

# New York Aviator Fast Becoming an Ace

## Christopher W. Ford Tells Graphically About Bringing Down Three Hun Machines

Christopher W. Ford of 583 Riverside Drive, New York, a Lieutenant in the Lafayette Escadrille, fast is approaching the "ace" class of American aviators. On March 10 he brought down a two seated Hun machine, but haze prevented official credit; on March 27 he brought down another, got full credit and the Croix de Guerre, and on May 21 he brought down an Albatross. His own story of the aerial fights written to George A. Lindsay of the Manhattan Navigation Company, where Lieut. Ford formerly was auditor, is a graphic first hand tale of air battling.

103d Aero Pursuit Squadron  
(Escadrille Lafayette),  
A. E. F., France.  
May 11, 1918.

I WANT to thank you a thousand times for your generous offer to our fund which went to the first boy to bring down a Hun; this reward went to Capt. Collins, who was since killed, as he was the first boy to bring down a Hun after the fund was started. Several of the other boys have brought down Huns since then, but the fund idea was never renewed.

We have one boy here named Lieut. Paul F. Baer, who has brought down five Huns inside of six weeks, a most wonderful record. Capt. Hall (who is now missing) got another, and I am proud to say that I got one on March 27, and have been decorated with the Croix de Guerre. Capt. Biddle also got another, not such a bad record, what do you think? All told since our escadrille has been formed we have brought down a total of about seventy enemy planes and, strange to say, not one of them fell inside our lines; the nearest we have come to having one fall in our lines is one which was shot down and fell to pieces before hitting the ground; one wing fell in our first line trench.



LIEUT. C. W. FORD.

This shows you that we have to do all of the fighting inside their lines, as they seldom come over on our side. I suppose you can readily understand that this makes it rather hard to get souvenirs of an enemy plane, although I promise you that if I ever get one inside our lines I will send you one of the Black Crosses.

I suppose you want to know how I got my Hun, so here goes. I was flying with Capt. Hall and Major Thaw, and we saw a patrol of seven or eight Huns, five of them two seaters, the others small fighting machines. We were above them and attacked. Major Thaw's gun was stuck, so he couldn't do anything. Capt. Hall

## Flying With the Lafayette Escadrille, One Aerial Adventure After Another Follows

got one of the small machines and I got a two seater. The scrap lasted for about twenty-five minutes and was observed by the balloons, artillery and infantry, so we did not have any trouble getting official confirmation.

We have changed sectors again and are now up on the North Channel ports region. When flying at 1,000 meters I can see England, Belgium, Holland, Germany, and, of course, France. This is the most active sector in the front and the biggest battle of the war is now being waged and we wouldn't have missed it for anything. We were bombed last night, but while the bombs came pretty close, none of them landed directly in our field. However, they made an awful racket and we all got into the trenches for protection.

On March 10 Capt. Collins and myself brought down a Boche two seated machine, but on account of a heavy mist and bad visibility we did not get it confirmed and were not credited with it, although I am sure we got him, as smoke was pouring out of the machine and it was diving vertically to the ground.

Have attempted to bring down a Hun observation balloon on two different occasions, but without success. However, just wait and see; I am going to get it the next time. It's a regular picnic going after them, as they are placed about eight to ten kilometers behind the Boche lines. The sky was just black with shrapnel and from the way the luminous bullets were coming up at us from all directions you would have thought they had all the machine guns in the front turned on us. However, if we did not get the balloon, we made the observer jump out and forced them to haul the balloon down, besides wasting a lot of ammunition, and I guess they had a nice job patching up the bullet holes afterward.

## A Day's Yachting With Sick Soldiers

(Continued from Preceding Page.)

who said, "Gee, if they'd offer me my discharge I bet I'd have this uniform off inside of twenty-four hours." But neither had the maimed sergeant been able to bring himself round to wanting non-combatant service. That would come later, perhaps. Meanwhile the youngster was low in his mind. He saw nothing whatever ahead of him.

"If I take my discharge I'll have the right to wear my uniform thirty days," he said. "I certainly will do that!"

Before enlistment he had been an automobile salesman. He had liked the work. It didn't look good to him now. Explaining to him that non-combatants are as necessary as fighting men, that the Cause holds work enough and glory enough and to spare for everybody, that a likely young man in the automobile business will have brighter prospects than ever after the war, that the great new commercial airplane business and its limitless possibilities will probably be an outgrowth of the automobile business—explaining all this and much more was of no use to lift his trouble. But before the day was over he was dancing with the best of them.

Among the hundred were several other

cases much like his. It occurred to the Fourth Estate suddenly that all the man's sized sorrows of this war are not engendered at the front; that when the roll of the sufferers for Liberty is called these fellows who wanted the worst way to go and were knocked out and disappointed at the last minute would deserve a place on it.

Last summer Dr. John A. Harriss, who among other things is one of the special deputy commissioners handling the Police Reserve, equipped the Surf with wards and an operating room, and she became a naval hospital ship auxiliary to the Solace. For this season he has placed her at the disposal of the Mayor's Committee and weekly or oftener she will take invalided soldiers on such outings as the one described.

Mrs. Daniel C. Reed, whose husband is the donor of General Hospital One, headed the canteen unit that did so much to make the trip successful. She was assisted by Mrs. Alfred J. Johnson and other members of the Mayor's Committee of Women. Henry MacDonald, director-general of the executive committee, represented the Mayor's Committee on National Defence as host.

The members of the Motor Corps of America, who brought the men to the pier at 9 and took them back to the hospital at 6, were under the personal command of Major Helen Bastedo.

## Polish Soldiers Are Making Excellent Fighters

NAPOLEON once said of the Polish army, "It is the best." Almost since the beginning of the war it has been the ambition of the Poles again to distinguish themselves in the field, regain their ancient prestige and win from the world the admission that their services entitle their nation to autonomy and independence.

Russia for political reasons discouraged the idea of a distinctive Polish army both under the rule of the Czar and under Kerensky. Of course under the Bolsheviks the agitation ended. So the Poles turned to France, which bade them welcome and in an order dated June 4, 1917,

decreed the creation of a distinct Polish legion.

Now the legion, which has grown so fast that it is really an army, is about to take its place on the battle line, having been mobilized in a great camp named Sille-le-Guillaume near Le Mans. The uniform is the same as the French, with the exception of a distinctive headdress, the "czapka." The officers are Frenchmen and Poles who have served in France.

It will be news to most Americans that since the early days of January large detachments of well drilled Poles have been arriving in France from the United States. They are the regiments which Ignace Paderewski was tireless and devoted in recruiting.

## Making Useless Plants Valuable

THE soapweed, or Spanish bayonet, flourishes in western Kansas, southern Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Until a few years ago it was regarded simply as a troublesome weed. Farmer and ranch owner took great pains to exterminate it on account of its habit of spreading over large areas and killing off other vegetation.

But men of science discovered that what was despised as a weed is really a plant having market value as a raw material for soap. The discovery was due to the fact that for a long time Indian and Mexican women have used a decoction of soapweed for toilet purposes, particularly for washing the hair.

It is especially suited for this purpose because it is wholly free from alkali. Soap manufacturers have found it excellent for toilet soaps and soaps intended for washing woollens.

Ordinarily one man can harvest a ton of soapweed in a day. After cutting the plants are allowed to dry for two or three months, and then are baled up in the ordinary broom corn baling machine.

As a result of inquiries from the United States the feasibility of cultivating black mint in this country for the production of menthol crystals and oil is the subject of a special report by Vice-Consul E. R. Dickover of Kobe, Japan.

Several attempts to import black mint plants have been frustrated by the long journey across the Pacific, during which the plants have died. Once arrangements were made with a steamer purser to care for the plants and they arrived in good condition, but were killed by disinfection in entering the country. The consulate now is attempting to obtain mint seeds, a difficult task, since the plant is cultivated almost entirely from slips.

Two widely different climatic areas are devoted to the cultivation of mint in Japan corresponding to the northern Pacific coast of the United States and to Virginia and North Carolina. About 92 per cent. of the Japanese mint is grown on the Hokkaido Island, where the

average winter temperature is 22 degrees and the summer temperature 60 degrees, with rainfall of thirty-eight inches. The remaining 8 per cent. of the Japanese crop is grown on Nippon, where the average temperatures are 38 and 5 degrees and the rainfall 42.5 inches.

The mint plant requires a light, well drained soil. The roots are planted at the end of November. The plant attains full growth during the summer months and is cut in late July, during August and in early September.

A physician once exclaimed: "Who but an old Yankee woman would ever have invented a rhubarb pie?" His voice and manner, no less than his language, implied a contemptuous mental association of acid herbs with acid temperaments. "Tinet. Rhu." he had so often prescribed that its purely medicinal suggestion was overpowering. Possibly he had experienced the pangs and penalties of rhubarb pie in excess.

Yet rhubarb pie taken in moderation is as wholesome as it is delicious. Yankee housekeepers of to-day may as fairly resent the aspersion cast upon their desserts as that upon their digestions.

The pieplant has a recorded history of over four centuries. It was first cultivated in the white walled gardens of Morocco and Algiers, amid fruits and flowers and fountains and was brought thence by the Moors to Spain.

Not until 200 years later did rhubarb really become known to English gardens, whence in due time it was brought to those of America to be employed first as a tincture, then as a sauce, and to attain a final apotheosis in pie.

Rhubarb, apart from its usefulness, has values for its beauty. The giant Chinese variety, with its enormous leaves, is often employed by landscape gardeners to produce bold sub-tropical effects; nor do they always disdain the charms of the more modest pieplant itself, of which the tall, graceful spikes of white flowers and large leaves, deeply veined and stained, are as certainly handsome as the succulent stalks are palatable.