GHOST PLANE

By ARTHUR STRINGER

W.N.U. SERVICE

THE STORY SO FAR: Because he and his partner, Cruger, need the money to keep Norland Airways in business, Alan Slade agrees to fly a "scientist" named Frayne and his partner, Karnell, to the Anawotto river in search of the trumpeter swan. With the proceeds Cruger buys a plane, a Lockheed, which is stolen. When he returns from the Anawotto Slade starts out to look for the plane. He has three clues, one of which appears to have lead up a blind alley. Slade thought the missing plane had some connection with Frayne, but when he returned to where he left the swan-hunter there was no trace of the plane, and Frayne appeared to be hunting swans. The second clue is the story of Umanak, the eskimo, about a "ghost" plane that is supposed to come from Echo Harbor. The third clue is Slade's hunch that if he finds a flyer named Slim Tumstead he will find the plane. Tumstead, who knows about the Lockheed and about Frayne, has disappeared. Now Slade, Umanak, and Slade's old prospector friends, Zeke and Minty, are all out looking for the plane. Slade has just learned that his hunch was sound. Tumstead is with Frayne, and they have a plane somewhere.

Now continue with the story.

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CHAPTER XIII

"On the contrary," retorted the older man, "you will sail away quite comfortably on the Kovalevka when she takes out her cargo. You will be carried safe and sound to Vladivostok, with money enough, remember, to give you three years of travel in Europe and all the vodka your heart may desire."

Tumstead seemed to be considering this.

"But why doesn't your Kovalevka show up?" he questioned.

"She will come," was the precise-noted answer, "when we are ready for her. Ice conditions have not been of the best. And we, too, have been a little slow in getting our shipment in shape."

"So damned slow," Tumstead retorted, "your stuff won't be any use to you. While you're combing the icicles out of your hair the war'll be over."

"Silence," commanded the steelier voice. "The men of my race are taught to do what they are commanded to do."

"And some of it," retorted the other, "I'd call uncommonly dirty work."

"It is not for you to question the nature of my work."

Tumstead's laugh was harsh.

"No, I'm merely a flyer," he acceded. "But I'm not the kind who can keep a ship going without gas."

It was the older man's turn to stand thoughtful.

"That is a problem," he finally said, "which we must in some way solve."

Tumstead's repeated laugh was edged with bitterness.

"I've gathered in everything that's lying round loose between here and the Pole," he protested. "And the next pinch may put us all in the dog-house."

"I think not," said the other. "And we have a problem more imminent."

"What problem?"

"Those snoopers which you spoke of. A means must be found to discourage them." The speaker's glance circled about in the uncertain light that surrounded him. "They may be closer than we imagine."

As Frayne disappeared within the tent Tumstead groped about for his fallen cup and reached once more for the coffeepot. Slade, watching him, backed quietly away through the underbrush. But his retreat was a brief one. He worked his way down the hollow between the hills and slowly ascended the opposing slope. Then, seeking what cover he could find, he circled back toward the lake front. He stopped, from time to time, to listen and look. But nothing, as he went, came between him and the object of his advance.

That objective was the shadowy tangle of spruce trees at the water's edge. He noticed, as he drew nearer, how a rough ramp of spruce logs had been built out from the hillside. It was so plainly a landing stage, to make easier the passing of heavy freight into a plane cabin, that no shock of surprise touched Slade when he peered under the matted treetops. For, standing there in the shadows, he saw the stolen Lockheed.

He climbed to the rough-timbered ramp and advanced to where two filled ore bags stood together at its outer edge. He stooped over one of the bags, intent on determining its contents.

He failed to see the bare-shouldered and burly figure that emerged from the tree shadows behind him and quietly reached for a spruce bole as long as the long bare arm that wielded it.

He failed to hear any movement as the newcomer crept forward, as silent as a shadow, and brought the spruce bole down on the stooping flyer's head.

Slade went down like a clouted rabbit.

Slade, as consciousness slowly returned to him, found it no easy matter to orient himself. His head throbbed and his body seemed cramped into quivering helplessness. Then the singing in his ears and the quivering of his frame merged into the throb and drone of a motor. He awakened to the fact that he was in a plane, and that plane was in flight.

He thought, at first, that his bodily helplessness was due to being so tightly wedged in between soiled ore bags and the pilot's seat. But it was due, he found after an effort or two to move, to the fact that both his hands and feet were tied.

Memory came back to him as he lay back trying to figure out the reason for all this. The final mists eddied away as he looked up and saw that the man at the controls was Tumstead. Slade made no effort to speak. Instead, he quietly tugged and twisted, in the hope of freeing himself. But his struggles were without result.

The plane's pilot, however, must have become conscious of them, for his smile was sardonic as he glanced back over a shrugging shoulder.

"Coming round?" he nonchalantly called out.

"What does this mean?" demanded Slade.

Tumstead flew on for a moment or two of silence.

"It means you're lucky to be alive," he finally announced. "That bullhead who knocked you out went back for his Luger. He was all set to give you the works."

Slade seemed to be giving thought to that statement.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked.

"That," retorted Tumstead, "is what I'm trying to figure out. The easiest way, of course, would be to drop you overboard. And that's where you'd go, all right, if we both weren't flyers."

"Then as one flyer to another," Slade asked, "why did you steal this plane?"

Tumstead's reply to that was a snort of laughter.

"That's my own affair," he said. "And you should have known better than nose in on it."

"You're flying for Frayne," said his prisoner.

"Can you suggest anything better?"

Slade considered that question.

"Yes," he answered, "I know something better."

"What?"

"To head back to Waterways with this Lockheed, while there's still a chance of saving your scalp."

Tumstead's laugh was hard and reckless.

"Not on your life," he proclaimed. "It's your scalp you need to worry about. And it's going to be some time before you get back to Waterways."

"Why do you say that?"

Tumstead's glance went over the terrain beneath his floats.

"Because, a little farther on, I'm going to drop you where you'll stay anchored for a considerable stretch of time," he said.

Slade's response to that was to struggle against the cords constricting his wrists and ankles. But those struggles, he still found, were useless.

"Are we over the Anawotto?" questioned Slade, embittered by the thought of his helplessness.

"We are," answered Tumstead. "And it's sure empty country."

Slade's trained ear told him, a minute later, that they were dropping lower. But from where he lay he could see nothing of the outside world. He concluded, from the length of time that Tumstead taxied along the surface, that the waterway on which they had landed was by no means a small one. He could hear the grating of the pontoons on a gravel bar.

"All out," cried Tumstead.

He half-swung and half-tossed his prisoner ashore, where with a still deeper sense of helplessness Slade tumbled full length along the pebbled slope. There, after taking a shuddering breath or two, he writhed and twisted about until he was able to fight his way back to a sitting posture.

"So you're going to leave me here?" he said.

"I am," said Tumstead. "And I can't waste time on talk."

"But why are you doing this?" persisted Slade.

"Because you got too ambitious."

Slade watched the plane being warped around in the shallows. A surge of desolation swept over him as he glanced about at the ice-scored and barren-ridged island surrounded by its lonely reaches of open water. That island, he saw, had little to offer him. Any scrub timber that grew between its ridges, he realized, would be too small for the making of a raft. And even with a raft to deliver him from that watery prison, he further realized as he stared about at the distant blue-hazed horizon, he would face a wilderness quite empty of life.

"I won't get away," he said, "and you know it."

Tumstead's laugh was defensively gruff.

"Let's hope for the best," he said as he turned back to his cabin. He emerged, a moment later, with a sheath-knife in an old and battered holster. But as the other man unsheathed the knife Slade saw that the blade was keen-edged and long. His eye remained on Tumstead as he stepped closer, the knife in his hand. The quick look of apprehension that came from his captive caused Tumstead's dark face to crease with a smile.

"I'm not that yellow," the latter announced as he stooped and cut the cords that bound Slade's wrists together. He was about to do the same with the cords that bound the ankles. But on second thought he drew back and replaced the knife in its sheath. This, after a moment's hesitation, he tossed a few paces farther up the shore slope, discreetly out of reach. Then as Slade sat trying to work life back into his benumbed hands the older man coolly explored the other's pockets. From them he extracted a lighter and a package of cigarettes.

A cynic smile played about his lips as he touched the little flame to a cigarette end and tossed the lighter back to its owner.

"You may need that," he observed. "But seeing I've been out of fags for over a week I'll keep the smokes."

"So that's all the chance you give me," said Slade, watching him as he luxuriously inhaled.

"It's about all I can afford," Tumstead said as he swung about and glanced down at his fellow-flyer. No look of commiseration softened the older man's face. But for a moment a frown of meditation wrinkled his forehead, a frown followed by a small shoulder movement of dismissal.

"Happy landing," was his curtly ironic exclamation as he turned away and climbed aboard his ship.

The man on the beach waited for the roar of the motor. But that familiar crescendo of sound failed to greet him. What he heard, instead, was Tumstead's cynically indifferent voice calling down to him. At the same time a package was tossed ashore.

"That's a pound of German army chocolate," Tumstead announced as he tossed still another object toward the motionless figure on the shore slope. "And here's a can of bully-beef."

He shrugged when no word of gratitude came from that still motionless figure.

"And here's something for your cigarettes," was Tumstead's last curt call as he threw overboard an empty tobacco-tin which struck Slade on the shoulder and came to a rest between his throbbing knees.

Slade sat watching the plane as it taxied across the gray-blue water and rose in the air. He continued to watch as it headed northward over the blue-misted ridges and faded away along the empty skyline.

He sat without moving until the ache in his tightly bound ankles reminded him of other things. Then he looked about for the sheath-knife. He gave a gulp of gratitude when he saw it lying there, within ten paces of him. It took him some time to worm his way to the knife. But a little of the listlessness went out of his face as his fingers closed about the heavy haft.

He lost no time in sawing through the cords and freeing his feet. When he attempted to stand up, however, he discovered that his benumbed legs were unable to support him. He had to sit there, for several minutes, waiting for feeling to come back to them.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

GRASSROOTS

by WRIGHT A. PATTERSON

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

CHANGING 'CLASSES' ON U. S. SCENE

WE REFER TO America's lower classes or to our middle or upper classes. Possibly there are such classes, but if so, the personnel of each is constantly changing. The push cart peddler of today is the merchant prince of tomorrow, or the merchant prince of today is a mendicant tomorrow. There is opportunity for all and the place of each is determined by his ability and his energy. Those who win must carry others upwards with them. Those who fail after having won what they lose has not been destroyed but is passed along to others. All any real American really asks is a fair field and a fair umpire—his government—to see there are no blows below the belt. He wants a chance to battle his way upward.

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A LETTER FROM A READER says he is tired reading about the war and wants to forget it. If all the people of America felt that way it would ensure a peace treaty dictated by the Huns, the Wops and the Japs and we would soon grow tired of the conditions imposed.

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OBLIGATION OF WRITING A LASTING PEACE

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE are hoping the peace following the close of this world conflict will be a lasting peace. They hope as they did in 1918, that this may be the last world conflict.

Granted the Allied Nations win, as they will, America can come nearer dictating the terms of peace than any other one nation. America is probably the only nation that would not write a "hate" peace. To fulfill the obligation that will be ours, America must do some serious thinking between now and the end of the conflict.

A book, "The Problems of Lasting Peace," by Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson gives us a foundation on which to think. They do not attempt to say what the peace shall be, but they do give us an analysis of the historic peace treaties of the past, and their results, and do make some general suggestions.

Among these is one that seems especially worth while. It is that the peace making be divided into three distinct stages. The first would settle temporarily problems on which there could be no delay. It would include the immediate re-establishment of national sovereignties as they existed before Germany invaded Austria, and the establishment on the part of the Allied Nations of an international police force that would insure compliance and the temporary maintenance of peace.

The second would provide for a "period for the rebuilding of political life and economies recovery."

The third would settle those "long-vices problems which require a cooling off of emotions, deliberation and careful development."

That it is not possible to write a lasting peace is amply demonstrated by the treaty of Versailles. Then hate, and the desire for revenge and imperidence dominated the peace conference. The same will be there again if the final peace is written by this generation at least before those who fought the war and suffered from its destruction have had years in which to forget.

The new peace, if it is to be permanent, must provide for the establishment and maintenance of representation government and personal liberty for people of the Axis nations and their satellites. It cannot be on a basis of punishment for the vanquished no matter how great their lives may have been. Hate, revenge (?) cannot have a place at that final peace table and they will have if the final peace terms are prepared immediately after the end of this world conflict.

Former President Hoover and ambassador Gibson have laid for us a foundation on which to base our thinking which should lead to a unified American demand for that kind of peace structure that will mean the end of wars. We have very seriously needed a place to start and "The Problem of Lasting Peace," provides that in a protected way.

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TO EACH OF US SHE WAS more than steel, and guns and planes. She was an American, and she died as other Americans have died and will die for the nation she so proudly represented. The aircraft carrier Lexington lies buried in the Coral sea, but her death was not in vain.

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CHINA SAYS 1,000 PLANES would save her and defeat the Japs. According to what WPB tells us that is less than one week's production of our plane plants.

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AT THE NEXT PEACE CONFERENCE there will not again sit a French Clemenceau to block a Magnainnsous settlement of world affairs and through a demand for average lay the foundation for another war. Without a Clemenceau the Atlantic charter will have a chance.

For you to make

'318

HAVE a posie-decked frock in your wardrobe! These easy-to-embroider sprays make colorful accents for any dress.

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HOUSEHOLD HINTS

Chopped ripe olives with the merest dash of garlic make a pungent filling for small white bread sandwiches to be toasted and served with cocktails.

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A good way to utilize stale bread is to make crisp rusks to eat with butter and cheese. Break up the bread into fairly equal sizes, dip into a little sweetened milk, and bake in a warm oven until dry and crisp.

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Oven pre-heating for short baking jobs wastes heat. Plan to do your baking and oven-cooking at the same time, when possible.

• • •

Strained honey, heated and mixed with soft butter and a dash of cinnamon and cloves, gives a delicious flavor to toasted muffins, hot waffles or pancakes.

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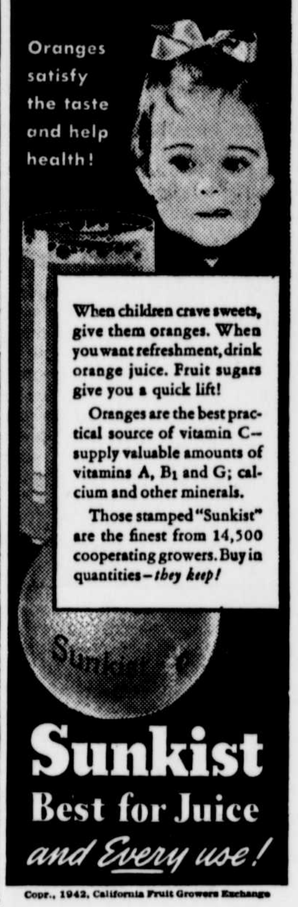
Copper flashing around pipes, dormer windows and the edges of roofs never needs painting. But copper is now on the priority list. If you have or are installing galvanized flashing, remember that it should be examined frequently and kept covered with paint.

No Handicap Too Great!

America's only deaf, dumb and blind amateur radio operator is 22-year-old Leo Sadowsky, who owned and operated Station W2OFU in Brooklyn, N. Y., says Collier's. Although he had to "hear" his radio-telegraph signals through vibrations produced by special devices, he passed both the written and practical tests in Federal Communications commission.

These 'sweets' have vitamins!

Oranges satisfy the taste and help health!



When children crave sweets, give them oranges. When you want refreshment, drink orange juice. Fruit sugars give you a quick lift!

Oranges are the best practical source of vitamin C—supply valuable amounts of vitamins A, B_1 and G; calcium and other minerals.

Those stamped "Sunkist" are the finest from 14,500 cooperating growers. Buy in quantities—*they keep!*

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RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCCESS

The man who advertises has assumed the responsibility for success. You would rather deal with a responsible man, wouldn't you?