

Errand for Q-74

By Malcolm Taylor

THE STORY: Capt. Raymond Jacob, U. S. Army intelligence, is about to parachute into German territory from an R.A.P. observation plane when there is a cascade of tracer bullets and Pilot Officer Danforth slumps over the wheel.

THREE MEN CHAPTER II

EARLIER in the night, in Frankfurt on the Main, 50 miles southeast of Coblenz as the crow flies, the inmate of Cell 38 in the municipal jail had been all right. Never said a word there about the plane or the visit of the august personages, he was sure. Gott sei dank! It was known that the place was full of informers.

But when he had left the wine-room—alone, he was glad to remember—the cold night air must have brought the alcohol to his head. So when he had been overtaken by the stranger, they somehow got talking of the plane. Here exact recollection ended. Only Vogel had a dreadful suspicion he had unbottled his lip completely. He remembered vaguely having felt very important—having enjoyed impressing the stranger with the importance of Friedrich Vogel.

"Himmel!" Vogel writhed as he recalled the tremendous upset at the works after the visit of the august personages, the Gestapo all over the place. Luck, fool's luck, brought him through that first grilling. But they would come back. . . . they would come back.

KURT SCHROEDER, inviolated out of active service in the Luftwaffe and now engaged in flying planes from distribution centers in the Reich to military airfields in North France and Belgium, took out the order he had received a few hours earlier and read them again, though he also

"One more infraction of the rules," the warden had warned him after the last performance, "and you get a 15-day stretch added to your 30. Now you don't want that, do you?" he had added with rough kindness. "Behave yourself and don't be stupid."

Whatever else he may have been, the man in Cell 38 was certainly not stupid. But the warden did not know that.

"Take that release and get out of here!" desire urged insistently. "Better not," reason replied. "Safer to lie low a couple of weeks more. THEY are after us."

"THEY'll be after us two weeks from now, just as hard."

"Not quite so hard. They're bound to slack off a bit. Meanwhile, what better place to hide from the police than in a jail?"

"Unless they think of it themselves."

"They may," reason gravely admitted. "No guarantee."

"But they won't think of looking in jails till they've been stumped a while. Now they're still thrashing covers and drawing blank. Presently they'll sit down and think. Say a couple of weeks more for all this. Then, if they start jail-combing, we'll be outside."

With that the man in Cell 38 sprang from the bunk, strode to the door and began to pound, rattle, shake and kick it, bellowing the while, "Let me out of here! Let me out of here!"

When the guards finally got the door open he kicked and fought a measured 15 days' worth.

At much the same time, in Chemnitz, some 300 miles to the east, Friedrich Vogel woke in a cold sweat, whimpering and sobbing. For a moment longer, the menacing Gestapo men of his nightmare still towered over him.

Vogel was young and able-bodied. He was also a superb craftsman. This fact had kept him out of the army, still kept him out—his joy, for he was a coward and knew it in his heart—even in these days of manpower shortage in the Reich. In addition, it had led to his being selected for this very special job here in Chemnitz, where he and a chosen handful of other expert workers were assembling a huge plane of most unusual design. Vogel knew aircraft and this was in many ways like none he had ever seen. As the work progressed, he reached his own conclusions about the nature of the mystery plane. But he kept his ideas to himself. The plane was a secret affair, so secret that the workshops were strictly guarded and the men kept under surveillance inside and outside the works.

self. It didn't pay to have a big mouth these days. But once in a while, especially on the rare occasions when he allowed himself an extra glass or two, his guard would slip.

One such occasion, about three weeks before, was the cause of these recurrent nightmares of his. What had he said to that stranger whom he had not seen again? What had he said? He sweated, how he had not seen again? He took that extra drink? In the wine-room he had been all right. Never said a word there about the plane or the visit of the august personages, he was sure. Gott sei dank! It was known that the place was full of informers.

But when he had left the wine-room—alone, he was glad to remember—the cold night air must have brought the alcohol to his head. So when he had been overtaken by the stranger, they somehow got talking of the plane. Here exact recollection ended. Only Vogel had a dreadful suspicion he had unbottled his lip completely. He remembered vaguely having felt very important—having enjoyed impressing the stranger with the importance of Friedrich Vogel.

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Not that Vogel minded that. It served as a reminder to him, and a safeguard. For he had another fault. He was self-important and liked to impress. He knew this weakness and kept watch on him-

ready knew them by heart.

"Transferred to Mannheim . . . five days' leave . . . You will report in Mannheim on the 28th."

Five days' leave! He would see Minna and the baby and the old people again! Four whole days with them!

And Mannheim! What luck! It was near home. He would not be separated from the family at Mannheim. He would be able to get home for a few hours—maybe longer—quite often. Maybe once a week.

He counted the days on the calendar for the twentieth time. Then he stared at the wall happily, seeing visions.

At last he put out the light, parted the black-out curtains in front of the window and looked out.

Hannover was as dark as the tomb and as soundless in the blackout. But Kurt Schroeder did not notice.

For him, the night was full of light and music.

(To Be Continued)

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THIS CURIOUS WORLD



JOHN PAUL JONES.
WHOSE REAL NAME WAS JOHN PAUL, WAS BORN IN SCOTLAND, WAS A COMMANDER IN THE AMERICAN NAVY, SERVED AS A REAR ADMIRAL IN RUSSELL'S BLACK SEA FLEET, DIED IN 1792, AND, 115 YEARS LATER, WAS BROUGHT BACK TO AMERICA AND BURIED WITH FULL NAVAL HONORS AT ANNAPOLIS.

OSTRICHES
MATE FOR LIFE!
TILL DEATH
DO US PART!

ANSWER: Below ground.

NEXT: How old is the helicopter idea?

"MAD ANTHONY"

HORIZONTAL

1 Pictured early American general.
11 Revelation vision.
13 Anthem.
14 Senior (abbr.).
16 Partners.
18 Leave out.
19 Green vegetables.
21 Girl's name.
22 Twitching.
23 Motive.
25 New Greek (abbr.).
28 Dramatic.
29 Sowed.
30 Harlem room.
31 Little demon.
32 Satisfied.
35 Church official.
39 English money of account.
40 Exist.
41 Proportion.
43 Sand.
44 Nullify.
46 Uncover.
47 Nights before.
48 Short jacket.
49 Dispatched.
50 Native of Latvia.

VERTICAL

1 Pertaining to atoms.
2 Attention.
3 Waste allowance.
4 Head cover.
5 Exclamation.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

20 Not hollow.
23 One who is carried.
24 Titles.
27 Negative word.
29 Newspaper Publishers' Association (abbr.).
32 Center part.
33 Papal capes.
34 Inhabitant of.
36 Vegetable.
37 East.
38 Seines.
42 Paradise.
43 Fence entrance.
45 Is (Latin).
46 Babylonian deity.

War Department (abbr.).
13 Witticisms.
14 Ocean.
15 Grate.
17 Variety of.
18 chalcid.
19 Kind of nut.

Out Our Way



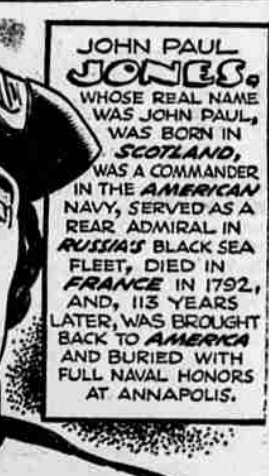
THE SIDELINES

By J. R. Williams



Hold Everything!

By William Ferguson



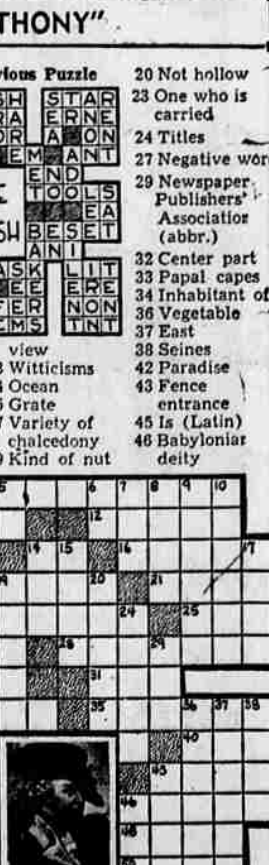
THIS CURIOUS WORLD

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"MAD ANTHONY"

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"MAD ANTHONY"

Our Boarding House



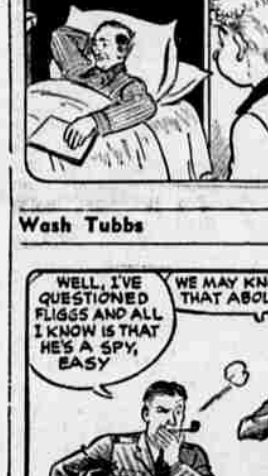
Our Boarding House

By J. R. Williams



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By J. R. Williams



Our Boarding House

By J. R. Williams



Our Boarding House

Red Ryder



Red Ryder

By Fred Harmon



Red Ryder

By Fred Harmon



Red Ryder

By Fred Harmon



Red Ryder

By Fred Harmon



Red Ryder

Freckles and His Friends



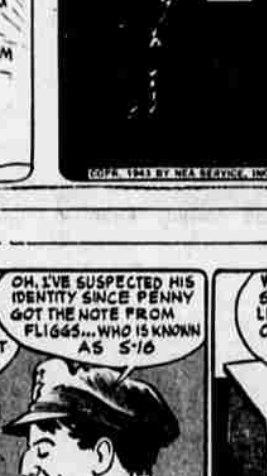
Freckles and His Friends

By Blosser



Freckles and His Friends

By Blosser



Freckles and His Friends

By Blosser



Freckles and His Friends

By Blosser



Freckles and His Friends

Wash Tubbs



Wash Tubbs

By Crane



Wash Tubbs

By Crane



Wash Tubbs

By Crane



Wash Tubbs

By Crane



Wash Tubbs

Boots and Her Buddies



Boots and Her Buddies

By V. T. Hamlin



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By V. T. Hamlin



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By V. T. Hamlin



Boots and Her Buddies

By V. T. Hamlin



Boots and Her Buddies

FUNNY BUSINESS



"It's our retractable landing gear play—his body never touches the ground!"

Little Orphan Annie



Little Orphan Annie

Allep Oop



Allep Oop

Allep Oop



Allep Oop

Allep Oop



Allep Oop