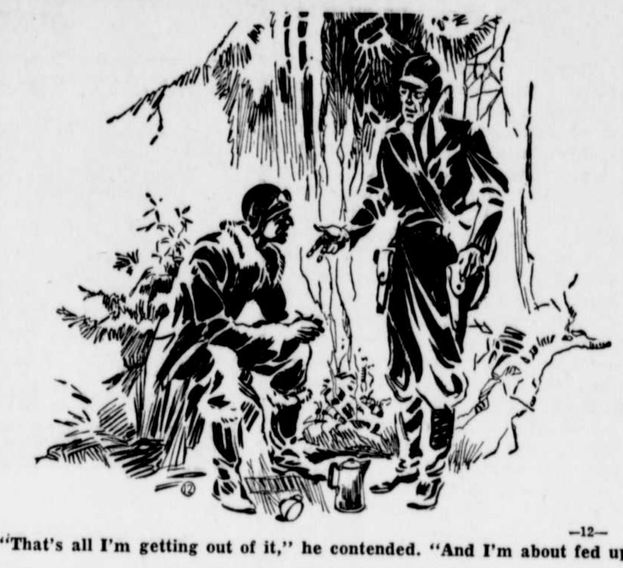
GHOST PLANE

By ARTHUR STRINGER

W.N.U. SERVICE

THE STORY SO FAR: To keep Norland Airways in business Alan Slade agrees to fly a so-called scientist named Frayne and his assistant, Karnell, to the Anawotto river in search of the trumpeter swan. With the proceeds his partner, Cruger, has bought a new plane, a Lockheed, which is stolen. When Slade returns from the Anawotto he starts out, with only two clues, to recover the plane. The first clue is the "devil bird" which the blind eskimo, Umanak, hears. Dr. Morlock, the "flying Padre," has operated on Umanak's eyes in the hope of restoring his sight. If the operation is successful Umanak will be able to help Slade. The second clue is Slade's hunch that the lost plane and the swan-hunter are somehow connected. But when he flies back to where he left Frayne he finds him apparently just hunting swans. There is no sign of the plane. But on the way home he learns that his gas cache at the cabin of Zeke and Minty, two old prospectors, has been robbed. He tells Cruger of a third clue, the disappearance of a flyer named Slim Tumstead, who knows about both the Lockheed and Frayne's expedition. Zeke and Minty discover prowlers near their camp and set out to investigate. Now Slade is talking to Lynn Morlock, the Padre's daughter.

Now continue with the story.



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"That's all I'm getting out of it," he contended. "And I'm about fed up."

CHAPTER XII

"What's wrong?" Lynn asked, startled by that newer note where fearlessness had always reigned.

"Cruger and I may go bust. We haven't been able to spot our stolen Lockheed."

Lynn's brow furrowed with thought.

"But who could get away with a thing like that?" she asked. "Even in country like this?"

Instead of answering that question, Slade asked one of his own.

"Have you ever stopped to ask what became of your friend Slim Tumstead, the flyer you fixed up after that bar-room fight?"

Lynn's frown deepened.

"I'd scarcely call him a friend," she objected. "He needed help, and I gave it to him."

"But they'd taken Tumstead's ticket away, remember. He's lawless and reckless. And he was at the end of his rope."

"And is probably drowning his sorrows in some McMurray gin mill," suggested the girl.

"On the contrary," said Slade, "he dropped out of sight there, without leaving a trace."

"But what would he do with a plane?"

"That's what I want to figure out," affirmed Slade. "It couldn't be just cheap-john smuggling. And it couldn't be high-grading. Not, at least, unless that man of science who calls himself Frayne is fooling us. Our birdman, of course, might be putting on an act."

"But mining and trapping is all anyone could do in country like that. He wouldn't be smuggling out marten and fox."

"It's not furs, naturally," conceded Slade. "But why is a plane flying between Echo Harbor and the Anawotto? And where did that plane come from? And who's flying it?"

"You're as bad as Umanak," Lynn observed as they stepped into the rough-boarded surgery. "That's what he keeps asking."

But Umanak surprised them by an abrupt movement of his bandaged head.

"Kabluna come back," he quietly announced.

That, Lynn knew, meant the Flying Padre. And her quick cross to the door confirmed Umanak's announcement.

"It's Father," said the girl, with her eyes on the blur of blue that grew bigger as she watched.

He could hear her cry of "Dad!" as she ran light-footed down the talus slope.

The Flying Padre's greeting to Slade was cordial but preoccupied.

"You're just in time, Alan," Lynn's father asserted, "to see whether I'm still a surgeon or not. We're going to unsheath our old friend Umanak."

Slade tried to be casual as they darkened the little surgery and examined the patient. But he was, he felt, the most excited of the three.

The Flying Padre, after a study of his patient's face, reached to the shelf for a candle, which he lighted.

"You see now?" he questioned as he held the small flame well above his head.

"Me see," said Umanak.

"High or low?"

"High up," answered Umanak.

The Flying Padre blew out the candle.

"And now?" he asked.

Slade could feel Lynn's fingers tighten on his arm.

"Me no see," was the old Eskimo's answer. "Light gone."

Slade could hear Morlock's sigh of relief as he stepped back and stood straighter.

"Me go find devil-bird now!" cried Umanak.

"That happens to be my job," said Slade.

"What's this talk about a devil-bird?" asked the Flying Padre, looking up from his instrument bag.

Slade explained about the plane that had been seen between Echo Harbor and the Anawotto. But the man of medicine was not impressed.

"I see planes," he observed, "in some mighty unexpected places."

The Flying Padre's gaze rested on the younger man's face.

"That's mean country to meander about in," he said.

"I've been over it," answered the man with the Viking eyes. "That's where I took those two swan-hunters."

"Wait a minute," cried the Flying Padre, arrested by a sudden thought. "What was the nationality of those swan-hunters?"

"It's hard to say," Slade explained. "But a good deal of their equipment was German. They were certainly foreigners."

"German?" meditated the older man. "That doesn't seem to fit in."

"Fit in with what?" asked the flyer.

"With what's been happening along the coast here. Short-wave sets have been picking up messages from time to time in Russian. A good part of it, they tell me, is in code that can't be made out."

"It might be a whaler," ventured Lynn, "between here and Echo Harbor."

"Then me go Echo Harbor," was the unexpected cry from Umanak, "and find out."

But Lynn disregarded that cry.

"Don't you remember, Dad, how we kept picking up stuff like that when the Russians made their transpolar flight three years ago?"

"Yes, I remember," said the Flying Padre. "But where are these people sending from? And what would a Russian be doing in this back yard of Nowhere today?"

"That," said Slade as he glanced down the talus slope toward the Snow-Ball Baby that floated in the shallows, "is what I'm going to find out."

A gold-green light lay over the evening world as Slade left Iviuk Inlet behind him. He was too close to the land of the midnight sun to hope for much darkness, even after two hours of heading southward. But, since his one wish was to remain unseen, he flew low over the scattered waterways and ridges, his floats all but brushing the meager spruce tops as he advanced on the thinning timber line. He flew with his lights out, feeling his way along by the stars.

The thought of flying dark over a steadily darkening terrain gave him the feeling of being singularly alone in a world that had fallen asleep. He wondered if, some day, camps and town-sites would mark that world of emptiness. And as though in answer to that unuttered question he observed the darkness punctuated by an unmistakable sign of life. Up from the empty world ahead of him he saw a signal rocket flare and die away again. Then out of the gloom his eye caught the repeated winking of a flashlight.

He watched those flashes closely, doing his best to read them. But they meant nothing to him beyond the fact that they were spelling out a message, and a message obviously not intended for him.

Slade made a quick decision. He banked and turned, still keeping uncomfortably close to the ridge crests, skimming over the broken woodland like a swallow skimming over ruffled water. He quartered off at right angles to his earlier course, idling on until he felt certain he was beyond the vision of the flashlight signaler. Then he doubled back until he found open water enough to make sure of a landing.

All was quiet along the starlit lake surface that took up his headway. He let his plane drift in closer to the shadowy shoreline. Then, making sure that all was still silence, he poled his ship patiently along the shallows. He worked his way westward, toward the source of the rocket flare, until he came to a landing spot that suited his purpose. There he moored his plane against the shelter of a sparsely timbered bluff and took up his rifle.

For several minutes, after mounting the near-by ridge, he stood silent and watchful. When no sign of life came to him he began picking his way carefully over the broken terrain toward the quarter from which the flashlight signals had first shown themselves. His caution became greater as he noticed where timber had been cut along the ridges that grew bolder as he advanced. He even observed where a hillside had been cleared and stripped. The scattered dikes and hollows clearly showed how a prospector had been busy there with pick and shovel.

Slade crouched low in one of these hollows and struck a match, wondering if the light would show up a telltale vein of gold-bearing quartz. But all he saw was dark and pitch-like rock.

He went on up the slope, puzzled by the repeated signs of an enterprise that seemed without meaning or purpose. Then he stopped short, arrested by a movement above him.

In the vague light he could see a man, a huge-bodied man stripped to the waist, moving along the ridge crest. Balanced on his shoulders he carried what had every appearance of an ore bag, an ore bag so heavy that the big body bent forward under its weight. He seemed to be following a path that led into the scrub timber ending abruptly in the shimmer of lake water.

Slade, watching from the shadows, saw that figure return empty-handed along the hilltop trail. Then he saw it once more forge lakeward, once more burdened with the weight of its ore bag. He could not be sure, but something about that great body with its gorilla-like arms made him think of Karnell. And if it was Karnell, Slade felt, the man who called himself Frayne would be somewhere in the neighborhood.

That thought prompted the watcher to push farther up the slope, seeking the cover of the underbrush as he went. He crept on until he crossed a well-trodden trail and again entered the underbrush that furred the declining hill slope. From there he could see a strange-looking structure of spruce boles partly obstructing the view of the lake water between the shouldering hills. In the rocky cup behind the odd-looking spruce canopy he saw a small tent, and beside this tent he caught sight of a small campfire carefully ceilinged by a tarpaulin on four stakes.

But what held his attention was a figure squatting beside that fire, a figure in a leather flying jacket. He could not make out the man's face. But he could see him replace a coffeepot on the coals and drink from a granite cup, which he tossed aside when he had emptied it. Then the man by the fire looked up as a second man spoke to him, apparently from inside the tent.

"Not on your life," cried the man beside the fire. "I'll be damned if you'll get me to do any navvy work."

What was said in response to that Slade could not hear.

"I sweat enough unloading the damned stuff," contended the man in the flyer's jacket.

A figure emerged from between the tent-flaps and stood looking down at the fireside lounger.

"You would sweat less, my friend," the newcomer said with steely-voiced precision, "if you restricted your use of alcohol."

The other's laugh was not pleasant.

"That's all I'm getting out of it," he contended. "And I'm about fed up with living like a timber wolf."

"But that plane must be loaded, a ton a trip," retorted his companion. "And Karnell can do only so much."

Slade knew then that his guess had not been wide of the mark. The huge-bodied man who carried the ore bags was indeed Karnell. And the indignant figure standing above the man who still squatted beside the campfire was Frayne. When, a moment later, the fireside squatter rose to his feet and stood with his face to the light, Slade saw that it was Tumstead.

"Your bullhead can do the loading," Tumstead was saying. "I'm a flyer."

"Who's drinking too much to keep a clear head," amended Frayne.

"What I drink," retorted the other, "is my own affair. I've carried your cargoes and kept this crate afloat, haven't I? And now that an outsider or two is edging in on your little enterprise I'd rather like to know where I get off when the blow-up comes."

"There will be no blow-up, as you term it," was the cold-noted response. "And there will be no edging in on this enterprise."

"But there's a snooper or two around this camp, and you know it. And when they stumble over what you're after I'm left out on a limb."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Household News

by Lynn Chambers

Prepare for Winter With Delicious Canned Fruit
(See Recipes Below.)

Fruit Canning

Plan now to put up those fruits from the market or your victory garden while you can still capture their garden-freshness and summer sweetness. This year's canning will require more careful planning than ever before, for waste in the fruit itself, canning jars, rubbers or sugar is highly undesirable.

Chart your plans before embarking on the canning program. Consider first how much sugar you will have available, with the five pounds per person allotment for people who are canning. Plan this amount so it will do for the jams, jellies, preserves, and sugar syrups for fruit canning.

If possible, can in the early morning hours when you are rested and your mind free from too many other thoughts. You will then be able to follow recipes more carefully, to work with more energy and spirit. The day before you will, if you are the bright and alert homemaker, have gathered together your jars, washed them, bought necessary supplies of rubbers and covers and other equipment.

Bring out the preserving kettles and pressure cookers, too. See that they are well scoured, that you have the racks, petcocks, pressure gauge, and steam-tight cover on the pressure cooker well in order.

A hot water bath is best for processing fruits because they are acid. They can safely at high temperatures, and texture, flavor and color are best. Oven canning is good also. For the hot water bath, use a large wash boiler or vessel with tight fitting cover. Fit this with a rack at least ½ inch from the bottom. Fill the rack with enough water to cover jars at least one inch over the top. Count the processing time as soon as water surrounding the jars begins to boil. There should be free circulation of water around jars.

For oven canning, set the temperature at 250 degrees. Set jars on a rack in the cold oven, however. Start counting time when oven is switched or turned on. Do not allow the temperature ever to exceed 250 degrees as this causes liquid to boil away and evaporate.

In placing your jars in the oven, allow for free circulation of heat between them. Do not allow the jars to touch each other, as this will often cause breakage, and do not allow them to come in contact with the sides of the oven.

If liquid evaporates during the processing in the oven, do not fill the jars after you take them out. Some evaporation does not affect successful canning of the fruit.

The Sugar Question.

Fruit may be canned successfully without sugar or sugar syrup with water or fruit juice used in its place. Sugar, however, does mellow and ripen the fruit, giving it a better flavor. You might try making your fruit syrups for fruit canning less sweet than usual if you are short on sugar.

Honey may be used in place of sugar in making the sweet syrup, but the fruit will be somewhat more dark than if sugar is used and the fruit flavor will be intensified. Use honey for each cup of sugar in the substitution.

Lynn Says:

How many jars are you putting up of the fruits? Here's a guide to help you pick out jars:

Cherries: 9 baskets yield 2 pints pitted, 7 pints, if whole.

Peaches: 2¼ pounds (small basket) yields 1 quart.

Plums: 1 14-pound basket yields 25 pints.

Strawberries: 1 crate yields 26 pints, if canned whole; 31 (7½-ounce) glasses of jam.

THIS WEEK'S MENU

Smothered Steak With Onions
Green Beans Scalloped Potatoes
Tomato-Lettuce Salad
Bran Muffins
Whipped Fruit Gelatin
Beverage

White corn syrup is another acceptable substitute, but since it is less sweet than sugar, substitute 1½ cups of corn syrup for 1 cup of sugar.

Syrups to Use.

Thin syrups (No. 1) are used for small, soft fruits such as cherries and berries. Make the syrup by using three parts of water to one part of sugar.

Medium syrup (No. 2) does best by sour berries, acid fruits as cherries and rhubarb, and peaches. Boil two parts of water with one part of sugar.

Heavy syrup (No. 3) is prescribed for the large, sour fruits in which you desire extra sweetness. Measure one part water to one part sugar and bring to a boil.

Apples or Pears.
(Hot Pack)

Wash, pare, core uniform-sized apples and cut to desired sizes. (If fruit is to stand long enough to discolor, drop into water which has been slightly salted, until ready to use.) Drain from brine. Boil 3 to 5 minutes in a medium syrup and pack into clean jars, filling with syrup to ½ inch of the top. Put on cap, screw band tight, process in hot water bath 25 minutes, or in the oven (at 250 degrees) 75 minutes. If using a pressure cooker, process at 5 pounds for 10 minutes.

Apples or Pears.
(Open Kettle)

Select uniform fruit, wash, pare and core. Cut into halves or slices. Drop into boiling No. 1 syrup, and boil for 20 minutes. Pack into clean, hot, sterilized jars and seal tight.

Peaches.
(Open Kettle)

Select firm, ripe peaches. Peel or dip peaches in hot water, then in cold and slip off peel. Leave whole or cut in halves or slices. Boil 20 minutes in No. 2 or 3 syrup, and pack in clean, hot, sterilized jars. Seal tightly.

Peaches.
(Hot Pack)

Prepare as above, removing peel and pits. Precook for 3 minutes, then pack into clean jars, add syrup to within ½ inch of the top. Put on top, screw on firmly, and process in a hot water bath for 20 minutes, or in the pressure cooker for 10 minutes at 5 pounds, or in the oven (250 degrees) for 68 minutes.

Plums.
(Hot Pack)

Use the same method and time as for peaches, except do not peel the fruit, merely prick the skins.

Berries.
(Cold Pack)
(Except strawberries and cranberries)

Wash, stem and pack berries. Pack into clean jars and add No. 2 or 3 syrup. Put on cap, screw tightly. Process in hot water bath 20 minutes or in pressure cooker 8 minutes at 5 pounds or in the oven at 250 degrees for 68 minutes.

Cherries.
(Cold Pack)

Wash, stem and pit cherries, if desired. Pack into well cleaned jars, fill with No. 2 or 3 syrup depending on the sweetness desired. Put on cap and fasten tightly. Process 20 minutes in a hot water bath, 10 minutes in the pressure cooker at 5 pounds, or 68 minutes in a 250-degree oven.

If the directions for the fruit you desire to can are not given here, or if you have any query on other canning problems, write to Miss Lynn Chambers, explaining your problem to her. Address your letters to her at Western Newspaper Union, 210 South Desplaines Street, Chicago, Illinois. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your reply.

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AROUND THE HOUSE

To keep fish from breaking when cooking, put the pieces in hot fat with skin side uppermost and allow them to brown before turning.

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When stewing dried fruits, the addition of a small amount of lemon rind will give a better flavor.

• • •

Ravel the thread from an old silk stocking and use it for catching and mending runners in other hose. It is stronger and less noticeable than darning thread.

• • •

To keep coat buttons from tearing out, sew a smaller button on the under side, running the thread through both.

• • •

If you cannot get candleholders for the birthday cake, decorate top with marshmallows and stick a candle into each one.

• • •

Put your kitchen table on casters. You then can roll it where you want it and save yourself many steps.

• • •

Shake your turkish towels vigorously before hanging up to dry. This removes wrinkles and raises the nap.

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