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American Leader of Airmen Who Downed von Richthofen Tells How Fight Was Won

Capt. LeBoutillier, R. A. F., East Orange Boy, Now Home on Leave, Commanded British Air Squadron That Rose to Meet the "Flying Circus," Smashed It and Drove It Back on Crippled Wings, Leaving Behind Its Fallen Leader Who Had Led It into Battle for the Last Time.

By Will B. Johnstone

BARON MANFRED VON RICHTHOFEN'S "Flying Circus" is a name that will survive in the annals of aerial combat not because of its picturesque nomenclature, but because of the prowess of its titled commander, who came and saw and conquered—AND WAS CONQUERED.

Greatest Prussian ace, with eighty planes to his credit, if the German record is true, the pride of the Kaiser's heart (being the one title in his outfit any way efficient), Richthofen finally met his match, and it is gratifying to know that an American boy commanded the squadron that went into the "Circus" and broke up the show.

Capt. Oliver C. LeBoutillier, R. A. F., of East Orange, N. J., now home on leave, had the honor of leading his men into the melee that resulted in bagging the Baron.

Last spring when Ludendorff launched the first great German offense of the year in Picardy, young LeBoutillier went over the top-of-the-top throughout the drive, alone or accompanied by his squadron, bringing down Boche planes, patrolling air lanes and playing one-night stands as the British lines moved back toward Amiens.

"We changed our aerodrome three or four times a week," said the Captain with a twinkle in his blue eyes "I could tell you many interesting details of that retreat," he went on, significantly, but under pressure he became as voluble as a sphynx. The extreme reticence of this daring commander in speaking of himself and his exploits is out of all proportion to the great importance of his squadron's "flying circus" performance wherein Ringmaster Richthofen was removed from the sky. His description makes it sound so simple. "My squadron was scouting along," he said, "and we ran into the 'Flying Circus.' It was a cat and dog fight, planes dropping on both sides and 'Rickey' was brought down." Just like that. Richthofen was always spoken of as "Rickey" by the boys, for they had known him long enough to be very familiar, all having more than a passing acquaintance with the German terror.

"Rickey's" death occurred on Sunday, April 21, of this year, at Sailley-le-Sec, about six miles south of Albert, and was the one great consolation to the British at a very trying time.

Flushed by the success of their armies, the proud Baron led his widely press-agented and justly feared "Circus," twenty strong, across the British lines. The nasal drone of their engines buzz-sawing the air sounded like a planing mill cutting knotty timber. Below, the dull glint of helmet tops showed like bolt ends where the two lines stood riveted amid wrack and ruin. The gaudily painted German vultures, colored to circus brilliance, glittered like tinsel in the drab surroundings as they swooped for prey, Richthofen's vermilion ship showing the way. British anti-aircraft greeted the spreaded circus with showers of shrapnel popcorn. Capt. LeBoutillier's squadron, sighting the invaders from afar, accepted without trepidation the challenge to battle and dashed into the lists to break propellers, as the gallant knights in ages past were wont to break lances on the historic terraine below. Led by the American youth, the British falcons closed with the vultures. It was a real battle of knights of the air.

The "Circus," composed of picked German aces of unquestionable skill, protected the tail of the great Richthofen as their commander's red wings flashed everywhere with devilish grace, executing the gamut of masterful evolutions, spitting wicked streams of lead at LeBoutillier and his dauntless crew. On both sides warriors crashed down out of the mad turmoil of machines and machine guns. Bullets ripped ugly gaps through quivering canvas wings or exploded fragile gasoline tanks into roaring flames. Spinning from aloft the antagonists swirled like tumbler pigeons in their desperate manoeuvres. Gun to gun, they sped perilously near to the ground, when suddenly a vermilion comet reeled loose from the mass, hurtled through space and crashed to earth just within the cheering British lines. Richthofen, with a bullet through his heart, had made his last landing. Their commander down, the "Circus," with its flaunting colors shot to bedraggled ribbons, withdrew in crestfallen haste. German observers seeing their champion fall, called for a barrage to encircle his remains, but to no avail. A British soldier crawled to the dead Richthofen, secured his body with a rope and drew it safely back.

Capt. LeBoutillier has a trophy of this historical engagement in the form of a handsome mahogany cane which he modestly exhibits. "This was made from 'Rickey's' shattered propeller blade," he explained, drawing out a French bayonet artfully concealed in the stick. "I also have a piece of vermilion canvas from his plane. (Contrary to report, 'Rickey's' was the only red ship in the 'Circus.') We stripped the wreck for souvenirs until there wasn't a scrap left." Richthofen was buried at Sailley-le-Sec with highest military honors. "We gave him a wonderful tribute becoming a worthy foe," said the Captain; "better than the boche would permit to one of our fellows. My squadron did not attend the funeral, as that would have been bad taste, having killed him, but we sent most wonderful flowers."

Capt. LeBoutillier is just one of the East Orange boys who has "made good." He attended the high school before the war and "tried to make the football team." He learned to fly at Mineola, then went to Canada to join the Royal Flying Corps in 1916, before we declared war. He has been wounded once during his three years' service, winning early promotion to Captain and Commander at twenty-three.

That aerial warfare is the most nerve-wracking branch of the service is illustrated by the Captain's statement that some of the bravest and most successful flyers will "go bad." In other words, develop a "yellow streak." "I have seen veterans of undoubted courage crack at the game," he said. "They will fly up to the line only to turn back at the last moment, try again and again, and finally give it up."

The Captain brought back among his trophies a German "streamer." This is a narrow strip of bunting, red, white and black, about two inches wide and two yards long. At one end are two neatly stitched canvas bags, one filled with dirt, the other a buttoned pocket to contain messages. "When an Allied pilot is lost on the German side of the line, the report is dropped within our camp by the enemy by means of these streamers," the Captain said. "We communicate the same way with streamers of our colors, only ours are weighted with lead instead of dirt."

The Captain's greatest thrill was the first of the many planes he downed. He was stationed on the Belgium coast at the time and chased a boche two-seater ten miles out to sea before he knocked it out. Apparently, he would have circumnavigated the ocean if necessary.

That these aviators are just a lot of boys is proved by the Captain. "We had a lark one day," he said. "We filled our planes with bricks from a handy ruin. Then we flew over a German base we had been bombing and fired the bricks at the boche. It was great sport."

Asked when he expected to return to France, the Captain said: "I'm going to Canada first to do instructing, then on over. I'm going quick, too, because I haven't any registration or classification cards, and I'm liable to be picked up as a draft evader."

Cat's-Eye Mirrors Shine in Paris's Dark Streets.

PARIS is a city of darkness at night time. Pedestrians find their way through its narrow, romantic streets and along its magnificent boulevards with the aid of flashlights. And to assist in piloting them a most novel scheme has been adopted. The entrances of buildings are festooned with cat's eye mirrors, lamp-posts are belted with them; they mark places of refuge, and outline house numbers. When these metal-coated reflectors catch the gleam of a pocket lamp they reflect rays of light and thereby aid one in reaching his destination. One such lamp-post is shown in the accompanying illustration from Popular Mechanics.

Von Richthofen's Last Air Battle

DRAWN FROM CAPT. LE BOUTILLIER'S DESCRIPTION OF THE FATAL FIGHT IN WHICH THE GERMAN MASTER ACE LED HIS FAMOUS "FLYING CIRCUS" TO DEFEAT AND HIS OWN DEATH

Another Letter From "Bugs"

Two Weeks in the Officers' Training Camp at Louisville, Playing "Button, Button, Who's Got a Button Unbuttoned," Already Has Earned Him the Right to Put Two Letters After His Name—"K. P."

BY ARTHUR ("BUGS") BAER

KENTUCKY, Sept. 7, 1918.

OLD TOPPER: Been in this man's army about two weeks now and it's getting used to me. It's a game that will either make a man or a male milliner out of you and it's making a man out of me. There isn't any place in the works for a bird who can't stand up and take it with a grin on his map. We get up at 5 o'clock in the morning to put the sun out. Five A. M. is sure one young hour to gallop out of the hay.

Don't ever fall for that bunk about anybody getting homesick in this man's army, because nobody has time to get homesick. The days are the longest and the shortest that I have ever experienced.

By the longest I mean that we pop out of the blankets at 5 o'clock and pop right back at 9 o'clock in the evening, making sixteen hours of straight hustling. By the shortest I mean that the hours fly by like bats out of Hades.

The training is intensive, which means just what it means, multiplied by six. And life would be as merry as two sets of marriage chimes if it weren't for one splinter in the ointment.

That's the army button.

You've heard of America's answer. But did you ever hear of America's question? The army button is America's question? How to keep the army button buttoned is the biggest problem in the whole institution.

Before I decided to put a spoon in the big battle broth, a button didn't mean any more to me than Sunday does to a near-sighted porcupine. But now—well, yea bo!

Did you ever notice that a button had an expression?

Well, it has. A button has the most unbuttoned expression that you ever lamped in your life. Just when you think a button is buttoned it ain't. And when you think it ain't buttoned it ain't either.

Each unbuttoned button means a cycle in the kitchen police, and from where papa sits it looks as if lil' brighteyes is going to fight this war out right in the kitchen, armed with a double-barrelled mop and a .42-centimetre battery of water buckets. You've got to chaperon your buttons all the time, and the yodel "Police your buttons" means that an eagle-eyed second loot has piped one of your coat buttons suffering from a lapse of memory. Your name goes down in his little black book and you are out of luck. You police everything down here. You don't shave at all. Getting rid of your whiskers is called policing your chin. Shining your boots is policing your brogans. Incidentally, we ran into a fine young splash of rain down here for about a week, and shining your muddy gondolas was a tougher job than getting a Democratic majority in a Philadelphia election. I finally solved the problem by letting the mud dry on my boots.

Then I shined the mud.

Bad—eh, what?

I got to hand it to Kentucky mud for its shining qualities. It sure takes a high-power polish. You know it isn't every gob of mud that you can polish. What chance would you have of tossing a shine on Jersey or Long Island mud? You said it.

By the way, old topper, who copped the world series? We haven't time to read the papers. Did anybody bust Heine Zim's record for the 30-yard dash? Send me some New York papers so that I can read the latest misstatement by my old pal Shouts.

Which is about all, as I have to shake a leg on guard duty. Guard duty is a soft job. All you have to do is to guard two hours on and four hours off for twenty-four hours. You also have to know a seven-foot library of orders. But it's easy for me. I know the rules backward.

Which is generally the way I repeat 'em.

And each misquoted order is another session of K. P.

If I ever get out of the kitchen I will tell you how the camp looks.

Still, it's all in a young democratic life.

And you can bet your porcelain eye that I will know better the next war.

It takes at least two wars to get expert at this stuff.

BUGS.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1918

THE NEW PLAYS

"Mr. Barnum" All Over the Lot

BY CHARLES DARNTON.

BROADWAY, as you know, isn't on the map that includes a circus parade. But when "Mr. Barnum" came to town last night there were great expectations in the crowd that filled the Criterion Theatre. Barnum is a name that even Belasco may hold in reverence. In Barnum there is the spell of show—and Broadway follows its own lights.

The best part of the show provided by Harrison Rhodes and Thomas A. Wise was the sideshow. In other words, the freaks were amusing. Given footlights instead of sawdust they had the advantage of appearing in a new world. The fat lady was all there, the "living skeleton" still lived, and General Tom Thumb, if you please, put on mighty airs when the midget Queenie Mab happened to be in his immediate vicinity.

But where, oh where, was the life of the circus that we treasured before it grew out of its teething ring? We were compelled to look for it 'way down South in 1850, and then we saw it with one foot on a boat and the other on a lot. We were kept outside the tent—worse luck! Only old P. T. and a twelve-year-old lad with initiative crawled under the canvas as friends filled with the spirit of adventure. This turn toward comradeship had a human twist, not to mention the crawl. Then, too, Barnum ate enough peanuts to put the tired business man of to-day quite out of business. Yet a pocketful of peanuts doesn't make a character nor a play.

"Mr. Barnum" went along in such a desultory sort of way that it was all over the lot instead of being solidly in it. In plain words, the play proved to be lacking both in picturesqueness and humor. A lifeless beginning led to a sentimental ending with Jenny Lind singing at Castle Garden as a "partner" of P. T. after his romantic young manager had managed to get him into a real estate scheme that threatened to make Bridgeport the graveyard of the circus. A bareback rider who found her way back to a husband and two children in Kentucky did not add to the joy of the proceedings, and the girl who hopped into sudden fame was encumbered by an alcoholic father given to such histrionic excesses that he killed one act of the play before he succeeded in killing himself.

Mr. Wise made Barnum a genial philanthropist with always a peanut left in his pocket for the deserving performer, and he gave a touch of tenderness to the scene in which he patted the daughter of the deceased drunkard on the back. Phoebe Foster played the runaway girl in her most innocent manner and with her hair hanging down her back at the proper moment. The feminine honors of the performance, however, were carried off with a high hand by Carlotta Monterey, a midget who had the coquetries of the sex at her finger tips. When Mr. Wise raised her on his shoulder "Mr. Barnum" reached its highest point.

"One of Us" at the Bijou

"A GENTLEMAN can't play the ruffian," said David Vincent, newspaper reporter in "One of Us," which opened at the Bijou Theatre last night. But Arthur Ashley, as a young college man exploring the underworld, proved that a gentleman might play a very good ruffian. He succeeded in convincing Miss Bertha Mann, cabaret entertainer, who accepted him for a regular strong-arm man. Ashley married her by the roughest kind of tactics, and then found himself hard pressed to live out the role.

Offered as a "new metropolitan comedy" the piece verged strongly to melodrama, with pretty touches of sentiment, and a lively if somewhat crude strain of humor. Jack Lait, the author, showed in this dramatic adventure that same vigorous dialogue which has served to gain readers for his efforts in the field of fiction. Many laughs were tucked away in his lines, and the audience found all of them.

After the hero married the singer her former admirer, described as "an all-around crook," led the young gentleman burglar into a second story job for the special purpose of delivering him to the law. This job was to be carried out at the very home of the amateur in crime. The girl found out all about it, and followed him. Then she was, of course, apprehended and everything explained. Miss Mann made the most of her role, with pathetic and convincing emphasis on the fact that she wanted to be a "good girl." Mr. Vilcent, the newspaper man, and Harry C. Bradley, the waiter-preacher, were particularly good.

Without presenting anything in the least new, "One of Us" has much to whet interest and evoke laughs.

"Someone in the House"

"SOMEONE IN THE HOUSE," which opened at the Knickerbocker last night, at least achieved a novelty. Except for the final downcoming at the end of the last act, the curtain fell when nobody expected it. That time, however, the audience was wondering what kept it. But the delay was explained. The "society burglar," whose clever escape from a famous detective it had taken three authors to achieve, at the last moment had developed a conscience, which, had the curtain fallen too soon, would have been cut off by a barrage of the members of the cast lined up in a frankly "waiting" attitude.

The plot, which was hatched in the city pawnshop of "The Deacon," moved in the second act to the country, where it stayed for the duration of the play—long enough for Jimmy Burke, alias "The Dancer," to get the diamond collar he was after and neatly foil the combined efforts of Detective Halloran and his aide, amateur criminologist Tom Hargraves, and the entire local police force to trap him. But when he paved the way to the diamonds by getting Percy Glendenning to give him the "gentleman crook" part in an amateur play in which the theft of the collar was to be the piece de resistance, and later aided and abetted as a surer way a "framed" burglarizing of the Glendenning safe, "for publicity only," he had not yet discovered that he had a heart—or that his personality had reached the trusting heart of Molly Brant, to whom the collar belonged. It was when he made this discovery that he mellowed the melodrama.

Robert Hudson fitted smoothly into his part as "The Dancer" in all but the first act, where, however, William B. Mack as "The Deacon" gave the play a promising start. The honors of the second act were easily carried off by Lynn Fontanne as Mrs. Glendenning and Hassard Short as Percy, who, between them justified the play's designation as a melodramatic comedy. Julia Hay made such a pretty Molly Brant that "The Dancer's" monopoly of her time seemed quite natural. Sidney Toler made Halloran act like an honest to goodness detective, although perhaps truer to type was John Sparks as Malone, the country police chief.

All in all, Larry Evans, Walter Percival and George S. Kaufman, who collaborated to evolve "Someone in the House," did a workmanlike job which a few nights may polish into a show that will hold the groove for a run.

"Forever After," at the Central

"FOREVER AFTER," a three-act American play by Owen Davis, presented by William A. Brady and featuring Alice Brady and Conrad Nagel, pleased the audience to the point of tears and laughter at the opening of the Central Theatre, 47th Street and Broadway, one of the new Shubert houses, last night.

The opening scene of the first act shows Nagel, as an American Army captain, lying severely wounded on No Man's Land. He is raving and his mind wanders back to the days of his boyhood love for Jennie, the role enacted by Miss Brady. "Jack," the boyhood chum of "Ted," is bending down to the wounded captain, listening to the story of his love for the girl whom he put out of his life because her ambitious mother, Mrs. Rusa Whytal, would not consent to Jennie marrying a poor boy.

The second scene is laid in the garden of Jennie's Vermont home and goes back to the time before he leaves for college.

The second act again depicts the desolate waste of No Man's Land, where Ted is again wandering in his mind, telling of the boat race while at Harvard. Scene two of the second act is the enacting of the boat race episode.

The third act shows "Ted" lying in a chateau, where he has been brought by stretcher bearers. Jennie recognizes him for the first time since he so rudely left her to go to New York to make his fortune.

The last two scenes of the last act show a party in full swing at Jennie's home, where Ted breaks with his love and leaves for New York and later for France.

In the closing scene Ted is coming out of the ether, administered at the operation, while his boyhood love, as a nurse, is listening to the soft words which always make an agreeable ending to the war play with love sprinkled through it.

Miss Brady never acted better, if the applause of a packed house is any criterion, while Conrad Nagel acted a typical youthful lover, and later as a brave Yankee soldier.