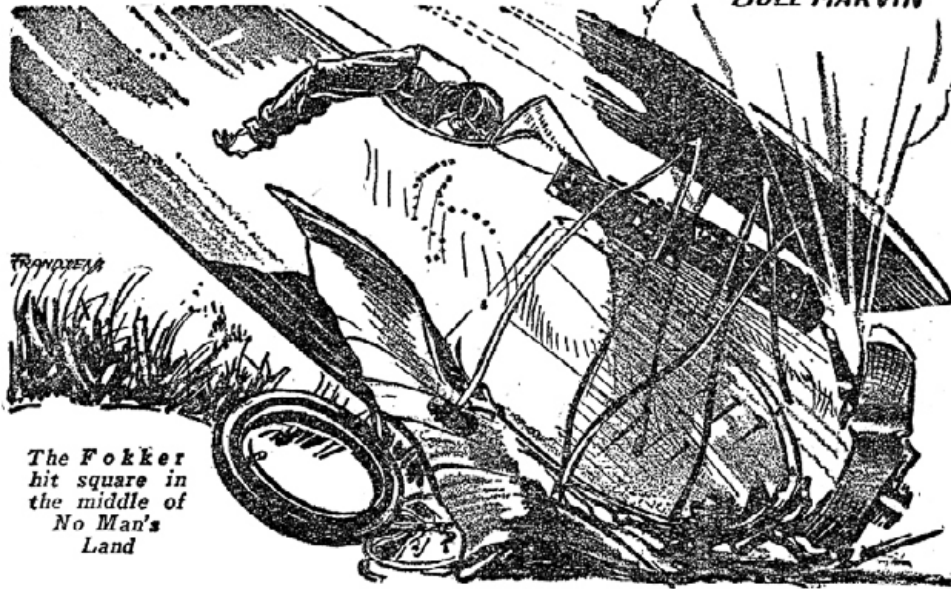


# NO GUNS NEEDED



*A Green Kid Pilot Earns an Apology from a Hard-Flying, Hun-Dogging Veteran!*

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**B**ULL MARVIN, a Hun-getter of the first water, but possessed of an annoying tendency to sound off about his deeds whenever he could catch a listening ear, snapped his cigarette across the tarmac and stared lazily up at the cloud dotted blue.

"Know what?" he murmured.

Dave Trevor shifted his position against the hangar post, and didn't even bother to open his eyes.

"No," he grunted. "And I don't want to know."

"It's about this bird von Steinhardt," Marvin said as though he hadn't stopped. "He's been in front of us now for about

three months. Too long, I say. I think I'll wind me up my airplane one of these fine days and knock him out of the war just the way I—"

"Aw, shut up!" Trevor growled. "You nor any other guy in this outfit will get von Steinhardt. Don't worry, when Germany finally quits that lad will still be flying."

Bull stuck another cigarette into his face and gave his squadron pal a hurt side glance.

"Yeah?" he echoed. "Well, next time I meet von Steinhardt I'll show you—"

Marvin didn't finish. With one hand he reached over and banged Trevor on the chest. "Hey, take a look!" he choked. "Do

you see what I see?"

Trevor followed the other's pointing hand toward the squadron office. Two officers were walking toward them. One was the familiar figure of Major Crofton, C.O. of the squadron. The other figure was a total stranger—a man of medium height, light blue eyes, and a skin you read about in the cosmetic ads. His uniform, however, was the outstanding item. From the perfectly perched service cap on his head to the glistening field boots on his underpinnings he was all class and military fashion.

**D**UMBFOUNDED beyond words, Trevor and Bull staggered to their feet, stood waiting as the pair approached. Major Crofton made the introductions.

"Lieutenant," he said to the pink-cheeked youth, "meet Captain Marvin and Lieutenant Trevor. I'm putting you in their flight."

The C.O. paused and gave both Bull and Trevor a warning look.

"This is Lieutenant Frazer," he said. "Just arrived from Pilots' Pool. I want you to take him under your wing. Show him the ropes, and see that he gets every consideration a fledgling should receive. Good luck, Frazer."

"Thank you, sir," the newcomer said, but his eyes were on Bull's face. In the depth of those eyes glowed frank admiration.

"I'm particularly pleased that I'm in your flight, Captain Marvin," he said suddenly. "You see, I've heard quite a lot about you. I only hope I will prove to be one-tenth as good."

The youth couldn't have done any better. Bull Marvin's thick lips parted in a wide grin, and he relaxed.

"You may, Frazer," he said. "Never can tell. But you've come to a tough outfit. You have to make good around here, or

out you go on your ear."

The lad nodded. "So I understand," he said. Then after a second's hesitation, "I certainly hope you'll do as the major said. I mean take me under your wing and tell me everything. Believe me, Captain, I want to learn fast."

Bull coughed into his hand, turned his head slightly and gave Trevor a quick wink.

"Sure, sure," he said, turning back to Frazer. "Tell you what, I'll take you over for a look-see around. But before we take off, go hunt up the flight sergeant. Tell him I want the cloud hooks. We may decide to stay aloft a while."

Frazer blinked, started to speak, but seemed to change his mind.

"Yes, sir," he said, and turned on his heel and dashed into the hangar.

As the youth disappeared, air rushed from Bull's lungs.

"My Gawd!" he gasped. "What a dummy! He fell for it! He actually fell for that old chestnut!"

Trevor grimaced.

"Take it easy, Bull!" he growled. "The kid's got the right spirit, anyway. Lay off him. You were green once, yourself."

"Not that green!" Bull chuckled. "Boy, oh, boy, maybe I can get a laugh out of this war yet!"

Trevor shrugged, and made no comment. Young Frazer was loping back to them.

"The flight sergeant's compliments, Captain," he said to Bull. "He says that General Pershing borrowed them yesterday and can't get them back until Friday."

With an effort Marvin shook his head in marked consternation.

"Too bad," he grunted. "But it can't be helped. Oh, well, we'll go for a look-see around anyway. Take Number Seventy-eight over there. Fly on my right, and a

shade behind. Trevor, here, will fly top cover for us. Okay, meet me at four thousand right over the field.”

Excited anticipation reflected in his face, Frazer saluted hastily and hurried over to the S.E.S with the number “78” painted on both sides of the fuselage. Marvin waited until he was out of earshot, then nudged Trevor in the ribs.

“This is going to be good!” he chuckled. “I only hope the dope knows how to fly.”

“Aw, give the kid a break!” Trevor snapped. “What the hell’s the idea of taking him over so soon? You know that von Steinhardt is still in front of us. I, for one, don’t want that kid’s scalp on my conscience just because you wanted a laugh.”

“Who said anything about meeting von Steinhardt?” Bull snarled. “I’m just going to give him a bit of Hun Archie. Sure, I want to see how he reacts under fire. Go on, climb into your crate. I know what I’m doing.”

Five minutes later, Bull was about to take off when young Frazer came running over to his plane.

“Pardon me, Captain,” he panted, “but I just wanted to be sure. Supposing we meet enemy planes, what should I do?”

“Fight,” Bull grunted. “But we won’t meet any enemy ships. You just stick close to me, that’s all.”

A dogged look crept into Frazer’s eyes.

“But shouldn’t I test my guns?” he asked. “We *might* get into a fight. I wouldn’t want to do that and have my guns jam up on me.”

Bull gave him an ugly look. That Trevor wouldn’t enthusiastically join him in taking a greenhorn “over the jumps” irked him not a little.

“Don’t worry!” he snapped. “There won’t be any scrap this trip. If there is, and

your guns jam—throw a gun at the guy. Now get up into the air and don’t worry.”

With a salute the youth went back to his plane. Bull stared at his perfectly tailored uniform for a moment, then savagely banged his own throttle home.

“Sending a sap like him to this outfit!” he growled. “Maybe a scrap would be good for him. A few Spandau slugs through his wings might knock some sense into his head—toughen him up a bit.”

**T**HOUGH Bull Marvin was of the loud-mouth type, and perpetually inclined to grab off a laugh at the other fellow’s expense, he was all pilot. Therefore, some twenty minutes later, when he led young Frazer and Trevor out over No Man’s Land, he kept both eyes skinned for the slightest sign of enemy planes. He had no intention of permitting a rank greenhorn to fight Fokkers on his first trip over.

But in time of war the best of plans and intentions often go haywire. Perhaps it was because Bull was interested in watching Frazer’s slight attack of nerves every time a German Archie shell burst near him. Or perhaps it was the clouds forming a perfect screen for the lurking red and yellow Fokker. At any rate Bull suddenly forgot Frazer and sat up straight in the seat as he heard the chatter of Trevor’s guns.

Snapping his eyes upward he saw Trevor climbing hell-for-leather toward a shaft of yellow and red light streaking down from behind a filmy fringe of cloud layer. One quick look at the red and yellow comet, and he shot out his free hand to the loading handles of his Vickers. There was no time to load the Lewis mounted on the top wing.

“Von Steinhardt!” he gasped. “And the bum’s out alone. Leave him to me, Dave.”

It was quite obvious, however, that

Trevor had no such intention. Guns blazing, the pilot tore straight upward and sawed rudder in a desperate effort to get the diving Fokker in his sights, and force the German at the controls to pull out of his dive and cut off. Von Steinhardt, however, had started his dive so that he'd have plenty of speed when he needed it. And he needed it right now.

**S**WERVING slightly, he rushed past Trevor's prop-hanging ship, then cut back until he was directly over Frazer's plane. Not a shot had left his guns yet. And as Bull slammed his plane around in a dime turn and charged in between the Fokker and Frazer, his heart stood still in his breast. Von Steinhardt was famous for his one-burst attack. Never a long distance fighter, he always got in close until his prop was practically chewing into his victim's plane, and then let go with his one deadly burst.

Face hard, muscles braced, Bull hauled his plane up to let the engine protect him as much as possible from von Steinhardt's bullets, and fired his own guns. Three seconds ticked past, but not a shot zipped out from the German's guns. Then suddenly the Fokker cut way out to the right, came up by the nose a shade, and then went streaking southward. In a flash the truth came home to Bull.

"Jammed guns!" he roared and hauled his own plane around in hot a pursuit. "His guns jammed on him! Sure, so he had to dive through us. It was the only way he—"

The rest froze on Bull's lips. From seemingly out of nowhere an S.E. with "78" on the fuselage suddenly came into his line of vision. Hunched over the stick, a loose strap of his helmet waving in the wind, young Frazer was driving his plane toward the Fokker.

"Leave him to me!" Bull bellowed. "Get the hell out of the way. He'll

slaughter you, you fathead!"

But the fledgling kept right on charging after the Fokker that was now a good three hundred yards from Bull's plane. Coming in at a slight angle, young Frazer was cutting down the gap between them in practically nothing flat.

A moment later Bull saw twin streams of jetting flame leap from the muzzles of Frazer's Vickers. But from the direction of the smoking tracers he could see that the fledgling was missing by a mile. And then without warning Frazer's guns went silent. The youngster pounding the loading handles of his guns was all the answer Bull Marvin needed.

"His guns too!" he roared, and smashed his clenched fist against his throttle. "Now will you get the hell away? You—Oh, my God! Von Steinhardt has cleared his guns. He will nail that kid cold!"

It was true. A test burst ripping out from the Fokker's guns proved it. And then the plane came slicing around in a split-arc turn. Too far away, and with Frazer's plane between him and the Fokker, Bull could do nothing but sit frozen to the seat of his plane and groan helplessly.

Inch by inch the blunt nose of the Fokker cut around toward Frazer's plane. Another second and von Steinhardt would have him cold in the sights. And a second after that, made-in-Germany bullets would make a corpse out of the fledgling.

But before that second ticked away the fledgling's plane seemed to lurch drunkenly. It went half over on wing, and then skidded crazily to the right, straight toward von Steinhardt's plane.

"He's going to crash him! He's going to fly into him!"

Unconsciously Bull roared the words at the top of his voice as he sat like a stone statue watching the drama of the skies

taking place right before him. A moment later and the drama was all over. To Bull's unbelieving eyes it was as though a weird miracle had taken place. Like a leaf in a gale of wind Frazer's plane went flip-flopping upward. And von Steinhardt's plane dropped by the nose and shot straight down, engine roaring full out.

"What? Didn't hit him! Not a shot fired! But—that's no dive. He's out of control. Maybe one of Trevor's bullets, at the start!"

Mumbling to himself, Bull stared pop-eyed at the red and yellow Fokker hurtling earthward. Not once did its nose start to come up. It hit right square in the middle of No Man's Land. One moment there was a mounting cloud of sun-baked earth, and then a livid sheet of flame blotted out everything.

For perhaps five full seconds Bull gaped down at the blazing wreck, then slowly he lifted his eyes and turned in the seat. Frazer had pulled into formation position at his right rear. The youngster's face was flushed with excitement, and his lips were parted in a mile wide grin. Bull scowled at him and banked west.

"You'd better feel happy!" he growled. "Another second and you'd have been down there, instead of him! But what the hell happened? It was like the guy got heart failure all of a sudden."

Mulling over the weird event that had taken place, he led the way back to his home field, and landed. As soon as he'd reached the line he trotted over to Trevor's plane.

"Did you see that, Dave?" he asked. "Damnedest thing ever! One of your slugs

must have nicked him and didn't take effect."

"No slug from my guns," Trevor denied. "I didn't even come close. Maybe—"

"**Y**OU'LL confirm that victory for me, won't you, Captain?"

Bull wheeled, glared into Frazer's eager face.

"Confirm," he began, and choked. "Say, what do you mean?"

"Why, I sent that plane down, Captain."

The big captain struggled for his tongue.

"You sent that ship down?" he howled. "Why, damn your eyes, you didn't even fire a shot! Your guns jammed on you!"

"I know, Captain," the fledgling nodded earnestly. "But I took your advice. Well, not exactly. I could not get the gun off the mounting, so I threw one of the spare Lewis ammo drums instead. With luck I hit him on the back of the head, and I guess it knocked him unconscious all right."

"You—you—" Bull couldn't go on. He leaned back against the wing, stunned. Trevor tapped Frazer on the shoulder.

"Do you drink, kid?"

"Why, yes, sure!" was the reply.

Trevor legged out of his plane and took the youth by the arm.

"Come on into the mess," he said. "This big slob has a lot of apologizing to do. And he's going to do it between drinks—at his expense!"