

"BATTLING WITH THE CUCKY HUN AMONG THE CLOUDS"

The Experiences of an American—Archibald Johnston—in the Lafayette Flying Corps of the French Army Told by Himself for the Benefit of Our Boys in the Aviation Service

This is an intimate description in four installments of life with the aviators of the French front. Archibald Johnston, formerly sergeant pilot of the Lafayette Flying Corps of France, was the first American to be discharged from the French government to join the American Army, and he is now a First Lieutenant in the aviation section of the Signal Corps.

BY ARCHIBALD JOHNSTON.

IN THE Spring of 1916 I was in the American ambulance section No. 1, quartered in Lorraine, performing daily the duties of that service. Near our cantonment was one of the famous bombing squadrons of the French aviation.

Naturally, we sought acquaintance with the aviators. There was a flying over the lines came to every man in the ambulance section. There was hardly one of us who did not ask himself daily why he was not a pilot. We served to "strafe" the boche in the air. As we became intimate with the pilots, we began to feel that they perhaps were different from us, and all of us began talking and even dreaming aviation.

In June our ambulance section was moved to Verdun. There we were quartered for two weeks beside the famous fighting squadron of Captain de Bouschamp.

De Bouschamp was one of the idols of the French service. He was as simple as he was courageous, and asked none of his men to do more than he did himself. This was the pilot who flew from France to Munich, bombed the city as a reprisal for German attacks on French hospitals—and landed in the Italian lines. He was later killed in combat at the Verdun front, and now lies, facing the lines, in the little churchyard at St. Etienne. So respected and loved was he that his grave is always covered with flowers. It was where French pilots do homage to a gallant warrior. For that reason the men of his squadron adored him, and his death was a great blow to the shell of the Hun. The spirit of the entire squadron was a revelation to us. We met the pilots, saw them when on duty, and when they were in the field to fight, disappear in the distance for their patrols on the lines and come home to the nest after work.

At that time our ambulance section was going into Verdun, in the middle of the last German attack. Therefore our work had been easy and not dangerous. It was here that we had an opportunity to know what would happen to us or what our feelings might be when the shells burst in our immediate vicinity. We were suffering from the greatest fear a soldier knows—we were afraid that we would be afraid.

Two weeks later when we came out of Verdun, we knew, each of us, to what extent fear could cripple our powers of reasoning and action.

He Joins the French Army. At Ligny-en-Barrois when the section was "on repoc" I heard a story that finally decided me to become a combatant in the French army. It was in from the "Foreign Legion" where French and Germans had alternated for weeks in taking each other's front lines, that a little Frenchman came "Hiss" and "hiss" his way to the front line, and fell in the German wire entanglements. He lived for three days and three nights, and then died. His name was the name of the man who went in the night to get him did not come back. On the third night, when the French took the position, they found the Frenchman lying on his side of his comrades around him. They found also that he had been tied to the wire, with a machine gun trained over him, and as a trap for which to catch his comrades, as they attempted to rescue him.

Having so determined, I left the ambulance section for the Foreign Legion, as a second-class soldier in the Foreign Legion; a week later I put on my blue uniform and went to the Foreign Legion as a student pilot in the second group of aviation. There I went through the necessary formalities, received my first lessons in flying as a French soldier—the sum of ten cents—and was assigned to the flying school at Buc, where my aerial education was to begin.

The Hierot school at Buc was situated on a high plateau, some four or five miles square, not far from Verdun. There, in the first days of August morning together with a man whom I had known in the ambulance, who had enlisted in the army about the same time as I. After climbing up a winding road through a forest, we suddenly emerged on a plateau, to find the buildings before us. A rear of motor, and we looked up, to find the sky fairly swarming with little monoplane. It was a joyful arrival. After going through the necessary formalities and being enrolled as student pilots in the school, we were shown over the buildings and equipment. Then we were presented to some 20 American comrades, who were at various stages in the instruction.

These men were drawn from almost every class of society and every walk of life. There were men from American universities, men from 15 to 40 years of age; there was a professional automobile racer and a music-hall dancer, men who had done two years in the trenches with the Foreign Legion—the hardest life a man can lead—except beside men who had never done anything. But all had two things in common—the love of adventure and the desire to lend their aid toward the extermination of the Hun.

We went down through the woods to luncheon in a little village, where our new friends explained to us the system of the school and what we had before us.

The Flying School at Buc. This school was for the sole purpose of training fighting pilots. In order that a man arrive as quickly as possible at the point where he might have full confidence in himself, the students never flew with teachers. The work began on a machine which could not



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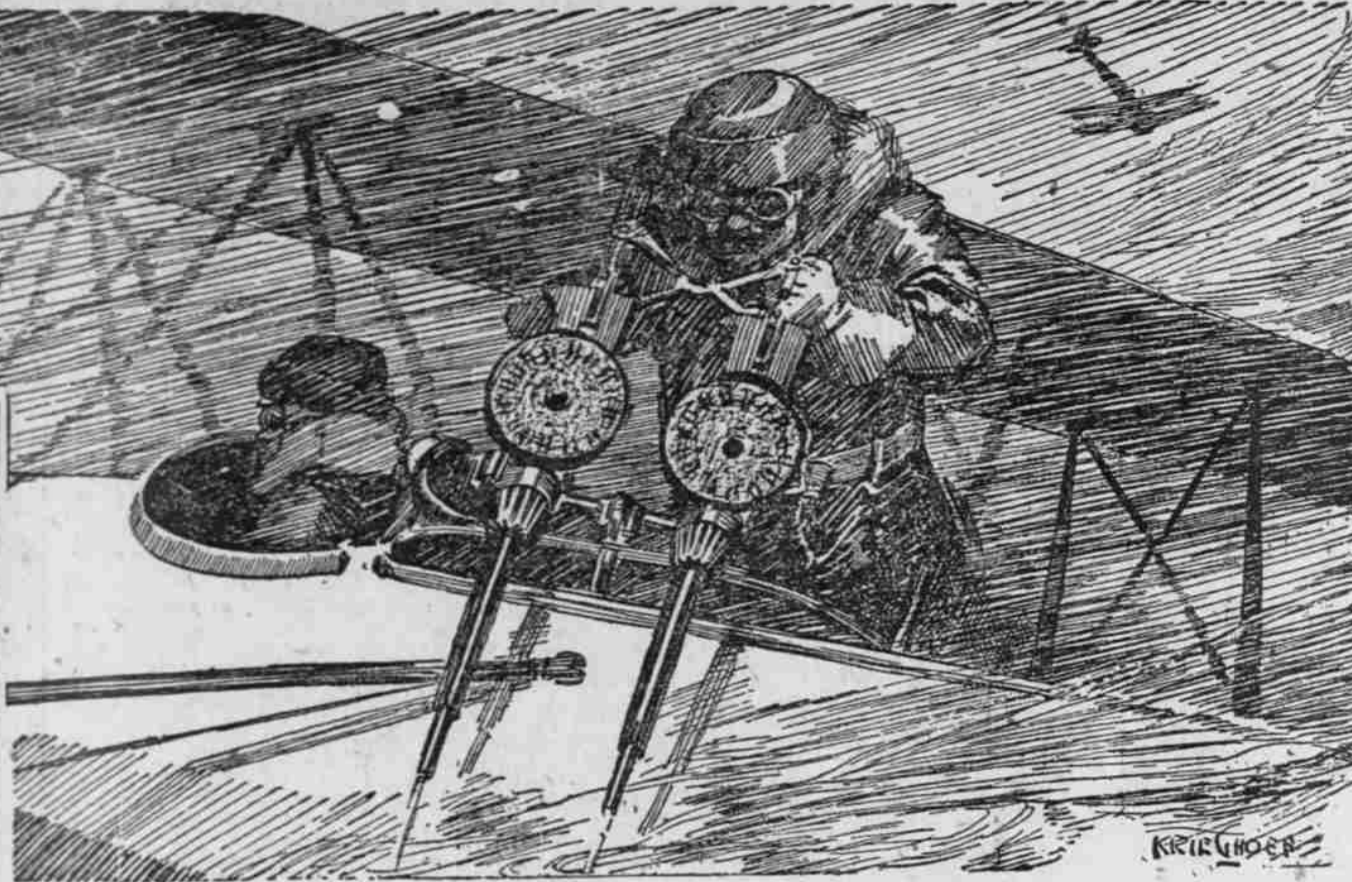
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of each storekeeper would overcome his patriotism. Their stowaways were innumerable, since P— could say only "good evening" and "good night" in German. After 21 nights in forced marching and 20 days in hiding, they crawled across the frontier into Switzerland. From there it was easy. P— did not think he had done any more than his duty required. He did not think he deserved the medallion.

When the French—"a race of degenerates"—do such deeds as this as a matter of duty, how can any nation expect to defeat them?

In the meantime our training progressed. On rainy days and windy days we were taught how to use the instruments in the pilot's seat. We were then ready for the finishing touches.

Early in October I began flying a 50-horsepower machine to perfect myself in its control before making the tests for my brevet. These tests, three in number, consisted in making a landing at a given point from a height of 3000 feet without a motor; in remaining at an altitude above 4000 feet for a period of one hour; and in making three prescribed overland voyages. Each of the voyages was a triangle of about 70 miles to each leg, the last one being to the home field. We were allowed the period of 24 hours to make each of the first two, but were compelled to make the third with no stop in the evening. I made without a mishap, and early in November, although my third voyage was still to come, I delayed. In fact, I was so sure of them that I went to Paris to order a new and resplendent uniform, such as the winged star of the pilot on his collar; but then my troubles began.

"Eight Days Prison." The second Sunday in November we were given our biweekly leave of 12 hours in Paris. I left at noon, with orders to return before midnight. Early in the evening I met a man whom I had not seen for some three years, and whom I had not known to be in Paris. As a result of talking over a cigar, a college I missed my train, and, as a consequence, arrived five hours late at the school. An hour later I was awakened by a knock on my door. I opened the door to see two bearded Captains gazing down at me. One of them asked: "Did you just get in?" I said, "Yes, but I missed my train, and I am in the morning." After that, sleep was impossible to me in the distress of worrying over what form of punishment would be meted out to me. The morning came, and I went from room to a little square of carpet in front of the Captain's desk. The Captain looked up, said, "Eight days prison," and immediately looked down again. My hearing was finished. I found the sergeant awaiting me at the door, and in his company there led to the "Fort de Buc. The room assigned to me in the local bastille proved to be two stories underground, equipped with a plain wooden bench and a bottle of water, and lighted by an airshaft, very carefully barred to prevent unlawful coming and going. I spent the day in meditation, and in the morning, was awakened an hour before dawn by an underofficer, who invited me to come forth and spade up the Captain's garbage. This I very feebly refused to do, and after a stormy session with the officers, during which we all talked at once, I was returned to my cell, with orders to empty the latrine in the next 24 hours of my sentence. Time passed slowly, although I had plenty of books and writing materials which were smuggled to me by my American comrades, who expressed themselves as outraged at such a method of treating a free-born citizen of the United States. Here the men had some 200 men to be exchanged in Switzerland for an equal number of mutilated boches. P— and a comrade got in touch with one of them and gave him certain verbal instructions. In a month P— began to receive tins of "bats" preserved meat. One tin contained a small pocket compass buried in the heart of the cake of meat—others contained money in gold and silver.

Then one night, when the nights were beginning to lengthen, P— and his friend got away. They were able to acquire one suit of civilian clothes. P— gave them to his comrade, who could speak German. They traveled all night at top speed. All day they hid in forests or deserted buildings. They lived on bread, chocolate and sausage, bought in small wayside stores. They paid in gold and got away fast, trusting that the cupidly

flags and "Old Glory" with pictures of all the pilots breveted from the school and the records of such graduates since leaving Juviv. Here we gathered for lectures and recitations, as well as for games and songs.

The Captain L—, chief pilot, was known familiarly to every man at Juviv as the "Mere Poule." The "Mother Hen" was a stout, stern soldier who looked to be all of 45, was beloved of every man in the school, and with reason. Underneath his crusty exterior was the warmest, kindest heart that ever beat. He gave me to understand that if I did my work as he expected me to do it, every one in the school

would make me forget my past misdeeds (witness the courtesy of my new captain) and set forth for a field some 70 miles away. The weather at 5000 feet proved very cold. A mist was gathering over the valley of the Seine, spreading westward over the "department" of "Seine et Marne" but I could see clearly at the vertical. In 50 minutes I saw the field where I was to make my first landing. I found myself over it, cut my motor, and fell in swift circles to face the wind at a hundred meters over its boundary. Then a short dive down straight into the wind, the ground came up to meet me, and I leveled off to place my machine on the field.

After having my tanks refilled with oil and gas I climbed stiffly back into the cockpit.

"Coupe" a mechanic turned the propeller, drawing the "mixture" into the cylinders. Then, "contact," and as I threw on the switch, the "mechanic" pulled down the propeller and the motor started with a crashing roar. Then with "bon voyage" from the mechanics and the ever-present crowd of French youngsters I opened up the motor and again took the air.

The next hour and a half was devoted to watching the ground move all too slowly under me as my plane tore into the strong wind which had aided my voyage in the other direction. Then the white and green hangars, which marked my next stop, came into view, and I landed to report and "fill up" for the homeward journey.

(Continued next Sunday.)

LEGAL SIDELIGHTS FOR LAWYERS AND LAYMEN

By Reynelle G. E. Cornish, of Portland Bar.

SEALS.—When is an instrument properly sealed, in a legal sense? We may be surprised to find that the law, so technical in many matters, has shown itself very broad on the question of what constitutes a legal seal.

The case of Cannon vs. Gorham, 71 S. E. 142, contains an interesting discussion of the seal question. In this case a corporation had signed "The Savannah, Americus & Montgomery Railway (L. S.)" by S. H. Hawkins, president (L. S.). The question was raised as to whether this constituted a sufficient corporate seal, and the court said in part:

"Section 5 of the Code of 1910 declares that the word 'seal' shall include impressions on the paper itself, as well as impressions on wax or wafers. With the exception of official seals, a scribble, or any other mark intended as a seal, shall be held as such." No distinction is made in this statute between the seal of a corporation and that of an individual.

The letters L. S. are an abbreviation of locus sigilli, "the place of the seal," and it has been said that they are usually inserted within brackets in copies of documents to indicate the position of the seal in the original.

The deed reciting that the seal was attached, these letters with the enclosing parentheses, following the signature, were apparently intended as a seal. It is a matter of common knowledge that these letters, with the enclosing parentheses or brackets, are often used, in this state at least, by individuals, in authenticating a deed. If they adopt a seal different from their corporate seal for a special occasion, or if they have no corporate seal, the seal adopted in the corporate deed for the time and occasion."

It has been held that under the common law a seal cannot be held to make the place of a seal, and a few shaly authorities may be found which state that a seal impressed directly upon the paper without the use of wax or other tenacious substance is no sufficient corporate seal. In Massachusetts the court has refused to hold that a facsimile of the seal of a corporation printed with ink in the blank form of an obligation at the same time when the blank is printed and by the

same agency is a mere scroll, and, therefore, not a valid seal." In this respect the court said in part:

"A printed scroll is no better than one made with pen and ink. And the fact that it was a facsimile of the device of the corporate seal did not change its character as a scroll. If we should pronounce every scroll a seal, we should speedily be called upon to take the next step of pronouncing every flourish to be a scroll; and nothing would remain of the ancient formality of sealing."

However, it will be noted that a preponderance of the decisions is in favor of the more liberal construction, and cases are to be found holding that "a small bit of paper, attached by a water to an instrument executed by a corporation and without any specific mark or stamp, is a sufficient corporate seal, so, too, that the printed impression of a seal or the word 'seal,' whether written or printed, alone, or inclosed in a scroll or brackets or parentheses or the letters 'L. S.' similarly employed, will constitute an adequate seal."

We Wish We Owned It.—We ran across the following statement of facts in the case of Singer vs. James, 100 Atlantic Reporter 842, the other day, and it has been haunting us ever since. We wish Mr. Hoover would plant a few lists just like it out our way. Just list!

"The bill alleges that the defendant has now, and has had for some time past, confined with the narrow limits of a scroll or brackets or parentheses or the letters 'L. S.' similarly employed, will constitute an adequate seal."

The plaintiff in the case was asking for an injunction to abate the nuisance arising from the various noises and odors of this various assortment. The court granted the relief asked, but what we are really interested in is

the question of where the fortunate lot owner acquired his valuable assortment of domestic animals. It was our impression that most of them had enlisted for the war!

AMERICAN IS DECORATED

Frank Loftin Is Given Red Cross by British Admiralty.

WASHINGTON, March 1.—Although officers in the military forces of this country are not allowed to accept decorations or gifts from foreign governments, the British Admiralty has just conferred honors upon a young American officer.

To Lieutenant Frank Loftin, U. S. N., on duty on an American destroyer operating in the war zone, has been given the Distinguished Service Cross. The Navy Department announces this recommendation made through the British Ambassador. Loftin was executive officer of the destroyer, which, with other ships, was co-acting a number of torpedo attacks when general quarters were sounded in the war zone, has been given the Distinguished Service Cross. The Navy Department announces this recommendation made through the British Ambassador. Loftin was executive officer of the destroyer, which, with other ships, was co-acting a number of torpedo attacks when general quarters were sounded in the war zone, has been given the Distinguished Service Cross.

POTATO BUTTER INDORSED

Substitute Can Be Produced at Cost of 10 Cents a Pound.

LONDON, March 1.—An excellent "potato butter" has been produced, which can be made by any household for 10 cents a pound, the Ministry of Food announces after experiments.

Following is the recipe: Peel the potatoes and boil or steam till they fall to pieces, rub through a sieve into a warm basin. To every 14 ounces of mashed potato add two ounces of butter or margarine and one teaspoonful of salt. Stir with the back of a wooden spoon till the whole is quite smooth. It is claimed this butter will keep for a considerable time if wrapped in grease-proof paper.

Advertisement for Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Text includes: 'Young Women Are Told How to Find Relief from Pain.', 'Nashua, N.H.—"I am nineteen years old and every month for two years I had such pains that I would often faint and have to leave school. I had such pain I did not know what to do with myself and tried so many remedies that were of no use. I read about Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound in the newspapers and decided to try it, and that is how I found relief from pain and feel so much better than I used to.', 'When I hear of any girl suffering as I did I tell them how Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound helped me.—DELINA MARTIN, 29 Bowers Street, Nashua, N. H.', 'Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made from native roots and herbs, contains no narcotic or harmful drugs, and is, therefore, THE PERFECTLY SAFE REMEDY LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND LYDIA E. PINKHAM MEDICINE CO. LYNN, MASS.'