



The Airman Sometimes Paints Humorous Designs on the Sides of Their Machines. This One Represents the German Rabbit Pursued Into His Hole by a Dog of War.

THRILLING encounters in the air when the Frenchman meets the Boche thousands of feet above the earth are described by Sergeant Austen...

...who has for more than a year been a member of a French flying squadron and who has recently returned to the United States on furlough because of illness.

"Please make it plain," said Sergeant Austen, "that I am not the hero of any of these exploits. We have many beautiful pilots in our squadron and naturally I have heard their adventures with the enemy discussed at first hand."

"Pierre Marinovitch, a Serbian, who is my pal in the squadron and who has recently brought down his eleventh machine (official), is the youngest of the French aces and a remarkable pilot. He entered the service when he was only seventeen years old. He enlisted in the French dragoon and later transferred to the aviation service.

"On one occasion the Serbian went out with other chase machines to protect one of the big touring cars which was going over the German lines to take photographs.

"The French usually send out these big machines for observation work and photographing and naturally they cannot protect themselves as well as a fighting machine. So the others go along, hovering near them, and keeping a sharp lookout for the enemy.

"Finally the Serbian saw a German machine following the French machines, but the German was keeping a long distance off and was very wise, apparently having no intention of coming near until a particularly good opportunity to do damage offered itself.

"The Serbian decided to take the initiative and started out to get him. There were two men aboard the German machine, and they had a very beautiful dog. This is unusual, as generally a first class pilot wants to go up by himself. They rather seem going up as pilot with a second man. But this man was a finished pilot, always having his machine under perfect control, very smooth, with no jerking in his turns. Apparently he could do anything he wanted.

Back Again to Death.

"Six or seven times the Serbian tried to jump under the German's tail, but his shots failed to take effect. The last time the Serbian tried to jump under him the German went down in a tail spin, but he didn't come out of it in the usual way—that is to say, just flattening out. If he had done this the Serbian would have got him as he came out of the spin. Instead the German came out on his side and spinning in a spiral. The Serbian tried to head him off and they came on face to face.

"God knows how it was, but they missed each other. This is one of the most peculiar sensations that one can have in the air, to come on face to face with a man, each trying to figure out which way the other is going to turn, each jockeying for position to shoot, and then miss each other so that the shots of neither take effect.

"Having passed each other, each man turned and came back as fast as he could and for three times the same thing happened—they came head on without getting each other, merely passed and turned again. Finally the Serbian turned more quickly than the German, and before the German could make the turn the Serbian had shot him in the back.

"There are, of course, some collisions, but it is impossible to guess which

was a man in going to turn when he comes head on in such encounters, and yet I don't think that the pilots are excited at such moments, they are too intent on what they are doing. Afterward? Well, a miss is as good as a mile in such cases. Either he got you or he didn't. Nobody thinks of even the most exciting encounter the next second, there's too much else to think about. Of course, when down on the ground a man may recall what happened; but there are so many encounters all of the time that nothing stands out very much. What a man in a single place machine is usually trying to do is to get on top of the enemy flyer and drive down. A two place machine is different because the man in the back can shoot upward. The man in a single place machine tries to come up under the tail of his adversary.

"Flyers stand by each other to the last, looking out to see that the man who came out with them to look for the enemy gets back all right, even if it involves a risk to their own lives. The following little account will show you what it means to have a pal in the air service. The Serbian and another chasseur from Spa 04 were out over the lines watching for a long time one day when they saw some black smoke puffs which indicated that the French anti-aircraft machine had been shooting at a Boche flyer. The two Frenchmen were 19,000 feet up, and they decided that they would not go directly after the fellow but would go into Germany and meet him on his way back, while they were flying out of Germany.

"When they were coming out of Germany and approaching the French lines they saw the German fooling over the lines. Obviously he belonged to the Richthofen circus. He was an excellent flyer and accepted combat at once.

"He came straight for the Serbias and just before he got to him sheered off to his left. The Serbian tried to follow, but the German in passing so closely had disturbed the air currents so that the Serbian got going in a tail spin.

A Savage Exchange.

"The German was then going sharply toward the left and the Serbian, in a tail spin, was out of the combat for the time being. The second Frenchman then looked over his shoulder to see which way the German was coming and the German then came around sharp to the right. The second Frenchman's next move was then to his own left, which brought him face to face with the German.

"They exchanged shots just before they passed. Then the German made a turn so as to get in some shots on the first man, who was still spinning. This made it necessary for the second French flyer to do a wing slide sideways, so as to approach the German at right angles. It was not possible for him to shoot at the German from the rear, because in that case he would have shot at his pal as well as at the German.

"When the German saw the move of the second Frenchman he sheered off and made an endeavor to turn and climb. Then the second Frenchman, who was having trouble with his motor and knew that he could not climb, had to go over and literally sit on the German.

"After a couple of attempts to rise the German made a long descending serpentine, and while he was doing this the Frenchman waited until he got on the high side of each turn, when there is a moment of hesitation, and gave him thirty or forty shots each time.

"After some time the German went straight down on his nose, but the Frenchman was by no means sure that this was

defeat and when they got near the ground scuttled away and saved themselves.

"In order that the German might not get away from him in this fashion the Frenchman nosed down after him until the German began to wobble. Then the Frenchman figured that it was time for the German to redouble if he were all right and that he would save his altitude of 1,200 feet and sit up there for a second or two to watch him. Almost immediately he saw the German score a perfect hit. There was very little left of the German.

"It then became time for the Frenchman to think of himself. He had fired 425 rounds of shot, all that he had, and his motor was not working well. He would have fallen an easy victim to an enemy—would have been, in fact, almost helpless.

"This is where the good pal came in. He also knew or surmised that his comrade would have spent all his ammunition and he had observed the faulty motor. He had recovered from his tail spin, although too late to get into the fight. Immediately on recovering himself he followed in the wake of his friend and their common foe, twenty-five miles into Germany.

"The second Frenchman, looking up, thought that an enemy machine was approaching him. He saw a black shadow above the sun and believed himself in for another scrap, but his friend being in another position immediately saw the allied machine and signalled to him. As he returned to the second Frenchman felt happier than he had ever been in his whole life. All the way back to their station the Serbian flew with his tail to protect him from a possible ace.

"Not all air encounters require such adroitness on the part of a pilot. On another occasion the Serbian, after an official action when he had not intended to fight at all. He was flying over his new machine home from the factory when he saw a German, and thinking he might get him jumped on him and brought him down immediately within the lines. Sometimes the easiest combats are the ones which are officially recognized without difficulty, while some of those in which the utmost adroitness has been expended by the aviator cannot be verified.

"Maden, Lieutenant Maden he should be called—one of the greatest French flyers, used to say that the hardest German he ever shot down was a fellow in a two place machine which he encountered one day.

"One day Maden was up in this all red machine and got tight behind a German

machine until she reached the sea bottom. A hurried examination revealed that the hull had withstood the test of the first shock—in itself a sterling tribute to the designer and the men who built the vessel, for had it been a Jerry-built craft or had the vessel contained a piece of badly done work, loss of valuable lives in the first few moments of the attack on this boat might have occurred.

Three minutes after the first explosion the crew heard a further loud report. There was nothing to be done but to lie absolutely quiet and if possible to give no indication of how the little ship was hunted and hunted vigorously, and of what the crew went through more than one hundred feet below the waves.

The submarine coming to the surface in the course of her voyage in the North Sea sighted a number of fast craft, including several destroyers, near her. So close were the hunters that the submarine had to dive at the greatest speed. In endeavoring to straighten out the commander found that his helm had jammed. Barely had this discovery been made than a violent explosion, apparently caused by a depth charge from one of the surface craft, shook the vessel. The concussion was so great that several men in the stern chambers were lifted off their feet. Still deeper went the sub-

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