

AIR ACTION ^{Weekly}

WINTER 1936 - SPECIAL EDITION

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*The Black Swan and her
Curtis-Wright J2 Fury*

AAW Profiles:

Warriors of the Air

*Eight of Today's Most Celebrated
(and Feared) Aviators!*



PLUS! The Black Swan, Pirate or Privateer?



SURPRISE ATTACK



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A special thanks to J.M. Albertson for moving us from Europe to America and to Mitch Gitelman and Heinz Schuller for being there at the painful beginning.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all of the people who have worked at nights and on weekends to bring this common dream to life. A game may seem to be a small thing to be called a common dream, but it has indeed been a dream to work with such a talented group from around the world on a universe that has become an extension of all us. Thank you for what has been and I hope will continue to be a very rewarding experience.

Jordan Weisman

P.S. To all the wives, husbands, children, and significant others. (in my case Dawne, Zach, Nate, and Lucas) - thanks for not clipping our wings and letting us fly

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Up in the Skies: Warriors of the Air

Air Action Weekly does not shy away from controversy. Conflict defines our existence, just as it does for the pilots and planes we feature every week. We'd like to believe that our readers have come to expect and appreciate our unbiased coverage of combat in the skies over the North American nations—coverage that only AAW has delivered since the Collapse and in the shadows of continuing conflict. Despite all that, though, we can't help but wonder how many pilots ripped this week's magazine from the rack with cries of, "This time you've gone too far!" after getting a look at the cover. And how many pilots tore the cover off?

The Black Swan? A pirate? This year's feature pilot?

Absolutely!

Air Action Weekly is about air combat, and the men and women who rise gloriously into the skies or tailspin back to earth. We've labored long and hard this year to bring you the straight facts on eight of the continent's top aces. Every one is an elite pilot and a deadly gunner; each also has a flair or style that sets them above their peers. These people are role models, good and bad, whose personalities often define entire militias and even nations. So we expect cries of indignation from the Maritime Provinces down to the Kingdom of Hawaii. (None from you flyers in the Empire State, though, right? How does it feel to be in formation with the infamous Black Swan?) Moral outrage aside, however, few pilots can deny the Black Swan her place on the rolls of top aces. Known in every nation, she is feared by some and loathed by others. Her reputation precedes her in every hangar, aerodrome and tavern; the lady gets splashed across newspapers everywhere, and perhaps best represents the shades of gray that often dim the crimson skies of a dogfight.

Pirates and privateers who prey on the zepelins that ship goods between states and nations have been a fact of life since the breakup of the old

United States. Two of our feature articles this week are reminders of those events and their aftereffects, which (for those who know their history) include the rise of the militia air wing to defend corporate and national interests from pirate marauders as well as from predation by rival militias. (And we're not even going to bring up the charges levied in various directions that certain militias are little more than privateers themselves.) Militias have at least the tacit approval of



The Black Swan

a government for their raids and air strikes. Is it such a large step from militia pilot to privateer, and then to pirate? Ask "Marshal" Bill Redmann, once of the Texas Rangers. Or, if you value your life, try talking instead to Comrade Aaron Whittaker—failed farmer, rancher, raider and pirate, who is now an accepted and upstanding citizen of the People's Collective. If you can find her, ask the Black Swan if she belongs on the cover this

week. We recommend trying out that question from a distance, though, and never from the cockpit of your plane.

So here's Air Action Weekly's 1937 Warriors of the Air issue, with write-ups on eight of North America's most colorful and deadly aces. The write-ups include available details on their wingmen, squadrons and lives. If you don't like the fact that three pirates grace the rolls, feel free to write and voice your complaint, but don't expect much in the way of a retraction. Pirates and privateers are still pilots, and there's only one way to keep them from our pages. Prove yourself by retiring them, and maybe you'll take their place next year. Either that, or your failure will add to their already impressive reputations. In the end, the only argument that matters is the one in the air.

Air Action Weekly is about air combat. Leave everything else on the ground.

Nero L. MacLeon
Editor, *Air Action Weekly*

The Fall From Glory

Essay by Robert Garret, Ph.D., Manhattan, NY, Empire State

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

No one agrees on the first warning sign of the breakup of the United States of America. Many point to the secession of South Carolina that touched off the American Civil War in 1860. Others blame our Founding Fathers, who built so much compromise into our system of government in order to form one union, under God but certainly divisible. Those events, however significant they may have been to their own times, played no real role in the breakup of the United States and Canada into the current collection of twenty sovereign nations. It would be just as valid to argue that the single plane shot down in last week's dogfight proves that the entire squadron will be lost six months from now.

1920 saw a few of the first signs of the coming collapse, in the aftermath of the influenza epidemic that followed the Great War. America's involvement in "Europe's battles" and the loss of so many citizens to a disease brought back by returning soldiers fostered intense isolationism, both national and regional. President Wilson's push to form the League of Nations drew increasing fire from U.S. citizens, opening the door for Warren G. Harding's "New Independence from Europe" campaign. Harding called for greater separation from the world in general, and the Regionalist party adopted it as part of their platform. Many Regionalists who won office in that year used their new power to push forward their own programs; the most controversial of these was Prohibition, which in 1920 failed ratification as a Constitutional amendment.

Prohibition consumed the political scene for the next three years, with the split for and against it occurring largely along regional lines. Its political power undercut by the Regionalists, Washington's indecisiveness forced politicians to support efforts to sign Prohibition into law—or to outright reject it—for their own states. Harding's death in 1923 handed the presidency to Calvin Coolidge, who refused to get behind the wavering Federal Prohibition Bill. Without presidential support, the bill quickly died. The war against alcohol

that had polarized the country now turned into a regional fight. Checkpoints appeared on state borders as various state authorities tried to restrict the flow of alcohol into "dry" regions. Many states also used these checkpoints to levy unofficial and illegal tariffs.

The campaigns of 1924 reflected the growing shift in power from Washington to the statehouses as the individual states demanded more authority. State governments appropriated greater powers, and a too-late move by the federal government to prevent it failed. The result—stronger states and a weak central government—is exemplified by the 1924 Bluefield Incident, in which Kentucky and West Virginia started feuding with the coastal states of Virginia and North Carolina for control of the Appalachians, origin of much of the moonshine funneled up north. The Virginia National Guard captured a large Kentucky convoy outside the town of Bluefield, only to discover that their prize was a Kentucky guard unit running alcohol out of the Appalachians toward the West Virginia border. Though jurisdiction clearly belonged to Kentucky, the men were tried in Virginia on vague charges and jailed. Virginia refused Kentucky's request to transfer the men back to their home state, and later rejected a similar "suggestion" from Washington D.C. Only under the threat of U.S. Army intervention did Virginia finally release the prisoners to federal authorities, almost two years after their capture.

ON THE EDGE

Except for the Bluefield Incident and a few other isolated problems, the years from 1924 through 1927 were among the best the United States had known, as Regionalists stepped back from their programs and allowed the country a collective respite. Unemployment dropped to an

Harvard-educated Robert Garret flew for three years with the Broadway Bombers before injury forced him from the skies. He consults with the Empire State on air defense, but AAW finds his outlook neutral and informative. For direct questions asked by Editor Nero L. MacLeon and Dr. Garret's answers, see the editorial sidebar Final Flights.

all-time low as the states employed their own people to maintain growing state infrastructures, even as the national infrastructure began to show the strain of severe regulation. Per capita income increased, and more people began investing in the stock market—in most cases foolishly, carried away by their own prosperity. The federal government might have reclaimed its authority then, but chose to wait for the next major election year to increase its power base and avoid reawakening Regionalist opposition.

As it turned out, Washington waited too long. In 1927, a new but no less deadly strain of the influenza that had killed so many in 1918 returned. The new epidemic struck a fatal blow to the nation's morale, which had just begun to recover from the shocks of the past decade. People were afraid, and acted accordingly. Cities and then states shut down their borders and turned their checkpoints into quarantine-enforcement sites. Necessary border crossings were made under armed supervision with strict controls. Lawless people like smugglers and raiders began adopting the airplane as their primary method of border-jumping, avoiding the limitations of the ground-based automobile.

The election of 1928 suffered weak voter turnout, as most people wanted to avoid large crowds of strangers. The Regionalists returned with a vengeance, with various "Strong State" platforms that effectively gutted the federal government's remaining power. Governors negotiated with their neighbors to establish interstate alliances, formalizing the segregated regions that had grown out of the preceding decade's isolationist policies. In many cases, these new alliances merely reinforced divisions that had existed from the United States' founding days. In early 1929, Utah enacted the Smith Law that made Mormonism the state's official religion, with state government support. With the federal government's impotence and Utah's isolation, cries to heed the traditional "separation of Church and State" went unheeded. Fearing similar measures, strongly anti-Mormon states such as Pennsylvania and Massachusetts began to discriminate against the Mormons, driving many toward Utah.

DIVIDED WE FALL

In October of 1929, the stock market crash became the straw that broke the back of the United States. Regionalism had wrecked the national economy and undermined any semblance of central control. Washington D.C.'s call for financial assistance from state governments met with fervent isolationist responses. President Hoover used the military to keep D.C. from slipping into lawlessness, but no one knew how long the states would support the illusion that remote Washington was still the center of U.S. government.

The answer was two months. The pressure-cooker of political differences, religious discrimination and fear exploded on January 1, 1930, when Texas seceded from the United States. Before the federal government could do more than bluster in response, California, the Carolinas, Utah and New York all withdrew from the United States and formed their own nations. The federal government possessed neither the will nor the financial resources to mount the multi-front political and military campaign necessary to hold the fragile union together. Instead, Washington found itself scrambling to prevent the outbreak of war as North America broke into European-sized countries along cultural and economic lines.

Those lines shifted over the next three years, and spread to include Canada as Québec broke away from its parent nation. The short-lived Outer Banks nation of Virginia and the Carolinas quickly folded itself into the rest of the Southern states, giving rise to the new Confederation of Dixie throughout the south. Louisiana seceded from Dixie soon afterward, requesting support from France for its independence. Ill-prepared to go it alone, the Midwestern states sank deep into the Depression and then resurrected themselves as a Christian Communist nation. The relatively strong Lakota and Navajo Native American tribes founded their own nations as well, respectively carving territory out of the nearly defunct Dakotas and the barren deserts and plateau country of the American southwest.

RISEN FROM THE ASHES

What had begun as a simple love affair with airplanes, those exotic and powerful engines of the skies, turned to desperate necessity as commerce between the new nations of North America ground to a halt. Ongoing conflict tore up the intercontinental railway system at national borders, and the few large highway systems built or under construction quickly fell into disrepair or were sabotaged. The automobile, once thought destined to become the national shipping vehicle, gave way to gyrotaxis, aerobuses and the large cargo zeppelins that commanded the skylines and made trade possible between friendly nations.

Where the money went, sky pirates followed. These marauders forced the rise of air militias to protect the shipping lanes. The pirates maintained an edge, however, and their early successes gave way to today's large and numerous pirate groups. Piracy got another boost when militias began raiding rival shipping concerns, often receiving bonuses from their employers that reflected the value of the cargo taken or destroyed. As pirate and militia raids cut deeper into national economies, the various governments began subsidizing air wings. Piracy lessened in the face of this organized response, then adapted to the changing times with the formation of larger pirate gangs—the new corsairs. From there, it was only a matter of time before nations began to subsidize pirates as well, handing out letters of marque in order to direct pirate activities away from their own zeppelin fleets and toward those of their enemies.

Today, North America is a continent politely at war with itself. Militias fall on each other with raids and swift strikes in defense of their own nation's interests, trying to maintain an edge over their neighbors. Pirates and privateers challenge the militias for control of the skies, and are all too often victorious. The air lanes are the new frontier, where a single individual with skill and nerve can make all the difference. Today's flyers are men and women to be applauded, feared and above all respected, for as long as they can push the envelope and maintain their hold on the skies. We have given them this power. The sky is the limit—but five thousand feet up makes for a long fall from glory.

Final Flights

AAW editor Nero MacLeon held a brief phone conference with Dr. Garret, asking for clarifications and expansions on the "Fall From Glory" article. For further reading, we recommend Dr. Garret's books *Fractured America* and *The Skies on Fire*.

Q: If Prohibition had been signed into federal law as a Constitutional amendment, do you believe that the states would not have fractured?

A: There is certainly an argument for that idea. But the vast socialist state of Russia collapsed soon after America did, so perhaps such breakups are inevitable for any large nation. The Bluefield Incident indicates that Prohibition was a regional sore point that undercut the power of the federal government to the point of dissolution.

Q: So would you call the Crash of '29 and the Depression that followed the ultimate reason for the Breakup?

A: No, just the last step along a convoluted path. If you want me to pin it down, I'd say the Breakup rests equally on Prohibition's failure, the second influenza epidemic, and the Crash of '29. Preventing any of the three might have reversed the effects of Regionalism. On the other hand, it might only have delayed the inevitable. The quick rise of the new generation of corsairs proves that a strong sense of individuality remained in America.

Q: You imply that the states fractured along semi-equal lines—yet look at the Confederation of Dixie, especially when compared to the tiny Atlantic Coalition.

A: Equality has nothing to do with size. The Atlantic Coalition is well protected. Dixie owns an impressive percentage of the country, but check its actual population and industrialization percentages. Any true inequalities worked themselves out in those first few years—such as the folding of the Outer Banks states into Dixie, Texas' appropriation of Oklahoma, and the rise of two independent Native American nations.

Q: Toward the end of your essay, you mention the automobile. Are you saying that cars might have become as popular and important as the airplane?

A: Try to imagine an intercontinental highway system, first rivaling and then surpassing the scale of railways at that time. Trucks that could haul cargo as zeppelins do now. Touring buses and ships. Without the emphasis on commercial and passenger airlines, there would have been no need for such a massive buildup of personal planes and militia fighters.

Q: I find that an amusing concept.

A: It could happen.

LEA
Weekly

Crimson Skies Over America

Compiled by Danielle Cross, Assistant Editor

With field reporters winging into various parts of the continent, interviewing pilots and digging up the truth (if any) behind rumors, our Warriors of the Air issue always gives AAW a chance to take an in-depth reading of political turmoil and air-action hot spots that might be of interest to flyers everywhere. Below are the latest points of conflict and those that will soon be popping up over the horizon; look for fuller coverage in later issues.

THE NORTHEASTERN GATEWAY



Maritime Provinces

Level out over Lake Champlain on a northerly heading and you'll soon be over the Richelieu River, heading toward Montreal and an area full of trouble. To the west is "Smugglers' Slide," the triangular patch of flatlands that Québec bootleggers must cross to gain the dubious safety of the Empire State's Adirondack Mountains. East of the Richelieu is a border war waiting to happen, with Québec and the Maritime Provinces contesting the lands south of the St. Lawrence River. To make matters worse, word is that the small but numerous pirate havens in the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains are two insults away from a territory war over control of the Champlain Valley.

Currently, Québec's free-trade agreement with the Atlantic Coalition and Columbia is being held together by dangerous shipping lanes that stretch out over the Atlantic and those few that weave down through the Champlain region. The Empire State and the Maritime Provinces could close down the latter routes at a moment's notice, assuming the pirates don't accomplish that first.

EMPIRE AND AIR LANES

The Empire State and the Industrial States of America suffer from intense mutual jealousy—the Empire State covets the ISA's industrial capacity, while the ISA would love to have New York's status as the North American continent's leading political

power and chief trading center. The latter is especially valuable, as all waterborne shipping into and out of the Great Lakes region is either subject to heavy tariff or refused passage by the Empire State. Ontario's neutrality allows a small loophole, though the ISA finds Ontario's handling fees only marginally more acceptable. The mutual rivalry between the Empire State and the ISA can only lead to further conflict, especially considering Empire President La Guardia's recent alliance with the Black Swan; she and her band will certainly find targets of opportunity westward of the Empire State. When challenged about the Black Swan, La Guardia points out that the Red Skull Legion has been based in the ISA for years and is almost certainly "encouraged"—if not directly subsidized—by the ISA's government.



Empire State



Industrial States of America

How long the Empire State can afford to remain focused westward is difficult to say. With the recent air strike into Manhattan by the Confederation of Dixie, the southern passages into this nation are more heavily patrolled as President La Guardia considers reprisals. Speculation abounds as to whether the strike offers proof of complicity on the part of Appalachia, a nation of longstanding neutrality toward the South (and perhaps its ally). The so-called experts are in disagreement, and the lack of real authority in the Appalachian Mountains argues against any trust between a "wet" and a "dry" nation.

COLUMBIA

Guilt by association seems to be a recurring nightmare for neutral Columbia, which dreams of someday putting the fractured United States of America back together again. Unfairly accused of and discriminated against with every act of terror

committed by the Unionist movement, Columbia almost always loses what political headway it manages to gain between atrocities.

Recently, after Columbia's failure to rout Hell's Henchmen from the mountains surrounding Piedmont, the Empire State crossed the border and destroyed the pirate haven. When Piedmont authorities broadcast mild threats in response to the uninvited assistance, one Broadway Bomber (whose name remains undisclosed) peeled off and took out Piedmont's aerodrome communications tower.



Columbia

APPALACHIAN TERRITORY

Except for the occasional section of the Texas border, the Appalachian Mountains may be the deadliest stretch of territory in North America—especially where the short Allegheny Front (also known as Hell's Heights) crosses the nations of Appalachia, Dixie, Columbia and the Empire State, and touches the ISA.

The Outer Banks states of Dixie continue to vie with Appalachian authorities for control of the land and the illegal liquor being funneled up from the Banks region into the ISA and the Empire State. Appalachia has long sought Empire State backing (and militia support) for its claim on the mountains, playing off the loathing most northerners have for the reborn Confederacy. Rumor has it that government-backed 'shine operations are deliberately targeted toward the ISA and not the Empire State in a gesture of goodwill (though none of these stories has yet been proved). If true, this has made strange bedfellows indeed of a dry and a wet nation.



Appalachia



Dixie

The Appalachias are also home to more smuggler's dens and pirate havens per square mile than any other area on the continent except Free Colorado. Hell's Henchmen, who originated in the area of Hell's Heights but now maraud throughout the mountain range, operate several bases in the area and are a force to be reckoned with. One rumor suggests that the Henchmen accept "tribute" from Dixie and Appalachia not to join the other side, and so continue to raid both.

THE ISLE OF TEXAS

Any North American nation that claims to be a friend of the Republic of Texas is very quiet about it. Oklahoma is considered a protectorate state, which seems to indicate that Texas takes any-



Republic of Texas

thing it needs. The Texas Rangers provide protection whenever they feel that another nation is seriously infringing on their state's "turf."

Texas, for its part, has little good to say about anyone. Texans currently reserve their greatest animosity for French Louisiana, particularly the air wing of the French Foreign Legion that recently arrived from the Spanish Civil War front and now patrols the Texas border. Next in line is Dixie, if only because of England's meddling in North American affairs by assisting that nation. Texas reviles Dixie even more than it does Free Colorado, the base of last week's heavy pirate raid that smashed the city of Amarillo. The nation of Arixo has

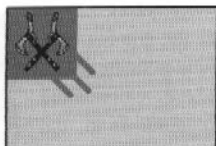


Arixo

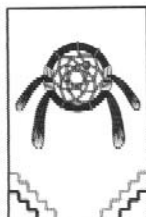
no trouble with the Republic of Texas at the moment, though the government is aware that Texas is casting an eye toward Arixo's mineral-rich lands. Texas has considered Mexico beneath contempt ever since the Second Battle of the Alamo; they don't think much more of the People's Collective, even though the Dusters recently put up a good show against Texas Rangers who strayed into Kansas Territory.

NATIVE AMERICA

Two islands remain of the wide spaces once roamed by the American Indians. Considered closed nations, the Navajo and Lakota Sioux violently defend their remaining territory. Though the Navajo Nation's borders are well defined, no one knows exactly how far Lakota influence extends into the former states of Montana and Wyoming.



Lakota



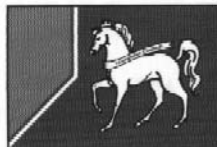
Navajo Nation

Limited trade goes on between the Native countries and others, more of it with the flexible Navajo than with the Lakota. Nonetheless, both nations view others with distrust. Both are militant dry nations, considering alcohol just another attempt by outsiders to destroy their society; bootlegging is punishable by immediate execution. This

instinctive paranoia makes dealing with them difficult; Appalachia's recent production and sales of "General Custer Whiskey" has only made matters worse with the Lakota.

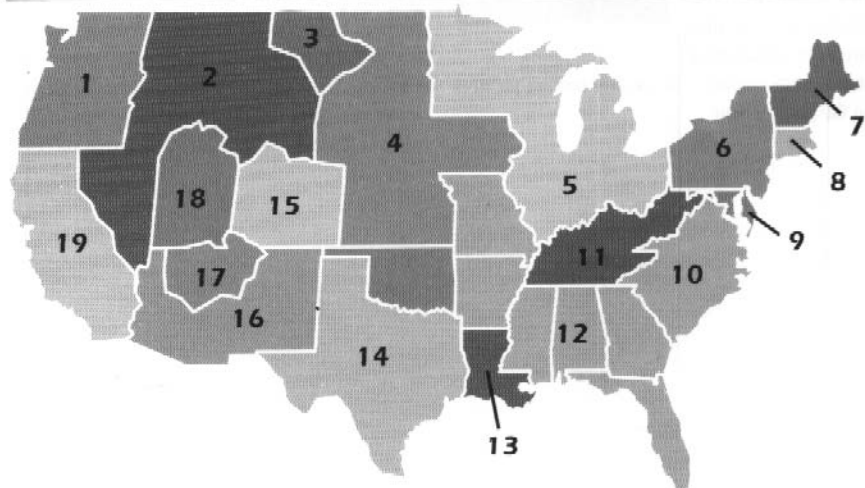
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

Like the Republic of Texas, the Free Colorado State doesn't much care whom it upsets. Where Texas deliberately antagonizes other nations, the FCS is simply too freewheeling to notice. With its mountain-based cities, Free Colorado is a pirate's paradise. Currently, the pirate-controlled city of Boulder and the "free city" of Denver are the leading political capitals, though it is difficult to say which has the real power.

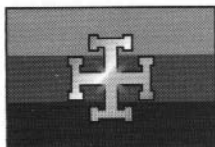


Free Colorado

Surrounded by dry nations, Boulder's primary interest lies in running alcohol into those areas, along with the occasional raid of resources. The Denver government maintains ties to



- | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|----|---------------|
| 1 | Pacifica | 8 | Atlantic Coalition | 15 | Free Colorado |
| 2 | Disputed Western Territories | 9 | Columbia | 16 | Arixa |
| 3 | Lakota | 10 | Outer Banks (Protectorate of Dixie) | 17 | Navajo Nation |
| 4 | People's Collective | 11 | Appalachia | 18 | Utah |
| 5 | Industrial States of America | 12 | Dixie | 19 | Hollywood |
| 6 | Empire State | 13 | French Louisiana | | |
| 7 | Maritime Provinces | 14 | Republic of Texas | | |



Utah

fighting off raiders and smugglers who come in over the Roan Plateau. The Navajo Nation has put a standing bounty on the head of Free Colorado's most successful smugglers; more recently, Texas has turned its red eye toward Free Colorado for the sacking of Amarillo.

UP AND DOWN 'THE WATERFRONT'

Even though Hollywood continues to stage raids on shipping between Arixo and Pacifica, neither of those nations is Hollywood's greatest enemy. That honor goes to the Empire State, which sees Hollywood as New York's rival for prestige in the world market. Hollywood recently reacted to Empire President La Guardia's borderline dishonesty in that arena by threatening to place an embargo on sending motion pictures to the Empire State.



Nation of Hollywood

Appalachia, Dixie and Hollywood, all wet nations. Utah is the highest-profile target of FCS illegal activities, and the Mormon militias are constant-

The onetime state of California remains at odds with Pacifica to the north, especially since deciding to reclaim the coastal ranges and lands north of the Sierra Nevadas occupied by Pacifica since 1932. Firmly entrenched in those areas, Pacifica is concentrating heavily on the growing conflicts in the far north, where White Russians from the Alaskan Ranges are causing trouble in the coastal regions of the former British Columbia. To the south, Hollywood is worried about Mexico's frequent stabs at San Diego and Arixo's support for the many pirate havens in the Mojave. The Diamondback gang has proven particularly troublesome on both sides of the desert with heavy raiding. So far, Hollywood has not managed to prove collusion between the Diamondbacks and the Navajo Nation.

In addition to the desert pirates and the Yosemite Brotherhood, who rule the havens in the Sierra Nevadas, the western region of Hollywood is known for its coastal bases. With pirate coves hidden along the entire West Coast, from the Santa Barbara Islands to the San Juans, Prince Vlad and his Red Dragons are without peer. Hollywood, Pacifica, Arixo and even Mexico have made frequent attempts to approach the pirate king with an offer of alliance, so far with no apparent success.



Pacifica

*Major Loyle "Show Stopper" Crawford**The Black Swan**Solobo Salawa*

Warriors of the Air

*"Marshall" Bill Redmann*

Here they are, AAW's Warriors of the Air selections. Say what you will about their nationalities, loyalties and personalities, one fact remains true: These pilots exhibit a deadly proficiency at the art of aerial combat. Should you take issue with our choices, have it out with the pilots themselves. Who knows, next year it might be your face on the cover.

*Comrade Captain Aaron "Easter" Whitaker**Jonathan "Ghengis" Kahn**Charlotte "Charlie" Steele**Colonel Beauregard "Raptor" Travis*



SUN
Weekly

Major Loyle "Show Stopper" Crawford

Interview by Alexia White-Coleman, Society Columnist

Admittedly, the opening night of Clifford Odets' *Golden Boy* may not be the usual place one seeks a famous flying ace. Theatre and art would seem to be a bit at odds with the usual rough-around-the-edges style affected by most of the continent's best pilots. But this columnist knows her business, and so as she settles back into her seat, she is not surprised to see no less than three of the Empire State's Broadway Bombers awaiting the opening act.

The after-show party, by invitation only, thins the crowd so that the Bombers are easier to find. Loyle Crawford is "holding court" near the fountain, one foot up on the edge of its wide bowl and

looking every bit the dashing man of the society pages, in a black tuxedo that fits him as easily as any flight gear. His eyes outshine the light that sparkles off the pool as he easily shifts the conversation through politics, finance and the latest Madison Avenue rumors. I count a Rockefeller and a relative of President La Guardia in the assembly, as well as the usual entourage of beautiful women who hang on his every word as if the upcoming elections or Wall Street happenings are of intense interest to them. A comment at the expense of Matthew Beckett—an up-and-comer on Madison Avenue but certainly not yet worthy of being invited here—sets them all laughing; the



Major Loyle Crawford surveys the airfield at Palisades, New Jersey, Empire State, home of the Madison Ventures.

Rockefeller toasts Crawford's wit.

The Hollywood Knight glamour boys and girls never had it so good.

Of course, Loyle Crawford comes well-recommended to any social circle. As the nephew of Madison Avenue veteran Bryce Crawford, he entered Manhattan's social elite at a young age, and rubbed elbows with some of the Empire State's finest. After a solid education from Yale, Loyle spent a year involved in the family business.

Under his uncle's tutelage, he managed money and traded on power as he started the friendships and made the contacts that would sustain him through his later years. New York business as usual, in other words.

Then, as with the young scions of the Carnegies and Kennedys, Loyle opted for a tour with the Empire State's militia. Guaranteed acceptance into the Broadway Bombers, Loyle learned quickly and turned out to be a natural pilot with a flair for the dramatic. Bryce Crawford waited just long enough to be sure of his nephew's ability, then used his own flair for public relations to turn Loyle into an "overnight" success. Loyle promptly rose to the challenge in several engagements against pirate bands raiding out of the Champlain Valley, and then in a skirmish against the Industrialized States of America over right-of-passage for ISA cargo vessels through the St. Lawrence River. The latter performance confirmed Loyle's position and earned him the nickname "Show Stopper" for his hard-hitting style; Loyle Crawford prefers to shred an opposing plane rather than merely crippling it.

Loyle has yet to return to his uncle's business, and the elder Crawford seems in no hurry to reclaim his nephew so long as Loyle's popularity (and presumably his influence) continues to grow as a pilot. That decision paid immense dividends

last year with the raid against the Hell's Henchmen pirate base in the Allegheny Mountains. The Bombers' two "Rockefeller Squadrons," otherwise known as the Empire Sky Guard under the command of Major Richard "Wraith" Merriwether-Mackenzie, paid Jesse "Cold-blooded" Cobbs a visit. Loyle's use of incendiary rounds caused three magnificent "show-stopper" explosions over Piedmont, Columbia; the last of these punched through the walls of a warehouse and cost Cobbs

a small fortune in illegal alcohol bound for the Empire State. Along with influence applied afterward by Bryce Crawford, this event netted Loyle his own squadron. Most recently, the "Show Stopper" foiled an attempt on the life of President La Guardia when two Red Skull pirate fighters invaded the skies of Manhattan to attack the president's air limo, Empire One.

LIEUTENANT EUGENE "MONEY MAN" WINDTHORPE III

Eugene Windthorpe comes from new money, and many speculate that Eugene's father purchased his son's slot in the Broadway Bombers. Whatever the truth of that rumor, Loyle Crawford requested the brash young man in his wing. "He flies like he has something to prove," says Crawford with a trace of

affection, possibly remembering his own early piloting days.

Windthorpe's nickname is a dig at his family's recent arrival on the Manhattan social scene, but the new pilot has taken it to heart. "I'm willing to put my money down on the table," he likes to say with an impish grin. So far he has delivered, holding his own in combat against Adirondack smugglers and in a brutal engagement against Hell's Henchmen (the one in which Loyle Crawford received so much press). According to comments by other Bomber squadron members,



The Empire State



The Broadway Bombers



The Madison Venturers

Windthorpe's favorite expression in the air is "let it ride," a saying that usually precedes particularly daring maneuvers.

THE MADISON VENTURERS

Loyle Crawford's squadron in the Broadway Bombers is sponsored by Bryce Crawford's



Crawford's mesmerizing gaze makes him a hit with the ladies.

Madison Avenue interests in addition to being subsidized by the Empire State. President La Guardia has even suggested that a nephew of his might try out for the Venturers, provided an opening becomes available. The Venturers want for nothing; their planes are always parade-ready, and they have twenty four hour air limo service available to and from the squadron's aerodrome. Along with the Carnegie Crusaders and both Rockefeller-sponsored squadrons, the Venturers are as often seen at social functions as they are in the air. They inject a dash of energy into Manhattan's social calendar, and so are in great demand.

The squadron's usual station is one of the skyscraper aerodromes that command the city's skylanes. The Venturers escorted the Black Swan into Manhattan during the privateer's recent visit to the Big Apple, and have formed an honor guard for President La Guardia's zeppelin more than a dozen times. The unit has taken on Loyle Crawford's trademark stunt, a barrel roll over Madison Avenue, as their personal mark. Regardless of their current station, on returning from any mission or routine patrol, Loyle leads his men and women in a low-altitude pass over Madison Avenue, buzzing by his uncle's offices as they perform the coordinated maneuver. The Venturers' emblem, an apple-shaped diamond, is painted on the wings of all craft. Bryce Crawford usually inserts a pilot's personal crest (if any) into any publicity shots taken of the Venturers.

SCENARIO: Best Show in Town

The strike against Hell's Henchmen should at least briefly silence those who have called the Broadway Bombers more talk than action and more parade than combat. Coming out of the dawn sun over Piedmont, Major Merriwether-MacKenzie's Sky Guard squadrons first buzzed the local airfield to warn them that the Empire State was in the area. Then they headed up into the Allegheny Mountains toward the Henchmen's newest base, while Empire State carrier zeppelins settled in low over Piedmont to persuade the local militia to remain on the ground.

The pirates weren't quite as slow to react as the Bombers might have hoped; the first enemy squadron popped over a nearby mountain and forced a battle with the second Sky Guard over Piedmont while the First Guard continued on toward the pirate haven. Flying nape of the earth as they searched for the Henchmen's warehouses, the Bombers climbed a steep mountain and ran right into a Henchmen zeppelin as it rose out of the next valley. Captain Neilson Abercrombie, leader of the Second Guard, died when his plane slammed into the side of the pirate zeppelin and exploded on impact. Clearly, before the Bombers could move on, the zeppelin must die.

SET-UP

Lay out one clear horizontal map (no zeppelin). The Henchmen set up first within 2 hexes of the *Violator*. The Venturers squadron sets up on the south map edge after the pirate player has placed his or her units.

The *Violator* is a commercial craft, modified to carry four broadside flak cannons. The pirate player secretly designates which positions are armed with these guns and which are dummies. The positions remain secret until the first time the guns fire. The *Violator's* engine pod guns are twin 60-caliber cannons loaded with armor-piercing ammunition; the nose and tail pods carry twin 70-calibers, also loaded with AP ammunition.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Venturers Squadron, Broadway Bombers

Lead 1: Loyle "Show-Stopper" Crawford	
Avenger	6-8-7-7-5-6
Wing 1: Eugene "Money Man" Windthorpe III	
Avenger	3-2-6-4-3-5
Lead 2: Heather "Ivy" Iverian	
Warhawk	4-3-6-4-3-5
Wing 2: Kenneth "Iron Horse" Vanderbilt	
Warhawk	3-3-5-4-3-5
Lead 3: Carlton "Carpethagger" Hawthorne	
Raven	5-2-7-4-3-3
Wing 3: Nancy "Market Maker" Morgan	
Raven	3-4-4-6-3-2

Hell's Henchmen

Lead 1: Joe "Badboy" Dukes	
Devastator	6-4-6-7-5-4
Wing 1: Tanya "The Tease" Hill	
Devastator	5-3-5-4-4-3
Lead 2: Veronica "Misery" Fuentes	
Fury	5-3-5-4-4-5
Wing 2: Jozef "Stalin" Niederman	
Fury	2-3-7-4-3-2

Hell's Henchmen zeppelin, the *Violator*

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Broadway Bombers' objective is to capture or down the pirate zeppelin. The Henchmen's objective is to clear the sky of Empire State planes.

WINNING THE MISSION

Whoever is in control of the zeppelin at the end of the mission is the winner. The pirate player controls the zeppelin by destroying or driving off the Empire squadron. The Empire player controls the zeppelin by shooting it down or destroying all of its guns and destroying or driving off all pirate aircraft.

The Black Swan

A compilation by Megan "Irish Rose" Whitney, Flier and Field Reporter

To call the Black Swan a woman of mystery is both obvious and a glaring understatement. More correctly, she is a woman of many mysteries. Stories about her and her origins abound, and she seems to delight in acknowledging all of them while suggesting that none are the whole truth.

The few facts are as tantalizing as the Swan herself, with her lustrous dark hair and a gaze that can kill or caress. The earliest mention of her involves pit fighting in the pirate haven of

Obyezhischche, in eastern Alaska. A 1924 edition of the small community's weekly newspaper briefly mentions a new fighter named Talia, described as a skinny "ugly duckling." Since then, the "duckling" has blossomed into a graceful and lethal swan. As she racked up victory after victory, the "Black Swan" nickname became hers.

That early newspaper citation suggested that the Black Swan was in her teens, but that is mere conjecture. No one knows for certain when she was born, or to whom, and no one has been foolish enough to ask her to produce a birth certificate. She has suggested on numerous occasions that she was born in Mother Russia, but escaped during the chaos of the Russian civil war. Those who have noted her marked resemblance to the late Tsar's daughters speculate that she may be Anastasia, about whom all manner of legends abound. In response to such stories, the Swan has reportedly said, "What use would there be in claiming the name of Romanov? The Romanovs were meant to rule Russia. Until their throne is returned to them, their lives have no purpose."

In Alaska, the Black Swan soon moved from the fighting pits to the cockpits of airplanes, proving as graceful and deadly a pilot as she had been a pit fighter. She started her career with Kunetsove's Kestrels, a White Russian band that claimed to be building an airfleet to strike at the Bolsheviks. In reality, the Kestrels preyed upon expatriate Russian, Eskimo, Canadian and American outposts indiscriminately. Anatoly Kunetsov and the Black Swan had a falling out, after which she challenged him to an air-duel. Kunetsov survived being shot down, but has never flown since.

Instead of assuming command of the Kestrels, Talia (sometimes also called Natalie or Nataka) left the frozen north and ventured far south, into Mexico. Little is known about her time there. Proof that she was there at all is scant: a few photos of her taken after the Siege of Veracruz in 1926, the battle of Monterey in early 1929, and touring the shattered Baja Bandits' base after a punishing strike by the Hollywood Knights in



Many braggarts claim trysts with the Black Swan; just how many are true, she isn't saying.

November of '29. Various stories claim she flew from Mexico to Havana, and then went to Europe to involve herself in intrigues there. Some point out that she might just as likely have been laid low by the influenza pandemic of 1927, which rolled into Mexico in early 1928.

The collapse of the United States brought the Black Swan back north of the border in early 1930. She moved into and out of various pirate bands in the southwest and on up into the Colorado Free State during the early part of the decade, becoming much more visible as her exploits splashed across the front pages of a legion of small regional newspapers. She took on a Robin Hood-like aura, and encouraged the pirates with whom she worked to be selective in how they chose and dealt with targets. The Swan's fellow flyers minimized collateral damage to structures; when they captured prize cargo, the Swan often made sure that things like medicines were delivered to the communities for which they were meant, sacrificing the profit she could have made by selling them on the black market. (Such actions are likely the source of the rumor that the flu almost got her in 1927.)

Also unique among pirates is the Black Swan's addition of a chaplain to every group she has ever joined. Devoutly Russian Orthodox, she attends services whenever possible; rumors abound of her entering churches humbly dressed, joining a community in worship, then leaving to raid elsewhere but leaving her fellow worshippers alone.

In early 1932, the Black Swan vanished for almost six months, after which she returned to Colorado and joined Red Sky's pirate band. She remained with them for a year and a half, and in 1934 left to establish her own pirate band. Other air pirates with whom she'd flown through the years flocked to join her. In a daring raid on Amarillo, the Swan's new band managed to hijack a Republic of Texas zeppelin, which became the Swan's flagship. In the four years since then, the Black Swan has systematically staged raids in the People's Collective, the Industrial States of

America, Dixie and the Republic of Texas. Many pundits expected her to raid Empire State shipping; her receipt of letters of marque from President La Guardia came as a complete surprise. As a privateer, she mostly preys on Dixie and ISA shipping, so successfully that the price on her head now tops \$10,000.

Her private life has been no less tempestuous and enigmatic than her public one. A year ago, she joined Howard Hughes in New York for dinner to celebrate Hughes' setting of the cross-continental flight speed record. She has been linked with other figures, both famous and notorious. She has admitted that she "greatly enjoys the company of men," but in examining a list of her real and alleged liaisons, one gets the sense of a certain competition with her paramours. Many of them

have been enemies: law enforcement officers, the leaders of rival pirate gangs, hotshot pilots looking to further a reputation. Many of them have also ended up dead by her hand, which means that only the most confident of men will approach her.

She seems to be seeking exactly this reaction, as if looking for a man she can consider her equal. Those who see themselves

as her superiors are quickly disabused of that notion. Those weak in spirit or body never get close to her, or are quickly discarded. Her daring exploits in the air and her success in a deadly profession testify to her passion; her somewhat flirtatious public persona dares people to approach, while suggesting that getting past the facade is a journey only a hero can successfully undertake. Many men have died trying to prove themselves that hero, and not a few women have perished trying to surpass the Black Swan. Even more have suggested that the Swan is no more than her facade. They say her reputation keeps the prudent away and attracts unstable individuals who willingly risk death to prove a meaningless point. Others note that her detractors often find out what lurks behind that facade, but don't live long enough to tell anyone.

The Black Swan is clearly the premier pilot



The Black Swan



The Black Swan prefers her Curtiss Wright J2 Fury to almost any other plane.

of 1937. Regardless of gender or heritage, or real or imagined exploits, she commands a fiercely loyal band of privateers who thrive in one of the continent's strongest nation-states. That accomplishment alone—which takes brains, foresight and guts—adds more than enough substance to the Black Swan legend.

WILLIAM K. "FENN" FENNEL

William K. "Fenn" Fennel is a curious constant in the Black Swan's privateer company. Lean as a greyhound, he has prematurely silver-gray hair that is said to have turned that color from the shock of combat in France, even though he hardly appears old enough to have flown in the Great War. Fenn is a man of few words, best known for

his sharp eyesight and uncanny gunnery skills. The Black Swan keeps him as her wingman because he sees the enemy from very far off and is superbly skilled at shooting them down.

Fenn—always called by his full name, never Will or Bill—keeps largely to himself, but seems to be present whenever the Black Swan needs help extricating herself from difficulties. Since the pirate band's move to New York, Fenn has attended the opera several times, and has often been seen in the New York City library and various museums. His subdued and courteous conduct on the ground is at odds with his image of a cold-blooded killer in the air.

SCENARIO: Egg Hunt

Carl Fabergé, jeweler to the Tsars of Russia, produced wonderful works of art. The best known among these are the Fabergé eggs, which were made out of actual bird's eggs ranging in size from robin's eggs to ostrich eggs. The North American "egg baron" is Harmon Hunt of Dallas, in the Republic of Texas. No one knows the full extent of Hunt's collection, but the acknowledged portion is worth more than \$100,000 in cash. To someone with an emotional attachment to it, the collection is priceless.

The Black Swan decides she wants to liberate some of these delicate treasures. As she approaches Hunt's mansion, she challenges his personal air corps—Hunt's Hunters—to a duel rather than risk damaging the eggs by attacking the house.

SET-UP

Use the Sea Port, with the Black Swans starting on the north edge and Hunt's Hunters starting on the south edge.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Black Swan Squadron's objective is to neutralize Hunt's Hunters to allow for safe egg-napping. The Black Swan's pilots must shoot down or force all of Hunt's Hunters off the map.

The Hunters' objective is to control the map at the end of the mission. To achieve this, the Hunters must have at least one functional plane with working guns flying after the destruction and/or removal of all Black Swan aircraft from the map.

WINNING THE MISSION

The squadron with the last functional plane on the map wins. Hunt's Hunters can gain a moral victory if they shoot down the Black Swan.

PLANES AND PILOTS

Black Swan Squadron

Lead 1: The Black Swan	
Fury	7-7-9-9-6-8
Wing 1: William "Fenn" Fennel	
Fury	4-3-6-4-4-4
Lead 2: Edward "Mad Eddie" Sears	
Raven	5-4-5-3-3-6
Wing 2: Yulia "The Architect" Chelekhova	
Raven	4-4-5-3-3-5
Lead 3: Judith "Valkyrie" DuChamp	
Brigand	5-4-4-3-3-6
Wing 3: Genya "Quicksilver" Chelekhova	
Devastator	4-4-6-3-3-4

Hunt's Hunters Squadron

Lead 1: Michael "Hunter" Herrick	
Peacemaker	6-5-7-4-4-6
Wing 1: Frank "Geriatric" Janic	
Peacemaker	5-3-6-4-4-5
Lead 2: Colleen "Willow" McCarthy	
Bloodhawk	4-3-7-4-3-5
Wing 2: Ronald "Six Shooter" Scharpe	
Kestrel	5-3-5-4-3-4
Lead 3: Rudolph "Chaps" Clancy	
Firebrand	5-5-5-4-4-4
Wing 3: Bonnie "Mae West" Frisch	
Kestrel	4-4-5-4-3-4

Soloho Salawa

Interview by LaRon "Talon" Coleman, Flier and Field Reporter

The fastest way to find a Navajo Nation pilot is to fly across the border and wait for a warrior to jump into your six. One of them will, faster than you can imagine. Always on the lookout for smugglers, the Navajo have small airfields dotting the landscape in places you'd swear nothing could land except maybe a gyrotaxi. Being a touch more cautious, I decided to take the slightly less dangerous route and use one of the pre-approved short hops from Flagstaff into the Moenkopi checkpoint. Once there, I requested a guide into the interior and submitted my bona fides for inspection—those being the tribal tattoo placed around my arm six years ago when I swore a blood brotherhood oath with an Apache.

The formalities concluded, I was given a

pilot-guide into the Canyon De Chelly (pronounced de-shay) area, where the authorities had assured me I would find the Hopi ace Soloho. The airstrip (if you could call it that) pointed out by my guide gave me my first impression of Soloho Salawa (Salawa means warrior in the Hopi tongue). To land, a pilot would have to nose down into a narrow canyon, bank and then hit a clearing in which it would have been impossible to stop except for a dramatic uphill slope. I took three passes over the airstrip before risking it, and even then barely managed to avoid piling up against a boulder. My guide then flew back to Moenkopi.

Two planes stood beneath an outcropping of pale rock—a Coyote and an older Lightning. That told me something else—namely, that Soloho was



Like his ancestors before him, Mr. Salawa takes hunting very seriously.

not one of the more militant Native American flyers who believed that a true warrior fights alone. To my mind, that made him more dangerous in the air, but hopefully more reasonable on the ground.

"Not a bad landing." That comment, from startlingly close by, was my hello from the Hopi ace as I jumped down. Solocho stood just to my right, near the boulder on which I had almost cracked my forward wing spar. With admirable ease, he placed one hand on the rock and levered himself up, coming down in a comfortable cross-legged sitting position. Lean and muscular, his dark hair in several long braids tied with strips of leather, he wore a plaid shirt, Levi's jeans and a large pistol on his hip.

As a Hopi, Solocho Salawa belongs to one of the tribes that form the backbone of the Navajo Nation. He was born in Phoenix, in the old state of Arizona, and lived both on and off Native lands during his early years. Fascinated with mechanized flight, he scratched out a living in air shows, which he called "dust-plot equivalents of the ones described these days in Air Action Weekly." During this time he took the name Solocho, Hopi for "the sound made by a bird's wing during flight." A simpler translation, from the salawa perspective, is "whistling arrow."

Solocho moved back to Native lands when the Navajo Nation formed, trading his prop-duster turned-stunt-plane for a beat-up Lightning. As the Navajo Nation clamped down on outside efforts to "subjugate or destroy the People with its poisoning drink" (the standard party-line of the Navajo Nation), Solocho led the defense along the southwest border against Mexican smugglers and pirate bands. He learned to hate Los Dos Muertos (the Two Deaths) for

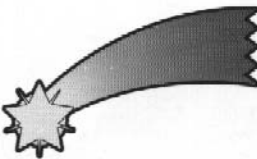
their strikes into Native lands, claiming many kills against those who flew with them, but never nailing either of them personally. The Mexican pirates' move further along the border, from which they now strike into Texas, has left Solocho somewhat frustrated professionally.



Navajo Nation



The Wind Warriors Air Militia



Uing Sotu Squadron (Starfire)

More recently, in the Plateau Wars of 1936, Solocho Salawa commanded his squadron out of Durango, forming the Navajo Nation's second line of defense against the coordinated waves of FCS pirate incursions intent on "opening up" the plateau for freer movement. Ranging into the San Juan Mountains, the Hopi ace personally claimed seventeen kills in the tight confines of the canyons and valleys, including the single-handed defeat of a blockade-runner zeppelin. The Navajo Nation commended him for shutting down the smuggler routes through the San Juans, and soon thereafter handed him the treacherous De Chelly area as his personal responsibility.

OMAU UMTA SALAWA

I was not allowed to meet this young warrior. Possibly suspecting treachery, Omau Umta remained hidden with a weapon trained on me throughout my interview with Solocho. From what little Solocho said of him, Omau Umta is a member of the militant warrior tradition, and so any meeting between us would have been steeped in subtle and obvious challenges to each other's manhood. Given my role as interviewer, guest and outsider, I would have lost that challenge, and so I remain in Solocho's debt for sparing me the humiliation.

As near as I can tell, Omau Umta translates as cloud and thunder—Thundercloud. He has been flying with Solocho Salawa for nearly one year,



Soloho and his people vigorously defend the lands they have recently regained.

stationed in the desert canyons on watch for pirates and smugglers, and flying on the ace's wing during this year's frequent battles against bootleggers. Though I question the wisdom that places such a firebrand with a seasoned flier like Soloho, perhaps the Navajo Nation is hoping that Soloho can temper one of its more headstrong pilots.

THE UING SOTU SQUADRON

Part of the Wind Warriors militia, Soloho's squadron is currently spread throughout the Canyon De Chelly area in an effort to discourage Free Colorado State smugglers from using it as a

back door into western Arizo. The Navajo Nation holds strict views against bootlegging, an offense punishable by death whether or not the smugglers intend to distribute their product in the interior.

Uing (pronounced ew-ing), meaning fire, and Sotu, meaning star, together translate as the Starfire Squadron. Soloho Salawa confirmed that the name comes from the shooting stars commonly seen over the Colorado Plateau rather than the more typical desert reference to the sun. He would comment no further, which leads me to believe that the name holds a deeper significance for him, if not for his people.

SCENARIO: Smuggler's Run

The De Chelly landscape rivals any city skyline for tight quarters and treacherous turns. The discriminating pilot would choose a nice safe altitude at which to traverse this region. Pirates and bootleggers, however, are not known for discrimination. They hug the landscape, hoping their low altitude will keep them from showing against the horizon and drown out their engine noise so that it can't be heard in the next valley over. Unfortunately, with the Navajo Nation spreading its squadrons into these areas, that tactic is no longer working.

Navajo Nation flight doctrine in such cases is straightforward. The two-plane Wind Warriors element remains prepared and engages any outriders or scouts as necessary. Radio communication is almost impossible in the canyons and flying off cliff-sides, and so the cargo planes or zeppelins following the fighters can be lured into a trap following the canyon dogfight with the outriders.

SET-UP

Lay out the Canyon Map. The Raiders force starts on the south map edge. The lead pair of Navajo fighters begins on the north map edge and sets up after the Raiders. The other Navajo pairs enter the map in subsequent turns.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Raiders' objective is to eliminate the Navajo fighters so that the zeppelin following can pass through the region safely. The Navajo force's objective is to eliminate or drive off the Raiders' fighter escort and have enough firepower left over to take out the inbound Raiders' zeppelin. The Navajo force starts widely scattered, with only two planes on the map. In Turn 2, the second pair enters from either the east or west map edge, north of the railroad tracks. In Turn 3, the last pair enters from the opposite edge.

When entering the map, the Navajo planes plot their first move as if they were already on the

PLANES AND PILOTS

Navajo Nation

Lead 1: Soloha Salawa	
Coyote	8-7-9-6-5-7
Wing 1: Omau Umta Salwa	
Peacemaker	6-6-6-6-3-5
Lead 2: Navajo Pilot	
Brigand	5-5-5-4-3-4
Wing 2: Navajo Pilot	
Brigand	4-3-5-4-3-4
Lead 3: Navajo Pilot	
Vampire	5-3-5-4-3-5
Wing 3: Navajo Pilot	
Vampire	5-3-4-4-3-4

Ragtime Raiders

Lead 1: Roman "Ragtime" Kane	
Peacemaker	4-3-5-6-3-4
Wing 1: Todd "The Kid" Davies	
Raven	4-4-5-4-3-3
Lead 2: Jessica "Rabbit" Boswell	
Fury	5-3-6-3-4-4
Wing 2: Meg "Powder Keg" Norris	
Fury	5-2-5-5-3-5
Lead 3: Tommy "Pretty Boy" Roberts	
Warhawk	4-3-5-4-3-6
Wing 3: Juan "Badges" Soto	
Warhawk	4-3-5-3-4-4

map, in the edge hex row at any facing and at any speed. When movement is resolved, the Navajo planes are placed in their starting location and moved normally.

WINNING THE MISSION

Whoever controls the map at the end of the mission is the winner. Controlling the map means eliminating all enemy aircraft.

"Marshal" Bill Redmann

A compilation by Nero L. MacLeon

Bill Redmann had every advantage. He was born to a life of privilege—the son of a Dallas judge, the Honorable Gunther Redmann. His dotting mother placed him in the finest schools available. Growing up in a family of devout Catholics, he certainly did not lack for spiritual guidance. Every detail of his early life suggested that Bill Redmann would grow up into a moral and well-educated man, with a future in law or politics or

perhaps in business as befit a scion of one of Texas' most-favored families.

Somewhere that message got lost.

Warning signs were tenuous at best. The youth who would grow up to be one of the most reviled pirates in the Texas skies never displayed a hint of violence. His aggression appeared only in his overwhelming drive to succeed, to be the best at anything he attempted. Bill Redmann excelled in academics and held his own in any sport he tried, though many people recall his frustration at simply being "good enough." When he voiced an interest in flying during his high school years, his father arranged for private lessons with then-USAF Captain Steve "Fireman" Kelley, who was also a friend of the family.

Bill Redmann began his college career at Princeton, pre-law on a scholarship, with near-record marks in his first semester that fell off to moderate levels in the next. In his second year, he changed to a business degree. His grades improved, but then Fate dealt him his first difficult hole-card. The year was 1929, and in October the short-term future of business came crashing down with the stock market.

Redmann stuck it out for another two months, until Texas seceded from the union. He resigned from Princeton just three weeks shy of the semester finals, abandoning the credits he'd earned, and returned to the new Republic of Texas. There, he enrolled in Dallas' leading college, taking a pre-law program with extra classes in history. He made it through another year before dropping out to join the Texas Rangers air militia. Gunther Redmann, hoping that his son's drive toward excellence would someday make him a hero of the Republic, helped secure him a position in Steve Kelley's squadron.

The posting turned out to be a terrible mistake. Bill Redmann had never forgotten the experience of comparing himself to "Fireman" Kelley during their first lessons together, and finding himself lacking every time. As part of Kelley's squadron, "Marshal" Bill Redmann constantly pushed his commanding officer's authority. On the



A formal photo that Redmann presented German Ace Ernst Udet upon his visit to Texas.

ground, he voiced insolent and continuous criticism of Kelley. In the air, he fought with a cold ruthlessness that earned him the unofficial moniker "Gravedigger," sometimes shortened to "Digger." The nickname became the source of several fistfights and one dogfight that earned both pilots an official reprimand. On the squadron's next mission, Redmann disobeyed orders and flamed down a Dixie passenger zeppelin suspected of smuggling booze into the Republic of Texas. That action earned him a court-martial, at which Steve Kelley offered the chief testimony against him.

Dishonorably discharged from the Rangers, Bill Redmann was not about to disappear quietly. First, he wanted his revenge.

He snuck back to the airfield the next day, stealing his plane from the Rangers just as Kelley taxied for takeoff on a routine patrol. Kelley's wingman, Theresa "Thumper" Larsen, never made it into the air—Redmann left her plane as burning wreckage on the runway. A five-minute dogfight followed, with Redmann pitting his rage against "Fireman" Kelley's greater skill. Spectators on the ground finally saw Redmann reduce power and waggle his wings in the traditional sign of surrender. When Kelley came around to ride Redmann back to the ground, Redmann rolled into an Immelmann and came nose-to-nose with Kelley, firing all weapons. The treacherous maneuver caught Kelley by surprise; he barely had time to bail out before his Hughes Lightning disintegrated. Bill Redmann immediately swung around and used his 60-caliber guns to cut Kelley down.

In the five years since, Bill Redmann has become the bane of the Texas Rangers. He is responsible for twenty-three kills—literally—and another thirteen planes shot down against the Rangers alone. He has also had run-ins with Dixie and the People's Collective, and several ground-based targets have also fallen to the pirate leader. He has faced the Black Swan twice in dogfights over contested targets that escaped while the two

pirate leaders battled each other. Currently, each has won a single victory; the loser in each engagement rode a stricken plane to the ground rather than trusting the other to allow a bailout.

ANNA "COSSACK" RASPUTIN

Opposites may generally attract, but that old saw has not proven to be the case for Redmann's wingman. The Cossack is every bit as treacherous and disreputable as her boss. Not much is known of Rasputin; even her name is likely an alias. Whoever she may really be, Anna Rasputin is a deadly pilot who enjoys strafing civilian ground targets for "fun." She adheres religiously to the Redmann Gang's take-no-prisoners philosophy, and so is often given clean-up duty after a major strike.

One pirate who has dealt with the Redmann Gang and came forward for an interview described her as "Psycho. That <deleted> is colder than the desert winter. She follows Redmann like a dog, but only him. The other members of the Redmann Gang are afraid of her. None of them trust her."



Redmann's Gang

THE REDMANN GANG

Only one man—"Easter" Whittaker, also featured in this issue—is known to have quit the Redmann Gang and survived. Most of our information on the Redmann Gang comes from him; certainly no AAW reporter tried to approach this deadly band of thugs.

"Marshal" Bill Redmann's pirates pride themselves on their place at the top of the Texas Air Rangers' Most-Wanted list. The top five slots belong to three pilots in Redmann's personal squadron and two in the Gang's fighter-bomber squadron. Another seven pirates are included in the Rangers' top twenty. Plunder is shared in proportion to status, which includes notoriety (especially a spot on the Rangers' list) and is subject to Redmann's whims. However, our source suggests that being high on the list also makes a pilot a target within the pirate gang. Any Redmann Gang



"Redmann has the sunken eyes and moral convictions of a rabid dog."—Steve Booth, Texas Air Rangers

pirate with a reputation he or she cannot defend is not expected to live long—a kind of vicious internal regulation that prevents atrocities (such as the Wichita Falls bombing by Foster and McCoy) from occurring just for the sake of enhancing reputations.

Amazingly enough, given Redmann's history of double-crosses and treacherous actions, other pirate bands continue to work with the Gang on a

short-term basis. Redmann is known as a lucrative partner, provided you give him no opening for betrayal. Ego in dealing with Redmann has been the downfall of many pirates, who believe they can keep control of Redmann long enough to make their killing. Some succeed—but for every successful partnership, AAW counts at least two failed attempts that ended in catastrophe for those who mistakenly trusted the "Marshal."

SCENARIO: Crossover

Last month's clash between the Redmann Gang and a squadron from the People's Collective demonstrated the usual Redmann ruthlessness. Members of the Panhandle Predators were flying with Redmann, having located a prime target in the Collective but lacking the firepower to take it on by themselves. Redmann volunteered his squadron to assist for a share of the take. With the cargo zeppelin neutralized, the pirates had only to mop up the Collective's Dusters, who had been dispatched out of the airfield at Liberal to intercept the pirates. Redmann and Rasputin ended up paired with two Predator flyers, facing a three-plane Dusters element. During the ensuing dogfight, after one Collective pilot was downed and another plane so shot up it could barely hold together, Rasputin turned her guns on one of the Predators.

The timing was perfect. Any earlier, and the Predators would have joined the Collective in taking down the infamous Bill Redmann. Any later, with all three Duster planes defeated, and the Predators would have been back on their guard against Redmann and the prime opportunity lost.

SET-UP

Lay out the Seaport Map. The Dusters set up first, within 5 hexes of the northern map edge. The Redmann Gang and the Predators set up within 5 hexes of the southern map edge and within 6 hexes of one another.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Redmann Gang's objective is to shoot down or drive from the map all other planes, both Dusters and Predators. The Dusters' objective is

PLANES AND PILOTS

Redmann Gang

Lead 1: Bill "Marshal" Redmann
Peacemaker 6-6-8-6-7-9
Wing 1: Anna "Cossack" Rasputin
Peacemaker 5-5-7-6-4-5

Predators

Lead 1: Jeff "Macho" Monda
Raven 4-4-5-5-4-4
Wing 1: Dennis "Dick" Tracy
Fury 3-5-4-4-3-4

Dusters

Lead 1: Comrade Jerome Warren
Defender 5-4-6-4-3-6
Wing 1a: Comrade Hannah Casserly
Devastator 4-4-6-4-4-5
Wing 1b: Comrade Gregory Becton
Devastator 4-5-5-4-4-4

to shoot down or drive from the map all enemy planes.

The Redmann Gang player controls the Predators aircraft until one Duster has been shot down. At that point, control of the Predators passes to the Dusters player. Control of the Predators also passes to the Dusters player if any Redmann plane shoots at a Predators aircraft.

WINNING THE MISSION

The last player left with a functional aircraft on the map wins the mission.

Comrade Captain Aaron "Easter" Whittaker

Interview by Julia "Jewel" Isaakson, Flier and Field Reporter

Born on his family's farm in southern Kansas, Aaron Whittaker wanted nothing more out of life than a modest living and a family of his own. He inherited the farm at age twenty-two after his parents died in a fire, but faced bankruptcy a year later thanks to the Crash of '29. Using the meager profits from the sale of the farm, he tried his hand at ranching on a small spread in northeastern Oklahoma. Drought plagued the ranch initially, but the final blow came when a wide-ranging air patrol decided to use his animals and home for strafing-run practice. This unprovoked attack killed his wife and put an end to his dreams of a better life for almost two years. Whittaker claims

the pilots were Texas Rangers, though no proof was ever found.

Whittaker hauled his old crop duster out of storage—one of the few pieces of equipment he'd saved from the farm—and outfitted it with armor and a pair of machine guns. He then went up against the Texas Rangers in an attempt at vengeance that nearly cost him his life several times over. In his underpowered, antiquated plane, he kept up his one-man vendetta for six months, attempting to live off the countryside as a raider but earning little more than the scorn of the Rangers.

At this low point in his life, the grief-stricken



Comrade Whittaker reclines against a captured Dixie Bell Valiant.

and near-starving Whittaker met up with "Marshal" Bill Redmann, an ex-Ranger turned mercenary and then pirate leader. Redmann upgraded Whittaker's aircraft, the Avenging Amy, and offered him a real chance at justice against Texas. Kept on a short leash, Whittaker accompanied several raids against Texas and Dixie shipping, until he realized that Redmann's idea of justice was no better than the acts of the marauders who had cost him his wife and home. In some cases it was worse, as Redmann did not always keep his raiding impersonal. Before long, Whittaker ran out on the pirate band.

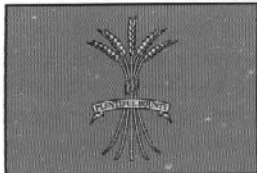
Aaron Whittaker is one of the few pilots to quit Redmann's band with his life, and credits his survival to the fact that he kept flying north in the People's Collective for as long as his money and his plane held out. He managed to reach Omaha before both quit on him, and applied to the local airfield for work as a mechanic. Never one to waste potential resources, Comrade Major Todd "Slingshot" MacFarlane first tried Whittaker out as a pilot in the Avenging Amy. In a slow, under-armored plane light on firepower and with the performance specs of a lame crow, Whittaker nonetheless managed to impress MacFarlane with the feats he could coax out of the old crop duster. Instead of a mechanic's position, Aaron Whittaker was offered training on a patched-together PR-1 Defender.

In his first battle, defending a grain zeppelin on its usual run from Lakota renegades, Whittaker tore into the opposing squadron with skill born in his desperate days of flying an inadequate aircraft against better-trained men and women. He put the PR-1 through paces even MacFarlane had never tried, claiming three "kills" and an assist. That pattern repeated itself over the next several years, as Whittaker pulled out all the stops in defending

his new home.

Though the People's Collective generally disapproves of pilot nicknames, believing that all men are equal comrades under the Collective's laws, they occasionally allow a commanding officer to bestow such a distinction. MacFarlane dubbed Whittaker "Easter" after his twentieth kill, commenting that Whittaker had shown "more surprises than a child's Easter basket. And certainly he's walked his way out of several graves up there.

Our Savior watches over us all, but it seems He takes a special hand in Aaron's life."



The People's Collective



Air Militia: The Dusters



14th Squadron—The Avengers

COMRADE ERIKA CARREY

One of Aaron Whittaker's two wingmen, Erika Carrey earned her wings two years ago, and to the amazement of many is still alive and flying. Carrey tends to hang in tight with Whittaker, using herself as a flying shield to keep her superior officer from harm. With Redmann's pirate band gunning for Whittaker, as well as aces from other nations wanting to test themselves against him, Carrey's devotion to her superior officer is as deadly as it is admirable.

Carrey loads up on rockets rather than guns, trying a new variety in every flight to keep people guessing. She unloads fast and early from long range, ditching

the cumbersome load rather than chance taking any of it to the ground later, and thereby giving her comrades a few extra seconds' grace. According to Whittaker, "A full spread of flare and sonic rounds from Erika has made all the difference in several battles to date."

COMRADE HEWETT JONES

A new addition to Whittaker's three-plane element, Jones replaces Comrade Ezekiel Miller, who died under the guns of Bill Redmann's pirate band last month. Comrade Jones prefers stitching

through his opponents' armor from long range with small-caliber machine guns, following up with a pair of heavy rockets, "to put them down hard once I've opened them up."

DUSTERS, 14TH SQUADRON— THE AVATARS

Whittaker's squadron, known as the Avatars, is based in Kansas City, but may be pulled to any border depending on the needs of the Collective. The Avatars have fought the Redmann Gang, the Texas Rangers, Dixie's Confederate Air Force, multiple raiding parties out of Free Colorado, and even a contingent of Germans stationed in the ISA

as flight instructors. Whittaker personally dueled German ace Günther Lützow. The squadron insignia is a winged fist, striking from Heaven.

Depending primarily on the PR-1 Defender, the Avatars are a fast-response squadron. Despite the relative lightness of their planes, they have shown an impressive ability to hang in during a dogfight against heavier craft when defending the Collective. When asked about his own tendency to stay in a fight even with a mortally wounded aircraft, Whittaker responded, "When I had nothing, the Collective gave me everything I needed. When I fly, I have nothing left to lose. I already owe it all to the Collective."

A SUNDAY WITH "EASTER"

This reporter managed to ask a few last questions of Aaron Whittaker, who consented to the following interview after morning services in the small Kansas City church that serves the airfield and its staff.

Q: For a devout worshipper, your record in the air seems strangely at odds with the man on the ground.

A: I suppose it does. But if it costs me time in Purgatory for even one life saved in the Collective, I'll consider it a fair trade.

Q: It wasn't always like that, though, was it?

A: If you're referring to my time as a raider and pirate, that was another life. In the end, I will answer for my actions. Perhaps between now and the time of judgment, I will have made up for past sins in some small way.

Q: How do you feel about sharing the pages of AAW with Bill Redmann, your former ... associate?

A: His is a soul surely condemned to Hell. His flying cannot be faulted, but he is a plague on humanity and—Lord forgive me—I can't help but hope he is sent to his final reward soon. If he ever comes under my sights again, he'll find no Christian charity there.



Comrade Whittaker steps out on the town with the Black Swan, famous pirate.

SCENARIO: The Dogfight

The recent battle that cost Aaron Whittaker one of his wingmen happened in the clear skies over Arkansas City on what was supposed to be a routine patrol. Redmann and his wingman, flying heavily loaded Peacemaker 370 fighter craft, were waiting for the patrol in hopes of putting an end to "the renegade," as Redmann's pirates still call Whittaker. Whittaker's element was flying PR-1s with load-outs consisting primarily of sonic and flak rockets.

Investigation later proved that Redmann had gotten Whittaker's patrol path via torture from a young officer stationed at the Arkansas City airfield. The pirates jumped into the Avatars' six as the Duster element slowed for an easy coast into the airfield, forcing the trio to break apart and work their speed back up under the first fire of the dogfight.

SET-UP

Lay out the clear horizontal map. The Dusters set up in triangle formation in the center of the map. The Redmann Gang planes set up behind and within 4 hexes of the Duster formation. Duster planes may not load lethal rockets.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The mission begins with the Combat Phase of Turn 1. The Redmann planes may fire guns but not rockets in this phase. During Turn 2 and afterward, they may fire normally. The goal of each side is to shoot down or drive off the opposing side. A plane may "retire" by flying off one of the short sides of the map. If a plane flies off a long side, it is considered to have fled.

PLANES AND PILOTS

The Dusters

Lead 1: Comrade Aaron Whittaker	
Defender	5-6-7-6-6-7
Wing 1a: Comrade Erika Carrey	
Defender	4-6-6-6-4-4
Wing 1b: Comrade Hewett Jones	
Defender	4-3-5-6-3-4

The Redmann Gang

Lead 1: Bill "Marshal" Redmann	
Peacemaker	6-6-8-6-7-9
Wing 1: Anna "Cossack" Rasputin	
Peacemaker	5-5-7-6-4-5

WINNING THE MISSION

The player with the highest point total wins the mission.

Duster Points

Shooting down Redmann	35
Shooting down Rasputin	25
Each enemy aircraft that flees	10
Each enemy aircraft that retires	5

Redmann Points

Shooting down Whittaker	20
Shooting down others	15
Each enemy aircraft that flees	10
Each enemy aircraft that retires	5

Jonathan "Ghengis" Kahn

Interview by Jake "Spud" O'Connor, Flier and Field Reporter

Jonathan Kahn, the feared leader of the Red Skull Legion, is well known for his wild lifestyle and acts of barbarism wherever his pirates have attacked. A Wall Street broker who lost everything in the market crash of 1929, he turned to piracy to continue to finance his extravagant standard of living. It sounds like the typical riches-to-rags story, but the truth runs much deeper.

Kahn comes from the famous Chicago Kahns, a family with industrial interests, but fami-

ly and friends always saw Jonathan as "different." Though capable of being the perfect gentleman when he wanted to be, he was prone to irrational outbursts of anger as a child. As he grew up, he learned to channel this anger into more civilized pursuits, which honed his competitive edge while eroding his sense of social responsibility. He purchased a medical deferment that kept him out of the Army during the Great War, but learned to fly anyway and was arrested more than a dozen times for brawling during the war years. After the war, he made money peddling influenza cures. He flew from town to town, plying people with remedies that were mostly grain alcohol and whatever berry was in season. He'd fly off once he'd sold his lot, never to be seen again.

The gullibility of the American people impressed Kahn. He started working the well-known "Drake scam," which provided him with a steady income. He told people that the heirs of Sir Francis Drake were going to sue the British Crown for all the gold Sir Francis had captured, and they they would be paid ten dollars for every dollar they donated to the lawsuit. Kahn first flew from city to city himself and later hired henchmen to harvest weekly contributions from families, threatening to cut them out of the deal if they didn't keep coughing up the money.

Kahn invested his ill-gotten gains in the stock market, spreading his wealth around to industrialists and associates who subsequently fell for his other schemes. He bought extensively on margin, made fast trades and even manipulated the press by leaking stories that spiked prices so that he could sell out at a fat profit. Before long, investors couldn't tell where reality lay. Some even said that Kahn couldn't tell his own lies from the truth. Whatever the case, he hesitated to sell when the Crash started; he may indeed have mistaken it for another one of his own scams.

The Crash ruined him financially and knocked him a bubble or two off plumb, but he kept scheming. Rumors had always flown about Kahn's connections to organized crime, but after the Crash they were rumors no more. Kahn cut a



"Ghengis" Kahn indulges his baser impulses.

deal with the leader of the Chicago Purple Gang, selling them all future profits from his Drake scam in return for a quick investment in a fleet of planes. The Purple Gang went for the idea, giving birth to the Red Skull Legion.

Kahn knew it wouldn't take the Purple Gang long to figure out that the government's collapse would end the Drake scam. To keep himself useful to them, he staged a series of quick raids that smashed little smuggling groups competing with the Purple Gang in the bootlegging business. That kind of favor earned him some respect and time while he looked for a big strike. He found it in Salt Lake City, where he staged a daring raid in 1931.

The Mormon State of Utah had done as much as it could to discourage Gentiles from interfering with it by making retribution quick and forceful. Kahn took his Red Skull Legion to Utah as an escort for a zeppelin supposedly full of Mormon refugees from the ISA. The zeppelin was a Trojan horse; immediately upon landing, armed pirates poured out of it and attacked the airport facilities. The Red Skull Legion made repeated strafing sorties against the local militia headquarters while the landing party boarded the airship *Moroni*, one of the largest in the Utah fleet. The *Moroni* lifted off with the landing party and was flown clear of Utah's central valley.

Then Kahn did something truly reprehensible. He repainted his Red Skull Legion planes with Utah's colors and proceeded to raid his way across the People's Collective, whipping the Christian Communists into a fearful frenzy. Anti-Mormon persecution in the Collective rose sharply, which gave Utah a real problem to worry about and almost kindled a war in the west. When Kahn's people reached the ISA, they shifted back to their true colors and renamed the *Moroni* the *Machiavelli*.

Since that time, Kahn has largely reserved his predations for soft but valuable targets. He's raided every nation, though his ISA raids have mostly knocked out fledgling gangs seeking to rival his power. Though other pirate gangs operate

out of the ISA, most of them formed at the same time as the Red Skull Legion or have been chased to the ISA and granted sanctions that make them inviolate as far as Kahn is concerned.

Kahn's personal lifestyle will likely contribute to his complete collapse in the not-too-distant future. The man drinks to excess and is said to have quite an appetite for the fairer sex. Said an acquaintance, "Variety is paramount for him, not necessarily quality. Instead of eating one perfect apple, he'd prefer to take a bite out of all of them."

Kahn boasts of a liaison with the Black Swan, though no one believes this story is anything more than an opium dream. Kahn may not even believe it himself; he may be spreading the rumor simply

because he knows it annoys the Black Swan. Kahn has had the pleasure of shooting down a couple of men who thought the way to the Swan's heart was through killing the man who besmirched her reputation. According to Kahn, such things are all part of a game he and the Swan play: "Someday we'll

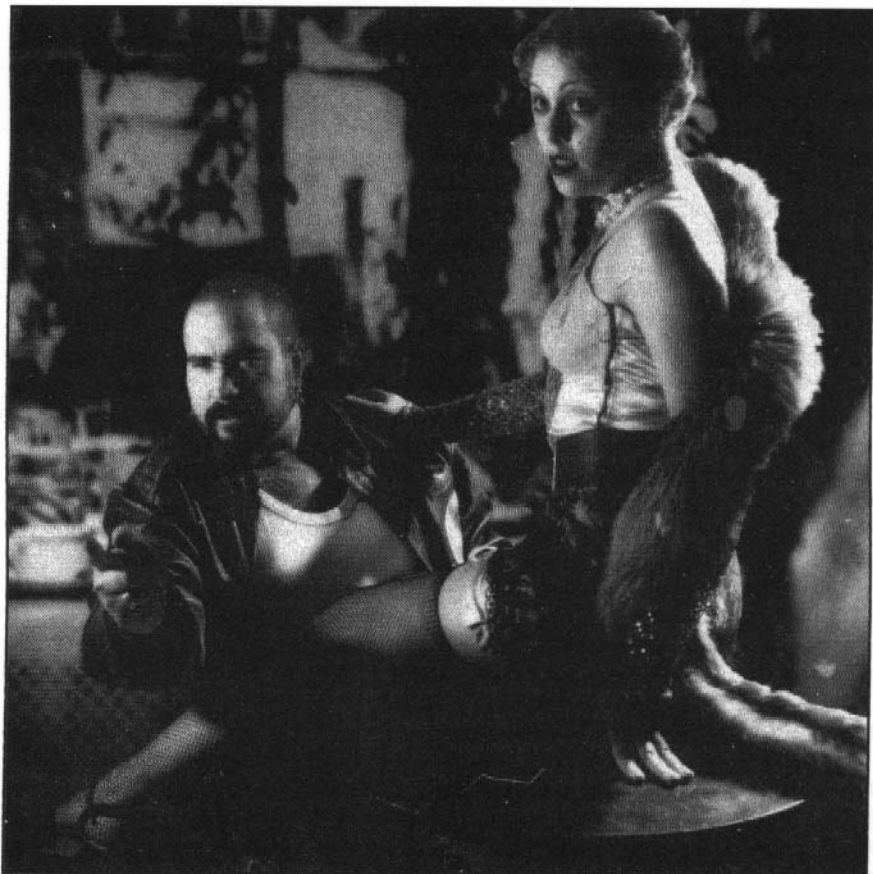
meet, and then we'll decide if I have her or not."

The most disturbing thing about Kahn is his unpredictability. He'll propose and organize a raid on the spur of the moment, which generally gives him the element of surprise against any target. Despite this recklessness, however, his analytical skills and a preternatural ability to avoid ambushes has repeatedly saved him from destruction. In 1935 the Georgia Air Knights put together an irresistible target for Kahn. The pirate leader took the bait, but delayed his raid because of Carol Kismet, a torch singer in Chicago, whose songs he thought were omens from God. It took him two weeks to tire of her and of that delusion, by which time the curtain of security around the Air Knights' operation had broken down and the trap was revealed.

Kahn's luck has run out before, and will likely run out again. Until then, his victims will suffer and good pilots everywhere will bear the burden of his atrocities. Some brave soul may rid the world of such vermin, but until then "Ghengis" Kahn and his Red Skull Legion will rule the skies over the ISA.



Red Skull Legion



A nosy photographer interrupts Kahn and torch singer Carol Kismet in a Chicago speakeasy.

HENRIETTA "HETTYHAWK" CORBETT

Large, raw-bowed and hatchet-faced, Hettyhawk is hardly the type of coquettish woman usually associated with Genghis Kahn, but she's been his wingman for years and hasn't allowed anyone to shoot him down yet. Born in Dixie to a woman of easy virtue, Hettyhawk grew up around the airfield at which—according to her mother—her father had flown. The little girl clearly wanted to find her father, but settled for being a companion to a series of pilots.

The pilots taught her to fly, providing Henrietta with all the freedom she could ever want. A naturally gifted pilot, she ultimately ran

afoul of one of her paramours' egos. In 1929, at the tender age of seventeen, she boasted that she could outfly him. He promptly challenged her to a duel, and she sent him down in flames. Shortly thereafter, Henrietta met Jonathan Kahn. What he saw in her no one knows, but she apparently found in him the father figure she'd never had. She has shown him unwavering loyalty, and is ruthless when it comes to ferreting out threats to Kahn's life.

Though her gunnery skills leave something to be desired, Henrietta can push a plane into maneuvers that would tear off its wings under normal circumstances. This ability makes her a tough target to hit, which gives her all the more time to correct her aim and send enemies to the grave.

SCENARIO: Torch Song

Carol Kismet, a nightclub singer, is on tour through Dixie on the arm of the governor of Arkansas. While with the governor, she tours a new McDonnell manufacturing facility that produces superior aircraft engines. Kismet has never forgotten her time with Jonathan Kahn, and wants to attract his attention again. To accomplish this, she appears on a Dixie radio program, Songs of the South, which is broadcast throughout several North American nations. She sings her newest song, "The Ballad of the Pirate's Lover." The song contains coded lyrics that list the coordinates for the McDonnell aircraft engine plant as well as a suggested time to attack it.

SET-UP

Lay out the Sea Port map. The Red Skull Legion starts on the north map edge. The pirates may set up anywhere within 5 hexes of the south edge, which is their home map edge.

In addition to his planes, the Dixie player may place five ground-based flak guns anywhere on the map, as long as they are not within 5 hexes of the north map edge. These guns may fire a flak shell every turn. They are protected by ten rows of armor. A hit to the eleventh row destroys the gun. Each gun has a Base Target Number of 3.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Red Skull Legion must destroy or drive off all Dixie aircraft and destroy all five flak-gun emplacements. After accomplishing this, the Legion's zeppelin can land and recover the aircraft and parts that are the objective of the raid. The Dixie player must destroy or drive off all Legion aircraft to protect the plant.

PLANES AND PILOTS**Red Skull Legion**

Lead 1: Jonathan "Genghis" Kahn	
Devastator	5-9-7-8-5-6
Wing 1: Henrietta "Hettyhawk" Corbett	
Brigand	6-1-5-2-3-3
Lead 2: Rafael "Fencer" Herrera	
Devastator	5-3-6-4-5-6
Wing 2: Harry "Lucky" Kenyon	
Brigand	2-3-4-4-3-6
Lead 3: Emma "Peel" Murilo	
Raven	4-4-5-4-3-5
Wing 3: Luthor "Pry-bar" Prymon	
Fury	2-5-4-4-3-5

Dixie Defense Force

Lead 1: Samuel "Tallboy" James	
Valiant	5-5-5-6-3-6
Wing 1: Edward "Buckshot" Riley	
Kestrel	5-4-4-4-3-5
Lead 2: Christina "Dancer" Briar	
Valiant	6-5-4-4-3-4
Wing 2: Hal "Frumby" Frum	
Kestrel	4-5-4-3-3-5
Lead 3: Joe "Rocky" Brickman	
Fury	2-5-5-4-3-4

WINNING THE MISSION

The squadron with the last functional plane on the map wins. The Dixie Defense Force can gain a moral victory if they shoot down Kahn.

Charlotte "Charlie" Steele

By Vickie Blair, reprinted from *The Hollywood Tattler*

When you think of the Hollywood Knights, the first image that comes to mind is the handsome heartthrobs whose faces fill the Hollywood tabloids. We see them standing by their distinctively painted planes with their famous "kills," scarves thrown over their shoulders, laughing and toasting each other with expensive champagne in Waterford crystal. Right after that comes the image of a beautiful young lady, screaming through the skies in her customized red-and-white Hughes Bloodhawk, her blonde hair blowing in the wind, grinning as she blasts another pirate out of the Hollywood sky. Who is this female ace whose exploits have made her famous from coast to coast? None other than Charlotte "Charlie" Steele, the founder and leader of the Hollywood Knights.

No one who knew Charlotte Steele before the advent of the Hollywood Knights would ever have believed she would end up leading this famous band of heroes. Born to mega-producer Edward Steele and his wife Lena, Charlotte led a relatively normal early life ... for a girl who was raised in the Hollywood Hills, in a house through which the glitterati of Hollywood flowed. Charlotte's teens were a whirl of parties, premieres and popping champagne corks. Everyone in Hollywood knew Charlie (her chosen nickname) as the hottest party girl in town, and woe to the hostess who forgot to add Charlie's name to her guest list!

All of this changed a few months after the United States' collapse. While flying with a friend high over the San Fernando Valley, the plane's engine stalled and wouldn't restart. The pilot panicked and jumped with the only parachute, leaving Charlie to face certain death alone. Remarkably,

Charlie managed to keep her head and bring the plane down safely.

In spite of (or perhaps because of) the terror of that near-disaster, Charlie fell in love with flying. Though her father forbade it, she began taking lessons with Norm Houston, an old family friend. Charlie turned out to be a natural pilot, one of those rare people who seem to be able to make a plane do anything.

One day, while shopping on the Miracle Mile, Charlie saw a gyrocopter land in the middle of Wilshire Boulevard. A couple of men jumped out, grabbed a woman off the street, jumped back in and took off. The police seemed powerless to find the woman or stop such incidents. This brazen kidnapping made a deep impression on Charlie; she decided then and there that something had to be done to stop such blatant criminal acts.

She went to Norm Houston, who helped her compile a list of the best pilots in Hollywood. Then Charlie threw a gala masquerade ball, in the best

Hollywood tradition. A select few—the pilots—received an additional "special invitation" to a midnight meeting. Because it came from Edward Steele's daughter, none of the pilots turned down that second invitation.

At the meeting, Charlie proposed that she and her fellow pilots form a flying unit to protect Hollywood and its citizens. It would be fun! It would be dashing! It would be just like in the movies, but real! Most of the flyers signed up on the spot, and the Hollywood Knights were born.

Unfortunately, most of the young flyers also thought Charlie's idea of air war was a romantic lark. Though they were all excellent pilots, not one of them had any combat experience. In their first



Charlotte Steele's official portrait from her debutant ball.

real combat against the notorious Sky Slavers, the Hollywood Knights were soundly defeated and lost one of their members.

The defeat was a watershed event in Charlie's life. She had never failed at anything before, and took it pretty hard. However, with Norm Houston's help she pulled up her socks and began rebuilding the shattered Knights—this time with a clear understanding of what air war really meant, and a steely-eyed determination that no one was going to chase them out of the skies of Hollywood again. At this point, the group also began receiving weapons and newly designed Hughes aircraft from a mysterious benefactor. They were also joined by Captain Dick Remington, an ace from the Great War, who started to whip them into shape.

The next time the Sky Slavers showed up, they faced a very different squadron of Knights. Fighting as a unit and making excellent use of the stunts that have since become their trademark, Charlie and the rest of the Knights thrashed the Slavers, and eventually destroyed the pirates' entire operation.

Since then, the Knights have gone from triumph to triumph—not winning every battle, but so far successfully maintaining the security of Hollywood's airspace. Along the way, they have become the darlings of the media. Not a tabloid is published in Hollywood without at least one article on the Knights, and of course Charlie is the most famous of them all. Every star in Hollywood has tried to join up with the Knights—for the publicity if nothing else—but Charlie's standards are high. (During our interview, she insisted that looks are not among them, though the Knights are a suspiciously good-looking bunch.) Recently, Charlie formed an auxiliary group called the Round Table Flyers to accommodate those whose enthusiasm outweighs their skills.

Recognizing the usefulness of all this attention, Charlie and the rest of the Knights play to it. They bring in the best studio artists to paint their planes, and always perform a brief stunt show over the San Fernando Valley as they patrol. They do this less for recruiting purposes than as a reminder to their enemies. Charlie particularly likes to rub her successes in the face of her main rival, Major Loyle "Show Stopper" Crawford, leader of Empire State's Broadway Bombers. But amid all the headlines, movie stars and champagne, the Hollywood Knights are combat veterans who never forget that their main mission is to protect the skies of Hollywood, their beloved homeland.



Nation of Hollywood



Hollywood Knights Air Militia



The Metro Marauders

LT. "GLAMOUR BOY" STEVE GARDNER

Steve Gardner was born on a farm in the Imperial Valley in Central California. From childhood on, it was obvious that no one so handsome should be wasting his time on a farm, and so Steve set off for Hollywood as soon as he could. Unfortunately, the studios had plenty of handsome boys hanging around looking for work, and Steve was no Laurence Olivier in the acting department. Rather than give up his dream of being in the movies, Steve signed up as a stuntman.

In his first few years he was shot, knifed, blown up and thrown out of countless windows. Finally he met an old stunt pilot named Norm Houston, who taught him to fly. Steve began to get lots of work as a stunt pilot, and was among the original crew recruited by Charlie Steele for the Hollywood Knights. Steve flew in the Knights' first disastrous raid against the Sky Slavers, and barely escaped with his life. He almost quit the Knights after his friend Jimmy Vega was shot down, but Charlie convinced him to hang in there and to become her new wingman. He's held that post ever since.

Steve has a particular grudge against pirates, who've killed several of his friends in the squadron. He's been accused of shooting at parachuting flyers against Charlie's standing orders, though no such allegations have yet been proved.

THE METRO MARAUDERS

Like the rest of the Hollywood Knight squadrons, Charlie's squadron is named after its sponsoring studio, in this case Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The Metro Marauders are based out of the Hughes Aircraft field in Santa Monica, which has fueled speculation about the relationship between the Marauders and Hughes Corporation. Some

relationship certainly exists, because the Knights fly Hughes planes exclusively (and always the latest and greatest). Occasionally they even test prototypes, and the Knights have given Hughes planes the best possible advertising. In exchange, Hughes Aircraft makes certain that the Knights' craft are always in tip-top shape.

Howard Hughes is a flying ace himself, having set the transcontinental air record (7 hours, 28 minutes) in 1935. According to rumor, he has flown with the Hollywood Knights under the call-sign Spectre, though Hughes' spokesmen vehemently deny this story. Several rumors about the relationship between Howard Hughes—a notorious womanizer—and Charlie Steele have also made the rounds, and have also been vehemently denied.

Like their Empire State rivals, the Broadway Bombers, the Metro Marauders have been tagged as more interested in fun than in fighting. Their recent actions against Los Lobos Negros, a Mexican pirate group that had been raiding north of the border, have hopefully laid that image to rest. Los Lobos Negros had made a practice of hitting targets in the San Diego area and then retreating into Mexico. Early in 1937, they became bold enough to range as far north as Los Angeles, where they made the mistake of angering Howard Hughes by hitting one of his facilities. The Marauders, supported by the Flying Foxes and some elements of the Hughes Air Guards, crossed into Mexico and razed the Baja base that had been the Lobos' home, shooting down four of the pirates' planes and chasing off the rest. On the Knights' side, only one of the Air Guards got shot down. With this victory, the Knights have hopefully discouraged the Mexican pirates from continuing to make life in southern Hollywood such a nightmare.



From Hollywood Playgirl to Defender of a Nation.

SCENARIO: Steal the "Bacon"

Henry Wilfred Bacon is traveling via private railcar from his gold mine near Las Vegas to his palatial estate in Hollywood, carrying the month's profits with him. Charlie Steele and the Hollywood Knights are flying cover for Mr. Bacon on his return to Los Angeles. Unfortunately, "Genghis" Kahn has discovered the route and schedule of this valuable train via a pretty little thing named Elvira. Charlie doesn't know yet which of her flyboys told Elvira, but once she finds out, there will be hell to pay.

The Red Skull Legion planes will attempt to harpoon Mr. Bacon's train car and carry it—with the gold and Mr. Bacon—back to their heavily armed zeppelin. The Hollywood Knights need to get the train car over the Hollywood border, where more militia units will join them.

SET-UP

Lay out the Canyon map. The Hollywood Knights set up first on the south edge. The Red Skull Legion sets up second on the north edge. Players may use any ordnance loadout. The train starts in the first Track hex on the west side of the map.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Each player's objective is to harpoon and tow Mr. Bacon's railway car to the friendly side of the map. Both players lose if the car is destroyed.

WINNING THE MISSION

Whoever tows the train car off the friendly side of the map or has the last functional plane on the map is the winner.

PLANES AND PILOTS**Hollywood Knights**

Lead 1: Charlotte "Charlie" Steele	
Bloodhawk	6-5-8-6-5-7
Wing 1: Steve "Glamour Boy" Gardner	
Bloodhawk	5-4-6-4-3-5
Lead 2: Irving "Blackface" Jolson	
Firebrand	4-5-6-6-3-2
Wing 2: Brandy "Wine" Noonan	
Firebrand	3-3-5-4-4-4
Lead 3: Carmen "Killer" Flores	
Fury	4-3-6-4-3-5
Wing 3: Karl "Wrong-way" Gruner	
Fury	4-3-6-4-3-2

Red Skull Legion

Lead 1: Jonathan "Genghis" Kahn	
Devastator	5-9-7-8-5-6
Wing 1: Henrietta "Hettyhawk" Corbett	
Brigand	6-1-5-2-3-3
Lead 2: Rafael "Fencer" Herrera	
Devastator	5-3-6-4-5-6
Wing 2: Octavia "Hardpoint" Mickels	
Brigand	2-3-4-4-3-6
Lead 3: Emma "Peel" Murilo	
Raven	4-4-5-4-3-5
Wing 3: Luthor "Pry-Bar" Prymon	
Fury	2-5-4-4-3-5

Colonel Beauregard "Rapier" Travis

Biography by Jackson Lewis, Atlanta correspondent

Recipient of an unprecedented second Southern Star for Valor in recognition of his part in the recent raid on Manhattan, Beauregard Travis is the most prominent member of the Confederacy Air Corps. Born in 1910, the oldest son of Great War hero Achilles Travis, Beauregard was indulged by his parents and wanted for nothing. He was barely fourteen when his father's friend, Samuel McCauley, taught him to fly, and his father bought him a Curtiss Sparrowhawk for his sixteenth birthday. Achilles Travis is said to have told his son, "A Travis will always fly for freedom," and taught him the importance of honor and duty. Even so long after his father's death in 1927, Beauregard has kept these principles central to his life.

Following the Crash of '29 and the secession

of the Southern states to form the Dixie Confederacy, Travis quit Emory University and traveled west, seeking to help defend the new nation against the Republic of Texas. Initially based in Shreveport, Louisiana before that state's departure from the Confederacy, Travis was the first in his squadron to make ace, earning the respect of most of his fellow flyers. Some, however, were less impressed—among them Martin "Banjo" McCauley, Samuel McCauley's son and a rival from Travis' youth.

Never on good terms, McCauley and Travis traded high scores, seeking to outdo each other. Their contest was cut short by Bill "Marshal" Redmann in the brief conflict that followed Louisiana's departure from the Confederacy. Travis never forgave Redmann for killing McCauley—not



The South rises again and Colonel Travis rises with it.

because he'd liked his fellow flyer, but because Redmann interrupted the competition before Travis could prove his superiority. That Redmann was a mercenary, selling his skills, merely added salt to the wound.

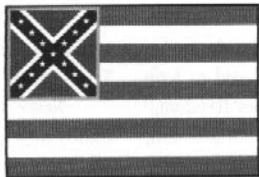
Following Louisiana's secession, Travis was reassigned to Ashdown, a small town twenty miles north of Texarkana. An important railway junction, the town lay perilously close to the Dixie-Texas border; Travis's unit was assigned to ensure its security by patrolling the Red River Valley. Barely two weeks after being posted to the area, Travis "bounced" a group of Texas Air Rangers attacking the town's railway yards. He destroyed all four aircraft and earned himself his first Southern Star for valor.

Life was not all plain sailing, however. In 1934, a beeper-seeker rocket shot Travis down over Appalachia, and he spent a brief period in captivity with a bootlegger cartel. Several scars testify to the brutality of his jailers, but Travis rarely talks about his Appalachian experience. The downing prompted Travis to acquire his trademark dog, a Rottweiler named Banjo, who serves as both a companion and an early-warning device against ultrasonic homing rockets. Indeed, Travis's innovation prompted Bell Industries to add a "dog basket" to later models of its Valiant design.

Travis was soon back in action, prosecuting raids into Appalachia before earning command of the First Georgia Air Squadron, the Winged Knights. The squadron has spent much of its time escorting commercial shipping, fighting pirates like the Black Swan and Hell's Henchmen, but Travis has worked to ensure that his people get their share of offensive operations as well. Travis led the operation against the Hollywood transport zeppelin *Los Angeles* that netted Dixie a squadron of Hughes Bloodhawk fighters. He also proposed,

planned and executed the squadron's daring raid against Manhattan, claiming two fighters and one airship kill.

Already a full colonel at twenty-seven, Beauregard Travis is a prominent member of Atlanta's social circles. His mix of high-profile daring and modesty has earned him a host of admirers and flatterers. The highlight of the 1935 spring calendar was Travis's wedding to Affinity Sawyer, daughter of Congressman William Sawyer. They have one son, Achilles.



Dixie



Confederate Air Corps



The Winged Knights Squadron

EZRA "SKEETER" STUART

Flying alongside Travis requires considerable bravery and skill. Ezra Stuart has both, and has flown with the colonel ever since Travis's previous wingman, Suzanne "Medusa" Fabian, was promoted to lead her own element. A dark-haired extrovert, Mississippi-born Stuart is in many ways the mirror image of his boss. He often serves as the unit's spokesman, having earned a reputation for being able to talk himself out of (and into) trouble. He also fancies himself a ladies' man. A rumor within the squadron, probably started by Stuart himself, suggests that he joined up to escape a romantic entanglement back home. His recent run-ins with Lieutenant Fabian appear to indicate that his

ladykilling technique is lacking. However, he is nothing if not persistent.

THE WINGED KNIGHTS SQUADRON

The Winged Knights, also known as the First Georgia Air Squadron, was one of the first Dixie air units formed and remains the Confederacy's most prestigious unit. Like many Dixie air units, the squadron comprises eighteen pilots with aircraft ranging from Dixie-built Valiants and Kestrels to imported or otherwise "acquired" Defenders



Travis poses with his Rottweiler "Banjo" and wife, Affinity.

and Bloodhawks. Since 1934, the unit has also had its own airship, the *Hannibal Lee*, a heavily armed and armored carrier with 2.5 million cubic feet of gas capacity. The squadron is based in Atlanta, but operates all along the Confederacy's northern border.

The Winged Knights was originally an all-white squadron, but Travis took the unusual step of integrating the unit within weeks of taking command. His time in Appalachia opened his eyes to society's inequalities, after which he swore to judge people on merit alone. Though integration caused some resentment within the CAE, the success of the unit has silenced all but the most bigoted critics. Indeed, Travis has thrown out several individuals who sought entry into the unit with blatantly fabricated credentials. He sees his squadron as a finely honed instrument of war that stands for honesty, integrity and courage, not as a social club for Atlanta's dilettantes.

SCENARIO: Ebony and Ivory

Though best known for their recent raid on Manhattan, one of Travis's earliest exploits with the squadron was defense of commercial shipping along the Atlanta-Richmond air route. Much of the western edge of the former Outer Banks nation was contested with the Appalachian Territories, or rather the "Bootlegger Barons" based there, and the series of clashes in the region are collectively known as the Moonshine War. The low-level conflict threatened trade through the region, but the location of the region's major cities prevented any movement of the routes toward the coast. Instead, the Confederacy arranged to escort any airship that was prepared to work with them.

The Winged Knights were one such unit assigned to escort duty, responsible for the area between Charlotte and Raleigh. In truth, they saw little of the bootleggers, but instead had numerous encounters with pirate bands set on exploiting the chaos. The squadron's most famous battle came barely three weeks into the assignment, when pirates led by the Black Swan attacked the commercial zeppelin, the *Spirit of Atlanta*.

SET-UP

Lay out a zeppelin map with a blank map next to it. The Dixie players must set up a two-plane element on each side of the zeppelin and within 3 hexes of it. The Black Swan player sets up on the far edge of the blank map. Players may use any rocket loadout. The zeppelin carries twin 60 caliber APs in each engine pod.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

The Dixie player must destroy or drive off all Black Swan aircraft.

The Black Swan player must destroy or drive off all Dixie aircraft and destroy at least three guns on each side of the zeppelin.

PLANES AND PILOTS**The Winged Knights**

Lead 1: Colonel Beauregard "Rapier" Travis	
Kestrel	7-6-8-9-6-7
Wing 1: Suzanne "Medusa" Fabian	
Kestrel	4-4-5-5-4-4
Lead 2: Lt. Glenn "Samson" Peyton	
Valiant	6-4-5-4-4-4
Wing 2: Taylor "Paddy" O'Connell	
Valiant	4-3-5-4-3-3

DCS *Spirit of Atlanta*, a commercial zeppelin

Black Swan Squadron

Lead 1: The Black Swan	
Fury	7-7-9-9-6-8
Wing 1: Judith "Valkyrie" Duchamp	
Fury	4-3-6-4-4-4
Lead 2: Lucas "Buster" Spalding	
Raven	5-4-5-3-3-6
Wing 2: Raoul "Aztec" Bernard	
Raven	4-4-5-3-3-5
Lead 3: Nathalie "Pixie" Foos	
Brigand	5-4-4-3-3-6
Wing 3: Martin "Buster" Forey	
Devastator	4-4-6-3-3-4

WINNING THE MISSION

The winner of the mission is whoever controls the zeppelin at the end. To control the zeppelin, Dixie pilots must clear the map of Black Swan aircraft. The Black Swan can control the zeppelin by eliminating Dixie aircraft and destroying the firepower of the zeppelin as noted above. If the zeppelin is shot down, Dixie still controls it.

NEWS

**UNIONIST MILITIA TERRORISTS
BOMB THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS
BUILDING IN COLUMBIA***Dateline: Washington, Columbia*

A bomb blast severely damaged the League of Nations Headquarters building, spraying glass and debris throughout the Union Station area last evening. The bomb went off at approximately 1:30 a.m., killing two security guards and crushing one corner of the five-story structure. The blast's concussion did shatter windows in the neighborhood, resulting in a few other injuries, all of which proved minor.

The chosen hour for the explosion seemed fortuitous. Had the blast gone off a mere six hours later, commuters coming into the Capitol Hill district would have been struck by flying debris, bringing the death toll into the hundreds. "And that is not counting the number of League of Nations employees who arrive early to communicate with their home governments via transatlantic phone lines," commented Detective Inspector Thomas Weir of the Columbia Criminal Investigation Department. "Things could have been a lot bloodier."

The precise timing of the bomb blast did carry with it ominous overtones. The Unionist Militia has staged a number of such attacks on League of Nations and other separatist institutions, all at 1:30 in the morning. This time is a reference to January of 1930, when the Republic of Texas declared independence of the United States, beginning the dissolution of the nation. The attacks come in the morning to serve as a "wake-up call" to America. Weir noted, "We've had a statement from the Unionists claiming responsibility for this attack, but the department wants its analysts to go over it for clues before releasing it to the public."

The Unionist Militia is a shadowy movement made up of self-proclaimed patriots who wish to

reunite the continent under one government. Decried as Continentalists by the leaders of North America's various sovereign nations, the Unionists still have managed to strike fear into the hearts of many nations. Their ability to attack at will and avoid capture has suggested to many that police and other governmental officials could be Unionists in disguise. Many also fear that if hostilities escalate into a continental war, Unionist fifth-column actions will cripple nations and cause an even more devastating collapse of order.

Professor Warren Varley of Columbia University has studied the Unionist Militia movement. "Most Unionists, it appears, are men who went to Europe to help save the world for democ-

racy and felt their efforts, and those of their dead comrades, were betrayed by the secessionists. These men are not without influence and may have even been the sons and husbands of leading secessionist figures, which puts them in a unique position to influence events and provides them with the resources necessary to attain their ends. The Unionists see themselves as the true heirs to the traditions of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln. They have taken to heart the old Pledge of Allegiance to the

flag, especially the phrase, 'one union, indivisible' and see reestablishment of same as a sacred goal."

Unionists have accepted responsibility for a variety of attacks against League of Nations facilities because they believe that America's preoccupation with European events was enough to allow for the break-up of the nation. The influence of France, Great Britain and Russia on the North American continent is also seen as applying pressure that will prevent reunification. Unionist manifestoes have suggested America is entering a new colonial period, enslaving itself to forces that it helped preserve in the Great War. They quote Benjamin Franklin as saying, "Those willing to surrender a little freedom in return for security deserve neither," and suggest that the governments of North America have done exactly that.

**"Regardless
of what good
the Unionists
might do,
they're also
murderers."**

**—Det. Thomas Weir,
Columbia Criminal
Investigation Dept.**

Though there is no denying they engage in terrorist actions, the Unionists have also managed to win support among a variety of individuals for actions taken by their members and agents. Not at all uncommon are tales of mysterious squadrons in black planes (with the old American flag rendered in black and white on them) attacking and driving off pirate gangs that have taken over small towns. The skill of these Unionist squadrons suggests a fair amount of experience in air-combat which harkens back to the idea that many Unionists are Great War veterans or flyers with current air corps of the various nations.

Detective Inspector Weir crouched next to the shrouded body of a dead security guard in the League of Nations building lobby. "Regardless of what good the Unionists might do, they're also murderers. That's the bottom line for me. The ends don't justify the means, which is a lesson I guess they just never learned."

WORLD EVENTS NO NEWS OF AMELIA EARHART

Dateline: South Seas

The lack of early results in the search for flying ace Amelia Earhart suggests grave possibilities. No vessels in the South Pacific report any direct sign of her plane, and it is only the lack of any wreckage that continues to promise hope of her survival, however slim.

Amelia Earhart, with copilot Lt. Commander Fred J. Noonan, took off from Miami, Florida in June bent on her round-the-world excursion. Earhart, the first woman pilot to solo over the Atlantic and who in 1933 earned ace status flying for the Empire State against the ISA, had hoped to be the first female pilot to circumnavigate the globe. Her husband, publisher George P. Putnam, billed the event as, "a sure triumph for one woman's indefatigable determination and undeniable skill." But this promising adventure turned tragic on July 2nd when Earhart's twin-engine Lockheed aircraft was lost in [what is believed to be] the vicinity of Howland Island in the South Pacific.

Recent clashes between Hollywood and the Kingdom of Hawaii have pulled most naval vessels from the South Pacific. What few warships remain have put aside their differences, at least temporarily, and are continuing to search nearby islands. But with more Japanese warships arriving every day and the opportunity for a prolonged operation slipping away, Earhart's husband, publisher George P. Putnam, is preparing to mount an independent search effort. "I refuse to believe her lost to mechanical difficulty," Putnam was quoted in a press conference, "and her Lockheed was fully armed and able to handle anything else."

FRANCE VOWS MORE FINANCIAL AND MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF LOUISIANA

Dateline: Paris, France

In an effort to shore up the morale of the Free State of French Louisiana, the government of France pledged to deliver more than six million francs in aid over the next two years to what they referred to as their "sister Republic on the North American continent." The French president also added that the first Division of the French Foreign Legion would be moved to New Orleans to begin extensive training of Louisiana militia forces.

Across the continent, reaction to this news varied. As expected, many leaders denounced this European involvement as more meddling by the League of Nations in the affairs of the North American States. President Hoover of Columbia took a milder position, noting that Louisiana's stability "allows it to act as a buffer between Dixie and Texas, which backs us off a bit more from a Great War here in North America." Hoover clearly hopes that as long as shooting is kept to a minimum, the chances of re-forming some continental union is possible.

Republic of Texas President Austin Crockett's office issued a tersely worded statement of reaction to the French pledge. "The intervention of foreign troops on North American soil has



always, in the past, been a flashpoint for war. The French haven't learned the lesson we taught the Brits in 1776 and 1812, but if they want a history lesson, we'll give it to them. The French relinquished control of Louisiana when they sold it to President Jefferson and if they want it back now, the refund we'll want for it will be mighty costly indeed."

Members of the French Foreign Legion found the Texan president's statement ironic, since the first companies slated to be sent to Louisiana are made up entirely of American expatriates who remained in Europe after the Great War, or traveled to France to join the famed Foreign Legion to get a new start on life. Captain Smith Johnson, whose New England accent is still in evidence, said he had always planned to return to America, but had never dreamed it would be under these conditions. "When I left it was all one nation. Now it's all broken up, like the Austro-Hungarian empire. Not good, no sir. Still, freedom is freedom. I'm here to fight for it, yes, sir."

Louisiana's Minister of State published a declaration in conjunction with the Ministry of Defense that indicated the Foreign Legion would only be serving in a training capacity, though, "the Foreign Legion forces do reserve the right to defend themselves and eliminate threats to their well-being." That the Foreign Legion's Dervish Air Squadron is stationed in Shreveport is seen as a not-too-subtle message to the Republic of Texas' Air Rangers to stay on their side of the border.

Few leaders on either side of the border thought the arrival of French troops would spark immediate hostilities, but no one doubts that the potential for a full scale war is building quickly. What starts in Louisiana could quickly spread to Dixie and then engulf the entire continent in flames.

ENTERTAINMENT PALADIN BLAKE RIDES AGAIN!

Dateline: Manhattan

I am proud to be the first to bring you this bit of good news. The cast of the hit radio show, "Paladin Blake and the Privateers" have all signed on for another season! And there's more—the ensemble cast will be joined by the young superstar of radio, Orson Wells! The talented Mr. Wells

will portray Paladin's archenemy, the evil Dr. Mortuary, leader of the ruthless pirate gang "The Grave Robbers." That's right, we will finally get to meet the man we've been hating for so long. As all of you doubtlessly remember, last season Blake and his privateers finally fought the penultimate battle with Hell's Hatchet Men (clearly based upon the pirate gang Hell's Henchmen), when it was revealed that they were nothing but a tool of the evil Dr. Mortuary. Paladin's on-again off-again romance with mysterious pirate mistress The Black Widow again became a central issue when the evil doctor's men raided her zeppelin flagship and took the Widow pris-

oner. All this leads to the exciting duel of wits and machine guns to be played out during the upcoming radio season by the fine actors Ronald Coleman and Orson Wells.

Speaking of The Black Widow, she is, in my opinion, the weakest character of the show. Perhaps it is just that the Black Swan, upon which the less-than-imaginative Black Widow is based, keeps out-doing her own fictional persona. Natalia, as the Black Swan is called by her friends, has become a major celebrity in her own right with every movie studio and radio show sending scouts to the pirate havens looking to sign her. As of now she has dodged them all. Is she just playing hard-to-get, or does she really want to stay out of the limelight?

**"The intervention
of foreign troops
on North
American soil
has always,
in the past,
been a
flashpoint for
war."**

**—Austin Crockett,
President of the
Republic of Texas**

THE REAL PALADIN SUES!*Dateline: Manhattan*

Once again, truth is stranger than fiction. The real Paladin Blake, founder of Blake Aviation Security, upon whom the popular radio character is based, announced today that he is suing the Empire State Broadcasting network because he does not feel that he is receiving his fair share of merchandising revenue. All I can say is, if he hasn't received enough money to buy a small country (and there are several nearby) then he's right! Just who are the real pirates after all?

ERROL FLYNN TAKES TO THE AIR!*Dateline: Hollywood*

The country on the opposite coast continues to pump out talking movies. The latest big-budget motion picture announced is *The Corsair*, an epic air-pirate picture starring none other than Mister Swashbuckler himself, Errol Flynn. According to my inside sources, the story is roughly based upon the adventures of the Los Angeles ex-doctor turned privateer Samuel Jamerson or, as he became known among the airworthy, "Doc. James." In real life, it was heavily rumored that a romance had blossomed between Doc James and The Black Swan, and apparently this will feature heavily in the screenplay. Every actress in Hollywood wants the role of the beautiful mistress of misery, and so the producers are not only talking to all the stars, but in an effort to whip the public into a frenzy, are conducting open auditions for unknown hopefuls. Let it never be said that our West Coast antagonists are subtle.

CHAPLIN ON THE MOVE*Dateline: Hollywood*

In a statement that has the entire nation of Hollywood abuzz with a blow to their foolish pride, Charlie Chaplin announced last week that his new movie studio will be built in Manhattan,

and not Los Angeles. The new project is slated for 1938, and is considered to be a protest against Hollywood's May threat of an embargo on feature films to the Empire State.

Chaplin, 48, is best known for his lovable character "The Tramp" the star of many films including *The Kid*, *City Lights* and, most recently, *Modern Times*. In 1919 he co-founded the United Artists studio along with actors Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, and in 1923 he wrote and directed the critically acclaimed film, *A Woman In Paris*. His 1931 film *Half Mast* was a brilliant, scathing indictment against the Great Breakup.

Though no ties have ever been discovered to the "Unionists" extremist party, he has remained an extremely vocal supporter for reunification of the North American Nations.

Hollywood's threat of three months ago, to treat films as a national resource subject to political whims, came after talks broke down between Hollywood and the Empire State over trade. It is common knowledge that the threat irritated Chaplin, and no one doubts that it prompted his dialogue with President La Guardia

I would hate to completely leave Hollywood, but then I would hate becoming a political tool even more."

—Charlie Chaplin

that led to the new studio.

If groundbreaking takes place this spring as planned, United Artists East is expected to be finished by late fall and will handle roughly one third of the United Artists films. UA offices will remain in Hollywood, at least until the West Coast nation acts on its threat. Says Chaplin, "Films, books and any other media belong to the people, not to the government, and certainly should not be used in petty bickering. I would hate to completely leave Hollywood, but then I would hate becoming a political tool even more."

**RED SKIES
A CECIL B. DEMILLE FILM***Dateline: Hollywood*

The astounding director who brought us the

Ten Commandments is turning his critical eye on producing what will be, "the greatest air power undertaking" in film history. It promises to compare to the *Ten Commandments*, both in scale and scope.

Red Skies will chronicle the adventures of Tom Rowan, a fighter ace in World War I, a war that did not end in 1918 but continues on to this day. Following the dawn (1918) raid that launches the second German offensive, in which DeMille promises "more planes in the sky than anyone has ever seen before at one time," the war continues with a shift to air power over ground combat. Severe reversals to allied positions places the combatants on more even footing, and with Germany gaining new allies (DeMille refused to comment on this), the stage is set for perpetual warfare.

DeMille was actually inspired, he said, by the dawn air raid that (in 1930) began Texas' latest struggle with Mexico (and culminated in the second battle for the Alamo). But there the similarities apparently end. "Mexico never really stood a chance, though I would love to turn serious attention toward that battle someday. And the idea of sweeping waves of planes, while good theater, simply does not seem possible. Perhaps the German war machine might have staged a few isolated attacks in such a manner, but in reality it would take a level of national effort that even the Germans lacked in 1914 to accomplish something on this scale. It is this (potential) level of national support that I hope to make a strong underpinning to *Red Skies*."



Talk about getting caught red-handed!

A hundred aircraft have already been purchased, leased, or borrowed from the larger fighter-craft manufacturers, showcasing their latest designs. In addition, DeMille will be drafting as extras any pilot with a post-1930 aircraft (of any make or model) who would like a "fly-on part." Shooting is scheduled to start later this year, at which time he hopes to have upwards of one thousand aircraft ready to fly.

SOCIETY **LOYLE CRAWFORD FLIES** **OFF THE WAGON?**

Dateline: Manhattan

A shooting star has fallen to earth, but no wishes were made on this bright descent. Loyle "Show Stopper" Crawford, an Empire State fighter ace of the Broadway Bombers militia and the subject of a *Air Action Weekly* biography only three months back, was caught by an independent photographer only this last weekend in a New York booze hall in the company of an "entertainer." The photograph was taken just before a 3:00 a.m. raid by local law enforcement against the *Starry Skies* nightclub, serving both Canadian liquor and good old Appalachia bourbon. The officers on the scene somehow managed to avoid arresting the popular pilot though several credible witnesses, and this photo, place him at the scene.

After a disappearing act that would make the great Houdini proud placed Crawford out of reach, the photographer did manage a few words with the fighter ace's clearly affectionate associate. Her dress, the photographer claims, might best be described as "provocative." She was quoted as saying, "Sure, why shouldn't Loyle come here? We're good as any Broadway club." An officious police lieutenant quickly escorted the young lady away before further conversation was possible. She has since remained unavailable for additional comment.

Crawford, a vocal supporter of prohibition in the past, is best known for his astounding performance last year against the Hell's Henchmen pirate base that the Broadway Bombers discovered in the Appalachian Mountains. Claiming three kills that day and making the successful final run against the alcohol warehouse turned him into an overnight hero that many citizens of the Empire State (one of the first dry nations) respected. His family ties to long-time Madison Avenue veteran Bryce Crawford (his uncle) assured him of good PR and a meteoric rise to the top of the Manhattan social structure, which he has enjoyed and, apparently, abused. Dinners with Broadway stars will certainly be hard to come by for some time.

But is this truly the end of Loyle's walk in the park? The silent treatment from Manhattan society could certainly be attributed to shock and amazement, though discreet inquiries indicate that perhaps caution is a better term. With no formal charges brought against him and no official word regarding this escapade from the Broadway Bombers themselves, Loyle is set to weather this local storm—and no one wants to bet against the "Show Stopper." Certainly, no one is yet willing to call him to account publicly. Meanwhile, our straying sky captain remains quiet, no doubt praying for clear skies over Manhattan.

Our advice? Come clean, Loyle. Your reputation might take a beating, but sooner or later you'll have to answer for the episode yourself. Reform will always be a much easier path than denial, and with a bit of luck (or a new raid by the Hell's Henchmen) you'll be a hero again before you know it.

After all, the show must go on.

"THE WORLD TODAY ... "
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF
AN AIR PIRATE

Dateline: Central Ohio, ISA

Many readers have heard tales, and an increasing number may have experienced firsthand the heart-racing fear of a pirate raid. But what's it like from the pirate's perspective? We asked fighter pilot David Wylie, who flies with the Empire State privateer Captain James Neville, to give us a glimpse of his life.

—From the journal of David Wylie, raiding pilot aboard the Privateer Sky Hawk (2000 feet above central Ohio)

Sharp eyes—it all starts with sharp eyes. Just a tiny silver dot on the horizon; anyone but Sparks Gunderson would have missed it. At this distance, it is hard to believe that tiny speck is actually a zeppelin more than six football fields long. Thank God for Gunderson's eyes.

Captain Neville takes us up above the thin cloud layer to give us a chance of arriving undetected. He also takes the extra time to swing around to the west, so that when we attack it the sun will be behind us. As we pour on the gas to close the distance, the crew scrambles to combat positions. I run from the bridge to the hanger deck to ready my plane.

The rumor has already spread that Gunderson thinks the ship is a Confederate cotton zep. That means capturing it will make us all some decent money. It also means that she'll be heavily defended.

My plane, the Broadway Beauty (Beauty for short), is a Whitty and Douglas supercharged 370. The normal 370 can outrun almost everything, and The Beauty is anything but normal. In a dive, I can get 270 mph out of her and still keep the wings attached. She can turn on a dime, as long as the dime is about the size of Rockefeller Center, but that's pretty good at over 200 mph. Oh, and did I mention that The Beauty is armed for bear? She carries twin 60 cal. machine guns and a salvo of rockets (you know, for the red glare part). Give me about 15 seconds with my cross-hairs on a target, and there's nothing left of it. But I digress.

The Captain has snuck up on the Southern zeppelin—they apparently still don't know that we're about to ruin their day. The order comes from the bridge to launch the planes. One at a time the planes, which hang from chains on a rail, are moved to the drop gantry. There the plane's engines are started, and then its dropped out of the bottom of the zeppelin. This is a real deadly time to have your engine fail, because it is a long way down.

It always gets me—one instant everything around me is standing still, the next instant everything is moving at close to a hundred miles per hour. My plane hits the air as I gun The Beauty's engines to get the hell out of the way before Johnson's plane lands right on top of me. The smell of the overdrive, that wonderful mix of exhaust and raw gasoline—it's better than morning coffee to get you going.

Now, the secret of air privateering (or piracy for that matter) is to capture the booty, not just spread it around the landscape. Shooting down unprotected zeppelins is a piece of cake, but where's the profit in that? And most aren't so unprotected to begin with. The trick to it is to take the cargo ship whole, and destroy as little as possible so you have more to sell or trade. There are only two ways to take a cargo zeppelin; get a boarding party to take the bridge, or destroy all the out-board engine nacelles. These two approaches are often taken simultaneously; if the boarding party succeeds, you stop shooting.

As we get ourselves into formation, the spotters on the *Sky Hawk* report that the Confederate zep is launching planes, so it's going to be an interesting fight after all. The last plane to launch from our zeppelin carries the boarding party. These poor souls will be flown directly above the cargo zep and then have to jump for it. They carry only three things: a grappling hook, a revolver, and a parachute strapped to their back. It's a one-way trip straight down; as they fall, they try to grab onto the zep with the hook. If they succeed, they try to swing from the hook line to some place they can get inside the zeppelin. If they miss or slide off, it's a long fall to the ground. Most panic and immediately pop their chute, but by doing that they just sign their own death warrant, because the

cargo zeps' machine gunners will cut them to shreds. Your only chance of survival is to let yourself fall until you are away from the zeppelin and then pop the chute, but it's hard to remember that rule with the ground rushing up to meet you.

If you're "lucky," you make it inside the zeppelin, where you fight room to room and corridor to corridor in an attempt to capture the bridge. One of the first things you learn as a pirate or privateer is to not make friends with the guys in the boarding party, because odds are you won't see many of them again.

That's when I heard the first thunder of the morning. The *Sky Hawk's* cannons have fired the first salvo at the Confederate planes. It's the sound of that thunder that tells your guts that now is the time to start pumping adrenaline, because you're gonna die. We let the cannon guys get the first couple of shots in, and then we pray they stop shooting, because the two groups of planes are already intertwined in a deadly dogfight. I had been elected as the first "diver," which means that while the rest of the boys mix it up with the Rebs, I break off ASAP and do a run at the zep to blow off one of its engines. My team's job is to make sure I'm not followed—that way, when I get to the zep I only have to worry about the machine gun nests. If I live through the run, I return to the dogfight to even the odds for a while and then help shake loose the next guy for his run.

I pull into a barrel roll that should put my pursuer into Johnson's sights and shake me free for a run at the zep. It works and I dive for it. Most people think that to be safe you want to fly far away from the zeppelin's machine guns, but that's exact-

ly wrong. The ship's guns are bigger and have longer range, so if I'm out of range of their guns, I'm way out of range for mine. No, the secret to attacking a zep is to get in real close. As the boys from the *Sky Hawk* say, "If you don't leave a streak of paint from your wing tip on the zep's canvas, you were too far out." This makes the machine gunner's job real hard, because you're at a bad angle and he can't track you fast enough.

On my first pass I got in close to the zep but took a couple of hits from a gunner on the way; no serious damage. Avoiding the spikes that the nice zeppelin designers are including for us flyboys nowadays, I maneuver into position and pump about a ton of lead into the starboard aft engine nacelle. I'm staring at that engine, waiting for the boom, or at least some smoke (when you knock out an engine, you get a cash bonus ... and I like cash), but I'm not looking at what's going on around me. One of the bad guys had broken off from the dogfight and managed to find a nice home right on my six. I wake up to this development when I hear the nearby thunder of his guns and see my right wing tip shred. Banking hard to the right, I dive toward the zeppelin. This frustrates him, because now he is afraid to fire

for fear of hitting his ride home. He takes the bait and follows me. I retrace my earlier route in and my pigeon stays on my tail. Just as I get to the engine nacelle I do a quick maneuver to bleed speed, my shadow dodges to avoid slamming into me and instead slams right into the engine nacelle. I may have to fight the captain for it, but that cash bonus is mine, I earned it.

It starts with sharp eyes, and it ends with fast reflexes. What a way to make a living.

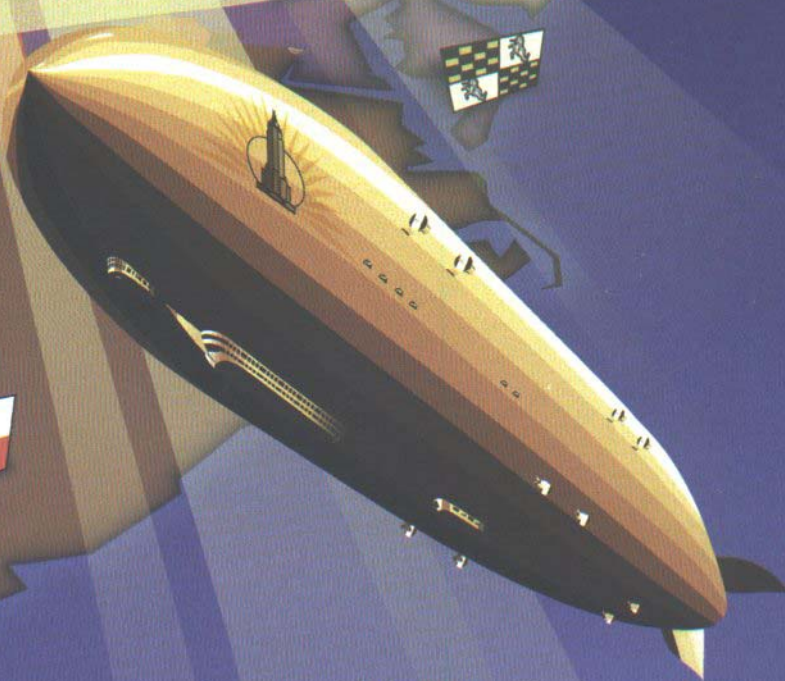
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