



A. BRUCE BIELASKI

Kaiser's Spies Beaten At Their Own Game

Remarkable Organization Built Up by Uncle Sam Since World War Began



THE story of how this menace was met can as yet be told only in part. But not the least interesting part concerns the men who have done the work.

Chief of the weapons which were at hand was the secret service of the department of justice. Its agents were an unobtrusively efficient lot, but woefully small in numbers and, for the most part, inexperienced in international affairs. "White slaves" and predatory business had been their chief game. The even smaller force of the treasury secret service was almost fully occupied with its routine duties of guarding the currency and the president's life. It, too, has rendered amazing service against the spies, but upon the department of justice agents fell the chief burden.

They were called upon to match the craft, the experience and the ruthlessness of the keenest of German spies, who were backed by a renowned secret service organization and unlimited funds.

Their chief, the man who had developed the government detective force, who had laid the foundation for an extensive, loosely geared, even running mechanism, and who promptly assembled it when the need came, is Alexander Bruce Bielaski ("Home Run" Bielaski they called him in his high school days). He entered the department a dozen years ago, when the development of a bureau of investigation to handle secret work for which no other provision had been made was started.

This bureau was commissioned to wrestle with violations of neutrality, with those of the national banking laws, with antitrust cases, bucket shop cases, "white slave" cases; it was to prosecute those who impersonate an officer of the government, to pursue those who flee the country and seek to evade the long arm of the federal law.

There were already several detective agencies in the government, each created for a specific purpose and limited by law in its operations. For instance, there was the secret service in the treasury department. There were customs agents to prevent smuggling, land agents to protect the public domain, post office inspectors to make difficult the misuse of the mails. But the special agents of the department of justice had a field many times as broad as that occupied by any other detective agency. One phase of its work alone—that of circumventing violations of neutrality—became a herculean task when the war broke.

The department of justice refused to follow precedent in its creation of a detective agency. It built a staff of operatives that was a new thing in the field of detective work. In doing so it made brains its first requisite of selection of men and held that education was a developer of brains.

The youngsters of this service have succeeded where veteran police have failed. Every case an operative undertakes is an entirely new problem, in which his past experience is by no means an infallible guide. It needs brains and initiative.

A young agent of the bureau of investigation, formerly a salesman for a wholesale grocer, went into the Alleghenies on his first case and cleaned up a nest of moonshiners that had defied local authorities and United States marshals for years. Another of these men worked as a laborer on the docks of New Orleans and found out the methods employed by the sugar samplers in so grading imported cargoes that the loss to the government was hundreds of thousands in duties every year. Still another "roped in" with Mexican revolutionists in El Paso.

The importance of the work of these special agents may be measured by an account of the circumstances that led to the seizure of the port of Vera Cruz in April, 1914, and the part played in that event by one of those ingenious men. It was some months before that event that a huge, bearded Russian attracted the attention of a house detective in a New York hotel by the display of a draft for \$3,000,000 signed by President Huerta of Mexico. The house detective telephoned the special agents, who watched the operations of the Russian.

That individual bought firearms and ammunition in sufficient quantities to load a ship. It was the business of the government to see to it that he did not send this to Mexico, as there was an embargo on firearms to that country. The ship, however, cleared for Odessa, Russia, and the special agents traced it to that point and witnessed the refusal of the Russian government to allow the ammunition to be landed, because of a fear that it was to be used by revolutionists. They saw the ship again traverse the Mediterranean and unload its cargo at Hamburg. The special agents noted, however, that the Russian had disappeared, and suspected that he was more loyal to his own pocket than to the Mexican government.

The ammunition was reshipped from Hamburg to Vera Cruz. As it approached the latter port the United States, under the influence of the information furnished by its special agents, entered and seized the port that Huerta might not get

this ammunition. The occupation of Vera Cruz followed. It later developed that most of the ammunition bought by the Russian was junk, and that Mexico had been cheated by him, and that he had returned, probably enriched to the extent of \$1,000,000, to the land of his fathers.

Such was the work of the special agents before the war. Bielaski, in Washington, sat at the center of the web which covered the nation. In other important cities, such as New York, Chicago, New Orleans, there were lesser web centers. In the federal building in each important city was an office of special agents with a group of operatives which revolved about it. In the smaller centers were single representatives who could call for re-enforcements whenever an emergency developed. Then there were the free lances of the service, those who could be shuttled to whatever point required the attention of especially skilled men.

Bielaski is the silent man with every mesh of the web in his sensitive fingers. His career is one that might well be an inspiration to any ambitious youngster. He entered the department of justice 12 years ago as a laborer and for a compensation of \$630 a year. Soon he was a clerk of special agents, then an examiner, a special examiner, an assistant to the attorney general, acting chief and chief of special agents. This latter post he has held since 1912. These have been the years during which the newest and greatest of the government's detective agencies has been taking definite form. Bielaski has been molding it.

Then the great war came, and the United States found itself a non-participant faced with the necessity of maintaining neutrality within its borders. Finally this country was itself in war and must combat the much vaunted secret service of the Germans, and must watch those millions of people living within its borders that had been born in enemy countries and whose allegiance was sufficiently in doubt to make their surveillance necessary.

During the period of neutrality scores of unpleasant situations arose because of the insistence of Germany upon abusing the hospitality of the United States. Almost the first of these resulted from a plan laid by Capt. Franz von Papen, military attaché to the German embassy, for obtaining false passports for the use of German reservists. First through Lieut. Hans von Wedell and later through one Kurovic he operated an office in New York which sought to get vagabonds around the wharfs and cheap boarding houses and to induce these men to apply to Washington for passports, which he purchased and used in returning reservists to Europe. The plan had not been working long when a special agent from the New York office was on the trail. He succeeded in representing himself as the proper sort of man to secure fraudulent passports, and was soon deep in the confidence of the Germans. Ruse was sent to prison; von Wedell fled, but was intercepted by the British and imprisoned, and the whole scheme was broken up. Van Papen was recalled at the request of the state department because of "improper activities," of which this was but one.

The watchfulness of the special agents was evidenced by the fact that they knew the exact hour when, on April 19, 1916, Wolf von Igel had taken 70 pounds of secret papers out of various hiding places and assembled them for transfer to Washington. Von Igel operated from an office at 69 Wall street. Though he was an employee of the German embassy, there was a question as to whether his papers were immune from seizure, as they would be in the embassy. So he was making ready to transfer them to unquestioned safety. He claimed that his papers were exempt from the right of seizure. The German ambassador backed his claim. The special agents admitted that if they were official papers of the embassy they should be returned. They took them to Washington, where, at the state department, they met the German ambassador. Through long hours of night that official dug through those papers. They placed him in a most embarrassing position. If he claimed them as state papers he admitted an official part in their revelations. If he failed to claim them he left this incriminating evidence in the hands of the American authorities. He decided that the latter course was the less embarrassing. Practically all the papers were left with the special agents. These papers revealed a degree of scheming and intrigue against a neutral country that is almost beyond conception.



When Capt. von Papen laid his plans in the German club, in New York, for the invasion of Canada by Germans in the United States, the special agents knew of his plans. The flasco of Paul Koenig, chief detective of the Hamburg-American line; the machinations of Capt. Karl Boy-Ed—all came to naught and were well known by the American authorities.

Finally came the master spy of them all, Capt. Franz von Rintelen, intimate of the kaiser, a man of highest social rank and vast wealth, with plans to overturn all in America that worked against the interests of Germany. He poured out money like water and met enthusiastic co-operation on all sides. It seemed almost as if every man in America was willing to help to the extent of accepting large amounts of money from von Rintelen. In fact, Americans took his money right and left, and rendered no service in return. Great quantities of German money were spent, but little progress was made toward attaining the results for which Germany strove.

When these activities are viewed as a whole, the effort of German intrigue in America is seen to have been astonishingly fertile. In the face of such a lack of results it is difficult to believe in the excellence and cleverness of Prussian espionage. This newly organized agency of the United States, intended for application to the tasks of peace, crossed swords with what is termed the greatest spy system in the world, and thus far it has not been bested.

Then, suddenly the United States itself was thrust into the war. With tens of thousands of German reservists, hundreds of thousands of German citizens, millions of people of German blood, this country would appear to have been in a position of great danger from within. Certainly there was need of sharp watchfulness. No other belligerent nation was confronted by an internal alien-enemy problem of such magnitude.

The government in this emergency offered Bielaski the assistance of representatives of its other departments elsewhere. There were, for instance, certain representatives of the department of agriculture, scattered from coast to coast, who knew their communities well. These were instructed to watch for individuals who gave evidence of disloyalty to the United States and report back to the department of justice, when there was time, or to the nearest United States attorney when quick action was required. The post office sent instructions to 45,000 postmasters, 33,000 letter carriers and 43,000 rural delivery men. Each of these was instructed to keep his ear to the ground for any showing of disloyalty from within and report promptly. The land office, the Indian office, the public health service, the reclamation service—all those governmental agencies that spread out among the people were officially instructed to help protect the nation from any possible foe from within.

Those other detective agencies of the government such as the secret service, the post office inspectors, the customs agents, were called upon for skilled assistance. On the instant, almost, and entirely aside from these government agencies, there was built up in silence a secret service of volunteers which is today effectively at work. Its tentacles steal out through newspaper offices, banks, hotels, over railroad systems, into municipal governments, through the radiations of traveling salesmen. It is a loose organization, but it works under instructions and knows what to do when it finds a plague spot.

And this vast machine has been placed in the hands of a young man, who, 12 years ago, fresh from high school, entered the government service as a laborer at \$630 a year. "Home Run" Bielaski, son of a minister, grandson of Capt. Alexander Bielaski, who died in battle at Bull Run, descendant of a Polish patriot who fought that America might become a nation, is making operation difficult for the spies of the enemy.

USING CAST IRON SHELLS.

They are making shells of cast iron in France, making them at the rate of 1,000,000 a day. The Scientific American quotes Edgar A. Custer as saying these are more effective than steel shells in attacking earthworks.

Old Coffins Now Valuable.

Old metal coffins that have not seen the light of day for many years adorn a vacant lot that is used as a junk yard in Grass Valley, Cal. These gruesome specters lying about on the ground have been the cause of a great deal of interest. One of these is a bronze affair that is worth several times as much for junk now as it cost when new 30 years ago.

FORCED TO WORK IN KRUPP PLANT

Deported Men and Prisoners Are Driven Into Slavery by German Authorities.

MAKE STARTLING DISCLOSURE

Hollander Tells How Deported Belgians and French Prisoners of War Are Compelled to Work in Munitions Factory in Essen.

By W. J. L. KIEHL.

(Correspondent of the Chicago News.) The Hague, Holland.—A Netherlands man who until four days ago was employed at Krupp's munition works in Essen, Germany, makes the startling disclosure that some 4,000 Hollanders are working at Essen in the munition and war material factories. Most of these men get there through the machinations of what this "escaped" Hollander calls "Seelenerkaefer"—Cohen & Ossendegner of Rotterdam, who seem to act as agents for supplying Germany with greatly needed labor. Eighty or ninety men a day generally find their way across the border by means of their agents, lured by the prospect of very high wages and good food. What they find in reality and how next to impossible it is made for them to return to their own country is thus told in the Hollander's words:

No Return Pass Given. "When this firm of agents secured my services they did not mention war work," he said. "I was given to understand that field labor and trade work was required. Also I was promised that I could return any Saturday to Holland to stay through Sunday. The promised wages were high and food was said to be plentiful. I accepted, my pass was ready in a few moments, but I did not know for my return to Holland had been omitted, as they always are in the passes given by these agents, no doubt because they know perfectly well that after a week in Germany no single Hollander would ever think of returning there after his week-end in Holland.

"Soon after my entrance upon German soil at Elten, where I found several compatriots like myself, we were met by an agent from an 'arbeits bureau,' who secured our services for shellmaking at Krupp's by telling us that food was good there and wages very high. He said that in other branches of labor food was but indifferent and the wages nothing like Krupp's, so we men went to Essen. How good the food was there you can judge of by the fact that my weight was reduced by 24 pounds while there. "For breakfast we received two slices of bread without any butter or fat whatever. For dinner potato soup that left us hungry an hour after eating. Then in the evening again two slices of bread like at breakfast.

GIVES HUSBAND AND 3 SONS FOR COUNTRY

Three, Wyo.—A husband and three sons for Uncle Sam's liberty forces is the contribution of Mrs. John M. Bennett, of this town. With all the male members of her family preparing in various training camps for the fight for democracy and humanity, Mrs. Bennett and her two young daughters spend a great deal of their leisure doing Red Cross work.

CREWS CRAZED BY SUFFERING

London.—Much has been written about the hardships endured by the crews of vessels sunk by German submarines. Here are some particulars dealing with the plucky deeds performed by officers and men belonging to all branches of the sea services, naval and mercantile.

The first case is that of a passenger steamer which had been torpedoed on a Monday, without warning, as usual, in the Atlantic, 320 miles from land. The chief officer took charge of No. 2 lifeboat, which had on board 31 persons, including two women and a baby four months old.

Bad weather prevailed all that day and throughout the night, increasing the plight of the miserable people. Provisions, too, were scarce, but what existed was taken charge of by the chief officer, who doled out half a dipper (half-pint) of water to each person night and morning.

They had been barely twenty-four hours in the boat when the horrors of

If the Hollander felt too ill or feeble to work the Germans simply took away his bed from under him to make him get up. Oh, yes, there is a doctor, but he always diagnoses the same. 'You can work—if you don't work you won't eat'—'nicht arbeiten—nieth essen,' as we used to put it. "The laborers are housed by the 500 together in barracks, which are but insufficiently warmed and imperfectly cleaned. Typhus claims many victims. In the barracks where I was housed I found four men lying dead of typhus beside my crib one morning. After a few days of this sort of thing it is not to be wondered at that many Hollanders try in every way to get back to their country, although the vises on their passes are lacking.

"If they are captured they are thrown into prison for a fortnight on bread and water. If they survive they are then drafted back to Krupp's, and set to work again. Production is pushed to the utmost. Numbers of soldiers are employed as a change from

stimulate the energy of the people are eagerly promulgated, such as those of enormous submarines of dreadnaught type, of guns that can shoot 50 kilometers that are soon to be used against the allied armies."

BIRDS EAT BOLL WEEVILS

Yet There is No Legal Protection for Insect Destroyers in the State of Georgia.

Savannah, Ga.—When Robert Cannon found the crop of a quail that he had killed loaded with boll weevils he immediately conferred with county authorities to ascertain if he could keep hunters off his land, which is not fenced. He was much disappointed when informed that he could not do so.

On farms in this part of the country, where the quail and other insect-destroying birds have been protected, the boll weevil is seldom seen, while on adjoining farms, where the public is permitted to hunt, cotton crops have been practically devastated.

A concerted movement is on foot among the farmers to conserve the quail. The matter will in all probability be brought to the attention of the legislature.

GETTING MAIL IN THE TRENCHES



French soldiers in the trenches made happy by letters from the loved ones at home.

the front, and these men are so afraid of being again sent to the front that they would rather work themselves to death at Krupp's.

Where Deported Belgians Work. "Deported Belgians and French prisoners of war also work at Krupp's. Discipline is strictly enforced, and any utterances of anti-German views are at once punished.

"I got the impression that Germany dung itself like mad into munition work as its last card. But raw material is getting scarce, especially copper. In Essen all copper faucets and the like had already been replaced by iron and tin. The general idea in Germany is that the war can be prolonged at the utmost for another half year, so they are employing their last forces for a supreme effort.

"Every evening at Krupp's alarms is made—'Flieger Gemeldet' [airplanes reported]. All lights are then extinguished. This is done so that we should not know when flyers really came to bombard the factories. No one is allowed to talk of the damage done by allied bombs, and the newspapers are enjoined to keep silence on these matters. Still, I can say that some damage has been done, although I cannot say how much nor exactly where. On the other hand, stories likely to

CONVICTS KEEP THEIR WORD

Warden Liberates 40 of Them for Holiday, and All Return to the Prison.

Rahway, N. J.—Warden Frank Moore of the state reformatory experimented during the holiday in permitting prisoners, after receiving their word of honor to return, to spend Christmas at home.

He liberated 40 of them and they all returned within the agreed time. "Barry the Buster," who is clever at jail deliveries, was one of the forty. Another was a young man who took a large turkey home to his mother.

His friends bade him good-by as he left Christmas night, believing his story of having business elsewhere. They did not know.

Women Conductors Quit.

New York.—The success of the experiment by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit company of hiring women conductors is seriously threatened. Three of the first ten women employed have resigned. Two resigned because of sickness and the third said the work interfered with the care of her five children.

woodwork, hoping to gather up the raindrops

Then they broke up the water keg, and licked the inside, which they found saturated with moisture, and delicious. At 3 p. m. on Monday land was sighted, but it was a long way off, and by the time they drew near darkness and a heavy northerly swell made a landing impossible. They lay to, and during a squall their mast carried away at the heel, but that did not matter much, for it acted as a sea anchor.

At daylight on Tuesday they were sighted by a couple of fishing boats, which towed them into port. The baby lived for some time after being landed. The linen keeper died as he was being lifted from the boat. Two of the crew refused to leave the boat, having gone mad. A trimmer died from gangrene two weeks later.

The chief officer remarked: "I would like to testify to the excellent behavior of the boat's crew throughout our period of eight days' hardship and exposure."

A New York hotel has a roof garden for the dogs belonging to guests.

merchandise and take Liberty bonds in payment for it.

McAdoo, in a statement given out through the federal reserve banks, "I am sure that they have failed to consider the effect which the acceptance of their offers have upon the situation. We are making the strongest effort to have these government bonds purchased for permanent investment by the people at large, to be paid for out of the past and future savings of those who buy them. Purchases thus made not only result in providing funds for the uses of the government, but they also effect a conservation of labor and material.

"When the bonds are exchanged for merchandise, the primary object of their sale is defeated, discouraging thrift and increasing expenditure. In addition to this, such bonds, when taken in exchange for merchandise, sold in most cases be immediately sold in the open market. This naturally tends to depress the market price of the issue and makes it less easy to sell future issues at the same rate."

Secretary McAdoo believes that the merchants of the country, upon a more careful consideration of the subject, will discontinue their efforts to sell

merchandise and take Liberty bonds in payment for it.

FIND GUINEA EGGS IN SNAKE

Setting Hen Finishes the Job by Hatching Out Seven Little Guineas.

Moultrie, Ga.—Seven young guineas, all christened "Jonah," because they spent part of their prenatal period in the stomach of a reptile without harm to themselves or the snake, until the latter was unhappily cut open, are the proud possession of L. D. Alford of Colquitt county.

While picking cotton early this fall, Mr. Alford noticed a snake lying in a cotton row in a torpid state with its body considerably swollen. Killing the snake and cutting it open, Alford found seven guinea eggs inside of it, which had recently been stolen from the nest of a setting hen. Placing the eggs under a setting hen in his nearby barn, Mr. Alford was overjoyed a few days later to find seven little guineas hatched out and happy.

TIME WHEN LIFE IS SWEET

Few Joys That May Be Compared to the Joy of the Vagabond on the Trail.

In there any joy in life like the joy of the trail? Sun and wind and rain and whirling spaces of empty time and days that trip off like a zephyr and ever the magical road, mysteriously breaking on and on! Sometimes the vagabond in Mongolia walks in the wake of the curts, through the white

dust of the trail. Or the curts rumble on while he stoops to a miniature goldenrod or a splendid heliospur. The plain is studded with flowers—gentian, Canterbury bells, thornless thistle, a tall, delicately-fringed daisy, a scented pink morning-glory, an inflated, mottled moon flower and a hundred others. But most vivid of all, the electric-blue larkspur. Sometimes the vagabond rides by the side of the sleepy Chinese carter, ready to recall him when the donkey, seeking a nip of the short grass, strays too far from the

road; sometimes he sits silently rapt in the mystery of the horizon. Sometimes—a true vagabond—he lies on his back in the car, only dreamily conscious of the rustled clouds shaping and re-shaping themselves. It seems to him then that he peers into the mystical vision of life itself, and in those moments he is in some way released from the cell of the individual and mysteriously merged in the universe—in some way linked with the earth and the multitudes of her chil-

dren who have entered again earth's caverns.—Exchange.