

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schilling Kralik Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschechow  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke  
Nestroy Marie de France  
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz  
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz  
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
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**Air Service Boys in the Big Battle  
Or, Silencing the Big Guns**

Charles Amory Beach

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**AIR SERVICE BOYS IN THE BIG BATTLE**

**Or SILENCING THE BIG GUNS**

**By**  
**Charles Amory Beach**



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## CHAPTER I. BAD NEWS FROM THE AIR

"Well, Tom, how's your head now?"

"How's my head? What do you mean? There's nothing the matter with my head," and the speaker, who wore the uniform of a French aviator, glanced up in surprise from the cot on which he was reclining in his tent near the airdromes that stretched around a great level field, not far from Paris.

"Oh, isn't there?" questioned Jack Parmly, with a smile. "Then I beg your pardon for asking, my cabbage! I beg your pardon, Sergeant Raymond!"

Tom Raymond, whose chum had addressed him by the military title, looked curiously at his companion, and smiled at the appellation of the term cabbage. It was one of the many little tricks picked up by association with their French flying comrades, of speaking to a friend by some odd, endearing term. It might be cucumber or rose, cabbage or cart wheel—the words mattered not, it was the meaning back of them.

"Say, is anything the matter?" went on Tom, as his chum, attired like himself, but wearing an old blouse covered with oil and grease, continued to smile. "What gave you the notion that my head hurt?"

"I didn't say it hurt. I only asked how it was. The swelling hasn't begun to subside in mine yet, and I was wondering if it had in yours."

"Swelling? Subside? What in the world—"

Jack Parmly brought to a sudden termination the rapid torrent of words from the mouth of his chum by silently pointing to a small medal fastened to the uniform jacket of his friend. It was the coveted *croix de guerre*.

"Oh, that!" exclaimed Tom.

"Nothing else, my pickled beet!" answered Jack. "Doesn't it make your head swell up as if it would burst every time you look at it? Now don't say it doesn't, for that's the way it affects me, and I'm sure you're not very different. And every time I read the citation

that goes with the medal — well, I'm just aching for a chance to show it to the folks back home, aren't you, Sergeant?"

Tom Raymond started a bit at the second use of the title.

"I see you aren't any more used to it than I am!" exclaimed Jack. "Well, it'll be a little time before we stop looking around to see if it isn't some one behind us they're talking to. So I thought I'd practice it a bit on you. And you can do the same for me. I should think, out of common politeness, you'd get up, salute and call me the same."

"Oh! Now I see what you're driving at," voiced Tom, as he glanced up from a momentary look at his medal to the face of his comrade-in-arms, or perhaps in flying would be more appropriate. "The wind's in that quarter, is it?"

"No wind at all to speak of," broke in Jack. "If you'd like to go for a fly, and see if we can bag a Boche or two, I'm with you."

"Against orders, Jack. I'd like to, but we were ordered here for rest and observation work; and you know, as well as I do, that obeying orders is just as important as sending a member of the Hun Flying Circus down where he can't do any more of his grandstand stunts. But I'm hoping the time will come when we can climb up back of our machine guns again, and do our bit to show that the little old U. S. A. is still on the map."

"I guess that time'll soon come, Tom, old man. I heard rumors that a lot of us were to be sent up nearer the front shortly, and if they don't include you and me, there'll be something doing in this camp!"

"That's what I say. So you thought I'd have a swelled head, did you, because they gave us the croix de guerre?"

"I confess I had a faint suspicion that way," admitted Jack. "Both of us being advanced to sergeants was a big step, too."

"It was," agreed Tom. "I almost wish they hadn't done it, for there are lots of others in the escadrille that deserve it fully as much, and some more, than we do."

"That's right. But you can't make these delightful Frenchmen see anything the way you want 'em to. Once they get a notion in their heads that you've done something for la belle France, they're your

friends for life, kissing you on both cheeks and pinning medals on you wherever they'll stick."

"Well, they mean all right, Jack," said Tom. "And there aren't any braver or more lovable people on the face of the earth than these same French. They've done more and suffered more for their country than we dream of. And it's only natural that they should say 'much obliged,' in their own particular way, to any one they think is helping to free them from the Germans."

"I suppose you're right. But advancing us to sergeants would have been enough, without pinning the decorations on us and mentioning us in the order of the day, as well as giving us as fine a citation as ever was signed by a commanding general. However, it's all in the day's work, though when we flew over the German super cannons, and did our bit in helping demolish them so they couldn't shell Paris any more, we didn't think—or, at least, I didn't—that we'd be sitting here talking about it."

"Me either," agreed Tom. "But, to get down to brass tacks, what have you been doing to get into such a mess? You look like a chauffeur of the old days they tell of when they had to climb under the car to see if it needed oiling—"

"That's just about what I have been doing," admitted Jack. "When I heard the rumor that our escadrille might get orders to move at any hour, I decided that it was up to me to look MY machine over. It didn't make that nose dive just the way I wanted it to the last time I was up, and I'm not taking any chances. So I've been crawling in and around and under it—"

"While I've been lying here I taking it easy!" broke in Tom. "I don't call that fair of you, Jack," and he seemed genuinely hurt.

"Go easy now, my pickled onion!" laughed his chum. "I wasn't going to leave you out in the cold. I just came to tell you that you'd better stop looking like a moving picture of an airman, and put on some old duds to look over your own craft. And here you go and—"

"All right, old ham sandwich!" laughed Tom.

"I'll forgive you. I'm going to do the same as you, and tinker with my machine. If, as you say, we're likely to be on the job

again soon, I don't want to take any chances either. Where's that mechanic of mine? There was something wrong with my joy stick, he said, the last time I came down out of the clouds to take an enforced rest, and I might as well start with that, if there's any repairing to be done — "

Tom flung off his uniform jacket, with the two silver wings, denoting that he was a full-fledged airman, and sent an orderly to summon his chief mechanic, for each aviator had several helpers to run messages for him, as well as to see that his machine is in perfect trim.

Experts are needed to see to it that the machine and the aviator are in perfect trim, leaving for the airman himself the trying and difficult task, sometimes, of flying upside down, while he is making observations of the enemy with one eye, and fighting off a Boche with the other—ready to kill or be killed.

Sergeants Tom Raymond and Jack Parmly, chums and fellow airmen flying for France, started toward the aerodromes where their machines were kept when not in use. They were both attired now for hard and not very clean work, though the more laborious part would be done by mechanics at their orders. Still the lads themselves would leave nothing to chance. Indeed no airman does, for in very, truth his He and the success of an army may, at times, depend on the strength or weakness of a seemingly insignificant bit of wire or the continuity of a small gasoline pipe.

"Well, it'll seem good to get up in the air again," remarked Jack. "A little rest is all right, but too much is more than enough."

"Right O, my sliced liberty bond!" laughed Tom. "And now — "

Their talk was interrupted by a cheer that broke out in front of a recreation house, in reality a YMCA hut, or le Foyer du Soldat as it was called. It was where the airmen went when not on duty to read the papers, write letters and buy chocolate.

"What's up now?" asked Jack, as he and his chum looked toward the cheering squad of aviators and their assistants.

"Give it up. Let's go over and find out."

They broke into a run as the cheering continued, and then they saw hats being thrown into the air and men capering about with every evidence of joy.

"We must have won a big battle!" cried Jack.

"Seems so," agreed Tom. "Hi there! what is it?" he asked in French of a fellow aviator.

"What is it? You ask me what? Ah, joy of my life! It is you who ought to know first! It is you who should give thanks! Ah!"

"Yes, that's all right, old man," returned Jack in English. "We'll give thanks right as soon as we know what it is; but we aren't mind readers, you know, and there are so many things to guess at that there's no use in wasting the time. Tell us, like a good chap!" he begged in French, for he saw the puzzled look on the face of the aviator Tom had addressed.

"It is the best news ever!" was the answer. "The first of your brave countrymen have arrived to help us drive the Boche from France! The first American Expeditionary Force, to serve under your brave General Pershing, has reached the shores of France safely, in spite of the U-boats, and are even now marching to show themselves in Paris! Ah, is it any wonder that we rejoice? How is it you say in your own delightful country? Two cheers and a lion! Ah!"

"Tiger, my dear boy! Tiger!" laughed Jack. "And, while you're about it, you might as well make it three cheers and done with it. Not that it makes any great amount of difference in this case, but it's just the custom, my stuffed olive!"

And then he and Tom were fairly carried off their feet by the rush of enthusiastic Frenchmen to congratulate them on the good news, and to share it with them.

"Is it really true?" asked Tom. "Has any substantial part of Uncle Sam's boys really got here at last?"

He was told that such was the case. The news had just been received at the headquarters of the flying squad to which Tom and Jack were attached. About ten thousand American soldiers were even then on French soil. Their coming had long been waited for, and the arrangements sailed in secret, and the news was known in

American cities scarcely any sooner than it was in France, so careful had the military authorities been not to give the lurking German submarines a chance to torpedo the transports.

"Is not that glorious news, my friend?" asked the Frenchman who had given it to Tom and Jack.

"The best ever!" was the enthusiastic reply. And then Jack, turning to his chum, said in a low voice, as the Frenchman hurried back to the cheering throng: "You know what this means for us, of course?"

"Rather guess I do!" was the response. "It means we've got to apply for a transfer and fight under Pershing!"

"Exactly. Now how are we going to do it?"

"Oh, I fancy it will be all right. Merely a question of detail and procedure. They can't object to our wanting to fight among our own countrymen, now that enough of them are over here to make a showing. I suppose this is the first of the big army that's coming."

"I imagine so," agreed Jack. "Hurray! this is something like. There's going to be hard fighting. I realize that. But this is the beginning of the end, as I see it."

"That's what! Now, instead of tinkering over our machines, let's see the commandant and --"

Jack motioned to his chum to cease talking. Then he pointed up to the sky. There was a little speck against the blue, a speck that became larger as the two Americans watched.

"One of our fliers coming bark," remarked Tom in a low voice.

"I hope he brings more good news," returned Jack.

The approaching airman came rapidly nearer, and then the throngs that had gathered about the headquarters building to discuss the news of the arrival of the first American forces turned to watch the return of the flier.

"It's Du Boise," remarked Tom, naming an intrepid French fighter. He was one of the "aces," and had more than a score of Boche machines to his credit. "He must have been out 'on his own,' looking for a stray German."

"Yes, he and Leroy went out together," assented Jack. "But I don't see Harry's machine," and anxiously he scanned the heavens.

Harry Leroy was, like Tom and Jack, an American aviator who had lately joined the force in which the two friends had rendered such valiant service. Tom and Jack had known him on the other side—had, in fact, first met and become friendly with him at a flying school in Virginia. Leroy had suffered a slight accident which had put him out of the flying service for a year, but he had persisted, had finally been accepted, and was welcomed to France by his chums who had preceded him.

"I hope nothing has happened to Harry," murmured Tom; "but I don't see him, and it's queer Du Boise would come back without him."

"Maybe he had to—for gasoline or something," suggested Jack.

"I hope it isn't any worse than that," went on Tom. But his voice did not carry conviction.

The French aviator landed, and as he climbed out of his machine, helped by orderlies and others who rushed up, he was seen to stagger.

"Are you hurt?" asked Tom, hurrying up.

"A mere scratch—nothing, thank you," was the answer.

"Where's Harry Leroy?" Jack asked. "Did you have to leave him?"

"Ah, monsieur, I bring you bad news from the air," was the answer. "We were attacked by seven Boche machines. We each got one, and then—well, they got me—but what matters that? It is a mere nothing."

"What of Harry?" persisted Tom.

"Ah, it is of him I would speak. He is—he fell inside the enemy lines; and I had to come back for help. My petrol gave out, and I—"

And then, pressing his hands over his breast, the brave airman staggered and fell, as a stream of blood issued from beneath his jacket.



## CHAPTER II. A GIRL'S APPEAL

At once half a score of hands reached out to render aid to the stricken airman, whose blood was staining the ground where he had fallen.

Tom, seeing that his fellow aviator was more desperately wounded than the brave man had admitted, at once summoned stretcher-bearers, and he was carried to the hospital. Then all anxiously awaited the report of the surgeons, who quickly prepared to render aid to the fighter of the air.

"How is he?" asked Jack, as he and Tom, lingering near the hospital, saw one of the doctors emerge.

"He is doing very nicely," was the answer, given in French, for the two boys of the air spoke this language now with ease, if not always with absolute correctness.

"Then he isn't badly hurt?" asked Jack.

"No. The wound in his chest was only a flesh one, but it bled considerably. Two bullets from an aircraft machine gun struck ribs, and glanced off from them, but tore the flesh badly. The bleeding was held in check by the pressure Du Boise exerted on the wounds underneath his jacket, but at last he grew faint from loss of blood, and then the stream welled out. With rest and care he will be all right in a few days."

"How soon could we talk with him?" asked Tom.

"Talk with him?" asked the surgeon. "Is that necessary? He is doing very well, and—"

"Tom means ask him some questions," explained Jack. "You see, he started to tell us about our chum, Harry Leroy, who was out scouting with him. Harry was shot down, so Du Boise said, but he didn't get a chance to give any particulars, and we thought—"

"It will be a day or so before he will be able to talk to you," the surgeon said. "He is very weak, and must not be disturbed."

"Well, may we talk with him just as soon as possible?" eagerly asked Jack. "We want to find out where it was that Harry went

down in his machine—out of control very likely—and if we get a chance—"

"We'd like to take it out on those that shot him down!" interrupted Torn. "Du Boise must have noticed the machines that fought him and Harry, and if we could get any idea of the Boches who were in them—"

"I see," and the surgeon bowed and smiled approval of their idea. "You want revenge. I hope you get it. As soon as we think he is able to talk," and he nodded in the direction of the hospital, "we will let you see him. Good luck to you, and confusion to the Huns!"

"Gee, but this is tough luck!" murmured Tom, as he and his chum turned away. "Just as we were getting ready to go back into the game, too! Had it all fixed up for Harry to fly with us in a sort of a triangle scheme to down the Boches, and they have to go and plump him off the map. Well, it is tough!"

"Yes, sort of takes the fun out of the good news we heard a while ago," agreed Jack. "I mean about Pershing's boys getting over here to France. I hope Harry's only wounded, instead of killed. But if the Huns have him a prisoner—good-night!"

"There's only one consolation," added Tom. "Their airmen are the best of the lot. Of course that isn't saying much, but they behave a little more like human beings than the rest of the Boche gang; and if Harry has fallen a prisoner to them he'll get a bit of decent treatment, anyhow."

"That's so. We'll hope for that. And now let's go on with what we started when we saw Du Boise coming back—let's see what chance we have of being transferred to an All American escadrille."

The boys started across the field again toward the headquarters, and, nearing it, they saw, in a small motor car, a girl sitting beside the military driver. She was a pretty girl, and it needed only one glance to show that she was an American.

"Hello!" exclaimed Tom, with a low whistle. "Look who's here!"

"Do you know her?" asked Jack.

"No. Wish I did, though."

Jack glanced quickly and curiously at his chum.

"Oh, you needn't think you're the only chap that has a drag with the girls," went on Tom. "Just because Bessie Gleason—"

"Cut it out!" exclaimed Jack. "Look, she acts as though she wanted to speak to us."

The military chauffeur had alighted from the machine and was talking to one of the French aviation officers. Meanwhile the girl, left to herself, was looking about the big aviation field, with a look of wonder, mixed with alarm and nervousness. She caught sight of Tom and Jack, and a smile came to her face, making her, as Tom said afterward, the prettiest picture he had seen in a long while.

"You're Americans, aren't you?" began the girl, turning frankly to them. "I know you are! And, oh, I'm in such trouble!"

Tom stepped ahead of Jack, who was taking off his cap and bowing.

"Let me have a show for my white alley," Tom murmured to his chum. "You've got one girl."

"You win," murmured Jack.

"Yes, we're from the United States," said Tom. "But it's queer to see a girl here—from America or anywhere else. How'd you get through the lines, and what can we do for you?"

"I am looking for my brother," was the answer. "I understood he was stationed here, and I managed to get passes to come to see him, but it wasn't easy work. I met this officer in his motor car, and he brought me along the last stage of the journey. Can you tell me where my brother is? His name is Harry Leroy."

Torn said afterward that he felt as though he had gone into a spinning nose dive with a Boche aviator on his tail, while Jack admitted that he felt somewhat as he did the time his gasoline pipe was severed by a Hun bullet when he was high in the air and several miles behind the enemy's lines.

"Your—your brother!" Tom managed to mutter.

"Yes, Harry Leroy. He's from the United States, too. Perhaps you know him, as I notice you are both aviators. He told me if I ever got

to France to come to see him, and he mentioned the names of two young men—I have them here somewhere—"

She began to search in the depths of a little leather valise she carried, and, at that moment, the military chauffeur who had brought her to the aviation field turned to her, and spoke rapidly in French.

She understood the language, as did Tom and Jack, and at the first words her face went white. For the chauffeur informed her that her brother, Harry Leroy, whom she had come so far to see, was, even then, lying dead or wounded within the German lines.

"Oh!" the girl murmured, her face becoming whiter and more white. "Oh—Harry!"

Then she would have fallen from the seat, only Tom leaped forward and caught her in his arms.

And while efforts were being made to restore the girl to consciousness, may I not take this opportunity of telling my new readers something of the previous books of this series, so that they may read this one more intelligently?

Torn Raymond and Jack Parmly, as related in the initial volume, "Air Service Boys Flying for France; or The Young Heroes of the Lafayette Escadrille," were Virginians. Soon after the great world conflict started, they burned with a desire to fight on the side of freedom, and it was as aviators that they desired to help.

Accordingly they went to an aviation school in Virginia, under the auspices of the Government, and there learned the rudiments of flying. Tom's father had invented an aeroplane stabilizer, but, as told in the story, the plans and other papers had been stolen by a German spy.

Tom and his chum resolved to get possession of the documents, and they kept up the search after they reached France and were made members of the Lafayette Escadrille. It was in France that they met Adolph Tuessing, the German spy.

The second volume, entitled "Air Service Boys Over the Enemy's Lines; or The German Spy's Secret," takes the two young men through further adventures. They had become acquainted on the steamer with a girl named Bessie Gleason and her mother. Carl