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FEATURES

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TAM O' THE SCOTTS

By EDGAR
WALLACE

THE CASE OF LASKY

Lieutenant Bridgman went out over the German line and "strafed" a depot. He stayed a while to locate a new gun position and was caught between three strong batteries of Artillery.

"Reports" said the wing commander. "Well, Bridgman isn't back and Tam said he saw him nose-dive behind the German trenches."

So the report was made to Headquarters and Headquarters sent forward a long account of air fights for publication in the day's communique. "One of our machines did not return."

"But, A' doot it he's killed," said Tam; "he flattened out before he reached earth an' flew around a bit. We ye no ask Mr. Lasky, sir, he's a pilot."

Mr. Lasky was a bright-faced lad who, in ordinary circumstances, might have been looking forward to his leave. He had been sent forward to his credit divers bombed dumps and three enemy airmen.

He met the brown-faced, red-haired, awkwardly-built young man whom all the flying corps called "Tam."

"Ah, Tam," said Lasky reproachfully. "I was looking for you—I wanted you badly."

Tam chuckled. "A' thocht so," he said, "but A' wis not so far frae the aerodrome when you fellor chased you."

"I was chasing him!" said the indignant Lasky.

"Oh, ay?" replied the other skeptically. "An' was ye wantin' the Scot to help ye chase an' pair was floggin' sirs, A' think shame on ye for mistakin' the pair laddie."

"There were four," protested Lasky. "And yer gun jammed, A' think in, so wi' rare presence o' mind, ye stood oop in the fuselage an' hit the nearest representative of the Imperial German Air Service a crack over the head wi' a spanner."

A little group began to form at the door of the mess-room, for the news that Tam the Scot was a pilot was always sufficient to attract an audience. As for the victim of Tam's trouj, his eyes were dancing with glee.

"Demanded or frightened by this apparition of the superman of the air," continued Tam in the monotonous tone he adopted when he was evolving one of his romances, "the enemy fled, emitting sparks an' vapor to hide them from the vigilant ee o' young Mr. Lasky, the Boy Avenger, or the Terror of the Fairies."

The horror of the thocht leaves him breathless; an' he tairns an' like a hawk deeps sweetly but gracefully into the aerodrome."

"Bravo, Tam!" They gave him his due reward with great handclapping and Tam bowed left and right, his forage cap in his hand.

Tam came from the Clyde. He was not a ship-builder, but was the assistant of a man who ran a garage and did small repairs. He was in the accepted sense of the word, a patriot, because he did not enlist at the beginning of the war. His boss suggested he should, but Tam apparently held other views, went into a shipyard and was "barged and reserved."

They combed him out of that, and he went to another factory, making a false statement to secure the substitution of the badge he had lost. He was unmarried and had no dependents on him. Tam, however, had two sons fighting, suggested to Tam that though he'd hate to lose a good lodger, he didn't think the country out to lose a good soldier.

Tam changed his lodgings. He moved to Glasgow and was introduced by a fellow workman with the name of coward. Tam, however, his fellow workman insensible and was fired forthwith from his job.

Every subterfuge, every trick, every evasion and excuse he could invent to avoid service in the army, he invented. He simply did not want to be a soldier. He believed most passionately that the war had been started with the sole object of affording his enemies opportunities for annoying him.

Then one day he was sent on a job to an aerodrome workshop. He was a clever mechanic and he had mastered the intricacies of the engine which he was to repair, in less than a day.

He went back to his work very thoughtfully, and the next Sunday he bicycled to the aerodrome in his best clothes and renewed his acquaintance with the mechanic.

Within a week, he was wearing the double-breasted tunic of the Higher Life. He was not a kood or a tractable recruit. He had discipline and regarded his superiors as less than equals—but he was an enthusiast.

When Pangate, which is in the south of England, sent for pilots and mechanics, he accompanied his officers and flew for the first time in his life.

In the old days he could not look out of a fourth-floor window without feeling giddy. Now he flew over England at a height of six thousand feet, and was sorry when the journey came to an end. In a few months he was a qualified pilot, and might have received a commission had he so desired.

"Thank ye, sir," he said to the commanding officer, "but ye ken weel A'm no gen'ry. M' father was no believer in education, an' whilst fither laddies were livin' on meal at the University A' was airtin' m' salt at the Govan Iron Works."

A'm no' a society mon ye ken—A'd be usin' the wrong knite to eat wi' an' that would bring the coop into disrepute."

His education had, as a matter of fact, been a remarkable one. From the time he could read, he had absorbed every boy's book that he could buy or borrow. He told a friend of mine that when he enlisted he handed to the care of an acquaintance over six hundred paper-covered volumes which survived the war and were now in the hands of the German Air Service.

He knew the stories by heart, his phraseology and their construction, and was wont at times, half in earnest, half in doubt (at his own expense), to satirize everyday adventures in the romantic language of his favorite authors.

He was regarded as the safest, the most daring, the most venturesome of the scouts—those swift-flying spitfires of the clouds—made enjoyable a fame among the German airmen which was at once flattering and ominous. Once they dropped a message into the aerodrome, it was short and humorous, but there was enough truth in the message to give it a bite.

"Let us know when Tam is buried, we would a wrenth subscribe. Officers, German Imperial Air Service, Section . . ."

Nothing ever pleased Tam so much as this unsolicited testimonial to his prowess.

He purred for a week. Then he learned from a German prisoner that the author of the note was the flyer of a big Aviatik, and went and killed him in fair fight at a height of twelve thousand feet.

"It was an engrossin' an' thrillin' fight," explained Tam; "the bird was coarsin' in m' veins, m' hair was bristlin' wi' suppresed emotion. Round an' round an' another the dauntless airmen circled, the noo above, the noo below the flier. Wi' suppresed resolution Tam o' the Scots nose-dived for the wee feller's sail, loosin' a drum at the pair body as he endeavored to escape the lichtenin' swoop o' the intrepid Scotman. Wi' matchless skill, Tam o' the Scots banked over an' brocht the gallant miscreant to terra firma—guir laddie! He'd kept ben the house he'd no' be lyin' deid the night. God rest him!"

You might see Tam in the early morning, when the world was bare and only the flashes of guns revealed the rival positions, poised in the early sun, fourteen thousand feet in the air, a tiny spangle of white, smaller in magnitude than the fading stars. He seems motionless, though you know that he is traveling in big circles at seventy miles an hour.

He is above the German lines and the fleecy bursts of shrapnel and the darker patches where high explosive shells are bursting beneath him, adverse alike his tenacity and the indignation of the enemy.

What is Tam doing there so early? There has been a big raid in the dark hours; a dozen bombing machines have gone buzzing eastward to a certain railway station where the German troops waited in readiness to reinforce either A or B fronts. If you look long, you see the machines returning, a group of black specks in the morning sky. The Boches' scouts are up to the attack—the raiders go serenely onward, leaving the exciting business of duel a l'outrance to the nippy fighting machines which fly above each flank. One such fighter thrives himself at three of the enemy, diving, banking, climbing, circling and all the time firing "licks—licks—licks—licks!" through his propellers.

The fight is going badly for the bold fighting machine when suddenly like a hawk, Tam o' the Scots swoops upon his prey. One of the enemy side-slips, dives and strikes the rescuer, and rescuer and rescued land together. The fighting-machine pilot is Lieutenant Burnell; the observer, shot through the hand, but cheerful, is Captain Forsyth.

"Did ye no' feel a sense o' gratitude to the Almighty when you kent it were Tam sittin' aloft like a wee angel?"

"I thought it was a bombing machine that had come back," said Burnell untruthfully.

"Did ye hear that, sirs?" asked Tam truthfully. "For a grown officer an' gentleman handlin' the case-seagulls sent to me by m' rich uncle fro' Glasgow!"

"You can have two cigars, Tam—I'll see you to the devil before I give you any more—only had fifty in the first place."

"Two's no' many," said Tam calmly. "But A've na doot A'll enjoy them wi' m' educated palate better than wi' sirs—seagulls are for men an' no' for bairns, an' ye'd save yerse' an' awur feelin' o' sickness if ye gave me a'."

Tam lived with the men—he had the rank of sergeant, but he was as much Tam to the private mechanic as he was to the officers. His pay was good and sufficient. He had shocked that section of the Corps Comforts Committee which devoted its energies to the collection and dispatch of literature, by requesting that a special effort be made to keep him supplied with "latest bluds." A member of the Committee with a sneaking regard for this type of literature took it upon himself to ransack London for penny dreadfuls, and Tam received a generous stock with regularity.

"Am no' so fond o' th' new style," he said; "the detective story is vera guid in its way for hame consumption, but A' prefer the mair preemative descriptions, o' how that grand mon Deadwood Dick felled the machinations of Black Peter, the Scourge of Hell Canon. A've no sort o' use for the new kind o' story—the love-stories about money. Ye ken the sort: Harold is feelin' fine an' anxious about

teefate of the Royal Flying Corp. to think m' machine were a bomber! Did ye no' look oop an' see me? sirs, ye no' look thankfully at yer co-salvor when, wi' a hooricane roar, the Terror of the Air hurtled across the sky—'Saved!' ye said to yerse'! sirs, ed—an' by Tam! What can I do to shaw m' appreciation of the hero's devotion? Why! ye said to yerse', scoddenly, 'Why! A'll gi' him a box o' Lady Gwendoline's bairnmark!' is she the rechte' heir? Oh, Heaven help me to solve the mystery! (To be continued in our next.) A'm all for bluid an' fine laddies wi' a six-shooter in every hand an' a bowie-knife in their teeth—if it's no' so intellecual, but, mon, it's mair human!"

Tam was out one fine spring afternoon in a one-seater Morane. He was on guard watching over the warfare of

lashed through the mist and vanished in a flash. Tam had a tray of bombs under the fuselage—something in destructive quality between a Mills grenade and a three-inch shell.

Presently—swish! They were circling in the opposite direction to Tam, which meant that the object passed him at the rate of one hundred and forty miles an hour. But he had seen the German coming. . . . Something

artillery was turned upon the fleshy fighting squadron, full of fury, was on its way up. It had come to be a tradition in the wing that Tam had the right of initiating all attack, and it was a right of which he was especially jealous. Now, with the great cloud disgorging its shadowy guests, he gave a glance at his Lewis gun

and drove straight for his enemies. A bullet struck the fuselage and ricocheted past his ear; another ripped a hole in the canvas of his wing. He looked up. High above him, and evidently a fighting machine that had been hidden in the upper banks of the cloud, was a stiffly built Puker.

"Noo, lassie!" said Tam and nose-dived.

Something flashed past his tail and Tam's machine rocked like a ship at sea. He flattened out and climbed. The British Archie had ceased fire and the fight was between machine and machine for the squadron was now in position. Tam saw Lasky dive and glimpsed the flaming wreck of the boy's machine as it fell, then he found himself attacked on two sides. But he was the swifter climber—the faster mover. He shot impartially here and right and below—there was nothing above him after the first surprise. Then something went wrong with his engine—they missed, missed, missed again, went on—then stopped.

He had turned his head for home and began his glide to earth.

He landed near a road by the side of which a Highland battalion was resting and came to ground without mishap. He unstrapped himself and descended from the fuselage. He stripped off his gloves and walked to where the interested infantry were watching him.

"Where are ye gaun?" he asked, for Tam's besetting vice was an unquenchable curiosity.

"To the trenches afore Mastie, sirs," said the man he addressed.

"We'll no' be callin' me 'sirs,' I improved Tam. "A'm a sergeant. I'll lang will ye stay in the trenches up ye?"

"Four days, Sergeant," said the man.

"Four days—guld Lord!" answered Tam. "I wouldn't do that work for a thousand pounds a week."

"It's no' so bad," said half-a-dozen voices.

"It's vera, vera dangerous," said Tam, shaking his head. "A'm thantit, fu' A'm no' a soldier—they tried hard to make me an, but A' said, 'Noo, laddie, gie me a job!'"

"What happened to you, Tam?" asked the wing commander.

Tam cleared his throat.

"Patrols" by order the morn' he said, "m' suspicions were aroused by the erratic movements of a ground cloud. To think, wi' Tam the Scot was to act wi'oot a thocht for his personal safety, the gallant laddie brocht his machine to the cloud f' sight, cartling through its oombrageous depths. It was a fine gay sitch—aloon i' th' sky, he ventured into the air-lions' den. What did he see? The cloud was a nest of wee hornets! Slippin' a bomb he dashed madly back to the outer air—sendin' his S.O.S. wi' bairn hands—thanes to his—"

He stopped and bit his lip thoughtfully.

"Come, Tam!" smiled the officer, "that's a lame story for ye."

"Oh, ay," said Tam. "A'm no' in the mairt spirit—Hoo mony did we lose?"

"Mr. Lasky and Mr. Brand," said the wing commander quietly.

"Patrols," said Tam. He said, "Mr. Lasky was a bonnie lad—A'll ask ye to excuse me, Captain Thompson sirs. A'm no' feelin' vera weel the day—we've no' a seaguir about ye that ye willna be wantin'!"

WASTING 1,200,000 TREES EVERY YEAR

The amount of waste paper collected in all parts of Great Britain in 1914 was one thousand tons per week. By 1918 this had been increased to 6000 tons per week, or an increase of approximately 500 per cent. It requires eight trees of mature growth to produce a ton of paper pulp. Every ton of waste paper which can be substituted will save eight trees for other uses.

Raised Vegetables for Lunch Room

Vegetables canned from the gardens cared for by the school children will be a feature of the school lunch room in Wyandotte county, Kan., this winter. The vegetables were put up by volunteer helpers under the direction of the home demonstration agent of the Department of Agriculture and the State Agricultural College. At the school cannery 1000 bushels of tomatoes among other vegetables were canned.

By McMANUS.

BRINGING UP FATHER

LOOK-DUGAN THERE'S AN AEROPLANE!

I SUPPOSE SOME DAY WE'LL ALL BE HOME IN THEM THINGS.

FOR GOODNESS SAKE, WHO'D WANT TO GO HOME THAT FAST?

I WONDER WHERE HE IS GOIN'?

IT'S HARD TO TELL. HE MAY NOT BE GOIN' HE MAY BE COMIN' FROM

I'D LIKE TO BE UP THERE WITH IT.

WELL, I'D HATE TO BE UP THERE WITHOUT IT.

John