

A
Humorous
First
World
War
Story



I pulled the altimeter needle out of the little half-wit's empennage

They Had to Flee Paris

By JOE ARCHIBALD

Armed With Meatless Sausages and Bad Intentions, Muley and Ambrose Make Krauts of Themselves—While the Guardhouse Waits!

ME AND Ambrose Hooley got to Paree in August, 1918, because we did a very heroic and unselfish piece of work for the Allies over Pagny. So the brass hats gave us ten days—and not in the klink, for a change—and now we are standing at the foot of the Eifel Tower wondering how we can squander a hundred francs.

“Take a gander at the ones goin’ by, Muley,” Ambrose says. “No wonder they call this the Eyeful Tower. There is plenty of them here. Let’s follow them.”

“Look,” I says. “Those summer furs they are wearin’ don’t come off cats and the rocks dangling from their ears ain’t glass. With them four earrings you could purchase two new Spads. We have a hundred francs and those two cupcakes use more than that every day just to touch up their pans. Come on, as I promised Bugeye Boomer I’d git him some of them postcards.”

AMBROSE HOOLEY is a short, squat little squirt more pugnacious than a

tormented billy goat and he rues the day that does not bring him at least one fight to the finish. It is rumored about the sector where we have our Ninety-third Squadron that I, Muley Spink, am going to get a *crow de gare* for sharing a Nissen with Ambrose.

We walk around the best part of Parea and have a snort or two and that night we go to the Folies Bergere and meet the third number from the left after the show. She gets a friend. We all go to a swell cafe. In the A.M. when we wake up Ambrose and me have seven francs.

"And nine more days to go," Ambrose groans. "Why didn't I bring them soap wrappers, Muley? I wonder where we could find a blank check—or somethin'? Them dames must of et some blotters before they met us. Well, we might as well start back for Commercy."

We go for a walk. I look in through a door and grasp Ambrose by the arm.

"Look—here is fun," I says. "Only twenty centimes or so. Puppet show, Ambrose."

"Huh?" the little tomato sniffs. "After seein' the Folies Bergere, you want I should pay to see Frog pooches git blue ribbons. I hate dog shows, Muley."

"Puppets I says. They are dummies who act when you pull some strings. Some of the puppet shows in Parea ought to be reeskay, shouldn't they, Ambrose?"

"I've always tried everythin' once," the crackpot says. "Even that buckshot in ink they call caviar. Let's go."

It was not a bad show. It is about a Frog traveling salesman and a peasant's daughter. The drummer takes the innocent *femme* out for a ride in the country in a new auto and when the jalopy comes back, the *femme* is driving same. There is a curtain for a while, meaning time has elapsed, and then you see the traveling salesman walking back and he says

something in French me and Ambrose wished we understood as everybody laughed and some dolls blushed.

"That is somethin', Muley," Ambrose says. "The guy who pulls them strings has to be busier than a brigadier tryin' not to get too close to the *guerre*. What will we do next. Oh, look, Muley! In that cellar. A guy is beatin' up a dame. Come on, because we ain't goin' to stand for—"

"Ambrose, come back here," I yelp. "That is an Apache dance, is all. A-a-a-ambro-o-ose!"

"Don't be silly. There is no Indians in Parea," he yells back. Knowing what will happen I try to find a gendarme, and can't, so I go to a bistro across the street and sit there shaking and asking for absinthe by mistake. There is an awful racket going on across the narrow street, and whistles start blowing. I see gendarmes now and about eight A.E.F. cops. I get out of there quick, going to the Parea railroad terminal. "To heck with him," I says. "It had to happen sooner or later."

There is no train heading for Commercy inside of two hours. I sit and wait, and ten minutes before the rattler pulls out a rough looking citizen comes up to me and says he has a good mind to slug me one. He is a short character with a beret on and baggy pants and high-heeled shoes. He has a thin, black mustache over his upper lip.

"How dare you?" I snaps. "I am a U. S. officer. You lay a hand on me and you will regret it, my man. Go away."

"Stop actin', Muley."

"Huh?" I gulp, then look closer. Yes, it is Ambrose Hooley. "Why, you fathead," I holler. "What—"

"You should have stuck with me, Muley. You would have learned things. Don't ever interfere in a fight between husband and wife. They both pulled a knife on me, cut my uniform right down

the back and then everybody in the dive starts kickin' or punchin'. I crawled out from under and got into a little room where there was these clothes and some make-up. Let's git out of Paree, Muley."

We do, in just five minutes. Ambrose sighs and leans back in his seat and shoves his hands in his pockets. He pulls one of his bruised punch throwers out and it has a letter in it. He takes a gander at it.

"Huh, Muley," he says. "This is from the Keith-Orpheum Circuit in New York. It is addressed to Pierre and Pierre, Apache Dancers Extretrordinair. Look, steamship tickets to New York, Muley. We will go back on the next train and cash them in. Then we will have eight more days in Paree. What luck, Muley?"

"I bet you would, too, you criminal," I says flatly. "You will seal that up and send the letter right back to the address."

"That is what I thought you would say," Ambrose snorts. "No wonder you got awarded a Sunday school pin. Awright, I'll be a sucker."

EVERYTHING happens to me and Ambrose. If a steamship made one million voyages without a mishap we would ship aboard it on the next trip when it hit an iceberg. The train we are on is rumbling through a Frog town named Dormans when it leaves the rails. The boxcar me and Ambrose are in turns over more times than an insomnia victim on a hot night and when it spills us out, we are so close to the River Marne we get mouthfuls of it.

It is a long time before everybody gets their brains working again.

Some meat wagons arrive and remove the casualties but nobody bothers with us until the place is about policed up, and then not until they step on us by accident.

"Was you two on the train?" a guy says.

"Of course not," I snaps, my dome getting as clear as it ever could. "We got these scratches tryin' to steal some codfish away from a cat. Hit him, Ambrose."

"Right at the minute, Muley, I could not lift a truffle."

"Your names?"

"Pierre," Ambrose tosses out. "Pierre Pierre and here is my card. I dance with Apashies!"

"I am John Doe," I reply with disgust. "How far is the town from here where we can phone?"

"Just a quarter of a mile back."

"Come on, Ambrose," I says. "What have you got there?"

"A miracle," the little tomato says. "There was mail on this train on its way to Commercy. Look at the package I found. It is addressed to me. It is from Uncle Willie."

"Oh," I moan. "Only that could happen between book covers. Let me see."

Ambrose is right. I almost faint as there is Uncle Willie's handwriting and no mistake. It is like the penmanship you see in the third grade only not quite so good.

"We will open it when we git to town, Muley," Ambrose says. "I wonder what he's thought up now?"

"Just as if not enough had happened to us," I snarl at Ambrose. "I wish I was at the Ninety-third."

"Have an aspirin," Ambrose says.

We are on the edge of the Frog tank town when we hear a guy yelling for help and we see a French peasant up a tree and there is five dogs under the tree all of them are trying to climb up and get the citizen.

"Drive ze chiens away, s'il voo plays," he yelps. "Look out, because they are mad ones."

Me and Ambrose throw rocks at the pooches and when they retreat, the Frog comes down. He says it is an awful thing, the packs of dogs that go around France

looking for mess as they are nuts from not being fed.

“Say le guerre,” the Frog says and limps home. We see the seat of his empennage is out.

“There are lots of angles to a guerre, Muley,” Ambrose says. “Who would ever think of that one?”

WE GO into town and it is full of Limeys, Frogs and trucks and other articles of war. We go into a buvette that is very crowded. There is two nurses in it and they are with two flyers from a British outfit and one of the squabs gives me the eye as I go by.

“Yank, aren’t you?” the doll says. “We’re Yankees, too. Sit down as these two beef-eaters aren’t much company. Look at the long faces on them.”

“Sorrow,” one says and sighs and sips at more brandy. “This chap and myself are not in the pink. We would tell you why but it is a secret, old girl.”

“Old girl,” he said, the nice looking number comes back to her pal. “I am only twenty-one.” Then she looks at Ambrose and asks me where I got the freak.

“Him?” I ask. “Ha, ha! He is an artist from the Momart. Sh-h-h-h, he is a spy.”

“Huh?” Ambrose says. “You want me to git shot?”

“That is an idea,” I counter.

“I will get me a uniform somewhere,” Ambrose says.

He sits between the sad looking Limeys who have become almost blotto. Ten minutes later, the British pilots are starting to snore.

“Let’s help them out of here, Muley,” Ambrose grins. “Wait, girls, we will be back.”

“Live upstairs—old chap—rather—what?” a Limey mumbles. “Just a bit of a nap before we start for Ville en—thanks awfully.

We get the Limeys upstairs.

“The aspirin in the brandy did it, Muley,” Ambrose grins. “They will wake up tomorrer sometime. Ha!”

“Wha-a-a-t!” I yelp. “They might die. Oh, you dirty—”

“Stop getting jumpy,” Ambrose says. “I only want to borrow this little guy’s uniform for an hour or two. They are nice lookin’ nurses, Muley.”

“What is the use?”

We go downstairs again and join the dames and spend all we have left. One comes from Brooklyn and the other from Detroit. They leave us after promising us they will meet us in Paree after the war is over. We go back upstairs.

“These guys are certainly out cold,” Ambrose says. “Well, there is two beds here, Muley. We might as well sleep here. Boys, I am trays fatigay. Let’s see what is in this package from Uncle Willie.”

I start to take off my boots. Ambrose unwraps his mail and brings forth a chain of sausages.

“I suppose that is somethin’ new,” I says, my eyes bugging out. “They was invented years ago. And how did they keep without ice?”

“That is the marvel of it, maybe,” Ambrose says. “I will read the letter.” And he does. His uncle, Willie Hooley, says he incorporated with a very smart citizen who can make meat out of anything but meat. It is a synthetic sausage link he has sent to Ambrose and he claims it will taste like the real McCoy when it is cooked, just as if it really came off a pig.

“The pal of Uncle Willie’s is a vegetarian,” he says. “He makes hamburgs, steaks and chops out of vegetables and bread and herbs. There is a fortune in it. They have a closet full of the products now. Uncle Willie says for me to contact people who will be interested, like Kraut scientists, when the war is over as

even dogs and cats and horses will be at a premium after we get through fightin'."

Rapidly I am losing the last of my patience.

"I have heard enough," I says. "Throw the stuff away as it might be full of foot and mouth disease. Why don't they put Uncle Willie away?"

"I don't know, Muley," Ambrose says and wraps up the trick sausages. "But I will cook one when I get a chance and see what happens."

I yawn and pull off the other boot. Just then we hear feet clumping up the stairs and Ambrose snaps out the light. Somebody bangs on the door.

"I say, in there! Are you in there, Lieutenant Dumphy? I say, Rowbottom."

"Rather," Ambrose says. "Go away, won't you? It's beastly late—"

We hear a guy swear and then push the door open.

"Look here, men," a rough voice says. "It is time to go to Ville en Tardenois. I say, you answer me, what?"

"What's over there?" Ambrose says, and I bang him in the shins.

The visitors both swear and one snaps on a briquet and holds it high. We almost faint when we see two big Limey red tabs. They almost faint, too.

"Strike me pink, Colonel. These persons are not Leftenants Dumphy and—there's our chaps on the bed. I say, Rowbottom! Dumphy! Blarst my eyes, they are no end juicy. Who are you two? You have an R.A.F. uniform on, one of you."

"We had to put 'em to bed," I says shaky. "They was so boiled. We . . ."

"Godfrey! Do you know what they were supposed to do? There is a bridge over the Aisne near Neufchateau that has to be destroyed at dawn. There is a Rumpler over at Ville en Tardenois waiting for these men to fly it. It is vital to

the Allied plans that the bridge be blown up. And here are these two bloomin' jassacks—"

"Ah—er—no wonder the two dames was with them," Ambrose says. "I bet they was Kraut spies and slugged their drinks, huh? Ambrose, did you hear?"

"I ain't deaf. That is a swell story you thought up quick, Muley. I mean—"

"I think you are both a pair of ruddy liars by Big Ben and all the other clocks," a red tab says. "We'll find out. Call the police, Major."

"Now, wait a minute," Ambrose says. "We are U. S. flyers and when we saw the condition these poor bums—er—chaps was in an' after hearin' what they said to us before they passed out, we told 'em we would carry on. We'd do that job. That is why I got into this uniform, for mine is at the cleaners an'—is there bombs on the Rumpler?"

"Fancy," the major said. "Great spirit in the air squadrons, Colonel. I believe they are right."

"Look, Ambrose," I gulp. "What did you say about us carryin' on? I've had enough of this carryin' on. I will confess—"

"No bombs, old chap," the major says. "Not as simple as that."

"It wouldn't be, would it?" Ambrose sniffs.

"Dropping a bomb or two is not positive enough. You will wear the flying clothes of two German airmen when you start out. You will have dynamite and will sneak to the bridge and plant it. You will find a map of operations on Lieutenant Rowbottom."

"I'll confess," I snap. "I—"

AMBROSE manages to nick my chin with his elbow and I immediately shut my mouth.

"You are brave men," the red tab says.

“Your names? I don’t believe we—”

“Ah—Lieutenants Smith and Jones,” Ambrose says, saluting smartly. “Number Thirteenth Squadron, south of Nancy. Let’s get on with it. Wouldn’t be too hard on these crumbs—er—chaps. Spies everywhere, you know and all that, what? Cheerio!”

“Righto. Follow us, Leftenants,” the colonel says.

“If I had a gun,” I moan. “Even a knife, Ambrose, I would fix your wagon.”

“Now what else could we do, Muley?” Ambrose says sotto voice. “We would have got twenty years apiece for what they think we did. Oh, the things that happen to me. I wisht I hadn’t used up all the aspirin.”

“I’ll never look at another dame again,” I vow.

“Maybe you’re right,” the little crackpot comes back, “unless dames can fly without a Spad under them like angels. Every war is the same. There is always a bridge that settles who wins in the end. Come on, Muley.”

We drive to Ville en Tardenois in a British jalopy and there we pull Kraut flying burlap over our uniforms. There is a Rumpler all ready for us and two Limeys show us where they put the dynamite and set-off box and wires in the rear pit.

“It is where you sit,” Ambrose says to me. “No smokin’ now, Muley. Put this package in there too and do not dast throw it out. Uncle Willie might have somethin’ there.”

“There is room for a victrola here, too,” I reply with disgust. “We could have music.”

“We will be off as soon as I study the map more,” Ambrose says and scootches down with the red tabs. “That place marked with the big X is the place we land, huh? The smaller X is the bridge. It is simple enough.”

“Nuts,” I call out. “The X’s are where they will find two corpses. Guess whose?”

“Stout chaps,” the red tabs say when we are ready to hop. “You’ll get decorated for this if you succeed.”

“On Memorial Day,” I cut in.

“Odd chap, isn’t he, Jones?” a red tab addresses Ambrose. “Jolly good sense of humor, though.”

“He’s a scream at a lawn party,” Ambrose replies. “Awright, we’re bloody well as good as off. Cheerio and a pip or two, old custards. Contact and all that, you know.”

The Rumpler’s power-plant starts perking and it sounds like an old washing machine workin’ on a pair of dungarees that has a spanner wrench left in a pocket. Ambrose gives the Rumpler a run that almost takes it to the next town before the Kraut crate lifts off real estate, narrowly missing a washout on the roof of a Frog barn.

Ambrose cuts the Rumpler’s engine when we get in sight of Neufchateau and he takes the two-seater down to a hundred feet, which should be its ceiling anyway. Ambrose signals to me and then points. I look down and see a field right on the edge of town and I gather big beads of fret oil off my pan and throw them into the backwash. Here I am, Muley Spink, sitting on ten sticks of dynamite and it will only take one good jar to set off same and kill me to pieces. I lean over and beg Ambrose to be careful.

“Muley, if this Rumpler was made of blown glass, I could set it down without a crack,” the little ape yowls into my ear. “Stop lookin’ over my shoulder as you make me nervous.”

AMBROSE makes a landing that amazes me. We pile out of the Rumpler and walk toward the Aisne. I have the dynamite and goose-box wrapped

in an old piece of canvas and I says to the little crackpot what an awful time it would be if I stubbed my toe.

“Sh-h-h-h-h,” Ambrose says. “Two Heinies, Muley. Let me talk.”

“*Guten morgen*,” a Boche dough says and salutes.

“*Ach! Raus mit*,” Ambrose says, irritable. “*Vorwärts*, Heinrick. *Mach schnell*.”

“I am scairt,” I says.

“They are keepin’ goin’,” Ambrose shoots under his breath. “They think we are Rumpler flyers who are out of sorts. If things git too hot, we can throw the dynamite, Muley.”

“I always thought I joined the air corps,” I groan. “I even feel a cootie bitin’ me.”

“There’s the bridge, Muley. There is a Boche on guard. It is only a temporary bridge awright. Now we’ll just walk up to him. You go around where you can meet him and I will circle so’s I come up from the rear. Go around that clump of bushes, Muley.”

“Adoo,” I says. “If I don’t ever see you again. . . .”

I walk right out from behind the bushes and the Heinie brings the pigsticker to front and center and says, “*Handen hoch*,” which means up with the hands and no kidding.

“Wee gates,” I says. “Der Rumbler ist kaput, mine froind. Idt . . .”

Ambrose gets behind the Kraut and pushes his helmet over his eyes and then Ambrose bangs the enemy on the back of the noggin and he goes out without even making a peep like a chipmunk. We gag the Heinie and tie him up and then run to the bridge.

It is a pontoon one and we put the dynamite in the middle of it, fix the wires and then go back to shore. Ambrose

pushes the plunger and there is a noise that wakes up all of northern France.

“Come on, Muley,” Ambrose yips. “It is a race for life. That is one bridge that is no more.”

“The next one I cross will be over the Styx, Ambrose,” I gasp. “Listen to the Heinies yelp. I hear dogs, too.”

“Only about a half a mile to run, Muley. And all the time we could have been ‘—gulp—’ in Paree.”

“Dogs are chasin’ us, Ambrose. They must hire bloodhounds, the Krauts. Ow-w-w-w, there goes part of my pants.”

We finally reach the Rumpler we left idling and climb aboard. Just as Ambrose gets his empennage glued to the pilot’s seat, twelve tough Germans pour out of the town and they are loaded down with potato masher grenades. Dogs are climbing up on the two-seater and they look as big as lions and yelp louder.

“We are lost, Ambrose,” I howl. A potato masher overshoots its mark and explodes in a ditch near the Rumpler. A piece of it goes through the Heinie bus near my seat and I can feel it bite.

“Not yet, Muley,” Ambrose says and I see him stand up in the pit and throw something toward the semicircle of Krauts who keep coming in. I try the Boche Lewis in the rear pit and it is as empty of ammo as a convent. I almost cry.

Then the pooches charge the Heinies and they make a worse cry than a pack of wolves attacking a sleigh on the Russian steppes. There is about twenty canines and they scatter the Krauts like a bowling ball going in for a perfect strike. I see two Krauts running and each has a pooch clinging to his empennage.

“They are foaming at the mouth,” I yelp to Ambrose. “The dogs, not the Jerries. Look at them fight each other, too. What happened, Ambrose?”

I DID not find out until later as the Rumpler is on its way and Ambrose is giving it all the throttle it can use and more. I look back and see the snarling, howling dogs all mixed up with the Heinies and there is more Dutchmen breaking records on their way to Belgium.

But we are not out in the clear even if we are up to a thousand feet when we cross the Aisne. Two Albs are chasing us and are gaining faster than Ambrose can lie.

"We can't make it," I says right in the runt's ear. "The gun here is empty. Is this as fast as you can go? Oh, oh, the bullets are startin' to reach us!"

"This heap is flyin' twicet as fast as it was meant to, Muley. So near and yet so far, huh? Well, did you think you'd live forever?"

One Alb is close and the other one is trying to catch up. Spandau lead makes a doily out of the Rumpler's tail fin and I see some fabric curl up on the wing over Ambrose Hooley's dome.

The Rumpler bucks like it is performing in a rodeo and I am sweating sherbert. I am desperate.

There is the snout of an Alb pointing right at me when I come up with the empty ammo drum I picked up in the rear pit. A tracer goes right through the slack at my shoulder and I can smell the leather burning. Then I toss the drum and almost fall out of the Rumpler, I used such a wind-up.

Bull's-eye! Only a desperate character such as I, Muley Spink, was at the time could have smacked the Alb's prop. I look back and see the Heinie skidding to port like a drunk and the Mercedes power plant screams like a dame in hysterics as it tears loose from the Alb's bonnet.

"Look what I done, Ambrose," I screech into the little tomato's ear. "I got the Alb. I—"

Scrunch! Scrunch! Br-r-r-r-r-r-r!

The other Alb had sprayed us like flies under a insect gun.

"But not that one, Muley," Ambrose says. "Here we go down, so hold on to your hat. We have not got a control wire left. I will try to make Allied carpet by a hookslide. There goes part of the top wing, Muley. Catch it. Ow-w-w-w--w-w—"

I sit up and look about me and want to know who threw me off the Ferris wheel. A Frog farmhouse and Ambrose Hooley, who is riding part of a fuselage with a Maltese cross on it, keep circling me. Then the ground near the farmhouse takes a sock at me.

"Here, Muley. Over here. Something is stinging me." I hear Ambrose say after a while.

I crawl to where the little halfwit is moving around on all fours and I pick the altimeter needle out of his empennage. There is enough motor oil on him to grease the palms of all the politicians for the next eighty years.

"Congratulations to us," I says. "We did it ag'in."

"You mean Uncle Willie did," Ambrose says, and becomes normal. "What did you think I threw amongst the Krauts? It was them sinsetic sausages, Muley. They even smelled like real ones. When the hungry pooches got a whiff of them—oh, my! That was why they chased us on the way from the bridge. They was in my pocket, Muley. They thought the Krauts would try and take them away from 'em. I saw a Heinie make a lunge for one that broke off! Good old Uncle Willie."

"Amazin', ain't it?" I admit. "Where will we go, Ambrose?"

"It will take a little thinking, Muley. We are heroes to some folks, Lieutenants Smith and Jones. But if they ask too many questions in Chaumont we'll be men without countries, Muley—like twin

Nathan Hales. Just let me think.”

“Let me know how you come out,” I sigh. “I will lay down here.”

AN HOUR later, me and Ambrose come to a crossroads and we read a sign that says, VARENNES 15 KILO’S.

“And Commercy must be about seventy more from there, Muley,” Ambrose says. “You know what? We have got to take off these Heinie flying suits or a sniper will practice on us. There is an old barn over there.” We peel off in the Frog barn. Ambrose has to peel all the way down as he has still got on the R.C.F. suit. He finds an old pair of peasant’s pants and shoes in the barn, and an old burlap bag. Ambrose cuts three holes in the feed bag and makes a jersey out of it. He is a frowsy looking tomato when we leave the place.

A Frog fourgon picks us up and gives us a lift to Savant and it takes most of the day to get there as a fourgon is not fast but is drawn by a pair of tired mules. We sleep in another barn that night as we have thirty more miles to go. We finally come in sight of the Ninety-third Squadron at dusk of the same day and Ambrose clutches my arm and gasps.

“Muley,” he says. “Look, there is a little procession on the way to the boneyard on the hill. Oh, somebody has gone west. I hope it is not Slats or Biggy.”

“Uh-huh?” I choke out. “I am glad to find out you have feelin’s, Ambrose.”

“Each of them owe me twenty francs.”

“Come on,” I says disgustingly. “Let us go and see who the poor guy is. Maybe it is Bagby.”

We arrive at the hill and limp up the slope and pause near a big bush.

“There is the C.O. with a Bible,” I says, “He looks broke up, Ambrose. “They picked flowers somewhere, too. Oh, we might as well go and hear the worst.”

“There is two graves dug,” Ambrose says.

We walk out as big as life. Major Bagby drops the good book, turns and buries his head on Bugeye Boomer’s shoulder. Three flyers turn as white as penguin’s dickeys and one yells for us ghosts to go away as they never did nothing to us. It is the Old Man who gets his marbles back first.

“You two are supposed to be dead!” he yelps. “The word come in yesterday that you was killed in a train wreck. They found things that belonged to you. Some of the victims could not be identified but . . . and here we go to all this trouble—”

“We are so sorry,” Ambrose says. “You jump too quick when you see a conclusion, is all.”

“Another thing,” Bagby says. “A report come in today that two American aviators blew up a bridge near Neufchateau and was never heard from afterward. Smith and Jones, I think their names were—but every Smith and every Jones has been accounted for and they don’t know anything about it. Let’s gather up the spades an’ things and go down to Headquarters.”

Me and Ambrose look at each other.

“Let me do the talking, Muley.”

“We could kill you,” Bugeye says. “One of us got poison ivy and another got stung by a wasp pickin’ the flowers for you two clucks. I told Bagby nothin’ could kill the both of you.”

We go into the mess and Bagby sits down and rubs his hands together.

“Now why are you here when you both are supposed to be in Paree. Where were you the last forty-eight hours?”

“I don’t guess me and Muley will ever know,” Ambrose says. “We was in the wreck awright an’ didn’t come to until we found ourselves in Savant this A.M. We must have been wanderin’ and wanderin’

around in a comma ever since the choo-choo hopped the ribbons. We could have been run over and killed in our condition.

"I says to Muley, here, 'Do you remember much of what's took place since the wreck?', and Muley shakes his head and says, 'It is all a blank.' I wisht I knew how I got into these things I am wearin' though. I started out with a U. S. flyers suit on, didn't I?"

"You smell like a garage," Bagby snorts. "You still have grease on your big ears, Hooley. You got into an aeroplane somewhere and cracked it up. Two English pilots were supposed to blow up a bridge at Neufchateau but they got boiled in a Frog town near the Aisne. Two Yanks volunteered to carryon. Smith and Jones. The bridge is gone and the brass hats want to pin some medals on somebody. Stop kiddin' me, you two squirts!"

"Muley, they don't believe us," Ambrose says, acting hurt. "Do you remember anything like he says? Think, as we might be heroes and do not know it."

The C.O. looks like he has gone through more than me and Ambrose. He excuses himself and goes to his quarters. We go to our Nissen and have a laugh.

"Look, Muley," Ambrose says. "It is more fun to see the Old Man in a dither than it is to have medals. Anyway, we have been decorated already. Of course, we could get to be famous like Luke and Guynemer and all those if we get enough *crow de gares*. But this is fun as they can't do a thing to us."

"I still say we are not out of the woods, Ambrose."

Me and Ambrose go up with Bugeye Boomer in mid-afternoon just as if we had never been through a harrowing experience. Ambrose shoots down two Kraut pursuit jobs, a two-seater Aviatik and four Drachens, which are balloons. When we get back to the field, Ambrose

says sausages are sure lucky, aren't they?"

"Compared to your constitution, Ambrose," I says, "the one the U. S. uses is full of holes. What is the Rolls-Royce doin' over in front of Headquarters?"

An ackemma says two Limeys come in it. My knees fail me and I says:

"I will get right back into the Spad."

"No use, Lootenant," the grease monkey shakes his dome. "You just made the field as it was. Look at the radiator hiss. And you got only one aileron."

"Come on, Muley, you are just nervous," Ambrose says. "It is not the first time a Limey has stopped in to bum a feed."

We walk into Headquarters and Major Bagby looks at us very wryly. "Sit down, boys. I should like to ask some questions. You two did not fly that Rumpler from Ville en Tardenois, huh?"

"I don't remember," Ambrose says. "How could we have? It is silly."

"The British over by Fismes found this in the wreck of that Rumpler," Bagby says. "Ever see it before? Coincidence, isn't it, Hooley? A wrapper off a package that was mailed to you. From William X. Hooley. Don't say anythin' yet, Lieutenant."

"Look, we've been watching mail from your uncle. We intend to examine every package you get from him, we don't know what might happen if we don't. No package has come for you during the last ten days. Where did you get this one?"

"General Delivery, Paris," Ambrose says. "I knew you would tamper with my mail. Ha."

I groan and ask myself why not get it over with.

"So in the wreck of the train, the package unwrapped itself and the paper was caught up by a wind and flown all the way to Fismes. Now look, you two creeps, before I go nuts, own up and let's be

sensible about everything. You two blew up a pontoon bridge because two British pilots guzzled too much cognac!”

“I still say they was framed,” Ambrose says. “We saw two spies dressed up like nurses. They was drugged and if you doubt our word, you get a medico to examine them. I will not stand for two brave pilots gettin’ busted just because—awright, me and Muley did it. But I still say we was not in our right minds.”

“You have to convince me?” Bagby says and wipes his brow. “Well, Major, they was on leave when they did it so I don’t know any way to put them in a sling—although I know they must have done something that rates one. A package from Uncle Willie, er, General Del—you’ll excuse me, won’t you? That is the part I won’t believe.

“I am going to my quarters and will have my meals brought to me until tomorrow at this time. I have to figure out how Ambrose got the package.”

“Why did they lie in the first place?” the Limey asks. “I’m still puzzled, by Jove. Jones and Smith—”

“Have you an aspirin, Hooley?” Bagby asks before he makes his exit. Ambrose turns pale and jumps off his chair like somebody has put a blowtorch under it.

“Uh—er—no, sir. I’m fresh out. If you don’t mind, we’ll retire to our huts.”

Me and Ambrose get to our hut and I says:

“It is like Uncle Willie. He got us out of an awful mess but he did his best to push us into a worst one. That wrapper—”

“Who can think of everything, Muley?” the little anthropoid snaps at me. “Oh-h-h-h-h-h!”

“Now what?”

“The steamship tickets for Pierre and Pierre, Muley. I left them in the suit in the room where the Limeys were—”

“Huh? Well, if they got your description in Paree, the Frog Scotland Yard won’t forget. Steamship tickets are worth maybe two hundred and fifty each. That is grand larceny,” I says. “I knew you would end up in Sing Sing.”

“I must find an aspirin,” Ambrose sighs.