

# "OUTWITTING THE HUN"

By

LIEUTENANT PAT O'BRIEN

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my chum, Paul Raney, and another officer detailed to check over my effects. The list they made and to which they affixed their signatures, as I have previously mentioned, is now in my possession and is one of the most treasured souvenirs of my adventure.

My trunk was sent to Cox & Co. in due course, and now that I was in London I thought I would go and claim it.

When I arrived at the bank I applied to the proper window for my mail and trunk.

"Who are you?" I was asked rather sharply.

"Well, I guess no one has any greater right to Pat O'Brien's effects than I have," I replied, "and I would be obliged to you if you would look them up for me."

"That may be all right, my friend," replied the clerk, "but according to our records Lieutenant O'Brien is a prisoner of war in Germany, and we can't very well turn over his effects to anyone else unless either you present proof that he is dead and that you are his lawful representative, or else deliver to us a properly authenticated order from him to give them to you."

He was very positive about it all, but quite polite, and I thought I would kid him no more.

"Well," I said, "I can't very well present proofs to you that Pat O'Brien is dead, but I will do the best I can to prove to you that he is alive, and if you haven't quite forgotten his signature I guess I can write you out an order that will answer all your requirements and enable you to give me Pat O'Brien's belongings without running any risks," and I scribbled my signature on a scrap of paper and handed it to him.

He looked at me carefully through the latticed window, then jumped down from the high chair and came outside to clasp me by the hand.

"Good heavens, lieutenant!" he exclaimed, as he pumped my hand up and down, "how did you ever get away?" and I had to sit right down and tell him and half a dozen other people in the bank all about my experiences.

I had been in England about five days when I received a telegram which, at first, occasioned me almost as much concern as the unexpected sight of a German spiked helmet had caused me in Belgium. It read as follows:

"Lieut. P. A. O'Brien, Royal Flying Corps, Regent's Palace Hotel, London:

"The king is very glad to hear of your escape from Germany. If you are to be in London on Friday next, December 7th, His majesty will receive you at Buckingham palace at 10:30 a. m. Please acknowledge."

"CROMER."

Of course, there was only one thing to do and that was to obey orders. I was an officer in the army and the king was my commander in chief. I had to go, and so I sat down and sent off the following answer:

"Earl Cromer, Buckingham Palace, London:

"I will attend Buckingham palace as directed, Friday, December 7th, at 10:30."

"LIEUT. PAT O'BRIEN."

In the interval that elapsed, I must confess, the ordeal of calling on the king of England loomed up more dreadfully every day, and I really believed I would rather have spent another day in the empty house in the big city in Belgium or, say, two more days at Courtrai, than to go through what I believed to be in store for me.

Orders were orders, however, and there was no way of getting out of it. As it turned out, it wasn't half as bad as I had feared—on the contrary, it was one of the most agreeable experiences of my life.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### I Am Presented to the King.

When the dreaded 7th of December arrived, I halted a taxicab and in as matter-of-fact tone of voice as I could command, directed the chauffeur to drive me to Buckingham palace, as though I was paying my regular morning call on the king.

My friend's version of this incident, I have since heard, is that I seated myself in the taxi and leaning through the window said: "Buckingham palace!" whereupon the taxi driver got down, opened the door and exclaimed threateningly:

"If you don't get out quietly and chuck your drunken talk, I'll jolly quick call a bobby, bil' me, if I won't!"

But I can only give my word that nothing of the kind occurred.

When I arrived at the palace gate, the sentry on guard asked me who I was and then let me pass at once up to the front entrance of the palace. There I was met by an elaborately

uniformed and equally elaborately decorated personage who, judging by the long row of medals he wore, must have seen long and distinguished service for the king.

I was relieved of my overcoat, hat and stick and conducted up a long stairway, where I was turned over to another functionary, who led me to the reception room of Earl Cromer, the king's secretary.

There I was introduced to another earl and a duke, whose name I do not remember. I was becoming so bewildered, in fact, that it is a wonder that I remember as much as I do of this eventful day.

I had heard many times that before being presented to the king a man is coached carefully as to just how he is to act and what he is to say and do, and all this time I was wondering when this drilling would commence. I certainly had no idea that I was to be ushered into the august presence of the king without some preliminary instruction.

Earl Cromer and the other noblemen talked to me for a while and got me to relate in brief the story of my experience, and they appeared to be very much interested. Perhaps they did it only to give me confidence and as a sort of rehearsal for the main performance, which was scheduled to take place much sooner than I expected.

I had barely completed my story when the door opened and an attendant entered and announced:

"The king will receive Lieutenant O'Brien."

If he had announced that the kaiser was outside with a squad of German guards to take me back to Courtrai my heart could not have sunk deeper. Earl Cromer beckoned me to follow him and we went into a large room, where I supposed I was at last to receive my coaching, but I observed the earl bow to a man standing there and realized that I was standing in the presence of the king of England.

"Your majesty, Lieutenant O'Brien," the earl announced, and then immediately backed from the room. I believed I would have followed right behind him, but by that time the king had me by the hand and was congratulating me, and he spoke so very cordially and democratically that he put me at my ease at once.

He then asked me how I felt and whether I was in a condition to converse, and when I told him I was, he said he would be very much pleased to hear my story in detail.

"Were you treated any worse by the Germans, lieutenant?" he asked, "on account of being an American? I've heard that the Germans had threatened to shoot Americans serving in the British army if they captured them, classing them as murderers, because America was a neutral country and Americans had no right to mix in the war. Did you find that to be the case?"

I told him that I had heard similar reports, but that I did not notice any appreciable difference in my treatment from that accorded Britishers.

The king declared that he believed my escape was due to my pluck and will power and that it was one of the



The King Had Me by the Hand.

most remarkable escapes he had ever heard of, which I thought was quite a compliment, coming as it did from the king of England.

"I hope that all the Americans will give as good an account of themselves as you have, lieutenant," he said, "and I feel quite sure they will. I fully appreciate all the service rendered us by Americans before the States entered the war."

At this moment I asked him if I was taking too much time.

"Not at all, lieutenant, not at all!" he replied, most cordially. "I was extremely interested in the brief report that came to me of your wonderful escape and I sent for you because I wanted to hear the whole story firsthand, and I am very glad you were able to come."

I had not expected to remain more than a few minutes, as I understood that four minutes is considered a long audience with the king. Fifty-two minutes elapsed before I finally left there!

During all this time I had done most of the talking, in response to the king's request to tell my story. Occasionally he interrupted to ask a question about a point he wanted me to make clear, but for the most part he

was content to play the part of a listener.

He seemed to be very keen on everything and when I described some of the tight holes I got into during my escape he evinced his sympathy. Occasionally I introduced some of the few humorous incidents of my adventure and in every instance he laughed heartily.

Altogether the impression I got of him was that he is a very genial, gracious and alert sovereign. I know I have felt more ill at ease when talking to a major than when speaking to the king—but perhaps I had more cause to.

During the whole interview we were left entirely alone, which impressed me as significant of the democratic manner of the present king of England, and I certainly came away with the utmost respect for him.

In all my conversation, I recalled afterwards, I never addressed the king as "Your Majesty," but used the military "sir." As I was a British officer and he was the head of the army, he probably appreciated this manner of address more than if I had used the usual "Your Majesty." Perhaps he attributed it to the fact that I was an American. At any rate, he didn't evince any displeasure at my departure from what I understand is the usual form of address.

Before I left he asked me what my plans for the future were.

"Why, sir, I hope to rejoin my squadron at the earliest possible moment!" I replied.

"No, lieutenant," he rejoined, "that is out of the question. We can't risk losing you for good by sending you back to a part of the front opposed by Germans, because if you were unfortunate enough to be captured again they would undoubtedly shoot you."

"Well, if I can't serve in France, sir," I suggested, "wouldn't it be feasible for me to fly in Italy or Salonica?"

"No," he replied, "that would be almost as bad. The only thing that I can suggest for you to do is either to take up instruction—a very valuable form of service—or perhaps it might be safe enough for you to serve in Egypt, but just at present, lieutenant, I think you have done enough anyway."

Then he rose and shook hands with me and wished me the best of luck, and we both said "Good-by."

In the adjoining room I met Earl Cromer again, and as he accompanied me to the door seemed to be surprised at the length of my visit.

As I left the palace a policeman and a sentry outside came smartly to attention. Perhaps they figured I had been made a general.

As I was riding back to the hotel in a taxi I reflected on the remarkable course of events which in the short space of nine months had taken me through so much and ended up, like the finish of a book, with my being received by his majesty, the king! When I first joined the Royal Flying Corps I never expected to see the inside of Buckingham palace, much less being received by the king.

## CHAPTER XX.

### Home Again.

That same day, in the evening, I was tendered a banquet at the Hotel Savoy by a fellow officer who had bet three other friends of mine that I would be home by Christmas. This wager had been made at the time he heard that I was a prisoner of war, and the dinner was the stake.

The first intimation he had of my safe return from Germany and the fact that he had won his bet was a telegram I sent him reading as follows:

"Lieut. Louis Grand:

"War bread bad, so I came home."

"PAT."

He said he would not part with that message for a thousand dollars. Other banquets followed in fast succession. After I had survived nine of them I figured that I was now in as much danger of succumbing to a surfeit of rich food as I had previously been of dying from starvation, and for my own protection, I decided to leave London. Moreover, my thoughts and my heart were turning back to the land of my birth, where I knew there was a loving mother who was longing for more substantial evidence of my safe escape than the cables and letters she had received.

Strangely enough, on the boat which carried me across the Atlantic, I saw an R. F. C. man—Lieutenant Lascelles.

I walked over to him, held out my hand and said "Hello!"

He looked at me steadily for at least a minute.

"My friend, you certainly look like Pat O'Brien," he declared, "but I can't believe my eyes. Who are you?"

I quickly convinced him that his eyes were still to be relied upon, and then he stared at me for another minute or two, shaking his head dubiously.

His mystification was quite explicable. The last time he had seen me I was going down to earth with a bullet in my face and my machine doing a spinning-nose dive. He was one of my comrades in the flying corps and was in the fight which resulted in my capture. He said he had read the report that I was a prisoner of war, but he had never believed it, as he did not think it possible for me to survive that fall.

He was one of the few men living out of eighteen who were originally in my squadron—I do not mean the eighteen with whom I sailed from Canada last May, but the squadron I joined in France.

As we sat on the deck exchanging

experiences, I would frequently find him gazing intently in my face as if he were not quite sure that the whole proposition was not a hoax and that I was an imposter.

Outside of this unexpected meeting, my trip was uneventful.

I arrived at St. John, New Brunswick, and eventually in the little town of Momenue, Ill., on the Kankakee river.

I have said that I was never so happy to arrive in a country as I was when I set foot on Dutch soil. Now, I'm afraid I shall have to take that statement back. Not until I finally landed in Momenue and realized that I was again in the town of my childhood days did I enjoy that feeling of absolute security which one never really appreciates until after a visit to foreign parts.

Now that I am back, the whole adventure constantly recurs to me as a dream, and I'm never quite sure that I won't wake up and find it so.

(THE END)

## BRIEF NEWS OF THE WAR

The Germans continue in retreat everywhere between Arras and the Solissons sector under the violent attacks by the allied troops, and the allies have reclaimed many French towns and territory.

Already outflanking the old Hindenburg line on the north, Field Marshal Haig's forces gradually are cutting their way eastward both north and south of the Somme.

Not alone have the allied troops all over the battle front from Arras to Solissons gained further important terrain, but to the north the British have advanced their line in the Lys sector, apparently without much effort.

Mount Kemmel, the famous stronghold southwest of Ypres which was the scene of terrific fighting during the German offensive in Flanders late in April, has been captured by the British.

In the capture of Mont St. Quentin, north of Peronne and Foullecourt, more than 1500 prisoners were taken by the British. The British losses were small.

The operations of the British air forces are steadily increasing in intensity and daring, according to an official announcement. During the course of the past week 17 raids were made into German territory and nine German cities were bombed, of which Mannheim provided the most striking example of the success achieved by the audacious British aviators.

The positions won by the American forces northwest of Solissons, give them a fine view along the Chemin des Dames. The Americans now can see the towers of the Laon cathedral.

## Nicaragua and Honduras to Arbitrate.

Washington.—An armed clash between Nicaragua and Honduras, which was threatened as the result of a boundary dispute, has been averted. Both nations have agreed, at the request of the United States, to withdraw all troops from their borders and submit the controversy to the United States through their respective ministers in Washington.

## French Continue to Advance.

Paris.—In the region north of Solissons French troops stormed the town of Leury and captured 1000 Germans, the French war office announced. French troops have crossed the Somme canal at Epenancourt, seven miles south of Peronne. Rouy le Petit, two miles northeast of Nesle, has been captured by the French.

## Bolshevik Leader Lenine Wounded.

London.—The wounding of Premier Lenine by assassins is announced in a Russian wireless message from Moscow.

## ALLIES' CREDITS 7 BILLION

Payments Since War Began Are Over Six Billions.

Washington.—Payments to the allies since the United States entered the war stand at \$6,989,064,750.

This represents the aggregate of checks paid, as distinguished from credits established, which now amount to \$6,692,040,000.

All credit accounts are being drawn on periodically by the governments to which they are extended, excepting that to Russia which has an unexpended balance of \$127,000,000.

Technically this is still available, but the Bolshevik government has never presented any demands for payment.

## Yankees Too Eager, Says Foch.

With the French Army in France.—"Everything is going well. We have begun our action and we shall continue," said Marshal Foch to the war correspondents in an interview. "You may tell the American people that their soldiers are admirable," said Marshal Foch to the correspondents. "They ask nothing better than to go to their death. They can be reproached only with rushing ahead too fast—it is necessary to hold them back."

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