

The Storming of Tomahawk Hill



Up, Up, Into a Hail of Snowballs the Besiegers Sped.

FRANK WILLIAMS and his cousin, Joe Fisher, were in a quandary. Frank had come to visit Joe at his house in one of the big western cities just at the moment when Ben Jordan, the leader of the crowd of rather tough boys who were at swords' points with Joe's crowd, had succeeded in capturing Tomahawk hill, which was the great winter battle ground of the boys of the city. A snow fort was always erected and fought for under regularly drawn up rules of war, but the victory of Ben's crowd had been won by the violation of all these rules—his snowballs were not only solid ice, but had stones frozen in them, too, and because of this the boys were particularly anxious to win the hill back from him.

Although Frank was only a visitor he was well known among his cousin's friends for his clever ideas, and the boys had insisted that on this serious occasion he should take the leadership. Frank had ordered his army to make snow shields of barrel heads, with a strap or cord to fasten to the wearer's arm. These did great service, as they protected the fighters to a great extent from the frozen snowballs, and as the enemy was not provided with ice shields they were soon vanquished by the well directed "iceball" fire of his forces, leaving the way clear to storm Fort Tomahawk.

The attacking party soon found out how hard a task they had before them. It was difficult enough to climb up the slippery slope, and then when they would come within range of Ben's sharpshooters it was well nigh impossible to advance up the hill, even though they were each provided with the snow shields.

Once the attackers got almost to the top, when Ben rolled three or four giant snowballs down on them. They were tumbled over like so many terpins, sliding bruised and shaken clear to the bottom of the hill, while the enemy unmercifully jeered them.

After Frank picked himself up and reviewed his battered forces he decided they had had enough. A retreat was ordered to headquarters, in Joe's stable loft, and a grand powwow was commenced. Everybody had a plan to suggest, but not one was practical.

The noise and arguments got so loud that Frank couldn't think straight and he went downstairs, telling them to leave him alone for a while and he might be able to evolve some scheme.

Frank entered the main room, which was used as a garage, where he settled himself in the big touring car to try to think of some idea. But it wouldn't come. He glanced dismally around, but the sight of Joe's big double runner bobsled, the Zip, in the opposite corner, gave him no inspiration. His eyes rested on her for a moment as he thought gloomily:

"Too bad you can't coast up hill as fast as you can coast down!" Then he found himself looking at another object—the compact little motor of the old auto buckboard. The auto buckboard had been smashed up in a collision, but the motor was uninjured

and had been removed to run a turning lathe.

He continued to look intently at the motor as he kept on studying, until suddenly his face lighted up. A minute more and he was all action. A careful examination of the damaged machine seemed to be most satisfactory, for he rushed upstairs and brought Joe back, and then excitedly began to explain something to him, pointing first to the motor and then to the bobsled.

Joe regarded Frank as if he thought he were crazy.

"Haven't you heard of auto sleds before? Let's get hold of Dubloc and I'll prove all my statements," argued Frank warmly.

Dubloc was the chauffeur. Frank laid his arguments before him and Dubloc nodded approvingly. His approval quickly won Joe over to Frank's great scheme. But most of the day had passed now, so Frank and Joe dismissed their army, with mysterious hints about the new campaign to be carried out later.

The first thing done, with Dubloc's aid, the next morning was to unbolt the motor from its place on the work bench. Finally its 75 pounds were free to be lifted, and Frank, Joe and Dubloc were able to shift the 16 horsepower motor and its gasoline tank at the same time, so no precious moments were lost in disconnecting. The motor and tank were firmly secured to the long board seat of the Zip right over the rear sled. The next task was to remove the rear axle with its wheels from the auto buckboard. They were finally placed in position, as shown in the picture. After that it was an easy matter to adjust the chain on the sprocket wheel and connect it with the motor.

"But how are you going to keep from slipping?" Joe now asked.

"That's where the tractive force plays its part," answered Frank. "See these lengths of chain. I am going to inflate the tires, then wind the chains around each wheel."

As the engine was in good condition, Frank inserted the spark plug and "cranked" the motor, the same as any chauffeur would, to start the engine. Then he threw on the speed lever and spun the wheels (jacked up off the floor) at a great rate.

"We've got to box in the motor. Saw these lengths," and Frank measured off certain boards from the pile of lumber by the carpenter's bench. The boards were sawed to the required sizes, and nailed into place, and the Zip now began to take the shape you see

Going to Sleep

The father of a lad, who was about 7 years old, was a physician, and when the child complained of his difficulty in getting to sleep was ready with advice. "I'll tell you something that will soon put you to sleep," the parent said. "You begin and count slowly up to 100, and then another hundred, and so on, and before you know it you'll be sleeping. Try it tonight when you go to bed." Everything remained quiet until the father went to retire. As he passed the boy's bed a little voice piped, "Dad!" "Yes, my boy?" "What comes after trillions?"

her in the picture. Frank completed his labors by painting her name on the sides and nailing a small American flag at the prow.

The Zip was ready at last. It was afternoon when they pulled her into the yard, where Frank assigned Joe to act as steersman, which operation was accomplished the same as before the Zip became an auto sled, the forward runners being movable and pivoted on the rod that pierced the seat and terminated in the steering wheel.

Frank now mounted the rear. As the spark plug had already been inserted, he proceeded to start the motor and the engine began to hum; then Frank let out the speed lever, the chain wound wheels bit into the snowy driveway, and the Zip shot into the street, while the army (which had been hastily summoned) cheered enthusiastically.

From the street they could get a distant view of Tomahawk hill. They were careful not to expose themselves to the possible gaze of the enemy, who they found had been also busy—making at least a dozen giant snowballs, which stood in a row on the hill crest.

"Say, suppose we are able to climb the hill, and they begin rolling 'em down on us—one of 'em would knock the Zip all to smithereens!" exclaimed Joe, dubiously.

"We'll provide for that—head her back and we'll make final preparations for the grand attack," answered Frank, and in a few moments they had arranged for the majority to form a skirmish line to clear the way for the grand attack, while he ran the Zip under cover of a clump of bushes near by. The skirmish line succeeded after some hot fighting, and then Frank commanded five of his huskiest fighters, including Joe, to scramble aboard, while he congratulated the bruised heroes of the skirmish line. They had not only beaten the enemy at the foot of the slope, but had decoyed Ben into rolling down all the giant snowballs. This great danger removed, Frank issued final instructions to Ted Warner, who was in command of those left on foot, and then turned to the crew of the Zip.

"Boys, we must reach the top, and we must hold out when we get there until the rest can climb up and come to our support! Are you ready—then off we go!" and the Zip, manned by her intrepid crew, dashed from the bushes. There was a long smooth stretch across the open field to traverse before she began the ascent. This gave her a fine start, for she shot down the clear space going at 40 miles an hour.

A Silly Warning

Hardacre—Waal, Maria, these city folks do things outrageously.
Mrs. Hardacre—What is it now, Hi?
Mr. Hardacre—Waal, jest look what's painted on that pall up there—"Use for fire only." Now, who in all creation could build a fire in a pail?—Tit-Bits.

A High Course

He—Do you believe in the higher education for girls?
She—Oh, my, yes; I'm taking lessons in aviation already.—Boston Herald.

The yell of astonishment that greeted her appearance from the besieged had hardly died away before she started the ascent.

She raced quarter way up with hardly a sign of decreased speed. But the drumming of the motor grew louder and more strained as she reached half way. Still, she must have been going at a great clip, for the three-quarters distance was made at a rate faster than a man could run—but the last quarter!

Slower and slower the chained wheels turned over the snowy crest, yet steadily they forced her up with scarcely a slip as they gripped the icy slope. And now the Zip came within range of the sharpshooters, who unmercifully peppered the onrushing foe.

Would she do it? Up, up into a hail of snowballs the besiegers sped. They had naught but their snow shields, which they crouched behind for what protection they gave. Finally only 50 feet separated them from the crest. Could they make it? The puffing motor was just able to complete the climb, where it hurled the Zip over the crest directly at the base of the fort, into the massed ranks of the besieged, who had come out to repel the enemy, though they had not dared to run down to meet the oncomers on account of the slippery hillside. The top was gained at last.

Then came the fiercest fighting of the whole campaign. Frank's confidence in his followers was not misplaced, but more than once they were all forced down the hill by Ben's force, who outnumbered them two to one. Yet every precious moment gained brought Frank's reinforcement creeping nearer to the top.

Ben was no coward, and he and Frank finally grappled with each other just at the critical moment. They were equally matched, but Frank was lucky enough to down his enemy, and Ben's fall threw his ranks into great confusion, and all the while Frank's "second army corps" climbed higher.

The momentary panic gained time enough for them to reach the top, where they literally mowed down the tired and disconcerted enemy, who had been too busily engaged in fighting off the Zip's crew to notice their approach. They pulled Frank off Ben, who rose to find himself a prisoner with all his army.

But what happened next was most humiliating of all. Over a dozen sleds were captured among the spoils of war. When Frank learned of this an idea struck him. He turned to Ben:

"We can't make you fellows 'walk the plank,' but we can make you 'ride the sled!' and then each prisoner was forced to ride ignominiously down hill on the very sled he had brought up!

Frank reserved Ben for the last. Frank had a little ceremony he wanted to perform, especially for his captive's benefit. Still kicking and fighting, Ben was forced to watch Frank remove the little flag upon the prow of the Zip and stick it on the crest of Fort Tomahawk.

Then Frank said:
"I brought this flag 25 miles to plant it on Tomahawk hill, and when you want to declare war again just remember that. Now, boys, give Ben his little ride!"