THE CENTRE REPORTER DENTRE HALL, PA.



bring me home.

## O'BRIEN FINDS HIMSELF A PRISONER OF WAR AFTER A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE FROM DEATH.

Synopsis .- Pat O'Brien, a resident of Momence, Ill., -after seeing service in the American flying corps on the Mexican border in 1916, joins the British Royal Flying corps in Canada, and after a brief training period is sent to France. He is assigned to a squadron in active service on the front. He engages in several hot fights with German flyers, from which he emerges victorious.

## CHAPTER III. Captured by the Huns.

two German balloons. I decided that would go off on my own hook and see what a German balloon looked like at close quarters.

These observation balloons are used by both sides in conjunction with the artillery. A man sits up in the baltoon with a wireless apparatus and di- jig is up. rects the firing of the guns. From his point of vantage he can follow the work of his own artillery with a remarkable degree of accuracy and at the same time he can observe the enemy's movements and report them.

The Germans are very good at this work, and they use a great number of



a few, "such as they were," and read- | ting it out. It takes less than a min- | they, too, were officers or privates. ily observing that nothing could be ute for the fabric to burn off the wings done with what was left, I made my and then the machine drops like an contained eight beds, three of which way back to infantry headquarters, arrow, leaving a trail of smoke like a comet. where I was able to telephone in a

report. A little later one of our automobiles came out after me and took me chances of escape were nil. Their very in attendance, just orderlies, for this back to our airdrome. Most of my next shot, I felt, must hit me. squadron thought I was lost beyond

doubt, and never expected to see me flying over the line, I had watched a orderlies were not old men nor very again; but my friend, Paul Raney, had fight above me. A German machine young boys, as I had expected to find, held out that I was all right, and as was set on fire, and dived down but young men in the prime of life, I was afterwards told, said, "Don't through our formation in flames on its who evidently had been medical stusend for another pilot; that Irishman way to the ground. The Hun was div- dents. One or two of them, I discovwill be back, if he has to walk." And ing at such a sharp angle that both ered, were able to talk English, but he knew that the only thing that kept his wings came off, and as he passed for some reason they would not talk. me from walking was the fact that our within a few hundred feet of me I saw Perhaps they were forbidden by the own automobile had been sent out to the look of horror on his face. Now, when I expected any moment

to suffer a similar fate, I could not I had lots to think about that day, and I had learned many things; one help thinking of that poor Hun's last was not to have too much confidence look of agony.

the squadron told me that I had better not take those chances; that it maneuver was invented by a German- and when the doctor told me that I fense of his country. He found that was going to be a long war and I one of the greatest who ever flew and would have plenty of opportunities to who was killed in action some time bebe killed without deliberately "wishing fore. This turn, which I made successthem on" myself. Later I was to learn fully, brought one of their machines right in front of me, and as he sailed the truth of his statement.

That night my "flight"-each squad- along barely ten yards away, I "had ron is divided into three flights, con- the drop" on him, and he knew it. sisting of six men each-got ready to His white face and startled eyes I can still see. He knew beyond quesgo out again. As I started to put on my tunic I noticed that I was not tion that his last moment had come, because his position prevented his tak-

marked up for duty as usual. ing aim at me, while my gun pointed I asked the commanding officer, a straight at him. My first tracer bullet major, what the reason for that was, and he replied that he thought I had passed within a yard of his head, the second looked as if it hit his shoulder. done enough for one day. However, I knew that if I did not go, someone the third struck him in the neck, and else from another "flight" would have then I let him have the whole works, to take my place, and I insisted upon and he went down in a spinning nose going up with my patrol as usual, and dive.

the major reluctantly consented. Had All this time the three other Hun he known what was in store for me, I machines were shooting away at me. am sure he wouldn't have changed his I could hear the bullets striking my machine one after another. I hadn't mind so readtly.

As it was we had only five machines the slightest idea that I could ever for this patrol, anyway, because as we beat off those three Huns, but there crossed the lines one of them had to was nothing for me to do but fight, and drop out on account of motor trouble. my hands were full.

Our patrol was up at 8 p. m., and up In fighting, your machine is dropto within ten minutes of that hour it ping, dropping all the time. I glanced at my instruments, and my altitude had been entirely uneventful. At 7:50 p. m., however, while we was between 8,000 and 9,000 feet. were flying at a height of 13,000 feet, While I was still looking at the inwe observed three other English ma- struments, the whole blamed works chines which were about 3,000 feet disappeared. A burst of bullets went murderers and you ought to be treated

The room in which I found myself were occupied by wounded German officers. The other rooms, I imagined. As their tracer bullets came closer had about the same number of beds as and closer to me I realized that my mine. There were no Red Cross nurses was only an emergency hospital and Once, some days before, when I was too near the firing line for nurses. The officer in charge to do so.

In addition to the bullet wound in my mouth I had a swelling from my forehead to the back of my head almost as big as my shoe-and that is in my own ability. One of the men in I realized that my only chance lay saying considerable. I couldn't move and thought the only thing for him to in making an Immelman turn. This an inch without suffering intense pain, had no bones broken I wondered how a fellow would feel who had.

German officers visited me that morning and told me that my machine went down in a spinning nose dive from a height of between 8,000 and 9.000 feet, and they had the surprise of their lives when they discovered that I had not been dashed to pieces. They had to cut me out of my machine, which was riddled with shots and shattered to bits.

A German doctor removed the builet from my throat, and the first thing he said to me when I came to was, "You are an American!

There was no denying it, because the metal identification disk on my wrist bore the inscription:

> "P. O'B. U. S. A. R. F. C."

Although I was suffering intense agony, the doctor, who spoke perfect English, insisted upon conversing with

"You may be all right as a sportsman," he declared, "but you are a d-d murderer just the same for being here. You Americans who got into this thing before America came into the war are no better than common

smiled. At this time I was just beginning to say a few words, as my wound had prevented me from talking, but I said enough to let him know what I was doing there and how I happened to be there. He evidently had heard my story from some of the others, though, because he said it was too bad I had not broken my neck; that he did not have much sympathy with the flying corps anyway. He asked me what part of America I came from, and I told him "Calffornia." After a few more questions he learned that I hailed from San Francisco, and then added to my distress by saying, "How would you like to have a good, juicy steak right out of the Hofbrau?" Naturally I told him it would "hit the spot," but I hardly thought my mouth was in shape just then to eat it. I immediately asked, of course, what he knew about the Hofbrau, and he replied, "I was connected with the place a good many years, and I ought to know all about it.'

After that this German officer and became rather chummy; that is, as far as I could be chummy with an enemy, and we whiled away a good many long hours talking about the days we had spent in San Francisco, and frequently in the conversation one of us would mention some prominent Californian, or some little incident occurring there, with which we were both familiar.

He told me when war was declared he was, of course, intensely patriotic do was to go back and aid in the dehe could not go directly from San Francisco, because the water was too well guarded by the English, so he boarded a boat for South America. There he obtained a forged passport and in the guise of a Montevidean took passage for New York and from there to England.

He passed through England without any difficulty on his forged passport, but concluded not to risk going to Holland for fear of exciting too much suspicion, so went down through the Strait of Gibraltar to Italy, which was neutral at that time, up to Austria,



my dive had brought me within reach I shall not easily forget the 17th of of the machine guns from the ground, August, 1917. I killed two Huns in and they also put a barrage around me the double-seated machine in the of shrapnel from antiaircraft guns morning, another in the evening, and and I had an opportunity to "ride the then I was captured myself. I may barrage," as they call it in the R. F. C. have spent more eventful days in my To make the situation more interestlife, but I can't recall any just now. ing, they began shooting "flaming on-That morning, in crossing the line, ions" at me. "Flaming onlons" are on early morning patrol, I noticed rockets shot from a rocket gun. They are used to hit a machine when it is as soon as my patrol was over I flying low, and they are effective up to about five thousand feet. Sometimes they are shot up one after another in strings of about eight, and they are one of the hardest things to

uation in the air I had ever experi-

enced up to that time. The depth of

go through. If they hit the machine, it is bound to catch fire and then the

All the time, too, I was being attacked by "Archie"-the antiaircraft gun. I escaped the machine guns and the "flaming onions," but "Archie," the antiaircraft fire, got me four or five Every fime a bullet plugged times. me, or rather my machine, it made a loud bang, on account of the tension on the material covering the wings.

None of their shots hurt me until I was about a mile from our lines, and then they hit my motor. Fortunately, I still had altitude enough to drift on to our own side of the lines, for my motor was completely out of commission. They just raised the dickens with me all the time I was descending. and I began to think I would strike the ground before crossing the line, but there was a slight wind in my favor, and it carried me two miles behind our lines. There, the balloons I had gone out to get had the satisfaction of "pin-pointing" me, Through the directions which they were able to give to their artillery they commenced machines. shelling my machine where it lay. This particular work is to direct the He Was Overcome and Captured by fire of their artillery, and they are used just as the artillery observation airplanes are. Usually two men are stationed in each balloon. They ascend to a height of several thousand feet about five miles behind their own lines Huns. and are equipped with wireless and signaling apparatus. They watch the There were eight of us to nine of them. burst of their own artillery, check up But soon the other machines which I the position, get the range, and direct had seen in the distance, and which the next shot. When conditions are favorable they are able to direct the shots so accurately that it is quick work destroying the object of their attack. It was such a balloon as this that got my position, marked me out, called for an artillery, shot, and they commenced shelling my machine where it lay. If I had got the two balloons instead of the airplane, I probably would not have lost my machine, for he would in all probability have gone on home and not bothered about getting my range and causing the destruction of my machine. I landed in a part of the country that was literally covered with shell holes. Fortunately my machine was not badly damaged by the forced landmake them descend, and I only hoped ing. I leisurely got out, walked around that they would stay on the job until it to see what the damage was, and concluded that it could be easily repaired. In fact, I thought if I could find a space long enough between shell holes to get a start before leaving the

Machine O'Brien Was Driving When the Huns.

these balloons. It was considered a very important part of our work to keep them out of the sky.

There are two ways of going after a balloon in a machine. One of them is to cross the lines at a low altitude, flying so near the ground that the man with the antiaircraft gun can't bother you. You fly along until you get to the level of the balloon and if, in the meantime, they have not drawn the balloon down, you open fire on it and the bullets you use will set it on fire if they land.

The other way is to fly over where you know the balloons to be, put your machine in a spin so that they can't hit you, get above them, spin over the balloon and then open fire. In going back over the line you cross at a few hundred feet.

This is one of the hardest jobs in the service. There is less danger in attacking an enemy's aircraft.

Nevertheless, I had made up my mind to either get those balloons or I had a chance at them.

When our two hours' duty was up, therefore, I dropped out of the formation as we crossed the lines and turned back again.

I was at a height of 15,000 feet, considerably higher than the balloons. Shutting my motor off, I dropped down through the clouds, thinking to find repairs, without any particular thought the balloons at about five or six miles | for my own safety in that unprotected behind the German lines.

banks I saw below me, about a thou- ground and landed a few feet away. sand feet, a two-seater hostile ma- It had no sooner struck than I made chine doing artillery observation and a run for cover and crawled into a directing the German guns. This was shell hole. I would have liked to get at a point about four miles behind the | farther away, but I didn't know where German lines.

me and put out ground signals to at- squatted down and let them blaze tract the Hun machine's attention, for away. I sow the observer quit his work and grab his gun, while their pilot stuck from the mud which splattered up in the 1.780 of his machine straight my face and over my clothes. That down.

But they were too late to escape me. I was diving toward them at a speed of probably two hundred miles an fighting they wanted, but it did not hour, shooting all the time as fast as appeal to me, though they live in them possible. Their only chance lay in through many a long night and I had the possibility that the force of my only sought shelter there for a few drive might break my wings. I knew my danger in that direction, but as soon as I came out of my dive the Huns would have their chance to get firing, I waited there a short time, me, and I knew I had to get them first fearing perhaps they might send over and take a chance on my wings hold-

ing out. of theirs!

ground that I would be able to fly on from there. I was still examining my plane and considering the matter of a few slight spot, when a shell came whizzing Just as I came out of the cloud through the air, knocked me to the the next shell would burst, and I Evidently the German artillery saw thought I was fairly safe there, so I

The only damage I suffered was

was my introduction to a shell hole, and I resolved right there that the infantry could have all the shell-hole

minutes After the Germans had completely demolished my machine and ceased a lucky shot, hoping to get me after

Fortunately some of my first bullets enough shells had been wasted on one found their mark, and I was able to man. I crawled out cautiously, shook come out of my dive at about four the mud off, and I looked over in the thousand feet. They never came out direction where my machine had once been. There wasn't enough left for a

all. But evidently they concluded

, But right then came the hottest sit- decent souvenir, but nevertheless I got

below us pick a fight with nine Hun into the instrument board and blew it to smithereens, another bullet went

I knew right then that we were in through my upper lip, came out of the for it, because I could see over toward roof of my mouth and lodged in my the ocean a whole flock of Hun ma- throat, and the next thing I knew was chines which evidently had escaped when I came to in a German hospital say. the attention of our scrappy country- the following morning at five o'clock,

men below us. So we dove down on those nine

At first the fight was fairly even.

were flying even higher than we were, arrived on the scene, and when they, in turn, dove down on us, there was just twenty of them to our eight!

Four of them singled me out. I was diving, and they dived right down after me, shooting as they came. Their ing place at that time of the year, and tracer bullets were coming closer to in all probability would be abandoned me every moment. These tracer bul- as soon as they had found a better lets are balls of fire which enable the place. shooter to follow the course his bul- In all, the house contained four lets are taking and to correct his aim rooms and a stable, which was by far accordingly. They do no more harm the largest of all. Although I never to a pilot if he is hit than an ordinary looked into this "wing" of the hospital,

good night! When a machine catches patients lying on beds of straw around fire in flight there is no way of put- on the ground. I do not know whether

German time. I was a prisoner of war. CHAPTER IV.

Clipped Wings.

The hospital in which I found myself on the morning after my capture was a private house made of brick, very low and dirty, and not at all adapted for use as a hospital. It had evidently been used but a few days on account of the big push that was tak-

bullet, but if they hit the petrol tank. I was told that it, too, was filled with



Lieutenant O'Brien in the First Machine He Used in Active Service, With Him Is Lieutenant Atkinson,

The wound in my mouth made it impossible for me to answer him, and I was suffering too much pain to be hurt very much by anything he could

He asked me if I would like an apple! I could just as easily have eaten a brick.

When he got no answers out of me, he walked away disgustedly. "You don't have to worry any more,"

he declared, as a parting shot. "For you the war is over."

I was given a little broth later in the day, and as I began to collect my thoughts I wondered what had happened to my comrades in the battle which had resulted so disastrously to me. As I began to realize my plight I worried less about my physical condition than the fact that, as the doctod had pointed out, for me the war was practically over. I had been in it

but a short time, and now I would be a prisoner for the duration of the war! The next day some German flying officers visited me, and I must say they treated me with great consideration. They told me of the man I had brought down. They said he was a Bavarian and a fairly good pilot. They gave me his hat as a souvenir and compliment-

ed me on the fight I had put up. My helmet, which was of soft leather, was split from front to back by a bullet from a machine gun, and they examined it with great interest. When they brought me my uniform I found that the star of my rank which had been on my right shoulder strap had been shot off clean. The one on my left shoulder strap they asked me for as a souvenir, as also my R. F. C. badges, which I gave them. They allowed me to keep my "wings," which I wore on my left breast, because they were aware that that is the proudest possession of a British flying officer.

I think I am right in saying that the only chivalry in this war on the German side of the trenches has been displayed by the officers of the German flying corps, which comprises the pick of Germany. They pointed out to me that I and my comrades were fighting purely for the love of it, whereas they were fighting in defense of their country, but still, they said, they admired us for our sportsmanship. I had a notion to ask them if dropping bombs on London and killing so many innocent people was in defense of their country. but I was in no position or condition to pick a quarrel at that time.

That same day a German officer was brought into the hospital and put in the bunk next to mine. Of course I George Witzoff, the bigamist, whose casually looked at him, but did not marriages have variously been dstimatpay particular attention to him at that | ed at from 200 to 800. It was reporttime. He lay there for three or four ed that in the space of a single week hours before I did take a real good he went through marriage ceremonies look at him. I was positive that he with ten women. could not speak English, and naturally I did not say anything to him. Once

when I looked over in his direction his

Pat O'Brien and Paul Rancy.

and thence to Germany. He said when they put in at Gibraltar, after leaving England, there were two suspects taken off the ship, men that he was sure were neutral subjects, but much to his relief his own passport and credentials were examined and passed O. K.

The Hun spoke of his voyage from America to England as being exceptionally pleasant, and said he had a fine time, because he associated with the English passengers on board, his fluent English readily admitting him to several spirited arguments on the subject of the war, which he keenly enjoyed. One little incident he related revealed the remarkable tact which our enemy displayed in his associations at sea, which no doubt resulted advantageously for him. As he expressed it, he "made a hit" one evening when the crowd has assembled for a little music by suggesting that they sing "God Save the King." Thereafter his popularity was assured and the desired effect accomplished, for very soon a French officer came up to him and said, "It's too bad that England and ourselves haven't men in our army like you." It was too bad, he agreed, in telling me about it, because he was confident he could have done a whole lot more for Germany if he had been in the English army. In spite of his apparent loyalty, however, the man didn't seem very enthusiastic over the war and frankly admitted one day that the old political battles waged in California were much more to his liking than the battles he had gone through over here. On second thought he laughed as though it were a good joke, but he evidently intended me to infer that he had taken a keen interest in politics in San Francisco.

From his prison, O'Brien witnesses a thrilling air battle, which results in the death of his chum, who is shot down by a German flyer. Don't miss the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Wives Evidently His Hobby.

Probably the modern world's marrying record for men was created by

Worse'n Boils, Too.

Old Job had his troubles, but nobody eyes were on me, and to my surprise, he said, very sarcastically, "What the h-l are you looking at" and then