

# THE ARMY POST MURDERS

By Virginia Hanson

**The Characters**  
 Katherine Cornish, myself, visiting Elizabeth on a mid-western Army post.  
 Elizabeth, Colonel Wright's daughter.  
 Adam Drew, acting commanding officer.

Yesterday: Adam questions Mary Shaw.

## Chapter 12 A Different Slant

"YOU knew her," Adam said simply. "For some time I have thought she was unhappy, tormented. Do you know why?"

She made a little artificial gesture with her long, brittle hands. "Anne was not the confiding sort. One knows, of course, certain things from experience. It is not always easy to choose between two men. One falters from inflicting a severe hurt. However, you questioned young Spencer?"

I missed Adam's answer. The blood was singing in my ears. My pencil rolled free in my lap and I had to fumble for it in the semi-darkness. By the time I found it Adam had launched a counter-attack.

"Your husband and Nelson were classmates, I believe. Did you know him at the Point?"

There was a perceptible pause, but the answer, when it came, seemed candid—almost too candid.

"Yes. I had been engaged to Phil for some months when I met Barney. I said just now that I could understand Anne's problem. Believe me, I, too, was very unhappy until I found the right solution. I tell you this, of course, in the strictest confidence. Not for the world would I have let Anne know of it. I was very happy that he had found the right girl at last—in fact, I may say I fostered the romance. Poor Barney. One might almost believe it an adverse thing was vastly overrated. Anne had sent Barney away until she could test her own feelings and make up her mind. Barney had sought companionship and sympathy from Elizabeth until Anne dismissed Charlie and called him back. This she admitted to be true; Anne had confided in no one.

It was a singularly apt surmise, I reflected. If true—and I admitted the theory was plausible—Charlie was the only logical suspect. Suddenly my mind was illuminated by a flash of memory. What I had learned through the Houtizer and found Barney's and Shaw's biographies? Clearly I recalled the last terse, descriptive phrase under Shaw's picture:

"Chief claim to distinction: the man who tried to spoil Swede's beauty."

I must tell Adam about that at once. I gathered my scribbled sheets and tenses, for Mary Shaw to effect her lingering departure. Certain formalities must be observed, mutual sympathy and helpfulness expressed. I rose impatiently and stood just behind the curtains, while Adam ceremoniously ushered her out.

**Short, Bull-Dog Figure**  
 BUT I had no opportunity to impart my scrap of information, for the subject of it followed Adam uneasily into the room, wearing his most petulant, defensive scowl.

It sat down again and studied him—a short, bulldog figure who might be effective in a scrap. Why had he mixed with Barney? Over Mary? But what connection could that have with murdering Anne?

Once more I watched, with envy, Adam's peculiar talent for putting people at ease. Shaw did not refuse a cigarette. Adam leaned comfortably back, legs crossed, and talked through the smoke that made a blue veil between them. He asked no questions; he told Shaw what he had been doing, with an air of thinking aloud, and presently the younger man relaxed his defensive attitude and put in a word.

"Say, what did you do to Wheeler? He came out looking like he had seen a ghost, and they hadn't got out of the club before that battle-axe mother of his was pumping him hot and heavy."

"Did she get anything out of him?" Adam asked idly.

"Not that I could hear," Shaw admitted frankly. "His jaw was shut like a steel trap. What was it all about?"

"He just talked out of turn," Shaw snickered. "I figured it might be that. He'd be sure to bring it up."

Tomorrow: A strange figure.

Adam put both feet on the floor. "What do you mean?"

"The same thing you mean. I don't know how you missed it, but he was shot off his mouth enough since it happened."

"You mean—about Anne?"

"Yeah. Now don't get sore at me too. I know all about it, and it's true enough as far as it goes. Only it was a put-up job, and Wheeler doesn't know that."

Adam eyed him coldly. "Go on."

"Well, you see, it was several weeks, maybe a couple months ago—about the time Charlie Spencer started dragging her. We had some house guests and Charlie and Anne dropped in. You know the Wheelers live in the other half of our quarters and Anne saw him sitting by the window reading when they arrived. Ma Wheeler had gone to Chicago on a shopping spree. Don't know how she could bear to let her little girl go off like that, but she's go him pretty well trained. You know he's not allowed to mingle with us bad boys and girls."

"Well, Anne said there was poor Wheeler all alone over there listening to the party, and why didn't Mary call up and ask him to come over?"

"Well, Mary did ask him once and he declined with horror. So she said never again. And she said why didn't Anne go on over and cheer him up if she thought he needed it. So Anne said he'd probably call out the guard."

"Pretty soon it began to look like a swell idea to rib Anne up to breaking in on Wheeler. The girls got to work on her, and I think somebody dared her. We went out in the yard and we could see him still sitting there all alone, reading. Though how he could get any sense out of a book with all the noise we'd been making, I don't know."

**Thinking Fast**  
 "ANYWAY, Anne promised to give him the thrill of his life. The front door was open and she just walked in. He was facing the other way and before he knew she was there she had plumped down on his lap, arms around him and kissed him like he was Clark Gable."

"We could see it all as plain as day from the lawn. The blinds were way up and the lights full on. Well, you've seen a woman get mixed up with a mouse at close quarters. That was Wheeler. He let out a queer sort of bleat, jumped up and tore her loose from him like she was so much poison ivy, backed into a corner and held both hands straight out in front of him to make her keep her distance. He needed to, too. She turned on all the old siren stuff, stretched appealing arms toward him, looked at him soulfully. Been anybody but Wheeler he'd have smelled a rat."

"What happened?"

"That's about all I know. One of the girls was laughing too loud, so I took her back in our house. The rest of them said Wheeler came to and yanked down the blinds, so they came in too. But it wasn't long until the two of them, Wheeler and Anne, went past going toward Anne's quarters. She was hanging on to his arm and half running, he was traveling so fast. I guess he took her home. Wheeler's been talking his head off ever since. Not the circumstances, you know. Just hints of what he could spill."

"Shaw told me of you ever told him the truth?"

"Shaw looked uncomfortable. How could you tell a man a thing like that? I guess everybody else on the post learned what really happened, so his talk didn't hurt Anne any."

"What do you make of this?" Adam asked him.

From the table in front of him he picked up the envelope into which I had seen him put the little lead slug which he had dug from the pillar on the dance floor.

Shaw poked at it with a thick stubby finger.

"Thirty-two, isn't it? That's the one. . . ." His voice called off.

"No. The bullet that shot her lodged in the wall. This one hit a pillar on the far side of the floor."

Shaw whistled. "Are they from the same gun?"

"I don't know. The federal men will have to pass on that. But this was a fresh shot. . . ."

Something was dawning on Shaw's face.

"Say! Maybe I know something!" His thick, stubby hand darted across the table and fastened on Adam's arm. "Could that shot have been fired several hours ago—this afternoon?"

"Probably. What are you getting at?"

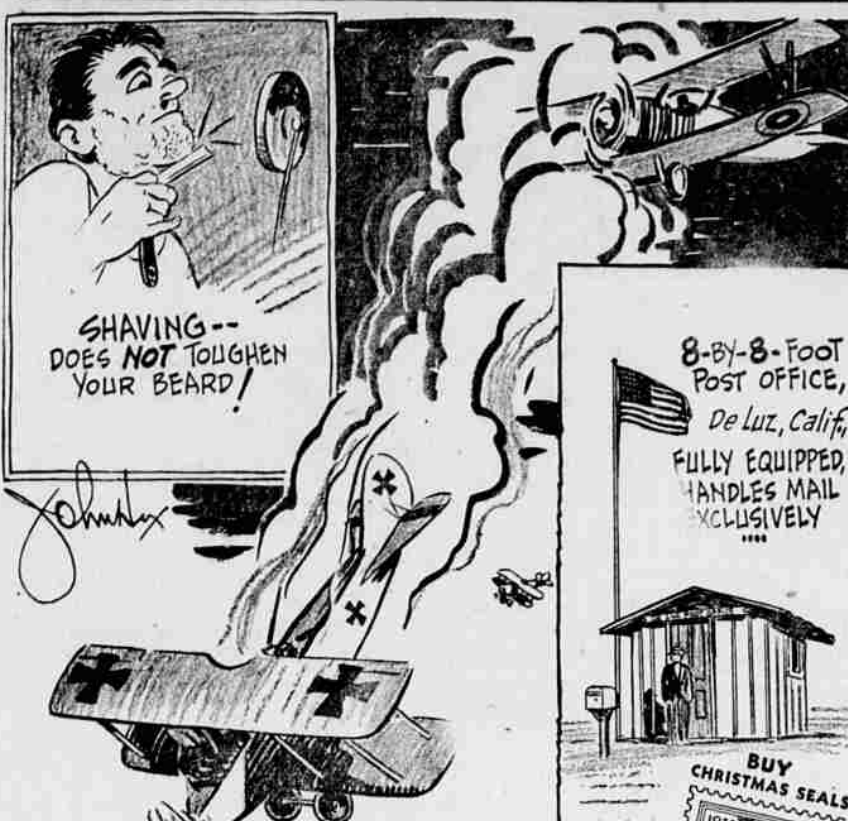
You could see Shaw thinking fast.

"Well, I'm not sure. It sounds crazy. But they were dressed alike—those big red hearts. It would mean that somebody made an awful blunder—that the shot that killed Anne Carewe was meant for Barney Nelson!"

Tomorrow: A strange figure.

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



**RENE FONCK --**  
 French World War ace,  
 SHOT DOWN HIS FIRST 32  
 GERMAN PLANES WITHOUT A  
 SINGLE ENEMY BULLET TOUCHING  
 HIS OWN SHIP!

Rene Fonck, French world war ace, was lucky. Time and again he had whipped his fighting little pursuit ship into the skies and turned enemy German planes into fiery meteors. Yet not a single German bullet had reached his own craft.

On August 16, 1916, Fonck peered from his cockpit and spotted a German two-seater in the distance. He dived at it, squeezing the machine gun handle—and found it jammed! Fonck pulled up, worked at the gun; it was no use. Again he dived at the German plane.

By bluffing and out-manoeuvring the German pilot, Fonck herded the enemy craft far back over the French line and forced him down on Fonck's airport. There, when the German pilot and gunner were taken, he revealed that his gun had been entirely useless!

Fonck brought down a total of 75 German planes during the world war and, strange as it seems, escaped with his ship untouched by German bullets until after bringing down 32 planes.

Effect of Shaving  
 Strange as it seems, shaving does not make the hair on your face grow tougher, according to findings of science. Neither does it affect the rate of growth of hair on any other part of the body. It is claimed.

After lengthy experimentation accumulated evidence indicates that there is no effect whatsoever either on the growth rate, coarseness, or density of spacing after the change from the soft, down hair of adolescents to the stubborn beards of manhood.

Tomorrow: How far does your voice travel in telephoning San Francisco from New York?

# UNION COUNTY MEDICS PLAN HELP FOR POOR

LA GRANDE, Dec. 13.—(AP)—A Union county program was devised today for administration of medical relief through the assistance of private physicians and dentists. The plan, however, will not be put in effect until 1940 because of insufficient funds.

Following an explanation by Dr. Neil Black, state relief committee consultant, the county medical and dental societies agreed to care for indigents under a reduced schedule of fees.

A medical director will be employed to determine the right of applicants for assistance. Money will be supplied by the county and state through matched appropriations.

# TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tragedy Looms!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Exact Location!

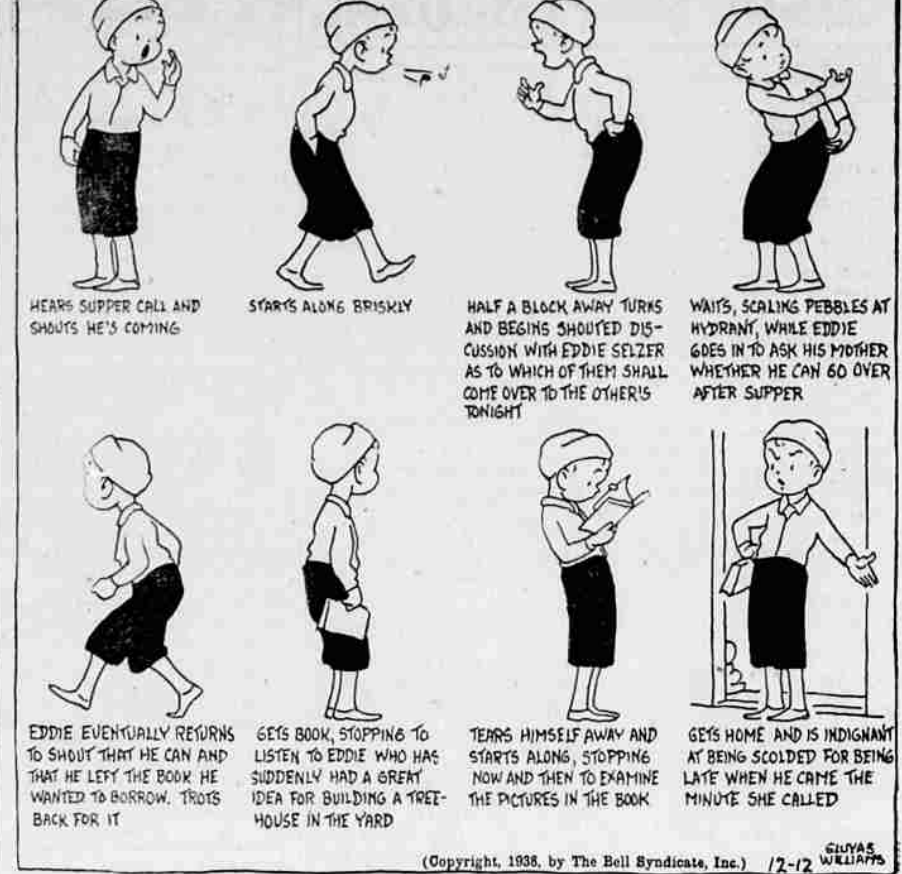


THE NEBBES—The Skeptic



# HEADING HOME

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



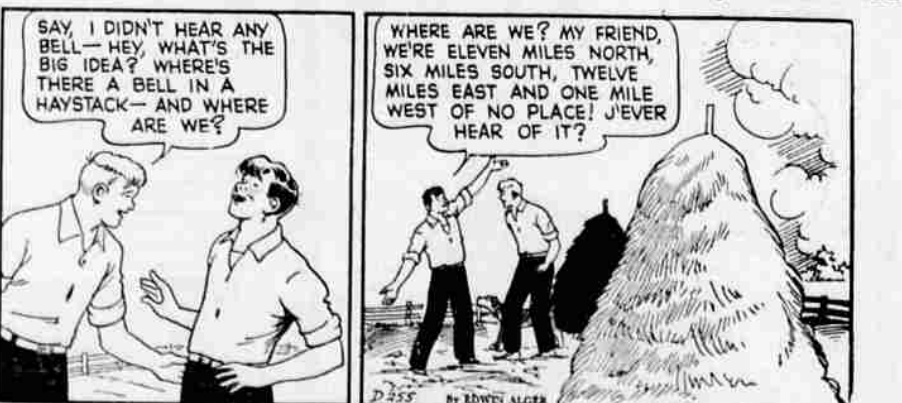
S MATTER POT



By HAL FORRE



By EDWIN ALGER



By SOL HEAR



# FATHER AND SON IN GUN AFFRAY

BEND, Ore., Dec. 13.—(AP)—Vernon C. Johnson, 27, and his father, Albert Johnson, 89, were held today while Police Chief Everett Rambo investigated a Sunday shooting affray.

Young Johnson was wounded three times in the arms, Rambo said, and was held for investigation in the jail. His father, who Sheriff Claude McCauley said wielded the gun, was under technical arrest in a hospital with a bullet wound in the foot.

McCauley quoted the father as saying the shooting followed an argument over playing a radio, in which the son struck the elder Johnson. McCauley said the father declared he shot his son three times, and the fourth shot accidentally struck his own foot.

# BRITAIN'S PLANES RATED SPEEDIEST

LONDON, Dec. 13.—(AP)—Britain has the world's fastest fighting planes but Italy leads in speedy bombers, the 1938 edition of "Jane's, All the World's Aircraft," revealed today.

Jane's placed the British Spitfire as "among the world's speediest." It said details of the newest U. S. Army machines have not yet been released for publication and their real performances are not known.

The British super-machine Spitfire I, a single-seat fighting monoplane, is listed as the world's fastest military aircraft.

The air ministry has just revealed the ship, a type of which Lord Nuffield is building 1,000, has a speed of 450 miles an hour. "It may mean a maximum of 400 miles an hour."