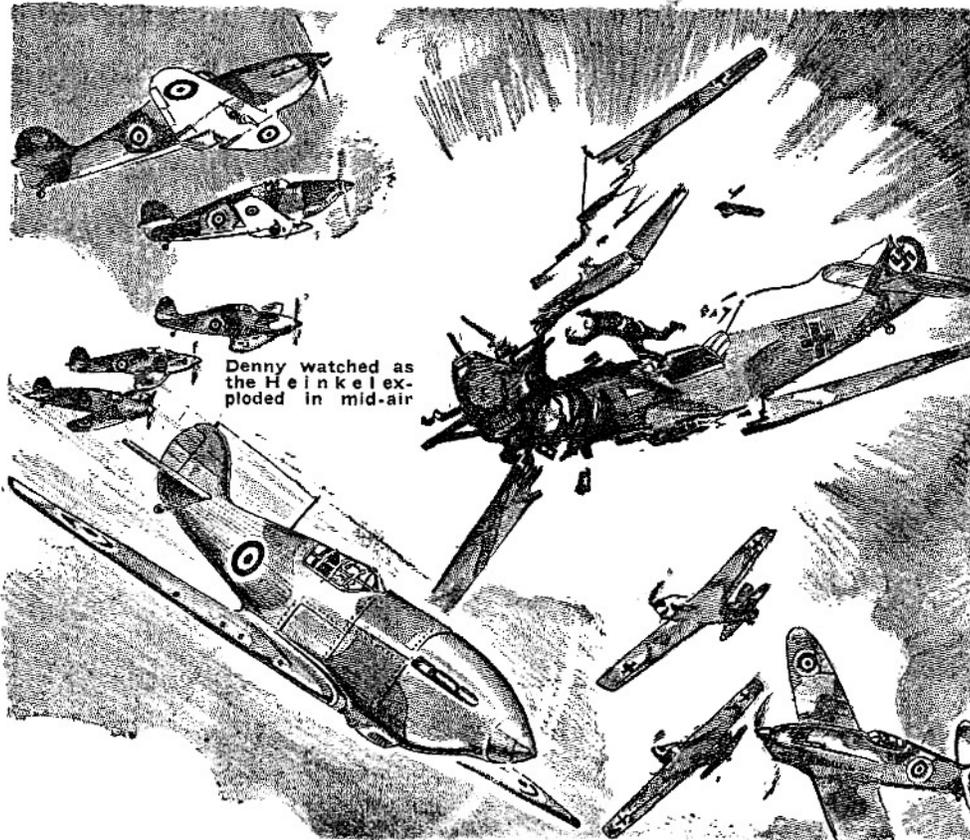


HOT LEAD FOR HEINKELS

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Yank Ed Denny Scours the Skies of Battle to Wipe Them Clean of a Doublecrossing Nazi Rat Who Would Sell Out His Pals for a Song!

HELL had suddenly broken out over the airdrome just outside of Tientsin which housed the ships of the Chinese Foreign Legion.

High above the heads of the scurrying men on the field, rode twelve Mitsubishi

bombers. They were laying their eggs of death so accurately, that Ed Denny, pilot for Chiang-Kai-Shek, screamed a string of cuss words at them that might have sounded like the crackling of tiny Chinese firecrackers, if they could have been heard above the horrible din.

The ships on the line, one by one, blew sky high as burning shrapnel penetrated their gas tanks. Doped fabric crackled as flames spread from wing to wing, and from nose to tail, leaving bare, blackened

metal skeletons where sleek, beautiful, flying ships had stood a moment before.

Thunder clap followed upon thunder clap, as the Japanese bombs laid waste to the canvas hangars. One by one, the incendiary bombs fired the sun-dried cloth, and, as the flames leaped toward the ceilings and ate through the great stanchions and wooden framework upon which it hung, they collapsed about the planes that were still housed inside, and, increased the intensity of the already raging inferno.

Frenchmen, Italians, Germans, Americans, Poles and Russians who made up the heterogeneous squadron of pilots were flinging themselves all over the place in an effort to get away from the horrible destruction that fell about their ears. Like their planes and hangars, they fell to earth to rise no more, struck either by exploding shell fragments, or struck down by the strafing Mitsubishi fighters that machine-gunned what was left of the squadron.

Ed Denny dragged himself across the open field toward a pile of railroad ties just behind a hangar that still stood on its framework through aflame from ground to roof. The heat seared his flesh as he passed. His progress was slow. Both his legs had been broken by shell fragments that by all the rules of war should have killed him, but Denny didn't die that easily.

Just as he reached refuge of the pile of railroad ties, the giant hangar collapsed. But Denny's body, protected by the cover of the logs, was spared. Merciful unconsciousness enveloped the Yank pilot in the tattered uniform of the Chinese Republic. . . .

Hours later, he awoke between the clean, white sheets in a Tientsin hospital. Slowly, it all came back to him. He knew the one man who had been behind that *strafe*. He asked the nurse how many of

his squadron had been saved. She lowered her voice as she said that none were left but him. Tears filled his eyes then.

As he closed them he pressed the tears through, until they rolled down his bronzed cheeks and stained the pillow on which his bandaged head rested. His jaw tightened. Someday, somewhere, he would meet the one person responsible for that bloody slaughter. Someday, Gellermann would answer to him, Ed Denny, for the betrayal and annihilation. . . .

THE drome of the 16th Fighter Squadron was situated twelve miles west of Ramsgate on the English coast. Daily Nazi air raids were beginning to pop at about this time.

Day after day the Nazi planes crossed the Channel. They bombed, they strafed, they photographed. The planes were causing a lot of trouble.

Reports were sent out to the string of dromes that stretched from the Firth of Forth to the southern extremity of England. The C. O.s were ordered to do something about the matter. Routine patrols were not enough. The Battle of Britain was really getting under way and the sooner the Nazis were informed about it, the better. German planes would have to be stopped before they got over the coastline. It developed into a matter of who would get in the best punches.

Squadron Leader Thatch-Urdell, commanding the 16th, now stood before nine of his pilots and told them all about it. He was a short, stout man in his late forties, and he had done his active duty twenty-five years before. He had been one of the finest flyers at that time and had downed his seventeen Huns. Now, he wanted to see his lads roll up similar high scores.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we face a crew of first-rate flyers. Only this morning I

received word of just who opposes us across the Channel. A certain Baron Gellermann—”

Ed Denny heard no more. The commander’s voice droned in his ears like a monotonous background of sound. And streaking through Denny’s senses was this one word: Gellermann—Gellermann—

He knew Gellermann. He knew the Nazi rat well. Gellermann was the big reason why Ed Denny, the one-time pilot for Chiang-Kai-Shek, had joined the R A. F. And now, Fate had ruled it that the grim baron should head his *staffel* of sky killers from a point directly across the Channel—in the German air base as Ostend.

“—composed of Germany’s greatest flyers,” the squadron leader was saying now. “They run single-seater Heinkels, painted orange and black checkerboard design. Gellermann himself flies an all-black plane, with an orange devil’s head insignia. You’re going to be seeing a lot of that Nazi and his students in the very near future, gentlemen. In fact, I wouldn’t be at all surprised if you ran into him today—” He let a smile appear on his lips. He looked up at the sky and said, “Perfect day for a battle—”

But he had to force that smile. He knew what he was sending these young Englishmen into. He knew that they had neither the experience nor the talent with which to cope with Gellermann and his *staffel*. He knew what the odds were. But he had his orders.

He stepped over to Flying Lieutenant Grinham, the tall, lean flight leader. Grinham was a good man, intelligent and tough. A born leader and a savage fighter.

“Good luck, Lieutenant,” Thatch-Urdell said. “Remember—the women and children in England are depending on you. They hate to be bombed!”

“They shan’t be bombed today, sir,” Grinham said.

He turned to the other flyers, grinned and then pointed to the nine eager-looking Spitfires. Already, the mechanics were warming up the super-charged Rolls-Royce motors.

“Up we go!” Grinham yelled.

The flyers ran toward their planes. And one of them, as he ran, kept repeating to himself:

“Gellermann—Gellermann—”

OUT over the Channel rode the flight of Spitfires heading northwest toward Belgium. As they crossed the French coast and headed toward Ostend, anti-aircraft fire barked up at them from below. The gun-thunder broke through the shattering noise of the motors.

Below, across the expanse of that battered earth, hate and pain and vicious fighting had left it a shambles. What was once fertile soil, where seed had taken root and grown to throbbing, eager life, there was now only what was left of a reign of death and destruction.

Denny looked down at it all, and his lips were grim. The only way really to see a war was to look down on it from the upper galleries. One could really see something then—the mass movements of infantry, the columns marching to the jumping-off place, the convulsive attacks in echelon, and—

He forgot about the war down there then. He saw and heard and felt something that told him about the war up here. The sight of Heinkels greeted him. He heard the chattering of Madsen guns, felt his plane lurch as slugs tore through the fuselage.

It was one of those surprise jobs, and it did a lot of damage to those nine Englishmen. Two of them went down in the first burst. The others scattered wildly as the Nazi squadron plummeted down upon them. In a few moments, the sky was

a pale blue board upon which swarming planes made frenzied scribbling.

Denny took it calmly. He sent his Spitfire down in a vertical dive and came out of it at a thousand feet. A Heinkel was trying to play tag with him, and, as it came closer, Denny saw that it was of orange and black checkerboard design.

“This is nice,” Denny murmured. He liked to talk aloud to his plane, as if it had ears. “This is very nice.”

He grabbed the trigger trips and cleared his eight Brownings with a short burst. The streams of Cupro emanating from his wings told him that the guns were feeling good today. He was feeling pretty good himself.

The Heinkel was trying to get on his tail, but Denny went through a series of rolls and loops designed to make the Nazi weary and disgusted with the whole business. It was a listless duel, until Denny maneuvered himself bit by bit, on top of this antagonist.

When he was upstairs, he turned over and plummeted down on the Nazi and cut him to little pieces. The eight Brownings talked plenty loud and the German never knew what hit him. He slumped against the glass enclosure of his cockpit and died there.

Denny followed him down to a thousand feet, to make sure that that Nazi was honest to goodness dead. Then he went upstairs again to look for another playmate.

When he gained more altitude, he saw that the Germans were getting much the better of this quarrel. Already, it looked as if more than half the English squadron had been cut down. The orange and black Heinkels were dominating the sky now. Even as Denny stared and came closer to the scrap, another Englishman went into a spin, his plane breaking out in smoke and flame, his motor whistling its own eulogy.

“Not so good,” Denny murmured. “Let’s butt in—”

He made his plane move faster, and almost at once encountered a streaking Heinkel that was playing carousal with another Spitfire. Cutting across the German’s path, Denny turned on a dime, came down on the Nazi like a bird gone mad, and made his eight Brownings pay dividends.

THE checkerboard Heinkel quivered. Flames broke out around the motor and placed a death costume around the wings and fuselage. Denny’s teeth were biting hard together, and the grin on his lips was none too pleasant. He was a killer now, not a human being. In its place was the beast-urge to hunt and destroy more prey.

He took his Spitfire up into the box-seats, looked down and saw that it was now a matter of seven Heinkels against three Britishers. He was the fourth, and the sooner he entered the battle, the better for his buddies who were in hot water down there.

He dived, and as he did so he saw—the all-black Heinkel!

“Hello, Gellermann,” Denny gritted. “It’s a pleasure to meet you again.”

At this time the German leader was concentrating on a young Englishman who appeared to be a tired hare, just about ready to give itself to the fangs of the hound. Gellermann was leaping in for the kill, when Denny interfered. The Yank streaked across the bullet path and looped on the outside, worked his guns to tell the German that he was open for business.

“Come on, rat,” Denny snarled. “Leave the kid alone. You and I have something to talk over.”

It seemed to him that psychic cables must have enabled Gellermann to hear those words, for the Nazi veered away

from the young Englishman, high-jumped to an attack position, and faced Denny.

The two of them were now conveniently away from the others, and although Denny realized that he had no right to concentrate on a single opponent while his comrades were so greatly outnumbered, he nevertheless jockeyed toward the Nazi, intent on a fight to the finish. He had waited a long time for this opportunity.

Gellermann opened the proceedings with an attempt to throw Denny off balance by scaring him with a fake head-on collision. Denny kept a straight course as the Nazi's wings nearly scraped the under-side of his fuselage.

"Very funny," Denny muttered. "Try that again and I'll tear your head off. I'll tear it off anyway."

He looped on the inside and then made a complete circle, to show the Nazi that both parties would be active in this deal. He came up under Gellermann and his Brownings spit lead. But the Nazi was smart and fast. He slipped out of the tight spot swerved away from the eight streams of fire, and dived. Denny went after him, cursing.

The German pulled out at twenty-five hundred feet, feinted a loop, and then zoomed upward. He made a smooth Immelmann and caught Denny by surprise. The Nazi's bullets streaked across space and hit the Spitfire's glycol tank. The line of white-hot lead moved up over the exhausts, then sizzled around the gas tanks. The Yank's plane was on fire!

"I'll be a—" Denny started to say, and then he didn't even have time to curse. He felt the heat puddling around his legs and saw the flames belching out toward his face. He went into a dive, gave the Spitfire full gun and saw through the smoke that he was hitting three-fifty now—four hundred—

How long did it take for a guy to bum to death? Denny was wondering about that. His eyes were seeing blackness, and he was telling his ship to hurry up and get close to the ground so he could make a landing and get out of the flames.

He didn't hear the Heinkel coming down after him. He didn't hear Gellermann laughing. He didn't hear the Madsens belching at him. He was hitting four-fifty now, and the flames were bouncing off him and the ground was coming up fast.

Denny was reaching out and trying to pull the Spitfire out of the dive now, and he was telling himself that it had been a lot of fun while it lasted, and maybe he would go to Heaven after all. Even if he went to Hell, the place couldn't be much hotter than this roasting plane, so it made little difference—

After that, he couldn't think any more. The flames made an orange wall in front of his eyes, and then there was a big noise, and then—blackness. . . .

A LOT of white, the smell of alcohol, and the soft voice of a nurse greeted the Yank's return to consciousness. She was speaking in German. Then, some one else was speaking, and the voice made Denny blink.

Gellermann was there, standing by the bed, speaking to a doctor. This Gellermann was tall and heavy. He had narrow eyes, a long, thin nose, and a moustache cut *Fuehrer* style. There was plenty of color in the uniform and plenty of polish on the boots.

Denny understood German, he had taken it at Princeton: Now, he heard Gellermann saying:

"It surprises me that he survived that crash. The plane was on fire all the way down, and—"

"You can't kill me so easily,

Gellermann,” Denny interrupted.

The Nazi whirled, stared at Denny’s bandaged head.

“You know my name?” he gasped.

“Sure, Gellermann,” replied Denny. “I know you, and you know me. We’re old friends, don’t you remember?”

Gellermann was frowning hard, and the doctor stared puzzledly for a moment, then turned away and moved on to the next bed.

“Your face is familiar,” Gellermann said.

“It ought to be.” Denny’s voice was louder now. He felt pain in his head and pain in his legs. It was a burning pain, but he knew that he wasn’t hurt badly. He knew what was the matter with him. He had a lot of experience as far as getting hurt was concerned.

“Who the devil are you?” Gellermann demanded. “If you’re trying to be smart, I advise against it. I—”

“I don’t have to try to be smart, Gellermann,” Denny said. “I am smart. At least, between the two of us, I have the better memory. Or—well, maybe you don’t want to remember.”

“Remember what?” Gellermann spat out. He was losing his patience now.

“China,” Denny snarled.

Gellermann’s face went white. He bit his lip, and at his sides his arms were rigid.

“Yes, of course I remember,” he said nervously. A fierce light glowed in his eyes, and he moved closer toward the bed.

“Don’t be a fool,” Denny said. “You can’t kill me now. After all, I’m a prisoner, and a wounded one at that. Better wait until after dark, Gellermann, when nobody is looking. You’re an expert at that sort of thing. Sneaking around and pulling fast ones when nobody is looking—”

Gellermann’s crooked lips formed a smile.

“So I meet up with my former comrade

again, eh? Well, this is indeed a pleasure. In fact, it is an honor.”

“Yeah, that’s right. Hand me the soft stuff. Make me believe that you’ve turned into a real nice guy, and you want to be pals with me. That, of course, will keep my mouth closed until you get your chance to put poison in my coffee, or a knife in my heart. But it won’t work, Gellermann. You were born a snake and you’ll die one! And before you die you’ll be disgraced!”

“You’re quite a fool, Denny,” the Nazi said. “Who are you going to talk to? Who will believe you? Who will think that there is any semblance of sanity in your brain after the story you tell them? Remember, Denny, we Germans are suffering a shortage of food right now, and the leavings, when there are any, are sent to the asylum where lunatic prisoners are kept!”

I get the idea,” Denny said, nodding. His lips trembled. He hated this man who smiled down upon him now. He had good cause to hate Gellermann.

“It will be wise for you to keep a quiet tongue concerning that little episode in China,” Gellermann murmured. “I may even be moved to grant you special favors, for old times’ sake, providing you keep that unpleasant little matter to yourself.”

DENNY thought fast. The German was playing chess with him now, and he had once been fairly good at chess. Now, he anticipated his opponent’s moves. He put strategy into play and made a mental nod. He would have to sacrifice a few pawns to the Nazi, but he had a feeling that there was going to be a checkmate pretty soon—and Ed Denny would not be the loser.

“Perhaps you’re right, Gellermann,” he said slowly. “Perhaps it would be wiser for me to forget that little matter. After all, I

don't give a damn personally, beyond the fact that a few of my very good friends died because of your— Well, what's the difference? I'm willing to forget about it, provided I receive a little hospitality during my stay here."

Gellermann's smile widened.

"Hospitality, and more than that," he said slowly. "Perhaps it would be possible you will be my guest. And the thought occurs to me that you might find it profitable to fly for Germany when your wounds heal. You are quite a good flyer, Denny, and I could use a man with your talents. After all, it's only the money that interests you. That's why you flew for China, and now for England. I might make you an interesting proposition."

"Perhaps," Denny said. He forced an amiable smile to his lips.

"I must leave now," Gellermann said. "I'm going up on a little project that has to do with your particular outfit. We captured one of your planes, and, of course, that opens the way for certain convenient activity—if you know what I mean."

"I know what you mean," Denny said.

Gellermann left the room then, and Denny rested back against the pillows, closed his eyes. . He cursed his own helplessness. He knew very well what this Gellermann was capable of. That deal in China—

His thoughts were interrupted by a groaning whisper from a cot nearby. He heard his own name mentioned. Then he moved up to a half-sitting position, stared over to his right and saw a bandaged figure.

"Grinham!" Denny breathed slowly.

It was Grinham, all right, and he was in a bad way. But his eyes said plenty, and Denny made a big try. He tested his legs, told himself that he might be able to get away with it, and then climbed out of the bed.

It was hard going, but he managed to make his way over to the cot where Grinham lay groaning. He sat on the edge of the narrow bed, and put his hand on the Englishman's wrist.

"How goes it?" he asked softly.

Grinham looked up at him with glazed eyes. The Britisher was fading fast, but he forced words from his lips.

"I heard what went on between you and Gellermann," he got out. "Not exactly cricket, Denny."

"Don't believe what you heard," Denny said. "I—"

GRINHAM interrupted.

"I'm going out now," he said. "I don't have more than a few minutes. But I want you to promise me, Denny, that you won't play a traitor's role."

"You've got my word," Denny said. "But look—let's talk fast. Any minute now, a nurse will come in here. I want you to tell me what happened to you."

"Shot down—but my plane wasn't hit. I managed to land it—behind the Siegfried line. But I'm filled with bullets—"

"Do you know where we are now?" Denny asked.

"Yes, I heard a few doctors talking . . . This hospital is less than a half mile away from Gellermann's drone . . . He has my plane there, and he's placing a small bomb under each wing . . . He's going out to bomb our hangars—"

"Maybe," Denny said meaningly.

Grinham looked at him curiously. Life was flowing out of him now, and yet he knew that Denny wanted to say something. His eyes begged for an explanation of what he had heard between the American and the Nazi.

"Listen to this, Grinham," Denny said. "Listen, and remember it. And if you get the opportunity, spill it to the first Nazi who passes by. It's about Gellermann. It's

about a phoney he pulled in China. I was flying there not so long ago. I was with a small outfit of foreign flyers—a little league of nations in itself. Gellermann was one of us.

“We were doing okay, see? We were knocking the Japs out of the sky right and left. We were in a sweet little locale, only a few miles from Tientsin, and the infantry units ahead of us were getting along fine because we practically had full control of the skies in that sector.

“And then Gellermann pulled his fast one. He worked the well-known doublecross. He sold out to the Japs. I got the story from an enemy flyer who was shot down behind our lines. But I got the story too late. A squadron of Jap planes came over and bombed hell out of us. Every man was killed except me. I joined up with one of the regular Chinese outfits, and then this Jap prisoner told about Gellermann’s dirty deal. And only a few days after that I was shot down. Gellermann did it. He was flying a Jap plane.

“Well, I was smashed up pretty bad. And I figured I’d take a rest. And one day, while I was in Ireland, I read an article telling about the great German aces who would carry the Swastika into battle. And one of them was the great Baron Gellermann, who made such a big hit with the Japs!”

He paused, then continued:

“I’ll tell you the truth, Grinham. I was a little yellow. I knew that Gellermann was really a great flyer, even if he was a dirty rat. I knew that he had blasted me out of the air once, and that he could do it again. But I crossed the Irish Sea and joined the R. A. F. with the hope that some day I would get another crack at him.

“I got that chance, and I loused it up. But they say that every man is entitled to three tries. I’m going to meet Gellermann

again. I don’t know how, but I’ll meet him. I’ve got a score to settle with that skunk. My best friends were the guys who flew in that volunteer outfit. And Gellermann murdered them! He told the Japs when and where to bomb. He actually directed that job. He—”

“I understand, Denny,” the Britisher said.

“What are you going to do about it?”

Grinham’s eyes fought for life.

“I’ll try and hold on. I’ll get the story across—somehow. The Nazis will find out about Gellermann. They’ll find out just about how far he can be trusted. Of course, he wouldn’t sell out on his own Fatherland, but even so—”

Those were the Englishman’s last words. His eyes grew dim for an instant, and then he died.

Denny went stiff, as if his bones and flesh were suddenly turned to stone. And then he was telling himself that now he could even the score with Gellermann by only one means—shooting the rat out of the sky. And maybe Grinham’s death was all for the best. To disgrace Gellermann before his countrymen by telling about the Chinese episode was, after all, a cheap sort of revenge.

There was really only one way to accomplish it.

“We’ll take it, bud,” Denny told himself. He looked down at his bandaged legs, wondered if they would hold him up. He didn’t wait for any answers.

Footsteps in the corridor outside told him what he must do. He hobbled over to the nearest window, pulled it up, and climbed out. The only man to see him do this was another English prisoner across the room.

The pain in Denny’s scorched legs was almost unbearable as he moved along, keeping close to the hospital wall.

“All right, feet, let’s hike,” he said.

His lips were set in a thin, tight line as he left the hospital grounds unseen and moved into the cover provided by thick woods. He fought his way through the brambles, slowly, painfully—

DENNY emerged from the Belgian Forest onto wide, flat, smooth piece of landing field. There, he saw three hangars, one-storied barracks, four anti-aircraft emplacements and a row of orange-and-black checkerboard-design Heinkels. One of them was idling. And nearby, was the Supermarine Spitfire warming up.

Peering through the heavy bush, Denny knew that he would have to work fast. He would grab one of these planes, and it would have to be the Spitfire. He couldn't take a chance with the Heinkel, although it was nearer. British guns would give that plane hell as soon as it crossed the channel.

His head was spinning now, and his feet felt like two glowing embers of steel. But even as he told himself that he wouldn't be able to stand the pain, he was running out from the cover of the woods. He was running toward the English plane!

He had a head start on the nearest German, and he was only about ten yards away, when the Nazi got wise to what was taking place. The man began to yell, and within a few seconds there was a general alarm.

But by that time, Denny was climbing into the cockpit, working the controls, sending the plane across the field. Now, he was looking through the rearview mirror, seeing the ground crew taking their places at the anti-aircraft guns. He saw something else—a single figure running toward the idling Heinkel. He knew who it was.

“All right, guy,” he told himself. “You're not running away. This is your third try. And you're gonna make it

good!”

He took the Spitfire up and streaked westward to get away from the first offerings of the anti-aircraft guns. He heard the swish of something heavy and flaming shoot by, and his plane shuddered. But he managed to zigzag out of the way. He maneuvered from the path of those vicious shells. Then he circled up, and deliberately turned around.

Gellermann was coming up after him!

On the field below, pilots and mechanics were gathered to watch the show. Gellermann no doubt had told them that it would be an easy, pleasant task, disposing of the arrogant fool who had run across the field clad only in pajamas, stolen a plane, and was now so absurdly bold as to think he could get away with such a stunt! Alone, Gellermann was coming up to teach this insolent individual a lesson.

Denny climbed to six thousand. He saw Gellermann coming toward him slowly. The Nazi was taking his time, and the checkerboard Heinkel seemed to be a gloating beast, torturing its prey by a slow approach, yet with fiendish deliberateness.

Denny waited until Gellermann reached his altitude. It was even up now, and that was the way Denny wanted it to be. He told himself to take it easy, to be smart and not to get excited. Then he went into action!

BOTH planes headed for each other simultaneously. Gellermann tried a short burst from the side after a rollout. Denny took the bullets in his wings. Gellermann feinted a dive, looped and got on Denny's tail. But the Yank spun out of it, climbed and reversed positions.

The Nazi felt the bullets pound into his fuselage. Denny came closer, but Gellermann made a quick, banking turn and got out of the tough spot. They faced

one another again, and the Nazi came at Denny head-on.

Denny waited until the last instant before giving his Brownings the trigger. But he missed his target as Gellermann zoomed over him. The German looped and came up under Denny, his guns spitting lead. Denny had to Immelmann to get out of the death trap.

Once again they jockeyed. Gellermann climbed and tried a gradual dive. Denny went down also. Gellermann looped up and continued the loop in a complete circle. It was smart, keen flying and it brought him on Denny's tail again. Bullets traced a line up the back of the Spitfire. Bullets smacked through the enclosed cockpit, nicked Denny in the shoulder. It was a shallow wound, but it made him tremble.

"All right, don't get excited," he told himself.

He zigzagged away from the Nazi's bullets, rolled out and started a dive. He made the Spitfire scream as he broke up the dive and hopped upstairs again. He tried an inside loop, then changed his mind and twisted out of it. This act brought him directly over Gellermann. He went over, looped on the outside and got the German directly in his sights. But Gellermann was speeding to his right, banking and starting his own loop.

Denny grinned.

"That was dumb, Mr. Rat!" he snarled. "And here's why!"

He came up under Gellermann and made his Brownings talk, even though the German was not in his sights. Gellermann got scared and tried to break out of the loop. As he twisted to his right, Denny moved in on him, and this time he had the Nazi square in his sights.

"How does this taste?" he shouted.

His eight Brownings belched fire and lead. Gellermann's plane lurched and then started to spin. Denny followed him down. The Yank was laughing now, but it was the laugh of a killer. His teeth were bared, his eyes narrowed. He saw a corpse spurting blood in the Heinkel's cockpit, and the sight did him a world of good. He watched as the Heinkel crashed directly into one of the hangars, and then he turned and streaked for home. . . .

Squadron Leader Thatch-Urdell left the infirmary and joined the group of anxious pilots waiting outside.

"Denny will be all right, gentlemen," he announced. He'll be flying again in a short time. In fact, he'll be taking Grinham's place as flight leader. And—" he grinned— "to use his own expression, he's 'rarin' to go.' He says that Gellermann gave him a keen appetite for more Nazis!"