraft of their own would be well advised to spend their final few moments in putting their earthly affairs into order. The firm of Keen & O'Dare, alias Ginsberg & Pulaski, would take no second place to Burke and Hare as efficient exterminators. Salvage rights to all the shattered steel and dural that dropped in flames before their yammering machine guns over the several issues of their career would net some lucky chap a fortune in scrap metal today.

The Griffon in his battle regalia was not too unlike some of the more subdued comic-book crusaders whose appearance he presaged by a few years. From "Coffin in the Fog", in the March, 1938, FA:

The man at the controls was dressed in a black coverall and wore a scarlet mask of silk and rubber under his service helmet. He was handsome in a cold determined way. His lips were drawn in a hard line, but there was a hint of a smile at the corners.....

Riding back in the rear gun emplacement was another figure a squat and burly one with a face that bore the tangible evidence of much violent action except that, on such a foray as this, it was covered by a similar costume.

We might as well introduce the two of them at this point. Up there in the front cockpit is Kerry Keen, primary identity of The Griffon himself (wave to all the folks, Kerry) though when out questing like this he insists that his accomplice (fellow-crusader, if you will) call him by his nom-de-plume of "Ginsberg".

He, in turn, calls the gunner-guy (as Whitehouse often termed him) by the grossly inappropriate name of "Pulaski". His real name is Barney O'Dare (grin and hoist that bottle of O'Doul's Dew in salute, Barney) and a leading national independent research laboratory reports that, by actual test, he is up to 37.8% more Irish than any leading brand of Paddy's Pig tested.



He, O'Dare, is a fair valet and house-boy to Keen between jousts with the ungodly; an indefatigable consumer of Irish whiskey and a damned fine aerial gunner. Given any kind of decent shot at a target, he never missed it and (here your writer speaks with some scantle of authority himself) that makes him either incredibly good or insufferably lucky or both.

This pair, in those days, comprised the entire inner circle of the Griffon's crew since he fell squarely into the category of covert crime-fighters, i.e., those whose true identity was not known to the public at large (FA readers excepted) nor to any duly constituted legal authorities.

Sometime later, but prior to September, 1940, a third member was admitted --admitted herself, rather. This was a pert and shapely blonde miss by name of Barbara "Pebbles" Colony. I regret I do not have the issue at hand wherein she made her first appearance but I recall reading it off the stands shortly after I had bought and read Charteris' "The Ace of Knaves", and I was struck by the truly astounding coincidence of similarity between Pebbles' appearance in the Griffon story and that of Miss Brenda Marlow in "The Unlicensed Victuallers" in the Charteris book.

Like Brenda, Barbara originally appeared to be against the side of the angels and switched allegiance in mid-narrative..... few writers possess sufficient gall to adamantly insist that a beautiful female character can be more than mistakenly supposed to be bad. Unlike Brenda, who dropped back into limbo after that single Saint story, Pebbles appeared with at least a walk-on part in nearly all of the subsequent Griffon stories.

Certain dour and misanthropic types might have intimated that Whitehouse sailed at times parlously close to the reef of plagiarism; that, while Keen himself did not too closely resemble Simon Templar, O'Dare was everlastingly and forevermore Templar's faithful stooge, Hoppy Uniatz, tricked out in a stage Irish brogue, his beloved Scots Whiskey exchanged for Irish Whiskey and his IQ augmented by perhaps a few jots and a couple of tittles. Maybe this is rank injustice to Whitehouse. Maybe he never in his whole life read a word of Charteris'. It is possibly possible.

Add to Keen and O'Dare, later Pebbles, the names of John Scott "Head of the F.B.I. New York Division", and his bumbling but good-natured underling named Drury Lang and you have the complete dramatis personae of the entire series. I donot recollect that The Griffon ever had any dealings with the municipal NY police. Such other casting as seemed necessary -- minor spear-carriers and expendable villains -- was done on a strictly one-shot basis.

The Griffon and Barney were notable for at least one other thing. I can't recall that they ever got themselves captured, knocked out or tied up although (correct me if I'm wrong) it seems as though Pebbles occasionally got immobilized by the opposition in the time-honored Queen-in-check gambit so dear to the hearts of the pulpsmiths. But for the hero and his henchman to go uncaptured for episode after episode, never walking through a door and "A star seemed to explode inside my head. I felt myself

falling in slow cartwheels, down, down, and eternally down as waves of blackness washed throbbingly over me, dissolving my very being, etc." smacks so overpoweringly of the miraculous, is so fresh and original, that even the most carping critic is moved to offer such an author absolution for any darkly suspected copy-cattery in some other aspect. Anyhow, I think so.

It is my opinion, and a purely subjective one, that the Griffon series represents the top highwater mark for all continuity characters hatched by the various air-war pulps. I say this, having also read some of the Bill Barnes stories.

Dean Grennell

\*\*\*\*\*

### W A N T E D

Back issues of "The Pulp Era". Also back numbers (before 1930) of Western Story, Detective Story, Argosy, All Story, Bluebook.

Michael Fogaris : 38 Ackerson Place : Passaic, New Jersey

\*\*\*\*\*

### W A N T E D

I need the following pulps to complete runs. If you can furnish any of these advise condition and price. Will consider inferior copies if contents are intact.

Secret Service Operator #5 V1#1, April 1934 : V2#4, Nov. 1934

Dusty Ayres and his Battle Birds, all issues up to but not including V6#1 except V5#4. All issues after V8#3 but not including V8#3.

Secret Agent X V1#1, Feb., 1934 : V1#2, Mar., 1934 : V2#1, May 1934 : V3#2, Oct., 1934 : V4#1, Dec., 1934 : V4#3, Feb., 1935 : V5#2, Apr., 1935.

and ALL remaining issues except the following: V9#1, Aug., 1936 V12#2, Aug., 1937 : V13#1, Feb., 1938 : V14#3, Mar., 1939.

Earl Kemp : 568 Roselle Avenue : El Cajon, California 92021

\*\*\*\*\*

Please mention The Pulp Era when answering advertisements.

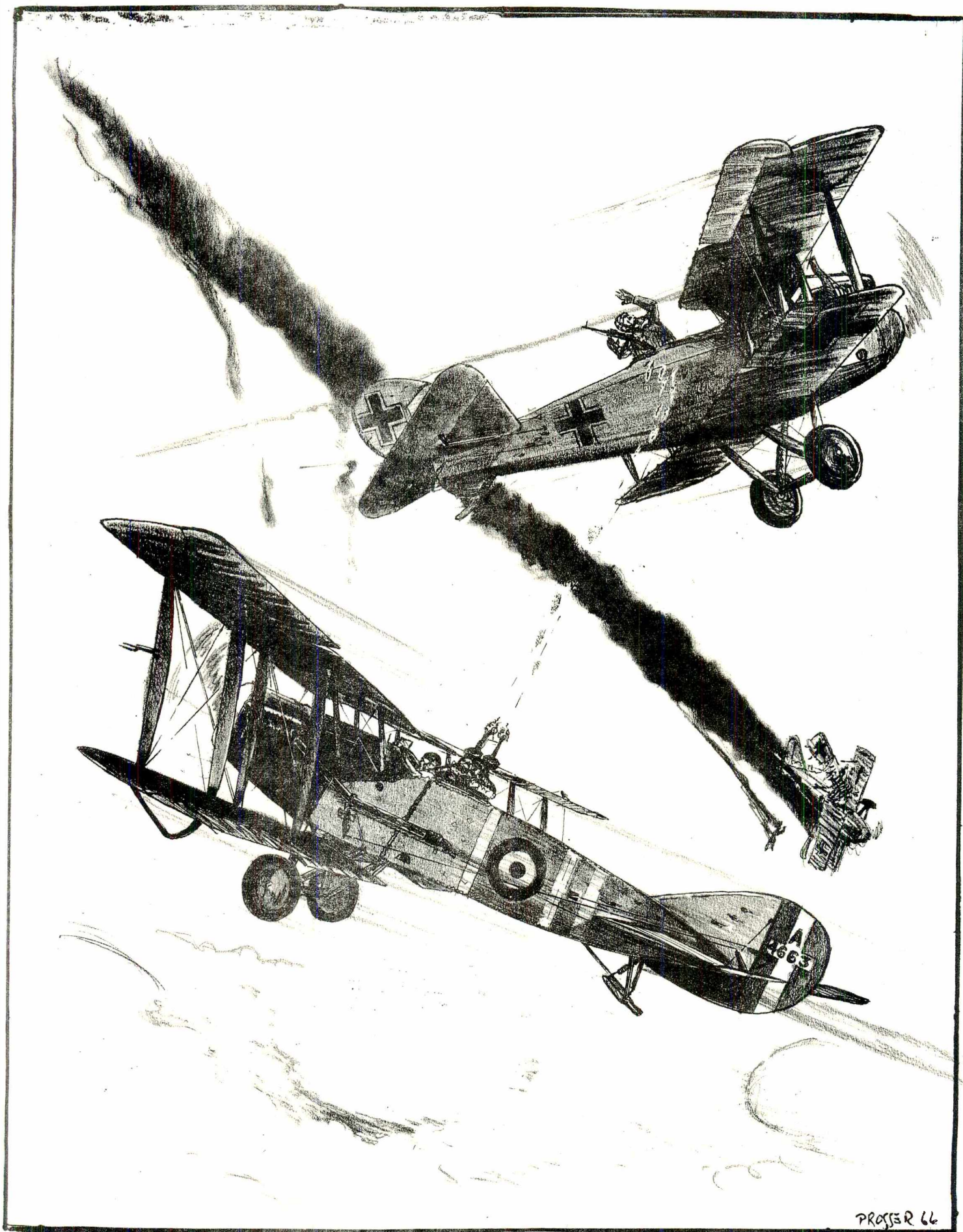
\*\*\*\*\*



# AIR WAR

1914~18

by Dave Prosser



BRITISH BRISTOL F-2B FIGHTER

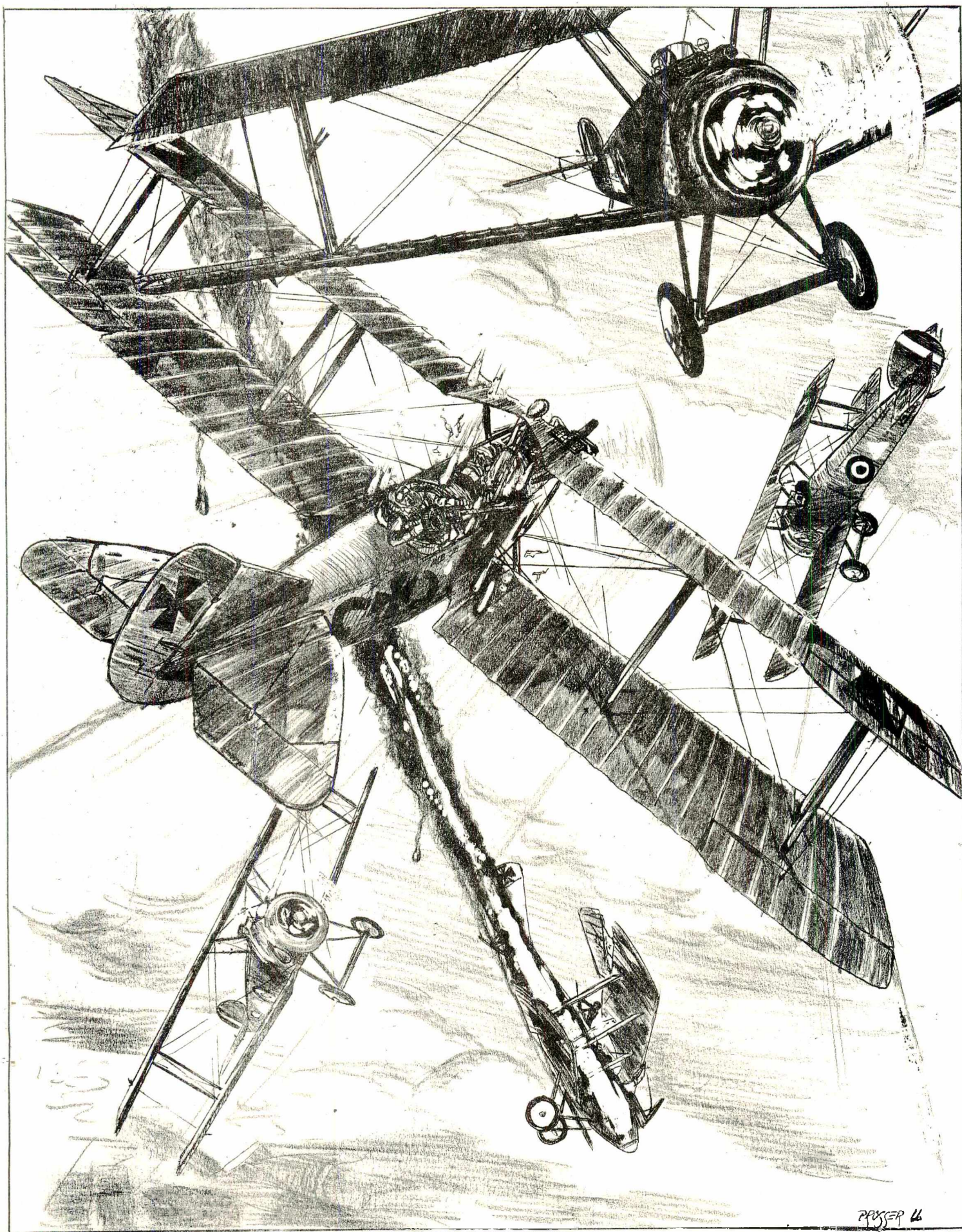
GERMAN: L.V.G OBSERVATION

PROSSER 66









PRISER 46

BRITISH: SOPWITH "CAMEL"

"INTERRUPTED FLIGHT"

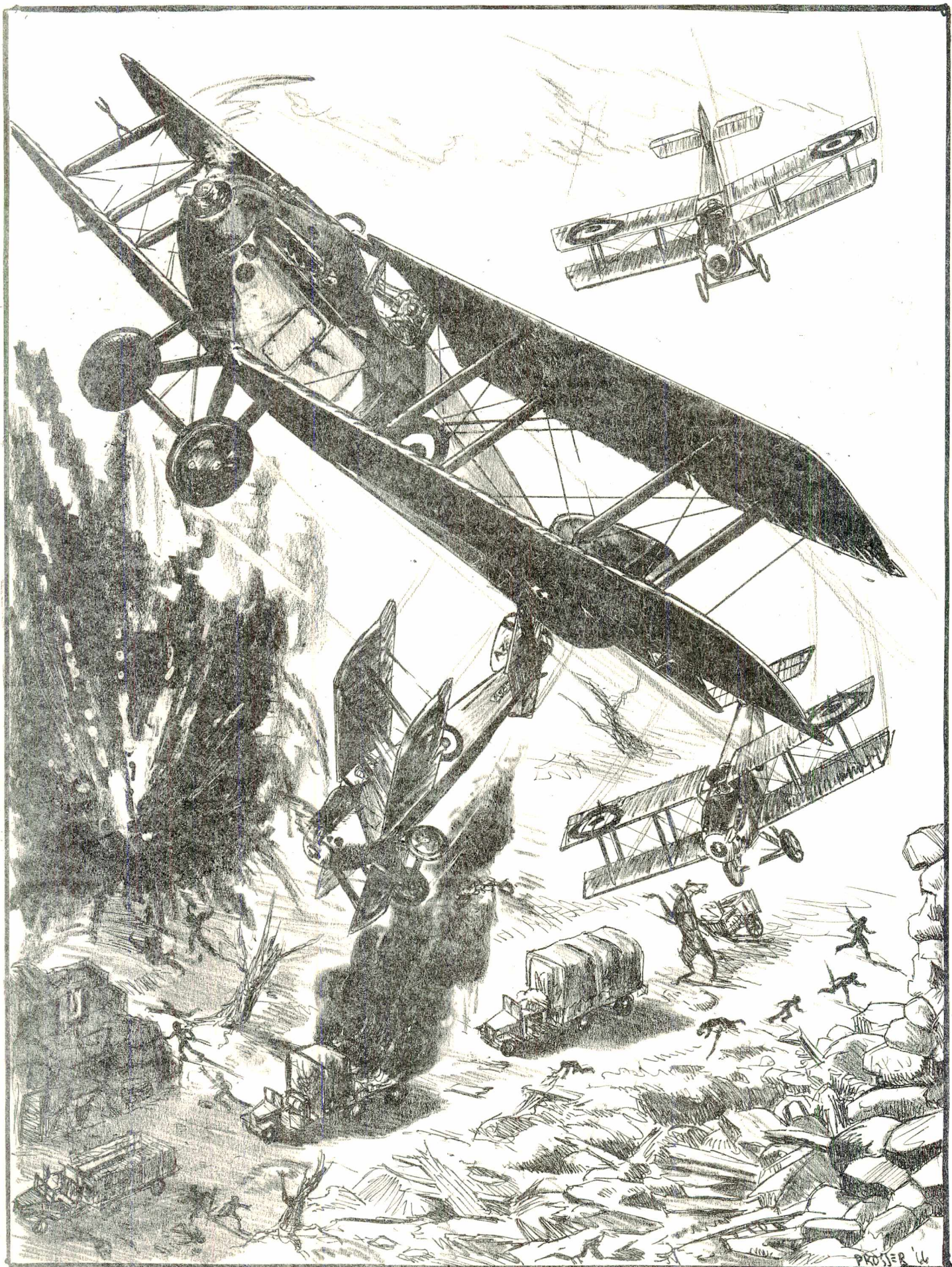
GERMAN: ALBATROS C-3

②





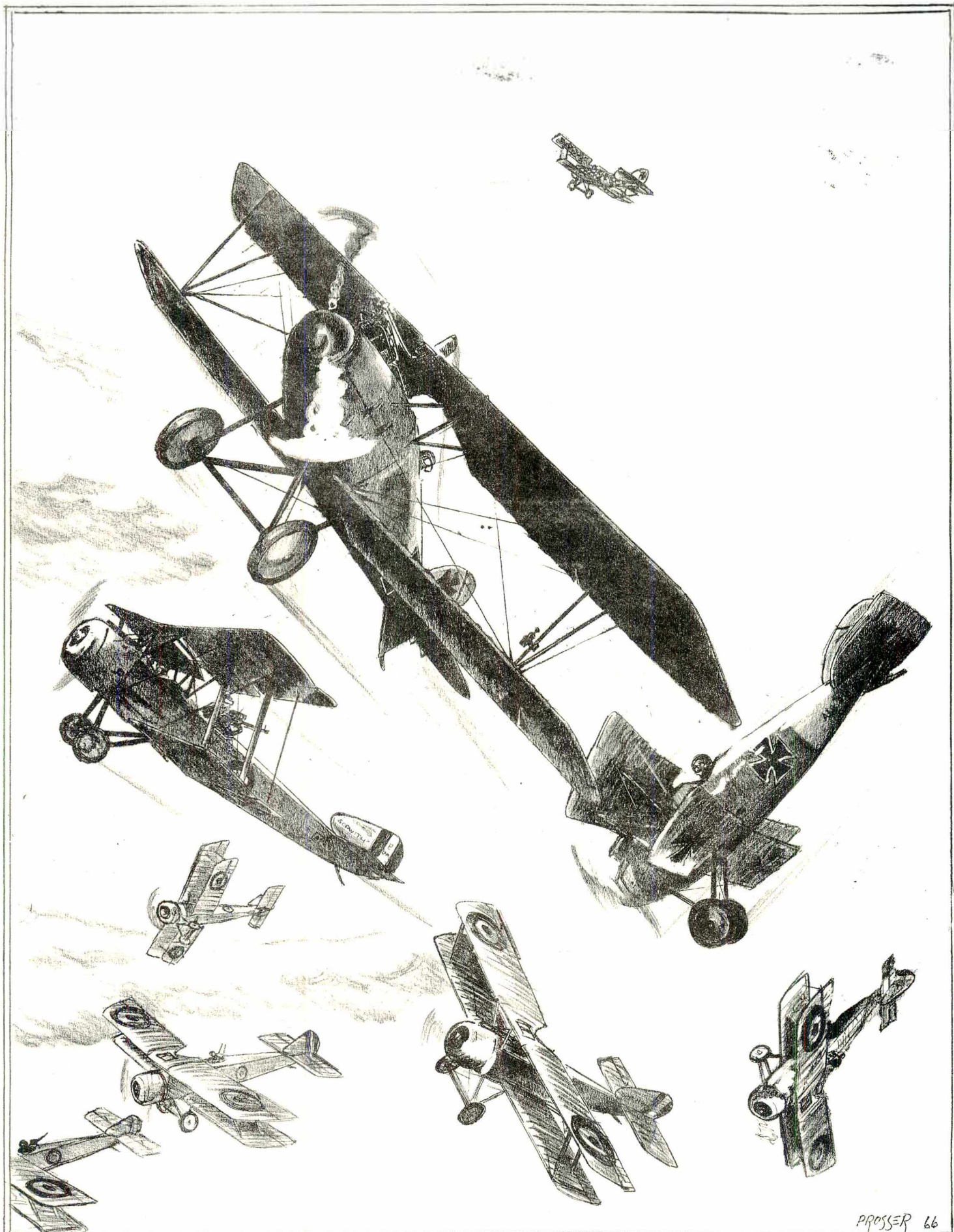




PROSSER '46







BRITISH: SOPWITH 1 1/2 "STRUTTER"

GERMAN: ALBATROS D-3 (RIGHT)

PROSSER 66



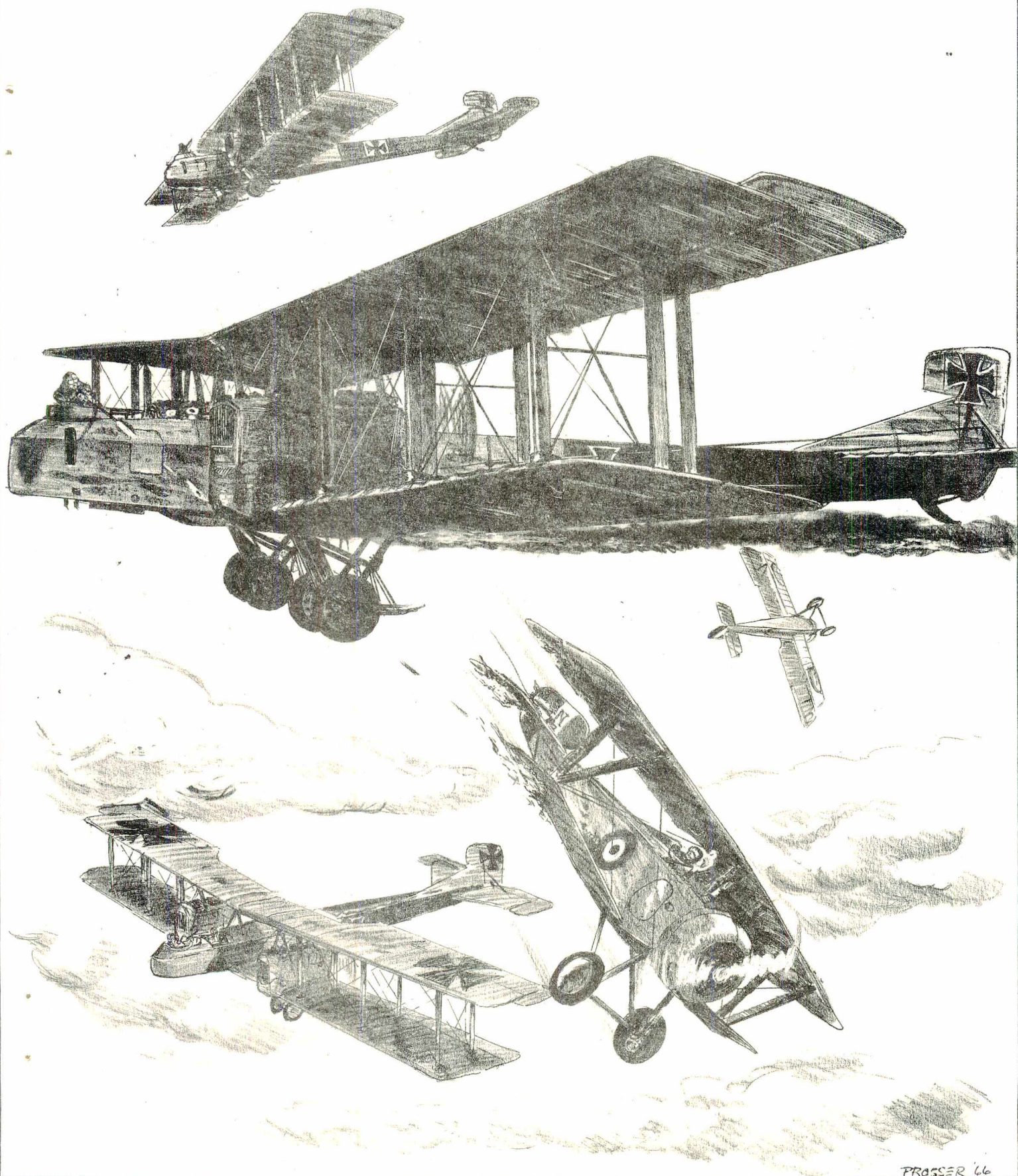




THE FIRST BOMBING OF LONDON NOV. 1916







SPARROWS AND EAGLES

GERMAN: GOTHA G-4

FRENCH: NIEUPOINT 17-C1





To those who wonder why such an interest in, or how anyone can have such an interest in, the First World War, or any part of it, there is no real explanation except to say that it is simply like a desire to collect stamps, or any of the interests, many and varied, which afflict people in general. That some of us find an interest, (perhaps a fascination is more accurate), in the vehicles and men who made the war in the air is no more peculiar or unusual than any other facet of historical research and interest, nor or those who are intrigued by it any different from anyone else. It is just something which attracts us, by the nature of our beings.

There are certain aspects which can be pinpointed and which generally are those which have the most appeal and which are given as reasons, some of which are as follows: (a) That in the period of 1914-1918 there existed the last of what might be classified as "chivalry", the remnants of the code which began with knights centuries ago, and was carried on through the early part of the First World War, especially in the air. Later, when the great conflict grew more bitter and desperate, the last of this code disappeared forever it seems. However ridiculous this might seem to some, it was the last time tribute was ever paid to a gallant foe, even by those who lost to him. Never-more will we see or hear of such instances as a pilot spending long hours in the hospitals and prison camps, with the men he had shot down, as did the German ace, Oswald Boelcke; an entire Air Force declaring a temporary armistice while they came to pay tribute to a fallen foe, as did the R.A.F. upon the death of the greatest of German fliers, Manfred von Richtofen, "The Red Baron" (the same Red Baron whom the dog "Snoopy" chases in the "Peanuts" strip); Nevermore will we know of a flier pulling his guns from his target when discovering his enemy's guns are jammed, as did the French ace Guynemer to the German Ernst Udet.

It was truly the end of an era, an epoch in the history of war. While such acts seem perhaps ridiculous and foolhardy now, it is difficult to avoid admiration for those daring men who braved the unknown skies and all the dangers of the unknown in such flimsy machines as were those of the first war. They were held together with wires and turnbuckles, with wooden struts and braces, and so treacherous were some they must surely have been flown and held together greatly by the sheer courage and magnificent willpower of those who dared go aloft in them.

(b) Secondly, probably the other most fascinating aspect of interest in these machines and this period is for modellers who find endless enchantment in making reproductions of these ancient vehicles and who revel in the exhausting detail it is possible to put into them. The color schemes mentioned in the "Blue Max" review elsewhere in this issue is another item of great variance and opportunity for variety and ingenuity for any who want to go to the effort of accurately copying.

Much of the appeal too, is for the fliers themselves. As Mr. Bob Curran, Editor of Cavalier Magazine, wrote in his introduction to the Fawcett publication "Sky Fighters of WW 1"



(Fawcett Book #484, copyright 1961) referring to the pilots themselves, "Their true-to-life stories defy the fiction-writer to improve on them. Who could create a character like Mickey Mannock or Frank Luke or Elliott White Springs? What death scene could be more thrilling than that witnessed by the men on the Western Front the day that Werner Voss went west? Who could conjure up that fight of Billy Barker's the day he tackled 60 German planes -- singlehanded? Who would dare end a story the way Guynemer's story ends, the way that French school children are told about him to this day, that "one day he flew so high he could never come down."

These men were the last of a breed, the last of their kind, so it is only fitting and logical that they arouse nostalgia. They are long gone now, but they remain in memory.....the memories of thousands, perhaps many more, who still relive those by-gone days in a world long-dead.....but forgotten.....NEVER!

-----

In the following folio I have tried within the limits of time and circumstances to re-create some of the mood, the feel and essence of the period, the fliers and their aircraft. To do this fully would require much more time and work than is available at the present and would entail illustrations of the ground crews, the airfields, the life between flights, the unforgettable leaves in Paris and much, much more. I have therefore tried to encompass a wee slice of some of this into the illustrations I have done. Perhaps some of the "feeling" I have known while doing these illos will come to you.....the gagging mixture of gasoline and oil fumes, the stinging odors of cordite burning fabric, the sudden and sickening lurch of a plane hit by enemy bullets or the elation of the flyer who sees his marksmanship bring a stream of smoke from his target. I hope that I have accomplished this to some extent.

To any who feel critical and care to pick errors, as I have done with my review of "The Blue Max", I must apologize for errors spotted in advance, for I admit there must be some. I have done the best possible with the available material. Alas, the mass of of plans for the WW 1 planes I once had have disappeared and I have worked from the few remaining, from actual photos of the planes, and other material gathered through the years. Still, at times only one photo of a machine was available, and when this plane was needed for an illo, I have done the most possible for accuracy, and have tried to depict all the elaborate series of struts, wires, braces, and all details possible. In some instances, (as the Gotha bombers) even several photos will not give all the information needed, so some detail has been lost on the engines.

-----

## THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

THE COVER: No one flyer ever gained for himself the fame of Frank Luke, Jr. the immortal "Balloon Buster" from Arizona. It is doubtful, too, that any one flyer ever caused one air force so much irritation, consternation, and uproar as did Luke. A fighter from his earliest days, he had always worked hard

for what he wanted, never shirking his share of the load, and usually doing much more. Luke was very much the loner; his only close friend in his pre-war life was Bill Elder, a hunchbacked boy he befriended and whose wonderful friendship he never forgot, even during those flame-tossed, brief days of his flying lifetime. His only really close friend in the war was Joe Wehner, whose Germanic ancestors had caused him to be hounded by the FBI, and other federal and private agencies during most of his life in the service. It was Wehner Luke chose to fly with him -- just Joe, that's all he asked, and it was more than likely as much for the simple feeling of knowing that Wehner was near, his friend close, as it was for protection.

Luke's penchant for being a loner caused all the trouble -- and most of his record of rebelliousness -- in the war. He preferred to go out alone or with Wehner, and regulations be damned! His first victory was in doubt for he could not specify exact location and his fellow pilots, feeling this was more mere bragg- ing of the Arizona upstart. Their taunts stung him and when they declined his invitations to fight, he avoided them. It was the of Captain Jerry Vasconcelles, C.O. of the French "Cicognes" (Storks) Squadron, an ace and one of the most daring pilots, to the effect that he felt that shooting down balloons was the most dangerous and rewarding efforts for a pilot, that caused Luke's attention to turn to these sausage-like observation platforms; here was the quick way to glory!

Orders to strafe a balloon were usually obeyed -- reluctantly. To follow orders was natural, but to go looking for balloons on one's own was madness! Generally anchored to trucks for better movability, the balloons were sent aloft and lowered by winches, handwound. Relatively immovable, exceedingly slow at best, they were far better targets for flyers. However, the dangers exceeded the gains by far -- to most pilots at least. Explosions were near-inevitable when bullets punctured the inflammable-gas-filled bags; when incendiary bullets were used (as was the case when bags were on the menu) and even a few slugs of ordinary type would make the bag collapse.

Invaluable information was relayed to ground h.q. and gunnery batteries from the balloons, as well as troop movements, etc. In relative cost to one side, the loss of a plane and/or pilot in exchange for a balloon downed was comparatively small from the monetary point. Each balloon cost about \$100,000. and was manned by from 1-5 trained observers. One bag downed could curtail severely if not completely eliminate artillery fire in a given area; oftentimes for the period of time necessary for a vital maneuver. No wonder then that the enemy protected their balloons with savage intensity with "Archy" (anti-aircraft fire); it was this which made the job so deadly. Balloon locations were well-chosen to facilitate placement of defensive fire; 75s on special mounts were generally the main item, supplemented by a large array of long-range machine-guns and bomb-throwing cannon. The balloons, being stationery, permitted an almost impenetrable ring of fire to be thrown up against an enemy, in addition to which there was usually a flight or two of aircraft lurking in the clouds to attack intruders. These were the odds against which Frank Luke chose to fight.



On Sept. 12, 1918, the day after he told Wehner of his decision, he left the flight and over Marieulles, brought down his first balloon in flames. He landed just across the American lines at one of our balloon locations and got confirmation from two of the many men who saw his kill; they wouldn't doubt him this time. (His plane was splintered, shattered, riddled and splattered with Archy and machine gun fire but Luke Just laughed; "They can't get me!" seemed his attitude and he carried it with him to the end.) Two days later Luke downed a bag near Buzy while Wehner fought off 8 Fokkers; when this was finished, Frank and Wehner separated and Luke brought down another on his own, near Boinville. He made no attempt to shoot the 2 men who parachuted from the balloon. On Sept. 15th, Luke had downed 6 balloons in 3 days -- a record never equalled; Wehner had been busy too, with a score of 2 balloons and three planes in the same time. The spy and the liar were the heroes of the air force!

Sept. 16th: Luke and Wehner attacked a trio of balloons, located beforehand. Taking off at dusk, the glow of bursting, flaming balloons appeared at 7:10, 7:21 and 7:36! Luke had predicted "Joe can get one about 7:10, I'll get another about 7:20 and together we ought to get the third one about 7:30!" The entire event was watched by Colonel Wm. Mitchell, Chief of Air Service, 1st Army (The same "Billy" Mitchell of Air Force fame in WW2). Many years afterward he spoke of it as "one of the most remarkable feats in the military career of a youngster that was nothing short of amazing".

Sept. 17th: Luke brought down 2 balloons; Joe Wehner was killed in a dogfight, going down in flames. (Luke now had 14 confirmed victories --- 4 planes, 10 balloons. He was 5 ahead of Rickenbacker. It didn't matter to him now...Wehner was dead. Nothing mattered.) He returned to his base from a Paris leave with half of it yet to spend; with A.W.O.L's fouling up maneuvers all over, Major Hartney couldn't believe his eyes. Luke reported "There was nothing to do."

He continued to disobey orders, flying as he wished, downing aircraft and balloons alike, indiscriminately, although he always considered himself a "balloon man." Nothing mattered to him seemingly except, flying and fighting. Sept. 25th, Luke wrote his last letter home.

Sept. 28th: After staying overnight at the field of the famed French "Cicognes" after bagging another balloon, he returned to his field. His C.O. Captain Grant, informed him that "--you're the damnedest nuisance that ever set foot on a flying field", that Luke was not running the outfit and that Luke would conform as did the others, the announced that Frank was grounded. Luke saluted, slammed the door, and walked directly to his plane. Deciding to "fill 'er up" at the drome of Les Cicognes, he took off. Grant ordered an orderly to call the Storks' field and order him under arrest. Asked what he was going to do, Grant replied, "I'm going to recommend him for the Distinguished Service Cross; Then, by God, I'm going to court-martial him!"

Luke was told of the order as soon as he landed at the Storks' field, coincidental with the arrival of Grant's superior, Major

Hartney, to whom Luke immediately asked permission to get 3 balloons over Verdun. Hartney (originally C.O. of 27th Sq. at Luke's arrival, was now commander of the First Pursuit Group) had always been somewhat awed, or facinated by Luke. He gave his permission, and ordered mechanics to gas Luke's plane. (Vasconcelles, in a quandry, having taken the order for Luke's arrest, decided to say nothing, since Hartney seemed to have taken the responsibility). Luke took off at 5:22 p.m.; over American balloon h.q. at Souilly he dropped a message: "WATCH 3 HUN BALLOONS ON MEUSE. LUKE."

He destroyed the first balloon without trouble, headed for the 2nd; guns fired on him, but he got it. A brief time elapsed; watchers held their breaths, then the sky lit up a 3rd time. It was to be his last flight. Badly damaged by the anti-aircraft, perhaps wounded himself, he soon found himself attacked by 5 Fokker D-7's from an auxiliary field. His spad wouldn't climb and they fought near the ground; Luke shot down two; the others climbed, evidently fearing the low-level combat. Soldiers ran onto the road as he flew over Murvaux. For some reason Luke strafed them, something he had always refused to do before; 11 died there. Finally landing in a field near the town, he drank from a stream. The German troops approached and a non-com cried out that he was a prisoner; he shot the non-com and two more before a rifle bullet struck him dead. They took the identification tags from his body, ordering him buried. The usual courtesy of notifying his countrymen was omitted; after all, he had gunned the German troops with explosive Buckingham bullets which left horrible wounds...he did not deserve it. The full identity and fate of Luke was not known until after the war.

Captain Grant recommended him posthumously for the Congressional Medal of Honor. Eddie Rickenbacker called him "--the greatest fighter who ever went into the air" Adding the 2 Fokkers from his last battle, Luke's official score was 20 -- 14 balloons and 6 planes. Others equalled or bettered this score, but no one destroyed so many in so short a time -- from Sept. 12 to the 28th, taking time out for one-half of his leave.

He was the most spectacular of the American Aces, a flyer unique in the annals of the air. He never succumbed to regimentation or the army's way of doing it. He did it himself (or at most, with one other) and he flew as he saw fit. He died as he had lived, a rebel to the last.

The illustration depicts the attack on the last of the three balloons. The plane is the famed S.P.A.D. 13 (which the Germans called "The French Albatros" -- a great tribute indeed). The initials stand for "Societe Pour Aviation et Ses Derives". This was the same plane Rickenbacker gained his fame in, and most certainly one of the most famous of the Allied planes. It had a wingspan of 26 ft. 4 in., a length of 20 ft. 4 in., and would climb to its 18,400 ft. ceiling in 22 min. 30 sec., and do a speed of 90 mph at this height, 128 mph at around 6,000 to 7,000 ft. Armament was 2 Vickers machine guns mounted on the hood of the plane.



No. 1. No particular story here. Simple combat scene between two planes and crews, the main difference being that while the German L.V.G. shown here (one of the earlier "B" models) and the Bristol F2B both carried a pilot and observer/gunner, the German ship was primarily an observation-light bomber while the F2B was a real "fighter" in every sense of the word, despite the two occupants.

Both these earlier models of L.V.G. (Luft-Verkehrs Gesellschaft: Air Transport ((or "conveyance")) Company), the B-1 & B-2 were "prize" aircraft, for when the Kaiser offered prizes in 1914 for the annual air contests for military planes, these models won 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places. At the same meet, these planes won 1st and 2nd prizes offered by the Crown Prince for civilian pilots. Quite a showing for one meet! Top speed was about 90 mph.

The Bristol Fighter was an improved model of the earlier F2A, whose poor showing seems to have been based mainly on its performance in the hands of incompetent and/or combat-inexperienced pilots. Powered by the Rolls-Royce Falcon 3 (200hp) it climbed to 10,000 ft. in 11 min., 15 sec; its ceiling 21,500 ft. A magnificent ship, it soon became the most feared fighting plane on the front. It carried a fixed (stationary) .30 cal. Vickers machine gun fired from the pilot's cockpit, and wore either a single or pair of, .30 cal. Lewis machine guns on a rotating Scarff mounting in the rear cockpit, which were also hinged on the mount to permit vertical elevation while firing. In addition to general duties, it was often used as "top cover" above "layers" of Camels and S.E.5s in great flights. The Canadian ace, Capt. A. E. McKeever, scored all of his 30 victories in a plane of this type. Plane depicted is of 62 Squadron. Note unusual spring-braced tail-skid; most planes had much more primitive, single-piece wooden skid.

No. 2. "Interrupted Flight" depicts the attack and downing of Albatros C-3s by British Sopwith "Camels". The C-3 appeared at the front in Sept. 1915 and continued through 1918; it was one of the cleanest twin-seat of its time. Slow but versatile, it was used for reconnaissance, infantry contact and day bombing. When it arrived at the front, it's only armament was a Parabellum machine gun, but later models bore synchronized Spandaus for the pilot also. While it often appeared on Allied tally sheets, victims of the C-3s included the famed Raoul Lufbery, French/American ace, originally of the Lafayette Escadrille. Span--38 $\frac{1}{2}$  ft., length--27 ft. Top speed was 85 mph.

Technical terminology classified the Sopwith "Camel" as the F-1, and was nicknamed first the "Big 'Pup'", after the smaller Sopwith model of the latter title. It was not big, however; it was small, compact, and with full battle-load it wore a snub-nosed, aggressive, pugged, appearance. The raised housing for machine guns gave it a "hump", thus the later "Camel" designation. It reached the front in June 1917, 2 complete squadrons being in action by the following month. (6 & 70 Sq.) Norman McMillan, Camel pilot of 45 sq., wrote of it in his book, "Into the Blue", "The Camel was a fierce little beast. She answered readily to intelligent handling but she was utterly remorseless against

brutal or ignorant treatment. Some of her vices became virtues in the battle "aires" where quick maneuver was invaluable. The Camel turned swiftly to the right...partly incidental to the big gyroscopic forces produced by the rotary engine in the light framework of wood and wire. Mainly...on this ability she won her fame in flight, for the heavier, stationary-engined German scouts could not turn so fast." (In the rotary engine, the cylinders were arranged in a circle, mounted at a 180 degree angle to the fuselage, and the cylinders rotated around the propeller shaft.)

Top speed was 115 mph, span -- 28 ft., length -- 18 ft., 9 in. It was also used as a night fighter. The late Elliott White Springs (Springmaid Cotton Mills) wrote of the Camel, to the agreement of many pilots, that "---a Camel was so short it would roll of its own accord, due to the torque and naturally the rotary engine emphasized the torque. Flying a Camel was like flying a gyroscope that was out of balance. They vibrated like a hula dancer's empennage and smelled like the inside of a motor-man's mitt". They were generally armed with 2 .30 cal. Vickers machine guns. Planes bear the white triangle of No.43 Squadron, and used this insignia from Sept. 1917 to March 1918.

No. 3. The Sopwith "Dolphin" was designed as ultimate successor to the "Camel" and was designed and some actually sent to France in 1917. Original planning was for, and the plane built around the Hispano-Suiza engine, but engines received from French and British subcontractors were so poor that the Dolphins had trouble right from their beginning; they got a reputation for unreliability almost at once. Pilots called it the "block-buster" for, while the reverse-stagger of the wings were designed to give maximum visibility (Illo shows how pilot's head was placed in the middle of the wing, with a framework of spars in front and behind his head) the flyers saw only the probable outcome to their heads as the result of a "roll-over". To add insult to injury, first models also had a Lewis gun mounted over the pilot's head. Most flyers removed them immediately, feeling that the dangers were great enough without having one's own machine gun flapping about, whacking their heads indiscriminately while they tried to fly the bloody monster.

It is unlikely that anyone but the manufacturer ever paid any attention to Sopwith numbers, but the Dolphin was listed as 5F.1. Following the tradition of naming Sopwith planes after living creatures, the 5F.1. became "Dolphin" probably due to its rather blunt-nosed appearance. It appeared in number early in 1918 and remained in use some places until the end of the war. With its proper Hispano-Suiza engine, the Dolphin flew between 120 and 125 mph in level flight, and climbed to 15,000 ft. in 23 minutes, being armed generally with 2 Vickers machine guns.

The illustration shows Dolphins used as they were utilized quite often -- low flying operations such as convoy-dusting and trench strafing. Dolphins depicted are of No. 90 Squadron, and used this insignia from January to August 1918.



No. 4. April 2, 1917 at 11:15 A.M. -- Baron Manfred von Richtofen claimed his 33rd victory, a Sopwith 1½ "Strutter", piloted by Lt. Peter Warren whose observer was Sergeant R. Dunn. Sgt. Dunn died as a result of the fight.

Richtofen accompanied his friend, the famous German flyer, Verner Voss, back to Voss' airdrome; Richtofen's brother Lothar was with them (Gibbons in his "The Red Knight of Germany" says Lothar saw his brother's plane in flight; another source that the three took off together.) Over Arras were spotted 9 of the British planes (Richtofen's official squadron report says 8). Manfred and Lothar attacked while Voss, in a slower Albatross D-2 decided wisely he would stay out of it rather than take the chance of offending the "Red Baron", feeling his joining might be taken to indicate he felt Richtofen needed help.

Richtofen's report reads dramatically of the battle the enemy put up, but Voss' account differs greatly. "I do not believe that he is a better flyer than I am" Voss wrote to his parents. He had been thoroughly unimpressed by Richtofen's fight, feeling he was fighting like an inexperienced youngster. There has been much commentary on this battle, for while Richtofen's official report states that the gunner fired on him after the plane had landed, the account millions of Germans read in the newspapers of the day states that Richtofen refused to fire on the grounded enemy, thus establishing even more of an heroic aura about the hero of his people. The British pilot, Lt. Warren, later stated that he did not remember the red plane firing at all on them after they had crash-landed. Floyd Gibbons (see above) believes that Richtofen wouldn't have hesitated to admit attacking an enemy on the ground (as his official report states) but that the conflicting stories resulted from the official German censor's revision of the story, to eliminate the possibility of any "Hun atrocity" stories being started.

The illustration shows the action just after Richtofen's first diving attack and subsequent climb; Lothar is diving to attack and in the distance above, Voss is seen in his black-and-white checkerboard design Albatros D-2. Richtofen had by this time adopted the completely red color-scheme for his planes and was flying an Albatros D-3, as was Lothar. His first official act after being given his own squadron -- Jagdstaffel 11 -- was to adopt the all-red color scheme for his own plane; all others belonging to Jasta 11 had red as a basic color of their planes with other colors also being used. Lothar used yellow as his identifying color.

The Albatros D-3 was one of Germany's greatest fighters of the war. Preceded by the D-1 and the D-2, it was introduced at the beginning of 1917. The only real visual difference between it and its predecessors was in its use of the "V" struts on the wings. Armed with twin Spandau machine guns, the D-3 flew at 105-110 mph, had a span of 29 ft., 7 in., and was 25 ft., 5 in. long. Its only real fault was inability to pull out rapidly from a dive, due to developing a particular momentum which fought the pilot's handling of the controls; it was at this point in a battle where a D-3 quite often was dealt a death blow.

The Sopwith 1½ "Strutter" (about the only plane of this manufacturer, at least of any note, to be named other than with the name of an animal of some sort) came to the front in May, 1916 and became one of the significant planes of the war. It was the first to have a gun capable of firing through the propellor, through use of an "interrupter gear", so it ultimately became a "fighter" or fighting scout; it was also first to use the Scarff machine-gun mount, which became the standard for many years. The guns were mounted on an elevating bridge which pivoted on a moving ring. A single lever released the gun(s) to fire in any direction and release of the lever again locked it in position. The French took readily to the machine, building 4500 of them and the U.S. purchased 514 of them. Span -- 33½ ft., length -- 25 ft., 3 in. Top speed varied from 85-95 mph.

No. 5. The first bombing of London occurred in November 1916 and succeeded in shocking England and causing jubilation in Germany. For months zeppelins had been raiding English coastal areas at tremendous cost and doing little damage. It was uncertain by either side whether such a bombing of London was possible by aircraft; neither side was sure until two German Naval pilots took off on November 28th 1916, and flew unmolested across England. They glided over London, calmly bombing Victoria Station. The bombs were small, injured only a few and killed no one, but it shocked the English and convinced the German High Command that their planes could reach London. This was the beginning of the "Gotha Terror" (see illustration 6). The flyers, Lt. Walter Ilges, observer, and Deck-Offizier Paul Brandt, pilot, were bothered by defending fighters on the return journey as well as anti-aircraft; forced by heavy coastal batteries to fly too far south, they ran out of gas and had to land, being taken prisoners in France.

Their plane was an L.V.G. C-2; a later development by the same company (formerly the German Farman Co.) which made the plane depicted in an earlier illustration here. Used by both Army and Navy, its slowness was made up for by its ability to carry heavy loads with little trouble. Span was 42 ft., 1 in., length -- 28½ ft. The illustration shows the scene shortly after the bombing as the German flyers are returning, while British planes come up after them. Smoke from the bombing can be seen distantly.

No. 6. Sparrows against Eagles shows a later development of the bombing raid in the previous illustration. Convinced now that long-range bombing of London was possible, the Germans began plans for what was to materialize on May 25, 1917. The English coast was raided by Gotha Bombers; they struck at Kent, Folkestone and Essex, killing 95 people and injuring 192. They reappeared in June 1917; twenty Gothas over London, dropping 126 bombs weighing over 4 tons, killing 162 and wounding 432. The Gotha became a symbol of terror to the people of England..... the name somehow seemed to convey the feeling to those who heard it. Flying outdated B.E.s, the Home Defense Squadrons were practically useless against these huge planes which measured 77 ft. across the wings and were 40 ft. long. They were replete with guns and had a tunnel along which a man could travel to fire



toward the rear, protecting the plane's "blind spot". So great was the general alarm that 56 Squadron -- Britain's finest -- was brought back from France to protect England. No raids occurred while it remained but the same day it returned to France, Gothas again raided England. Night raids began on September 3rd, 1917, and the "Rain of Terror" had started in earnest. Powered by 2 220 h.p. Benz engines, it was a "pusher" type plane, the propellers being in the rear of the engines. There were bigger bombers to come.

On December 12th, 1917, a flight of Nieuport 17 scouts of 1st Sq., R.F.C. was sent aloft to intercept Gothas coming to England. Only 2 of the Nieuports managed to get above the Gothas; one of them piloted by Capt. W.W. Rogers, a 19 year old Canadian, braved the massed fire of the entire group long enough to win a position between the gun tunnel and the rear gun position of one Gotha, long enough to pour a continuous stream of fire into the big plane, diving away still being fired upon by the others. Damaged seriously, the Gotha pilot managed to land the plane, which burned completely after landing, near the Headquarters of the 1st Australian Battalion. Rogers, unhurt but with his plane thoroughly shot-up, landed nearby. He was awarded the Military Cross for his work. Illustration shows the scene just after Rogers has pulled away after firing at the Gotha; a trail of smoke is developing on the big ship. Note particular damage shown on Nieuport....Tail section and wing badly shot up, particularly on control sections; this detail was taken from an actual photo showing the Nieuport after the battle.

The Nieuport 17 was one of the scrappiest planes the French came up with. Span was 27 ft., 4 in., length -- 18 ft., 11 in. Mounted with Vickers m.g., at times one also was mounted on the upper wing. Raoul Lufbery, the famed ace, flew a Nieuport 17 while with the Lafayette Escadrille (C-1 model). Squadron markings do not appear on the plane for none are visible in the photos of it; however, it consisted of a white vertical bar immediately behind the cockade on the side of the plane and a white band down topside of the fuselage, lengthwise, beginning at the rear end of the headrest, toward the tail

\*\*\*\*\*

The Midwestcon returns to the North Plaza Motel!

The 18th Annual Midwestcon will be held on June 23, 24th & 25th 1967 at the North Plaza Motel, 7911 Reading Rd., Cincinnati, Ohio. Assets: Seascape Room; a huge lounge for the use of the convention; swimming pool; a dozen good restaurants within walking distance; a minimum of program. Come to relax and meet your friends. Contact Lou Tabakow for full details and special reservation card which assures you of special rates.

Lou Tabakow : 3953 St. Johns : Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

\*\*\*\*\*

(Argassing.....continued from page 8)

Several fans wrote and Andy Harris from Racine, Ohio sent me a copy of True West, (February 1967, 35¢) which features an article on the old western pulps by J. Edward Leithead.

A very interesting article to all fans of the Pulp Era, although it appears that Mr. Leithead worked almost entirely from memory rather than research, and in many places his memory was rather faulty. A few examples: he mentions that "Argosy ran western serials by Chas. Alden Seltzer and Geo. Washington Ogden and shorts by other western writers." Actually Argosy westerns by almost every popular writer in the field including Edgar Rice Burroughs, J. E. Grinstead, Max Brand, Evan Evans, George Owen Baxter, Earle Stanley Gardiner, Allan Vaughan Elston, W. C. Tuttle, etc.

The Frontier (Doubleday) lasted longer than a couple of years. I have mint copies in my collection from the 1st issue (1924) up through 1928. It featured stories on all frontiers.

West didn't fold that early. Thrilling Publications put it out for years.

Popular Publications didn't fold "like a house of cards", they still publish Argosy (high circulation) as well as Railroad, Adventure, etc., and may possibly enter the paperback field.

The Shadow was not written by Lester Dent, but by Walter Gibson. Lester Dent wrote the Doc Savage novels under the name Kenneth Robeson.

He didn't cover all the westerns that made the "Big Time". For example: Wild West Weekly, Thrilling Western, Popular Western, Big Book Western, etc., as well as the series characters, Masked Rider Western, Rio Kid Western, Texas Rangers, etc.

Black Mask at one time also ran western and sports stories in addition to detective.

They advertise another article on the pulps to appear soon, this time written by Walt Coburn another famous name from the pulps.

However even with these shortcomings, the article is recommended reading for the nostalgic value.

Next issue we'll talk a little about Detective Story Magazine and The Frontier.

Lynn Hickman



THE **MASTER OF MEN!** MARCH

10¢



*The* **CITADEL OF HELL**  
FEATURE-LENGTH SPIDER NOVEL

Design by Plato Jones from the March 1934 cover by John Howitt

## A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF THE SPIDER NOVELS

### Introduction

Eight years ago when I first began to collect the pulp magazines that I so enjoyed during the thirties, I found that information concerning them was not readily available. Indeed, it was only through voluminous correspondence with other fans and collectors that I was able to compile even the most basic details - the number of issues, publication dates, and the titles of the lead stories. At that time I vowed that, if possible, I would endeavor to correct the situation, at least as it pertained to a few of my special favorites. My first timetable called for no serious work on the subject before the early seventies and the completion date was set for a very nebulous and far distant future. When Fred Cook began publication of Bronze Shadows, an amateur magazine devoted to one of my pulp favorites, Doc Savage, a new avenue was opened. It was no longer necessary to wait until I had completed work on an entire series - individual segments could be published periodically. Thus, I started the "Critical Analysis of the Doc Savage Novels".

When Lynn Hickman asked me if I might consider doing a similar series on The Spider, I was delighted; Richard Wentworth had always shared an equal place with Clark Savage, Jr., in my fond memories and - to my knowledge - no definite study of his exploits was being undertaken. It is my hope that some day, fortune permitting, two publications will be available to the collector and fan: The Supreme Adventurer, a collection of the Doc Savage studies; and The Master of Men, a collection of The Spider studies. An even fonder hope is that other fans will follow suit and that similar reference works will be available on G-8, The Phantom Detective, Operator #5, The Avenger, and other pulp heroes.

There are two other remarks that I feel are necessary. First, I certainly do not believe that I am uniquely qualified to write these series nor do I claim to be the No. 1 Doc Savage or Spider fan - it is simply that no one else is providing the studies so it's better I than no one. Secondly, I want to clarify the use of the term "Critical Comment". Pulp literature did not pretend to offer anything more than entertaining, readable fiction. When I offer critical remarks it is always within the context of pulp literature. And the only reason I criticize at all is in an effort to determine and define those basic elements which appear to contribute most to a good, readable pulp story.

Herman S. McGregor

Lead story by R. T. M. Scott.

Interior illustrations by J. Fleming Gould.

Cover illustration by Walter M. Baumhofer - A gaunt, sinister hand bearing a spider ring on the little finger is clutching a net-like web which has ensnared a thug, a masked man, a policeman, and a hard-looking redhaired woman.

Cast of The Spider Strikes:

Richard Wentworth, "five feet eleven, 170 lbs." - wealthy, agile, athletic - he is the Spider, Master of Men.

Nita Van Sloan, a blue-eyed beauty with brown clustered curls - the sustaining heroine.

Ram Singh, a stoic and deadly Hindu - devoted to his master, Wentworth.

Apollo, a Great Dane - gift from Wentworth to Nita.

Jenkyns, Wentworth's butler.

Stanley Kirkpatrick, New York City Commissioner of Police - devoted to Wentworth, but opposed to the Spider.

Parsons, a private secretary who loses his employer's money in a card game.

Blunton, a card sharp in the employ of Mr. X.

Dorothy Canfield, sweet, young girl in love with Jack Selwyn.

Sparks, an heroic reporter for the Evening Standard.

Corinne Pompé, hard, but beautiful mistress of Mr. X.

Joe and Bill, two victims of the Great Depression.

Dr. Sylvester Quornelle, Mr. X - a worthy adversary for the Spider.

Jack Selwyn, alias George Baker, falsely accused of a jewel theft.

Professor Brownlee, Wentworth's old college friend.

The Story: Richard Wentworth, returning from Europe on an ocean liner, saves a would-be suicide who has lost his employer's money to a card sharp. Wentworth volunteers to regain the money and confronts the gambler. When the villain reaches for a gun, Wentworth shoots him between the eyes and places the Spider's seal on his forehead. In the man's pocket is a map of a ship which is to sail carrying a war-debt payment from a world war ally. Wentworth telegraphs Kirkpatrick that the spider is on board. Kirkpatrick wires the ship demanding a search of Wentworth to discover the Spider's seal. The cigarette lighter containing the seal is cleverly concealed.

Kirkpatrick, aware of the lighter episode, demands that Nita assist him in determining if Wentworth is truly innocent. She is to greet Dick and ask him for his lighter which Kirkpatrick will then examine. Forced to comply, Nita cleverly arranges Apollo's leash around a vase - as Wentworth enters, the dog leaps and the vase falls on Nita. As Dick carries her to a sofa, she exchanges lighters and the Spider's identity is saved. To protect himself in the future, Wentworth asks Professor Brownlee to design a lighter in which the seal will be destroyed if opened by any other than himself.



It is revealed that Wentworth has for two years been on the trail of a master criminal who uses disguises to steal money and jewels, sometimes implicating honest men. One such victim is Jack Selwyn who is accused of stealing diamonds which he says he gave to his employer - who was actually Mr. X in disguise. Selwyn's girl friend, Dorothy Canfield, seeks Wentworth's help and asks him to meet her at her apartment. Kirkpatrick has been wounded by an assailant and is recuperating in Wentworth's apartment, ably nursed by Nita Van Sloan.

Wentworth, at Dorothy's apartment, fails to find Dorothy but does meet Madame Pompé, a former radio star, who is Mr. X's mistress. Mr. X appears and almost kills Wentworth, but is thwarted when stabbed in the leg by a rapier concealed in Wentworth's cane. Wentworth asks Sparks, a newspaper reporter, to search the files for any information on Madame Pompé, hoping to find some clue to her benefactor's real identity.

Madame Pompé asks Dick Wentworth to visit her apartment. In the apartment, where the lady openly tries to seduce him, Wentworth is trapped by Mr. X. However, planning before, Dick has stationed Ram Singh on the balcony and it is Mr. X who is trapped. But, with the alertness and agility of a true adversary, the master villain escapes.

From Sparks, the newspaper man, Wentworth learns that Mr. X is, in reality, Dr. Sylvester Quornelle. Going to Quornelle's house which is boarded up, Wentworth saves Jack Selwyn from death but is unable to prevent the killing of Sparks.

Vowing vengeance, Wentworth and Ram Singh go to the Molly Ann, a steamer which Wentworth had previously investigated and determined was in the hire of Dr. Quornelle. The crew is loading cylinders of poison gas to be used in the robbery of the ocean liner carrying the war-debt payment. Some of the crew are killed and the rest captured by the police. The seal of the Spider is placed on one victim.

Dr. Quornelle, using Madame Pompé who has secured refuge in Wentworth's apartment, kidnaps Nita. Wentworth goes to Quornelle's headquarters as directed and is imprisoned. The police attack the stronghold and Quornelle goes to the roof to hold them off with machine guns until his hirelings can release poison gas. However, Wentworth escapes, kills the thugs in the basement, and confronts Quornelle on the roof. Subduing the doctor in battle, Wentworth places the Spider seal on his forehead and calmly tosses him off the roof to the street below. In the basement with Nita, Wentworth calmly greets the police.

Critical Comment: Although The Spider Strikes is not truly typical of The Spider series, it is a beautifully-written piece of pulp fiction. It is far more adult than most pulp novels which deal with a central character - it is not only the story of the Spider but also a story of two capable and audacious adversaries. Mr. X is a formidable foe and the duel between the hero and the villain is all the more fascinating because each is agile of mind and body, each is capable of escaping from a tight spot, and each is a master of disguise.

The Spider Strikes is comparable to a piece of jewelry made up of many small gems. An excellent example of this is one chapter in which Wentworth first visits the Molly Ann. Although it is not essential in forwarding the plot, it is an excellent episode complete in itself. Wentworth finds that a hapless bum has been disemboweled by a ruthless sailor who wears a hook in place of a missing hand. This villian is confronted by Wentworth and killed. This single chapter, read out of context, is a thrilling adventure in itself.

The dialogue, too, contributes - it is absolutely sparkling compared to that found in most pulps. R. T. M. Scott, whoever he is, seems to be extremely influenced by drama - one can sense the set, the scene, the action, and the dialogue in each episode.

Although never vulgar, and ivory-pure compared to today's literature, there is more sex in this one novel than is found in the entire Doc Savage, G-8, and Phantom Detective series. All of the sex centers around Madame Pompé, frankly identified as Mr. X's "play girl". She tries openly and brazenly to seduce the hero, and he is human enough to appreciate her charms although noble enough to resist them. An example of the sex awareness as well as the quality of the dialogue is as follows. Madame Corinne Pompé calls Wentworth and says she is in danger from Mr. X. Wentworth replies:

"All right, Corinne. Come over this afternoon if you can get away. And by the way -"

"Yes?"

"Bring an overnight bag."

"An overnight bag?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Dick."

Wentworth replaced the telephone upon the table.

"Now what the devil did she think I meant," he grumbled as if he didn't know.

As mentioned above and below, The Spider Strikes is not typical of The Spider series as it later develops. However, in its own right and on its own adult level, the story is a superior pulp-fiction effort. It's regrettable that two series did not develop - one patterned on this story, in addition to the series which did evolve.

General Comment: Probably no other "novel-length" pulp magazine changed so drastically as did The Spider. This first issue would be more appropriately titled "Meet Richard Wentworth, Society Detective". Nowhere in the story is there a hint of the hideous, stooped character that is to develop shortly after this first issue.

Introduced are Richard Wentworth, Nita Van Sloan, Stanley Kirkpatrick, Apollo, the Great Dane, Ram Singh, and Jenkyns, the butler. Although Dick Wentworth is quick to kill without remorse (one villian gets a single shot between the eyes in chapter two), the role of the Spider is but incidental; the seal of the Spider is placed on the man's forehead. At no time does Wentworth drop his own identity to become The Spider. He is always Wentworth signing his work with the Spider seal.

Kirkpatrick, though suspecting Wentworth prior to the story's beginning, rather casually mentions, "You'll recall that the Spider has never harmed a decent man." The Spider has not become the emblem and character so feared by the underworld even though he has apparently been operating over the past few years.

An even greater deviation is found in the pattern of the story itself. Here are no horrendous mass murder spreading death to thousands of innocent people by means of cholera, bubonic plague, hydrophobia, or mysterious drugs. Instead we have a master criminal, versed in the art of make-up, who merely uses criminal methods to obtain valuables by theft. He does plan to dispose of all passengers on the ocean liner by means of poison gas, but this is only part of the robbery plan. Too, though he wears a mask and is known as Mr. X in the first half of the story, his true identity as a noted physician answers no puzzle for the reader since the physician was not previously introduced.

Most startling of all for the Spider fan who reads The Spider Strikes in retrospect is the character of Wentworth, himself. So completely charming, so much the sophisticate that it approaches burlesque, he is somewhat motivated by a sincere hatred of crime but more strongly by a rather selfish love of excitement and danger. He telephones his sweetheart, Nita, speaks of love employing the French language, and plays the violin for her. Upon reuniting a young girl and her sweetheart, he proceeds to play the organ for them, thrilling with thoughts of romance. He is almost victorian in his choice of language and his attitudes. As a reporter dies in his arms after phoning in news of his own murder, Wentworth states, "By God, Selwyn, that's the way to die." He also tells a friend that it's "bully" to see him. Upon recapturing his stolen Ming vase, he cannot resist the temptation to run his fingers over its delicate decorations.

But, heartless in battle is the Spider. Upon finally besting Mr. X in hand-to-hand battle on a roof top, Wentworth calmly picks up his adversary and tosses him to his death in the street below.

The first two Spider novels were written by R. T. M. Scott. How the Scott character came to change will receive attention in later resumes.

#### Additional Contents:

Leslie T. White, Baited Death (short story)

Norvell Page, Murder Undercover (short story)

Dept., The Spider's Web (In this installment the origin of the Spider is revealed: Professor Brownlee has used some college funds and is being blackmailed. Student Wentworth kills the blackmailer and scawls a Spider on his victim's forehead. Thus, the Spider is born.)



Lead story by R. T. M. Scott.

Interior illustrations by J. Fleming Gould.

Cover illustration by John Howitt - The hand of the Spider is touching the center of a roulette wheel, instead of numbers, the wheel features portraits - of a bald man, a well-dressed villian with knife, a beautiful girl, an oriental.

Cast of The Wheel of Death:

Richard Wentworth, Nita Van Sloan, Ram Singh, Stanley Kirkpatrick, Apollo.

Jackson, Wentworth's chauffeur - nothing now, he gains importance in later issues.

Dan Grogan, burly underworld chieftain.

Molly Dennis, pretty girl, trying to free her father.

Arnold Dennis, awaiting electrocution for a murder he didn't commit.

Mortimer Mack, President of the MackSyndicate - dirty dealer in politics.

Ned Morris, newspaper man, boyhood friend of Wentworth.

Jerry Stone, in love with Molly - in Mack's hire.

Cora, beautiful woman in green - one method of getting politicians in Mack's power.

David Bannister, newspaper publisher.

Buckley, a politician - who got in with the wrong crowd.

The Story: Wentworth, disguised as a cheap hood, visits Dan Grogan's Restaurant in response to rumors that Grogan is a power in the corrupt political machine in New York City. A pretty, young girl is also visiting the place. Just as Wentworth gets into Grogan's good graces, two thugs bring in the girl saying she was eavesdropping. Grogan leaves Wentworth and the girl under guard, but the Master of Men shoots the gunmen, places the Spider seal on their foreheads, and escapes. The girl is Molly Dennis, whose father is to be electrocuted that very night. She assures Dick that Grogan and Mortimer Mack have framed her father. The two narrowly escape death in their taxi when Grogan and a gang attack. Outdistancing the pursuers, Wentworth goes to a cheap rooming house where Ram Singh is waiting.

While the crooks attempt to break in, Wentworth calls the Governor and has the execution delayed by one week. Ram Singh disguises Dick and Molly as a blind man and an urchin boy, then sets fire to some linen. When firemen arrive, Dick and the girl escape in the confusion. Realizing that he has lost in Grogan's palce one of his guns which will identify him as the Spider, Wentworth returns. He finds the gun but while he is recovering it, Molly is kidnapped - and Wentworth finds that the gun he has retrieved is not his.

Since Mortimer Mack is his only lead, Wentworth gets his friend, Ned Morris, to arrange an invitation to one of Mack's fabulous society parties. As it is a social affair, Nita accompanies him. After meeting Mack, Wentworth notices that Jerry Stone, Molly Dennis' boy friend, is also present and seems to be in

the host's employ. Also noticed is a seductive woman named Cora who is dancing with Buckley, a noted - and married - politician. Wentworth concludes that Cora is but one method by which Mack entraps politicians. Another strange guest is David Bannister, a respected newspaper publisher.

Nita, in the ladies dressing room, hears a shot in the adjoining library and informs Dick who breaks into the room. Buckley is lying dead of a bullet wound. Mack appears and says that the politician has been shot by the gun Wentworth dropped at Grogan's. When Commissioner Kirkpatrick arrives, Wentworth manages to steal the gun and give it to Nita. He also discovers that the private elevator in Mack's apartment opens onto some secret rooms.

Finding that Jerry Stone has called the police and has been working for Mack only in an effort to find information that will clear Molly's father, Wentworth saves his life when Mack attempts to have him killed. Nita is captured by a gunman but Wentworth is able to kill the kidnapper with a single, delicate shot. The seal of the Spider is placed on the victim's forehead. Discovering the corpse and the seal, Kirkpatrick suspects and attempts to hold Wentworth, but Wentworth escapes.

Wentworth enters the elevator and sends it to the hidden basement where he locates, captures, and tortures Dan Grogan. Not only does he obtain proof of Arnold Dennis' innocence, but he learns that Mack is planning to kill Kirkpatrick and other honest city officials.

The next evening, learning that Kirkpatrick and the officials have been invited to David Bannister's house, Wentworth, to avoid arrest, disguises himself and Nita as a cab driver and a woman of the streets. In a pre-arranged plan, they barge into Bannister's house and Wentworth discovers that trained killers are hiding behind the drapes. He manages to kill them although he is severely wounded when he stops a bullet meant for Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick, grateful, apologizes for thinking that Wentworth could possibly be the Spider.

Critical Comment: After the glowing promise of The Spider Strikes, The Wheel of Death is a severe disappointment. The sparkling dialogue, so important to the readability of the first novel, is completely absent in this second adventure. Cora, the only possible counterpart of the fascinating Madame Pompé, has only a few lines and then wanders aimlessly out of the story. Then, too, neither Grogan nor Mack is a match for Wentworth. The criminal leader, unidentified until the last chapter, takes no part in the action and one misses the clash of two mighty opponents.

If the first Spider story was a series of crisp episodes, The Wheel of Death is composed of a long scene, an intolerably extended scene, and a crisp, brief finale - in the long middle portion concerning the action in Mack's apartment, the reader really needs a floor plan to properly follow the action. What with secret floors, secret rooms, an elevator with secret entrances, and sliding safes that are in reality secret entrances, the reader is bound to become a bit confused - and the reader almost needs the energy and stamina of Wentworth to accompany him throughout this exhaustive episode.

Of course, it is not fair to evaluate this novel solely by comparing it to its predecessor. Considered by itself, it has commendable points. Action is plentiful and the characterization of Wentworth - audacious, adventure-loving, and amazingly capable - is quite consistent. The story also maintains the adult level not usually found in pulps - the sophistication, and the awareness of sex is present (Mack's party features two live nudes - one painted in gold and one in silver - plus nude dancers in the floor show; and Nita, in the climax, is admittedly disguised as a streetwalker). The most legitimate criticism of the story is that it suffers from a lack of change of pace - contrast is always important and, when action and movement reaches its height immediately and remains at that level during the entire story, it loses its effectiveness and wearies the reader.

In summation, this second story by R. T. M Scott, The Wheel of Death, is a fairly entertaining story with much to commend it, but very disappointing in that it should have been much better.

Additional Contents:

Wyatt Blassingame, Scourge of the Green Winter (short)  
Alfred I. Tooke, Trail of the Wolf (short)

THE PULP COLLECTOR by Gary Zachrich





In January or February of 1934 when I had just reached the ripe old age of ten, I noticed a copy of The Wheel of Death at a school friend's house. Naturally, I borrowed it, read it, and rather naively took it to school one day in order to return it.

The teacher saw it, looked through it, and in indignant outrage, took it and the two of us to the Principal's office. With fiendish satisfaction she pointed to a Gould illustration showing Wentworth using a belt on the nude figure of Dan Grogan tied to a bed. My friend and I were advised most strongly that (1) we should never again bring such a bit of trash to school, (2) that we should refrain from reading such trash, and (3) if we didn't follow suggestion number two, we could never grow up to amount to anything.

The punch line? When I grew up, I became a school teacher - for a short time, anyway. And I know of at least two other such fans who became school teachers!

The moral? Reading for fun is far better than not reading at all, and those youngsters who read the pulps in the thirties probably became far more useful citizens than those who never developed a love for reading.

Lead story by Grant Stockbridge.

Interior illustrations by J. Fleming Gould.

Cover illustration by John Howitt - The Spider, unmasked, in a black cape, is holding a revolver in one hand, his other hand shields his face. A girl in red clings to him for protection while, in the background, people are fleeing in terror.

Cast of Wings of the Black Death:

Richard Wentworth, Nita Van Sloan, Kirkpatrick, Ram Singh, Jenkyns, Apollo.

Virginia Doeg, accused of substituting forged bonds for real ones.

John Harper, pawnbroker and a fence for stolen goods.

MacDonald Pugh, Wall Street broker who owned the real bonds.

Mrs. Henry Gainsborough, the first extortion victim.

Dave and Gertrude Gainsborough, children - first victims of the Black Death.

James Handley, Virginia's boy friend, accused of robbery.

Theodore Works, Pugh's partner - another plague victim.

The Black Death, masked man who releases the plague.

The Story: Richard Wentworth slips away from a society dance attended by Nita and Commissioner Kirkpatrick, in order to investigate the case of Virginia Doeg, a girl accused of substituting forged bonds for real ones owned by MacDonald Pugh, a Wall Street broker. Wentworth's concern is because Virginia's pet dog has just died of the bubonic plague. Knowing that John Harper, a pawnbroker, deals in stolen bonds, Wentworth puts on a mask and, as the Spider, makes a call. When Harper draws a gun, the Spider kills him and places the Spider seal on his forehead. In the safe is found a vial of "Hopkins' Solution", the only known antitoxin for the plague, plus the name and address of Mrs. Henry Gainsborough. Just as the Spider starts to leave, he is confronted by an armed, masked man who is known as the Black Death. The Spider escapes when the police arrive. Joining Kirkpatrick and Nita, Wentworth is shocked to learn from the Commissioner that two policemen have been killed and marked with the Spider seal. "Death to the Spider", vows Kirkpatrick.

Wentworth calls Mrs. Gainsborough and finds that she has received an extortion threat saying that, unless she pays \$1,000,000, her children will die of the plague. Despite Wentworth's opposition, the Black Death carries out his threat. Locating Virginia Doeg, the Spider contacts her but the two of them are captured and bound by one of the Black Death's henchmen. When the gunman sets fire to the apartment, the spider escapes and kills the captor; but, when he lowers Virginia to safety, she is taken by the police. The Black Death, again acting as the Spider, kills Virginia's guards and kidnaps her. Wentworth deliberately walks into his trap but is freed by Ram Singh and Apollo. Knowing that the Black Death is now using pigeons to spread the bubonic plague, Wentworth attempts to trap him but fails. When Commissioner Kirkpatrick discovers an association between Wentworth and the pigeons, he orders his arrest. Wentworth escapes capture by driving his car off of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Nita, attempting to determine the true identity of the Black Death, is too successful and is captured. Wentworth appears to rescue her but is himself caught. The two escape in time to pursue the Black Death who is in an airplane from which he plans to release disease-ridden pigeons. Wentworth shoots down the villain's plane and kills the Black Death. A recording carefully left by Wentworth convinces Kirkpatrick that Wentworth is not the Spider and the two remain friends.

Critical Comment: Although Wings of the Black Death is a good, entertaining pulp adventure, full of action, thrills, excitement, and suspense, it does suffer somewhat from an over-abundance of hazards, short sequences, and enemy confrontations. Wentworth faces death on five individual occasions and, of course, escapes each time, but there is too much similarity in the first three occasions. Wentworth seems to have the worst luck that any hero ever endured, and an unintentional sense of frustration creeps in. Because this novel marks such a definite turning point in the development of The Spider and because many of these changes are instrumental in the success of the story and of the series, it is necessary to discuss it at length.

This story is much more typical of the "lead-character" pulp novel than were either of its predecessors. The sophisticated and adult approach noted in the first two adventures is dropped in favor of those elements which appeal more broadly to the younger and less demanding readers. The character of the Spider is actually born in this story. For the first time, Wentworth does become the Spider. He puts on a black, silk mask "tight over the eyes and flowing down over the rest of his face"; and instead of reading, "Wentworth stepped into the darkness," the narrative reads, "and the Spider, as silent as his namesake, slipped into the darkness".

The basic concept and scope of the plot also marks a complete departure. The hero is fighting not only a villain, but also a peril - the bubonic plague; one must fear and fight not only the foe, but also the foe's weapon or criminal device. This one approach is the element which most typifies The Spider magazine during the height of its popularity - the magnitude of the villain's crime and his utter disregard for human life. Why did the magazine prove so popular under this format? Two possible reasons might be: (1) Whereas the police might be expected to cope with the criminals found in the first two stories, one realizes all too well that Wentworth - the Spider - really is the only possible hope for mankind against a foe like this; (2) the pulp reader wasn't as personally involved in the first two stories - most readers would never become victims of an ocean-liner robbery because most never sailed on ocean liners - but the black plague - this could reach out and engulf each of them indiscriminately.

Wings of the Black Death is the first Spider novel to be published under the house name of Grant Stockbridge. According to a letter printed in Bronze Shadows, the Spider stories were actually written by Norvell Page, well known for many stories published under his own name. Regrettably, no details are supplied as to whether Page wrote all of the novels, or all of the novels attributed to Grant Stockbridge. Regardless of authorship, the Grant Stock-



bridge Spider differed greatly from the Spider attributed to R. T. M. Scott.

Additional Contents:

H. M. Appel, Singing Doom (short)  
John Knox, Fear Island (short)  
John Colohan, The Alibi Murder (short)

\*\*\*\*\*

A N N O U N C E M E N T . . . .

A tabulation of all votes on whether or not to raise the single issue and subscription prices and have a larger magazine (40 to 60 pages average) or keep the lower price and have a smaller magazine (28 to 32 pages) was overwhelmingly in favor of the increased price and the larger magazine.

As mentioned, all existing subscriptions will be prorated out at the increased price, I could not afford to do otherwise.

So, an X below means that your subscription expires with this issue and that this is the last issue you will receive unless you resubscribe. Subscription rates are: 5 issues for \$2.25. 10 issues for \$4.00.

Also please note that the next issue (#67) will be my 17th publishing anniversary issue. It will count as two issues to subscribers or sell at \$1.50 to non subscribers. It will be as large as three normal issues.

\*\*\*\*\*

Wanted: Issue #4 of The Magazine of Horror. Must be in mint condition. Will buy or trade for it.

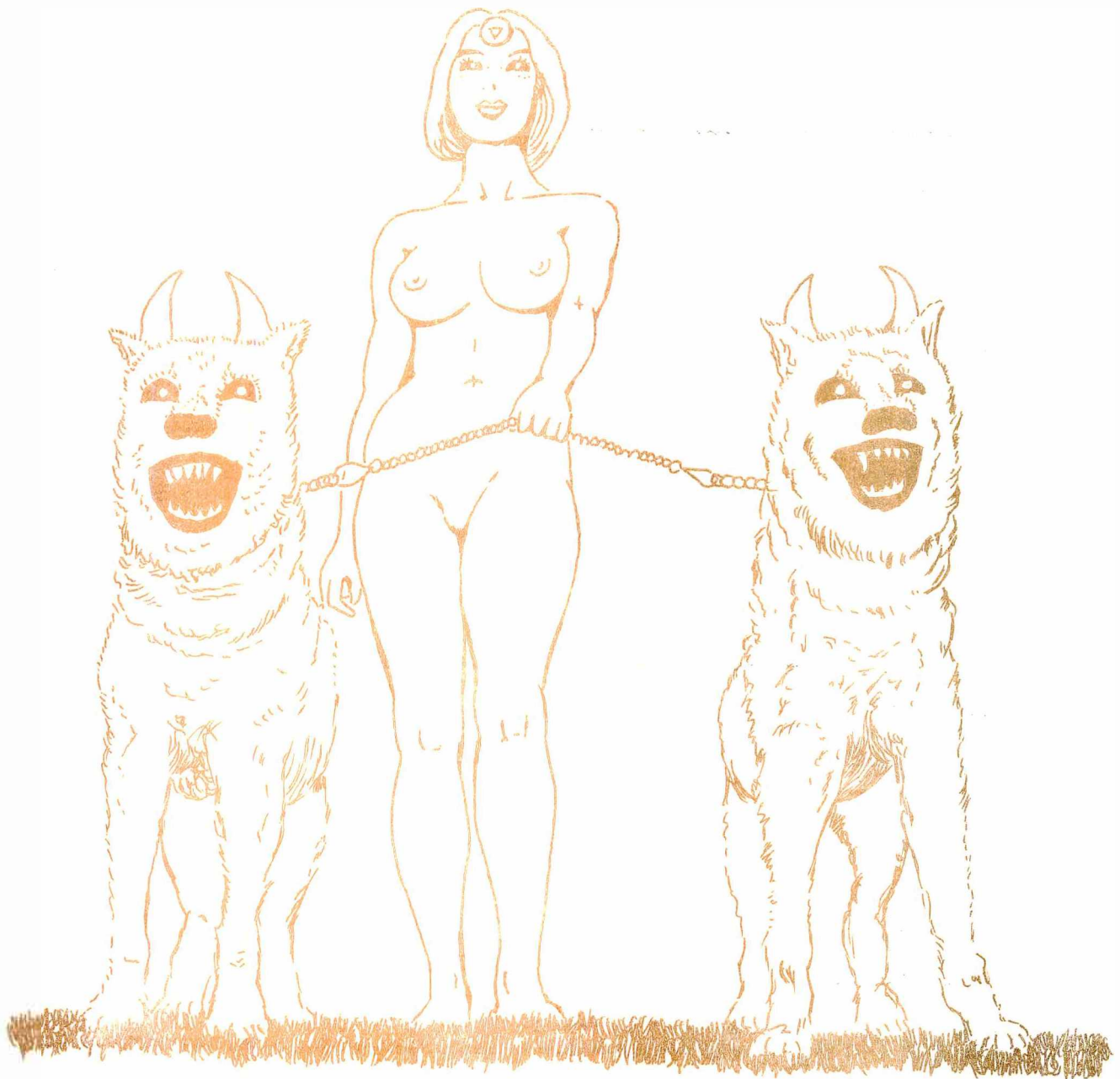
Lynn A. Hickman : 413 Ottokee Street : Wauseon, Ohio 43567.

\*\*\*\*\*

Late News: Issue #16 of the Magazine of Horror and issue #3 of Famous Science Fiction are now out. Robert Lowndes is trying to give us the best in reprints from the pulp era and is now also reprinting some of the artwork that appeared with the stories. He has done a fine job with these magazines and deserves the support of fandom to make them successful.

Lynn Hickman

NEWS AND VIEWS by Lynn Hickman and Gary Zachrich



Design by John Rackham

The first two issues of Famous Science Fiction (Tales of Wonder) are now available and are very good buys. They are available at 50¢ each from Health Knowledge, Inc., 119 5th Ave. N.Y., NY. 10003. Both issues have covers by Virgil Finlay. Issue #1 features The Girl In The Golden Atom by Ray Cummings, Voice of Atlantis by Laurence Manning, The City of the Singing Flame by Clark Ashton Smith, The Plague by George H. Smith, and The Question by J. Hunter Holly. Issue #2 features The Moon Menace by Edmond Hamilton, The White City by David H. Keller, M.D. Seeds of Space by Laurence Manning, Dust by Wallace West, and Ringhost by A. Bertram Chandler. Both are A-1 buys.

Issue #15 of the Magazine of Horror is also available at 50¢ from the same address and features the following stories: The Room of Shadows by Arthur J. Burks, Lilies by Robert A. W. Lowndes, The Flaw by J. Vernon Shea, The Doom of London by Robert Barr, The Vale of Lost Women by Robert E. Howard and The Ghoul Gallery by Hugh B. Cave. Cover by Virgil Finlay. Another A-1 buy.

From Ballantine Books, Inc. 101 5th Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10003 we have a beautiful full-color map at \$1.49 of The Middle Earth. A welcome addition to anyones fan room. Send for this. This company has a fine list of books coming up for the coming season. Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury, 60¢, January release. Berserker by Fred Saberhagen, 60¢, January release. Out of My Mind by John Brunner, 60¢, February release. The Return of Tarzan by Edgar Rice Burroughs, 50¢, February release. The Worm Ouroboros by E. R. Eddison, 95¢, April release. B.E.A.S.T. by Charles Eric Maine, 75¢, April release. Bred to Kill (western) by Lee Hoffman, 50¢, May release. To Open the Sky by Robert Silverberg, 75¢, May release. Dolphin Boy by Roy Meyers, 75¢, June release. And another important one that I missed. Treasure of the Black Falcon by John Coleman Burroughs.

At this writing I have received no news from Corinth, Ace, Pyramid and the others that are featuring reprint or science fiction. Bantam has issued a couple more Doc Savages, The Phantom Island (#14) and Murder Melody (#15).

Lynn Hickman

Octopus of Crime  
By Brant House  
Corinth Publications, 60¢.

Secret Agent X book #6. Opening with the unusual, we find Secret Agent X picking the locked doors of a bank. It is the only way he might obtain access to the safe deposit box of a man named Quade, suspected to be involved in a strange new criminal plot. While in the bank, the very thing he has started to combat, happens. The bank door is forced and a band of criminals enter to rob it. Hiding in the blackened interior of the bank, X makes a move to summon the police. He is machine-gunned, and only the bullet



proof vest he wears saves his life.

Later he is captured by the crime outfit and narrowly escapes with his life. Stored in the luggage compartment of an airplane, he uses a secret tool to cut a hole in the floor and jam the planes' controls. The crooks bail out and X forces his way to the cockpit to straighten the ship out in the nick of time.

Returning later to the bank, he examines Quades lockbox to find a sheaf of shares in a small unknown company. Taking one to one of his secret labs, he subjects it to various tests. They reveal the overlying mark of an Octopus.

Pursuing this, he finds that crime has incorporated. A national syndicate has been set up with endless funds at their disposal.

Hiring a retired detective named Tom McCarthy to watch a small field, he goes to search Quades home. Later, he finds McCarthy dead and vows revenge.

Following a broken trail, he finds that the Octopus, as the leader of the syndicate is known, is located in Chicago and he hires an ex detective named Hobart to help.

Flying in one of X's planes, they are shot down enroute. Both escape and make it to Chicago. Once there, he impersonates one of the crime board members and is discovered. Faced with torture in a medieval chamber of horror, he makes an exciting escape from a flaming holocaust. Desperate now, the Octopus launches a final assault. When kidnapping and murder fail to intimidate X, he turns a direct assault toward him.

In the action that follows, Secret Agent X traps the Octopus alone on his airship headquarters and comes face to face with him. The Octopus is Norton Beale, the world's leading criminologist who has been working hand in hand with the police. Worse yet, X can not prove that Beale is the Octopus.

X, unmindful of the scornful laughter ringing in his ears, calmly works out a method of proof.

Ironically, he forces the Octopus to prove that he is the Octopus.

Gary Zachrich

Purple Tornado  
by Robert Sidney Bowen  
Corinth Publications, 60¢.

Dusty Ayres and his Battle Birds  
Book #3. The President and the  
Congressional War Council commission  
Dusty as a separate arm of the service. A one man army. He now reports solely to General Staff, and is no longer a part of High Speed Group #7. No sooner does he accept this honor than a message from the Black Forces to the

north informs him that the Black Hawk has challenged him to a single combat at twenty thousand feet over the border.

As Dusty cruises at twenty one thousand feet, he is treated to the sight of a Black war plane tearing out of a towering Purple gas front, being chased and fired on by two of his Black Forces comrades. Dusty's sense of fair play and intuition lead him to intervene in behalf of the fleeing plane. By the time he drives them off, the lead plane is down in flames with the pilot dangling limply in a parachute.

Dusty lands and speaks to the wounded man and discovers the seeds of a terrible plot by the Blacks. He has sole possession of a green bead and a dirty map which he discovered in the toe of the dying pilots boot.

Huge, bullet-filled, and quick-paced action follows in which Dusty, minus his Battle Birds, fights against tremendous odds, is charged with murder, and is further hampered by the stupidity of a General Officer.

Possession or knowledge of the Green Bead or the map means death! The Purple Gas, a new invention is one of the primary weapons against the U.S. Captured, beaten and bleeding, Dusty wins through with the information needed to defeat the Black tide in the nick of time, climaxed by a head to head air battle with the Black Hawk.

These things are cover to cover adventure. However, that little critical, analytical dark corner of my mind works full time when I read, whether I want it to or not. Why does a man with Ayres intelligence and ability refuse to relay valuable information to Headquarters when it could have saved thousands of lives? Can a squadron of planes carry a steel mesh net several miles long and evidently a mile high? And how is it that when Dusty pulls the stick back into his belly, his plane dives like a screaming demon?

P.S. Dusty has a new plane. A monoplane with a top speed of 568 m.p.h. and I really did enjoy the darned book!

Gary Zachrich

March of the Flame Marauders  
by Curtis Steele  
Corinth Publications, 60¢.

Operator 5 book #7. Jimmy  
Christopher and Tim Donovan  
are sent to a Texas oil field  
to investigate suspicious

movements near the last producing well in what used to be one of the nation's richest oil reserves. A tremendous fire and explosion destroys the well as soon as they arrive. While investigating the explosion, Operator 5 discovers that a scientist is secretly operating a nearby abandoned well. He has discovered a new process which enables him to produce oil from exhausted wells.

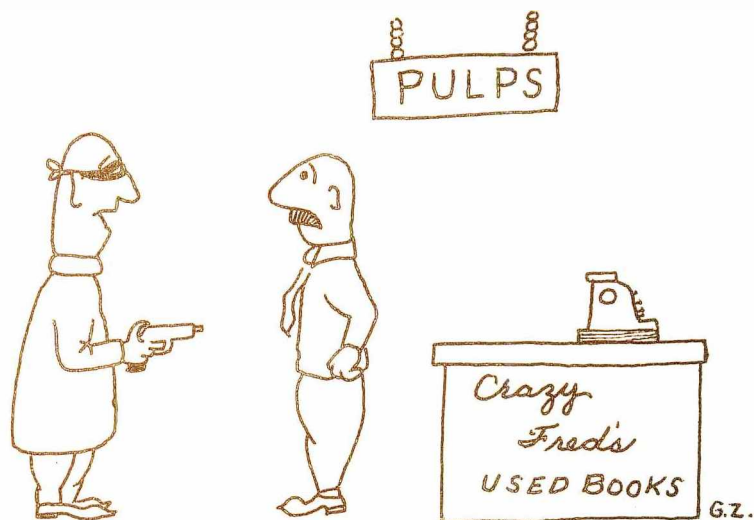
While talking with the scientist, a man comes to the site and declares himself to be Operator L-8 of the Secret Service. Naturally he is not. A three way fight ensues between Operator 5, Jaime Caronza, the imposter, and the scientist who is a bitter enemy of the U.S. Government. Some years earlier he was convicted of tax fraud and imprisoned. He needed the money to perfect his process.

Quickly unfolding developments show that a group of foriegn powers are trying to destroy the last of the U.S. already dwindling oil reserves and bring this mighty nation to it's knees.

Plots, espionage and counter plots put Operator 5 to the test. Seemingly, the U.S. is about to fold. Her oil fields are either running dry naturally, or being sabotaged. Tankers bringing the black gold to her shores are being destroyed, and an even greater menace appears at sea.

Huge battle fleets are converging, led by an amphibious submarine dreadnaught. The mightiest fighting machine ever produced. Operator 5 and Tim strive to thwart this threat and at the same time secure the Yerian Process of renewing oil wells to restore the U.S. to full power once again.

THE P U L P C O L L E C T O R by Gary Zachrich



"Sell me all your Phantom Detectives for 25¢ per copy or less!"





Fast moving and interesting, it has only two drawbacks. Firstly, it is so full of astericks and footnotes in places that it seems to be one half text-book, and the other is the excruciating high typo count and several spacing setting errors. This is the second Corinth book I have read today. The first was very well done, with only two typos, and these were of the kind that the wrong letter made another correct word. What happened here?

Gary Zachrich

The Corpse Parade  
by Robert Wallace  
Corinth Publications, 60¢.

The Phantom Detective, Book #22. Sad to say, but I believe this will be the last Phantom Detective book in the Corinth series. I hope I am wrong on this, as The Phantom is one of

my top favorites and I would hate to see the series come to a close.

In this novel, The Corpse Parade, Richard Curtis Van Loan, The Phantom Detective, suddenly finds the city straining beneath a rash of bloody murders. In each case, the victims body is discovered chained behind a moving vehicle with one arm amputated cleanly above the elbow. Fire-trucks, ambulances and busses are halted, and horrified drivers are told of the grisly trailer they pull.

Following an early lead, The Phantom Detective overhears a mysterious conversation between the heads of several large automotive firms. They have some unspoken things in common. And fear is one of them. Some of them have been murdered, and one of their member has dissappeared.



Insinuating himself into the "gang" of murderers by posing as one of them, Van Loan catches a glimpse of the "boss", a tall muffled figure who speaks sibilant, flawless English. Discovered by the gang, he is unable to get to the leader, and barely escapes from the flaming trap of the old freighter which has been the hideout.

A thread of a clue makes itself manifest. Coded messages bearing the key words EBALGUM. An Ethiopian phrase meaning Cut Them Down. The huge, agile black with the raiders is now explained, and further, he now finds that this group of industrialists had dealings with a Prince of Ethiopia.

Decoded messages later reveal that they cheated this prince of some tremendously rich oil lands.

Things then get thicker and quicker as the hunt nears the end in true detective fashion. Even I would not spoil the end of a good mystery by telling all at this point. Good, fast moving intrigue with an "old time" flavor.

By the way, the printing job here was back up to Corinth's usual high standards.

Gary Zachrich

Needle in a Time Stack  
by Robert Silverberg  
Ballantine Books, 50¢.

Ten fun poking stories pointed at improbable future societies. (maybe not improbable? Who knows?)

Leading off with a corker that puts me in mind of what the "Ben Casey" show could come to in another fifty years, (The Pain Peddlers) and finishing with nine more shorties featuring such subjects as biological experiments, a timid professor, thinking ironmongery, and almost the best thief in the universe, it rates as a good collection -- with one exception!!

He just had to include a fellow who finds himself caught in a closed time cycle in "Absolutely Inflexible". Maybe it is well written, but I think we've all had enough of these things.

Berserker  
by Fred Saberhagen  
Ballantine Books, 60¢.

Trumpets and drum rolls!! A collection of Fred Saberhagen's delightful short stories of the Berserker machines which appeared in Galaxy over the last few

years. Eleven short stories that really make a book. One day at last, Man came roaring out from his own little system with a bone in his teeth! Versatile, belligerent, and armed for any eventuality, he cast about the galaxy only to find that no one opposed him. The aliens he contacted were old and tolerant and had long ago lost even the ability to contemplate violence. They gave man all the elbow room he wanted, for there was more than enough room, and they pitied this poor war-like race.

Then came the Berserkers! Huge vehicles of destruction bent on eliminating all life! No living hand directed these computerized, random acting destroyers, for the race that had built them had either long ceased to exist, or was so distant that they were beyond reckoning.

They raged through the Galaxy, unopposed and almost unstoppable, for each huge berserker was capable of destroying the entire surface of a planet within a few hours. And then they met man. Those strange creatures from Sol, who never would or could believe that they were lacking in enemies. They still maintained fighting ships and arms, and had lost none of their warrior background. Fighting for existence itself, Man is still not completely unified, and politics and human frailty hamper the struggle at every turn.

A sign post of the sixties, this collection has earned a place on your book shelf. Double A stuff!!

Gary Zachrich

Tarnsman of Gor  
by John Norman  
Ballantine Books, 75¢.

Tarl Cabot -- English, young and red-haired is transported to a counter Earth. There the Priest-Kings, owners of an extremely advanced technology, determine the way of life. Warfare is limited to the use of sword, spear and bow, while medicine and housing are the finest. Here, Tarl meets his father, who starts his training as a warrior. He must thwart the threat of a nearby Empire that would like to forcefully gather in his father's city.

True to the old fantasy story line, he becomes a master swordsman, meets his princess and survives many thrilling, sword clanging adventures. A real Kline-type rip snorter, though somewhat up dated. Much to the better.



There is even a little teeny bit of sex in it. Finally victorious, Tarl ties his sweetie hand and foot, throws her across the saddle of his fleet winged mount and storms into the sky above the city. There, in the true warrior tradition, he unties her ankles, rips her diaphanous clothing to shreds and flings it down upon the city so that they might know of her fate. KA-ZOW.

Gary Zachrich

The Lord of Nardos	Marnie
by Russ Winterbotham	Maur has
Avalon Books, \$3.25.	a dream.
	He wants
to settle down by a quiet stream	
in a small cottage and raise a	
family, He and his personalized	



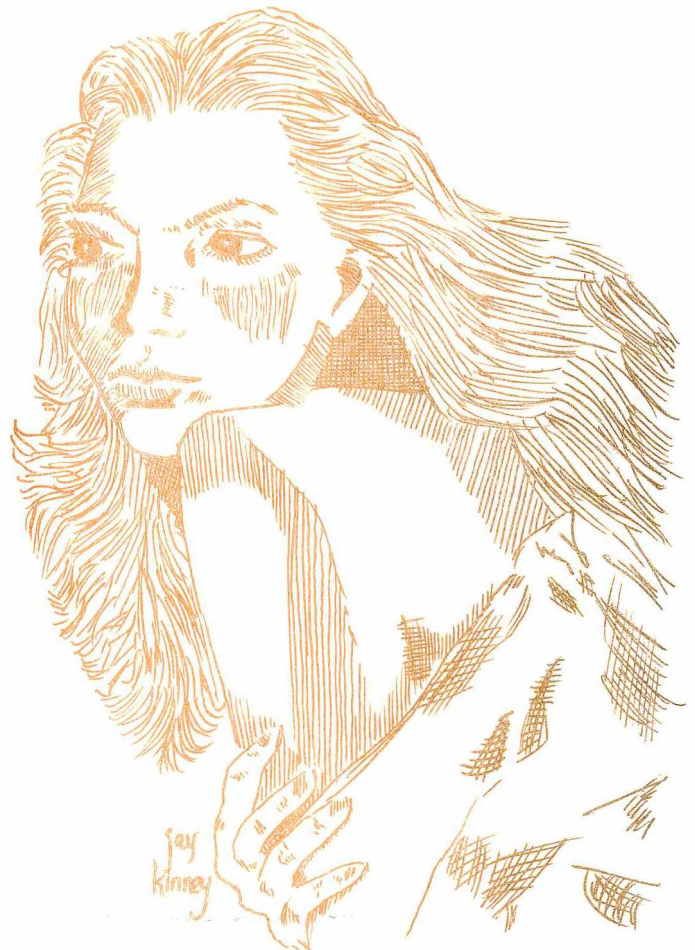
robot, Bukko, are enroute to the planet Plune where he plans to bring this about, forsaking his training as a spaceman and a commission to seek out the legendary planet of man's origin called Earth. Bukko, in the process of trying to convince Marnie that he should stay in space, allows him to make a minor correction in the course of the ship, a thing for a human to brag on. The Robot neglects to incorporate Marnie's reflex time into the maneuver and they are thrown hopelessly off course.

Lost in space and short of fuel, they head for the nearest planet likely to produce reaction mass, and orbit. A ship of antique design greets them with hostility and orders them to land. Unarmed and short of fuel, they have no choice but to obey. The tone and inflection of the enemy commander leads Marnie to believe that he is offering an opportunity to escape. Gambling, they make the escape attempt and succeed. Fantastically, Marnie deduces from this one act that there is a dual factioned power on the planet, that the officer is a minority member, and that if they walk right into the nearest city, the minority group will contact them. He is right. (How about that!) and they do.

The planet Nardos, as it is called, is suffering under the firm thumb of a dictatorship. The Nardos Patriots, as the other team is called, plan to overthrow the dictator and install one of their own. Marnie and Bukko are snatched into the intrigue and try to work out a way for them to get away. Nothing else. However, they are blamed for the well-timed assassination of the present dictator and find themselves part of a broken rebel organization. Reluctantly, Marnie must fight against terrible odds to take over the planet himself, and in the end finds out that this planet is the fabled Earth. Driven by the highest of motives (Self-preservation) he works to set up a Democracy!

The book is a class B Winterbotham work, based on a shaky story line and utilizing some extremely flimsy devices. It is however, well worth reading. The saving factor is a jim-dandy robot named Bukko. Unlike Asimov's robots, this one can kill if need be, and is basically an extension of the man he is serving. Finely developed, Winterbotham has fashioned some very good interplay and reasoning between man and robot without a mass of whys.

Gary Zachrich



Lord of Tranerica  
by Stanton A. Coblentz  
Avalon Books, \$3.25.

Harry McNear and Celia Ellen Brice are  
sucked into the future at the hands of  
a machine owned and operated by the  
Lord of Tranerica, Hannibal Fairchild

Spratt the Seventh. Spratt, who takes an immediate liking to Celia, introduces them to the 25th century and takes them on a guided tour. Celia, who is engaged to Harry McNear, has to constantly resist the advances of the Tyngall Spratt, who explains that in this modern day, personal feelings mean nothing to anyone unless they happen to be Tyngall Spratt. Great wonders are revealed to the ancient couple on the tour. Mighty food mills, mighty clothing mills, and mighty mills that build robots to run the other mighty mills. In the 25th century, there are scads and billions and trillions of people enshrouded in the clutches of a completely mechanized civilization. And they have nothing but leisure time.

Harry is lost in this mass of people, who each have a number to facilitate regimentation. Alas, Harry has none and is cast among those casts of of society called the numberless. Fearing for the welfare and chastity of his betrothed, Harry tries to win his way to her side. Then, a telecast comes to the commeners declaring that the Tyngall has become engaged. To Celia!

Enraged, Harry, the epitomy of your everyday fellow, tries to win his way to her side. After many attempts, he finds that her only salvation lies in overthrowing the Tyngallacy. He goes at it!

Rate this one a C for me. It's a real college try at satire, but just never seems to come off. Try it if you must, but it isn't a "Bill the Galactic Hero".

Gary Zachrich

The Weird Adventures of The Shadow  
by Walter Gibson alias Maxwell Grant  
Grosset & Dunlap, \$3.95.

This book has received  
some acclaim in the past  
few months by both fan  
and pro zines, but never-

theless it is a disappointing edition. The front cover is a modern style drawing of The Shadow which almost makes the buyer feel he is buying some kind of funny character. To offset this, the back and inside covers feature a good picture of The Shadow by Paul Orban from "Crime Out of Mind" (Feb. 1946).

Gibson's introduction is very disappointing after reviewers have said that this was the best part of the book and that he tells about the creation of The Shadow. In truth all that Gibson says is that he wrote a lot of words a day and at a terrific pace and gives a few interesting stories about visitors he had. But the big questions that all Shadow fans want to know (his creation, why he was created, why twice a month, and others) aren't even hinted at.

However, to be fair, the choices for the book are all good ones. Grove of Doom, Sept. 1, 1933; Murder by Moonlight, Dec. 1943 and Voodoo Death, June 1944. On comparing Grove of Doom with the pulp however, I have found that much of the dialouge and story has been cut. The story is still good, but not as good as the pulp

edition. I donot have the other two pulps for comparison so do not know if they have also been cut. The original illustrations have been reprinted in purple and white which hurt the fine art of Lovell and Orban.

If you have never read a Shadow, then I would suggest you buy this and find out for yourself if you like him. However, if you felt that you were going to buy it for Gibson's introduction then you will surely be disappointed. If this edition sells well it could possibly influence Gibson to do more in this vein and also others to do books on the pulp era.

Frank P. Eisgruber Jr.

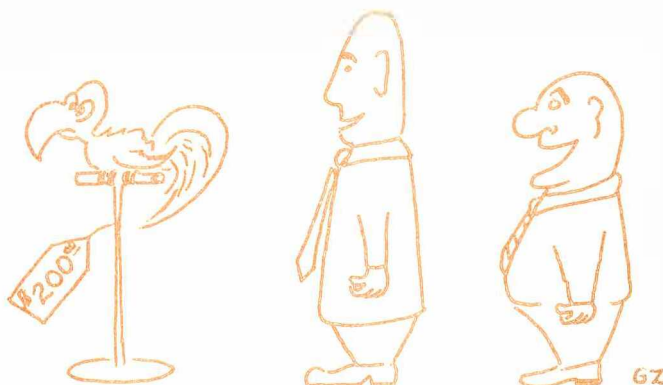
\*\*\*\*\*

WANTED: Shadow magazines. 1931 - all issues. 1932 - all issues.  
1933 - 3/15, 8/1. 1934 - 5/1, 8/15, 12/1. 1935 - 7/1.  
1936 - 1/1, 2/1.  
G-8 magazines. 1933 - 1941 most issues.  
Bill Barnes. Most issues.  
Air Trails. Most issues, 1935 - 1938.  
Dusty Ayres and his Battle Birds. Most issues.  
Aces. 9/29, 1/31, 5-7/31, 9/31, 11-12/31.

Will pay high prices for the above or will trade early Weird and Amazing Stories. A. Grossman Box 5722 Sherman Oaks, Calif. 91413

\*\*\*\*\*

THE P U L P C O L L E C T O R by Gary Zachrich



"Actually, its quite cheap! He emits an odd trilling, humming noise in the true Lester Dent fashion!"



LETTERS . . . . .

Frank Eisgruber, Jr.  
Chicago, Illinois

I would like to comment on the books that Corinth has reprinted. Phantom Detective is ok, but I think he suffers from two big faults; reusing the same plot too many times (a group of friends or people in the same industry are all being killed off by one in their group so as to get either a map or control) and a lack of characterization and atmosphere. On the whole, Operator 5 is the best they are reprinting (I feel only the Shadow surpasses him) The best single adventure is Blood Reign of the Dictator BUT I feel his greatest days were when he had the "Purple Empire" series. Secret Agent X is a poor attempt to copy every pulp hero into one, Dusty Ayres is good for action but has a crude writing style, Doctor Death is good because he is a horror character.

I wonder if you read Castle of Frankenstein #8 in which Lin Carter reviewed the books of '65. In it he said that the new Shadow books were dull, that the Phantom Detective was pulp writing at it's worst, but that Doc Savage was great. ((Editors comment: To me Lin Carters writings are a fine example of pulp writing at its worst, so can hardly become excited over his examination of some-one elses writings. LH))

How about an article and index on The Phantom Detective.

Irv Jacobs  
National City, Calif.

I would like to make a collection of the current Corinth series of reprints in paperback form, of The Phantom Detective, Operator #5, etc. Despite the fact that the editorial office is here in my own city, newsstand distribution is so bad that only a few of the titles are available. If you know of any mailorder dealer or fan who is managing to handle this line, I'd like to contact him.

Did you ever do an article on The Spider? He was one of my favorites. ((A series of articles on the Spider start with this issue. LH)) ((Try Dick Witter, F&SF Book Co., Box 415 Staten Island, New York 10302 for the Corinth books. I understand that he handles them. LH))

Barbara Bovard  
Los Angeles, Calif.

You know, fanzine doesn't seem the correct appellation for your mag because it does not indulge in the usual effluvia common to the fan world. The whole tone is much more adult and, to me, in some cases considerably more tongue-in-cheek; some of the parodies you have accepted might even be called vicious, i.e., the Doc Savage take-off. Tell me something; is the writer of that "story" a member of our generation or one of the younger set? The reason I ask is that the points of view between the two generations is quite different anent popular literature and what was escape literature and, bad as some of it was, a road of dreams for some of us is downright funny to the sophisticated youth of today.

This is not difficult to understand. I don't know about you, but from the weight of my years and educational background the material of the "Pulp Era", particularly as exemplified by The Shadow and Doc Savage, The Spider and The Phantom (not the comic strip one), is trash. Now wait a minute. Don't go into orbit. I am speaking from the high ground of my profession and not from personal inclinations.

I begged and borrowed and traded with the rest of my generation to get my hands on the above mentioned items along with Argosy, Amazing, Fantastic, Wonder and anything else that was within my reach. I sold pop bottles for the necessary pennies, too, so don't get the idea I'm a literary snob.

But the paperbacks have supplanted the mags and you know as well as I, I'm sure, that a full one third of the "originals", with the exception of the science fiction, aren't worth the ink they are printed with. That doesn't keep me from buying them. With me, it is a frank case of pure escapism because the bulk of the material I read is pretty heavy slugging most of the time. I can flip the modern equivalent of the penny-dreadful in an hour and feel relaxed -- and sometimes purely amused -- at the end of it. I enjoy it, violence, incredibility, lust and all. So if the modern generation finds the old-time mags funny and suitable for parody, it is within comprehension. The Pulp Era, I think, represented a particular level in the American or European culture and in context is as much a part of the ethnic background of the U.S. as was prohibition, the depression or the Thumping Thirties.

There is no denying the nostalgia of thinking about the pulps. For most of us (our generation), it coincides with our youth, with its dreams and desires. Certainly the identification with its heroes and heroines, improbable in their perfection as they were, was a damnsite better than the identification today with the ruthless "I've got mine, to Hell with you, Jack" types today.

If you will indulge my curiosity, I'd like to know what impelled you along this particular path in publishing. Your connection with science-fiction I know, but it would be interesting (and perhaps common ground with my interests) to know why you are working in the field of historical pulps. If you ever decide to do a doctoral thesis in American English, you have a ready made subject and references to hand. (My interest has always been along this vein. My main collection is of the Munsey publications, and it is rather extensive. LH))

\*\*\*\*\*

Change of address: Fred Cook 7511 Erie Street Sylvania, Ohio zip code 43560. Fred publishes the fine fanzine Bronze Shadows. If you like The Pulp Era you will certainly enjoy Bronze Shadows. Send for a sample copy. 35¢.

\*\*\*\*\*

I need the addresses of the following: Can anyone help? Rob Williams Peter Mabey, Mike Holsinger, Gordon Eklund, Ken Hedberg, Peter B. Hope Jim O'Meara, Tom Purdom, Sam Cox, Don Whiteman, Larry Anderson, Dennis Guthrie, Joe Gilbert, Bill Conner, Poul Anderson, Hal Lynch, Robert F. Smith.

\*\*\*\*\*

T R O A T published quarterly. 25¢ per copy, \$1.00 per year. Current issue features Capt. Pow by Gary Zachrich and The Drape of Things to Come by John Phillifent. Artwork by Gene Duplantier, George Barr, John Rackham, Jay Kinney, and Plato Jones.

413 Ottokee Street Wauseon, Ohio 43567



## IN THE NEXT ISSUE . . . . .

The Columbia Pulps by Robert A. W. Lowndes . . . Where Have The Heroes Gone? by Frederik Pohl . . . Thud And Blunder, Then And Now by Basil Wells . . . A Cook's Tour Of The Pulps by Fred Cook . . . Frank Tinsley, Prophet With A Brush by Bud Overn . . . and other fine articles by Henry Steeger, Wilkie Conner, Terry Jeeves, Dan McPhail, Mac McGregor, Vernell Coriell, Lou Tabakow, John Phillifent, and others. Plus artwork by Dave Prosser, Ray Sowers, Plato Jones, Amos Moon, Jay Kinney, and a couple of surprise artists.

Dave Prosser's Air War artfolio, part II will be included along with part 3 of the Argosy Index, part 2 of The Spider Series, and the normal columns by myself and Gary Zachrich. The letter column which was squeezed out this issue will be back and all in all it will be 150 pages crammed with items you won't want to miss.

Remember this is my 17th publishing anniversary issue and it will count as two issues on your subscription or will sell at \$1.50 to non-subscribers. So if this is a single copy to you, get your subscription in, or if your subscription expires this issue, send your renewal at once. 5 issue sub, \$2.25. 10 issue sub, \$4.00.

\*\*\*\*\*

M A R C O N 2 Holiday Inn North Toledo, Ohio April 8 & 9

Roger Zelazny Guest of Honor.

Fan Panels -- Pro Panels.

See you there?

