

GAMBLERS PREY UPON WOMEN AS HUSBANDS FIGHT

American and Canadian Officers Visiting London Also Fleeced by Sharpers.

GIRLS ARE USED AS DECOYS

International Coterie Using Private Houses for Games Operates Undisturbed—Tragedy of an Aviator's Wife—Women Worse Than Men.

London.—There is a man living in retirement in one of those fine upstanding old Jacobean manor houses, not fifty miles from London, a model country squire, popular with his tenants, a thoroughgoing sportsman, who rides to hounds most religiously and entertains on the most lavish scale. He can afford it. His annual income is somewhere in the \$100,000 line. Yet before the war this particular man hadn't a penny to his name.

The secret of his extraordinary success lay in quiet, suitably furnished back rooms in quiet, commonplace houses in those sober streets that nestle in and around Mayfair, Chemin de fer, poker, faro, sometimes a roulette wheel, and the gilded ladders of old British aristocracy would be awaiting, round like moths about a candle. They seem to have an intuitive sense for such places, these folk. Where the average man would pass by without comment, they nudge one's elbow and whisper, "That's old so-and-so's place. If ever you feel inclined for a quiet flutter"—that notorious "quiet flutter" signifying anything from a five pound note to \$500 or so.

Among this select coterie are men and women of doubtful nationality, who make best use of their business for exact information of their more highly connected clientele. This was proved, in the case of a recent raid, where the woman proprietor was discovered to be an agent in German pay. Thus they attain a double object.

Women Worse Than Men.

But there is also another class who frequent these places. Manufacturers from provincial munition districts, flushed with their new and easily won fortunes, and wishing to be in the social swim, run blindly into these well-baited traps. Perhaps their unpleasant experience gives them wisdom. They never repeat the performance. They belong to that eternal type which thinks it can beat the thief at his own game. They are gamblers for the same reason that drugtakers and dipsomaniacs are what they are. They can't help it.

The women are worse even than the men. At least 60 per cent more of the other sex favor the green table. They take their gambling seriously—dead seriously. To them, it is nothing of the sporting element of the affair; it is cutthroat business of pay and receive. Once a woman is seized with the gambling "bug" nothing on earth can hold her. It is the first step of the many great tragedies of life.

Tragedy of an Aviator's Wife.

Perhaps one of the most tragic instances of this nature was that of the wife of a commander in the British flying corps. Prior to the war he was a member of the stock exchange and they lived in a quiet village 20 miles from London. When he joined the colors they sold their home and the wife went to live in town—in a tiny flat in Knightsbridge. She was little more than a child, and a charmingly unsophisticated one at that, so fell easy victim to the gambler's wiles.

They got hold of her through the acquaintance of the restaurant she frequented—even the smartest matrons, d'hotel and head waiters are sometimes, though unwittingly, the instruments of the confederates who go to the restaurants instead of their daily business to get at the lonely men and women with money, who are to be discovered in every London hotel. One day a charming young girl distinguished appearance strolled over to her table. She was the newest to share it with her. Consent was readily given, and they got into conversation.

The welcome stranger sympathized with her loneliness, and finished by inviting her to a dainty maisonette off Park lane. After dinner cards were produced. And the fleecing had begun. By the time her husband was able to get home on leave and rescue her the unhappy woman had been robbed of the best part of \$20,000.

Organized Like a Company.

That is only one of the brilliant methods employed. This international gang—its agents cover every city and large town in the world—even in the enemy countries—is organized like a company, on a profit-sharing basis. There are trusted agents at every port, fashion center and high class health resort. It is the business of these agents to live in princely style, gradually working their way into the confidence of the notables of the locality giving full detailed reports of their movements and business transactions to a general headquarters.

When a moneyed man or woman sets out from one country to another the agent at the port of embarkation wires full particulars of his or her business, available capital and intended period of visit to his confederate at the other end. The victim is shadowed and approached on the train, aboard the ship, even in hotels. Their organization is the acme of thorough-

ness. If necessary they will follow a man or woman round the world. Quite the smartest of their independent missions was that established to a sleepy old world village that hugs the banks of a quiet reach of the River Thames. The delightful scenery and the picturesque surroundings attract the most exclusive clientele. A family of the most delightful people are always there to welcome a stranger at all hours—a family of three, father, mother and beautiful daughter. And the plan of campaign is the simplest and oldest in the world.

Girl Is Used as Lure.

This particular stretch of water is extremely popular. Punting, canoes and motorboats go flashing up and down from early morning until well after dark. Half a mile up stream is situated the riverside annex of one of the most exclusive London clubs. Thitherward every afternoon, and evening the beautiful daughter, attired in the most fetching costumes and in the daintiest of dainty canoes, goes paddling. The younger members of the club are also fond of the river. There is a fleeting smile as they pass in mid-stream, and they very soon become acquainted.

At first the maiden appears inclined to be reserved. There are the proprieties to be observed. She is no fool. It is no use frightening your fish at the first bite. But toward the end of the flirtation she relents somewhat. Her mother is giving a small dance. "Nothing formal, you know; just amongst ourselves" that evening. "If Mr. Jones will drop in they will be delighted to see him."

Mr. Jones goes. More often than not he takes a friend. They dance and are accorded the most hospitable reception. Mother is there, a charming, statuesque woman in flowing draperies. Father—they apologize profusely—is in a somewhat merry condition. That is obvious from the thickness of his accent and his halting gait. The visitors—in such delightful company—there are numerous pretty girls, inconspicuous of snares of the band, pass the matter off with a smile and a jest.

But father is not quite so "mellow" as he would have them believe. At least there is nothing the least bit steady in that searching glance to which he treats them from beneath beetling brows. And the hand that pours out the drinks is hardly that of a drunkard.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN NOW IN MARINES

Kansas City, Mo.—Benjamin Franklin has joined the marines, and the "immortal four" of the Kansas City marine recruiting office is now complete. The others are George Dewey, William Jennings Bryan and John Hopkins. Ben hailed from Dewey, Okla., where he has been "discovering" oil wells. He said he wanted to "discover" the way to Berlin.

At last they grow tired of dancing. A friendly hand of bridge is suggested as an alternative. Only small stakes are allowed at the start. But as hand follows hand and drink follows drink they increase in value. Between 11 p. m. and 3 a. m. the host and hostess may make anything from \$1,000 to \$2,000 out of the gamble—a gamble for them, but no gamble for the unlucky army subaltern or the impecunious college youth.

Once they have rid themselves of all their available loose cash they are courteously sent home, with a pressing invitation to return some other night for their revenge. They don't fail to accept the challenge. By the end of a week the whole of their capital may be in the box of their hosts.

Young and fashionably dressed women are invariably the decoys of the gambling fraternity.

The game is played in the most respectable house and among most respectable people. That is the chief difficulty of bringing these criminals to book.

Quite recently an American woman wrote to the editor of a London newspaper giving him particulars of one of these respectable entertainments. The address of the house was mentioned in the letter, also the time at which the game was commenced and the name of the proprietress of the place.

This woman, said the American, had made \$100,000 during the war. Many American officers had been decoyed to the place. One lost \$2,100, another \$1,500 and a Canadian \$500 just before leaving for the battle front. Women decoys were allowed to put their losses "on the slate" up to \$1,000 and take windings-in cash.

AIR RAIDS ONLY BORE LONDONERS

They Watch the Weather and Draw the Blinds But Refuse to Be Panic-Stricken.

MANY DON'T SEEK SHELTER

Busses and Subway Trains Operate as Usual and Club Men Sit Calmly Under Glass Roofs—Only the Foreign Element Frightened.

By FLOYD MACGRIFF.

London.—The thick London fog, often referred to in America, is one of the British capital's chief protections from air raids by the Huns. If it is a foggy or misty night the searchlights of Zeppelins cannot reach their long fingers of light to the earth and pick out the English coast or find their way to London. Airplanes, likewise are baffled. So a thick fog gives a sense of security and one buys a ticket to a theater with far more cheerfulness than on a moonlight night when the air is clear.

The weather has attained a new sphere as a topic of conversation. One Londoner may greet another with: "Well, it looks like a good night for a raid." If the evening is fair. More than a hundred bombings have taught the Londoner to expect a raid on such nights. He considers it lucky if none occurs.

"Blinds must be drawn at 9:30 p. m. today," runs a line in the daily papers. As summer approaches the hour is made later, to correspond with dusk. And the blinds are drawn. Hotel maids are instructed to attend to this promptly. Hotels also have placards warning guests that police will hold them responsible if a light shows from their window.

Busses Operate as Usual.

All London does not take to cover when an air raid is on. During a recent raid, when bombs were being dropped and bits of shrapnel fell full supply, the auto busses, with their woman conductors, operated as usual. And there were passengers. The drivers do not regard the air raids with fear. People in the street get under cover, if it is handy, so as not to be hit by falling shrapnel. But they do not dash madly to shelter or push or jam their way into safety in the underground railway stations. The subway trains are operated as usual. Only the foreign element, largely employed in munition factories, has become frightened. Many of these have moved into safety zones.

As an instance of air-raid boredom a British officer on leave, was on his way to his hotel room when the warning to take cover was sounded. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "Do?" he echoed. "Hell, I'm

going to bed!" During the same raid the musicians in a hotel which fronts the Thames and is well known in America played on as usual and the cafe crowd did not know there was a raid until the "all clear" was sounded.

Club Men Talk Calmly.

But the booming of heavy guns in and around the city generally reaches most ears. A crowd of men sat in a smoking room at one club, with a glass roof above, and talked of one thing and another during the raid. Seeking shelter in a subway would appear as impossible to them as going down Broadway barefooted. Only a very small proportion of London can be accommodated in the subways. The crowding of public buildings during raids has been discouraged, because it is realized that very few of them can withstand the heavy bombs. Residents now are officially advised to stay at home during raids and take their chances, which are about one in 400,000.

Despite more than 100 raids on London one has to hunt for any evidence of damage, although scores have been killed and wounded. Houses which have been demolished are in widely scattered districts. London being a city which is sprinkled over considerable territory with low buildings. Business houses, public structures and factories show no evidence of attack. But houses which have been bombed are so much mortar and dust, even houses that were four stories high.

Spirit of the Trenches Prevails.

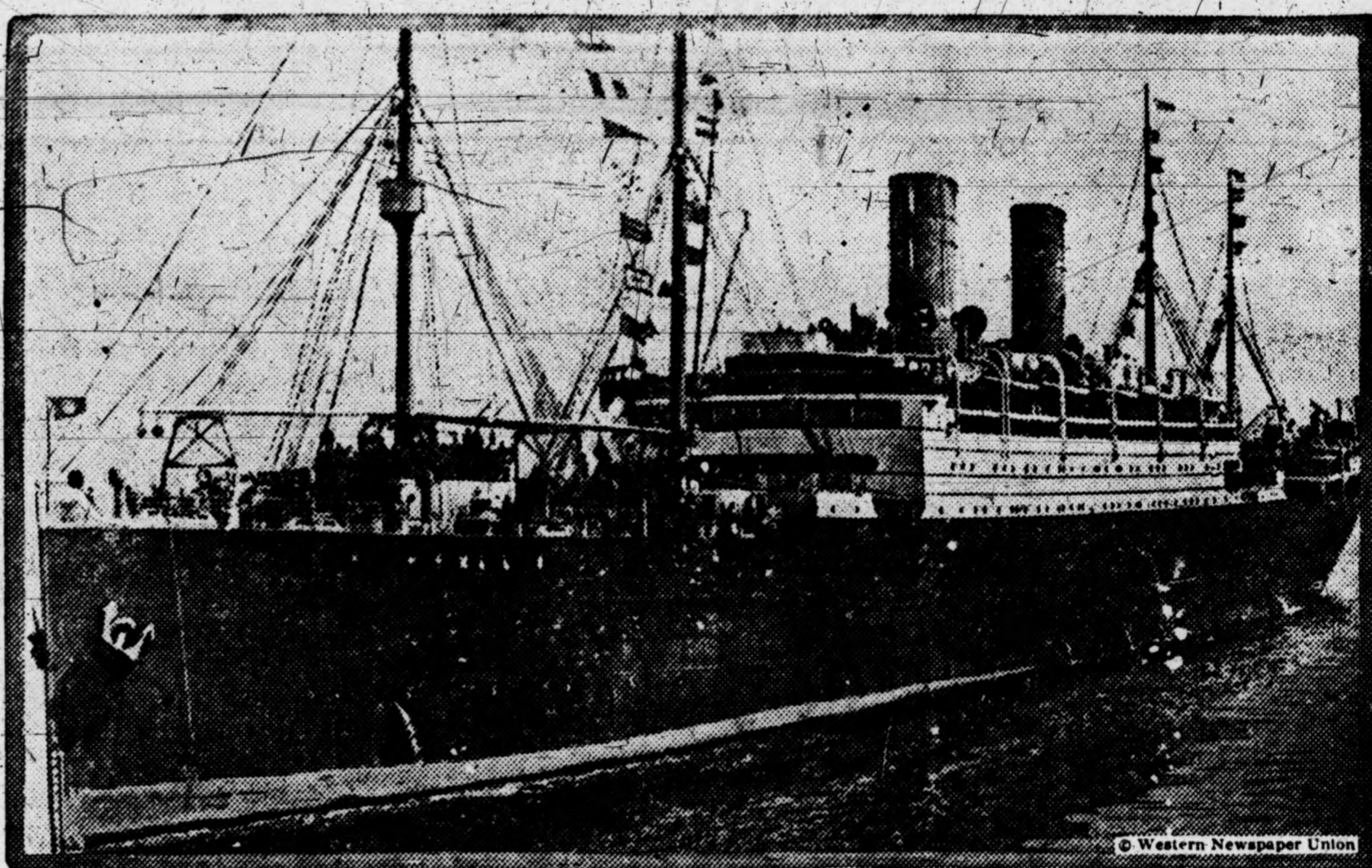
The spirit of the trenches, which makes men face death bravely, is the spirit of London during a Hun attack. Mothers are the most nervous, and many babies have been taken into the cold night air, during a raid, too thickly clad, each mother believing she was doing the best thing by going to a subway. And these babies have died from the exposure.

But there are many overbalanced cases of bravery. The bishop of London is authority for the story that a girl, aged seven and one-half years, who was alone during a gas raid, aroused her four younger brothers and sisters, brought them downstairs, placed them about a table and was reading a Bible when her mother, a widow employed as a train conductor, returned in panic, fearing for her little ones.

Awning Saved His Life.

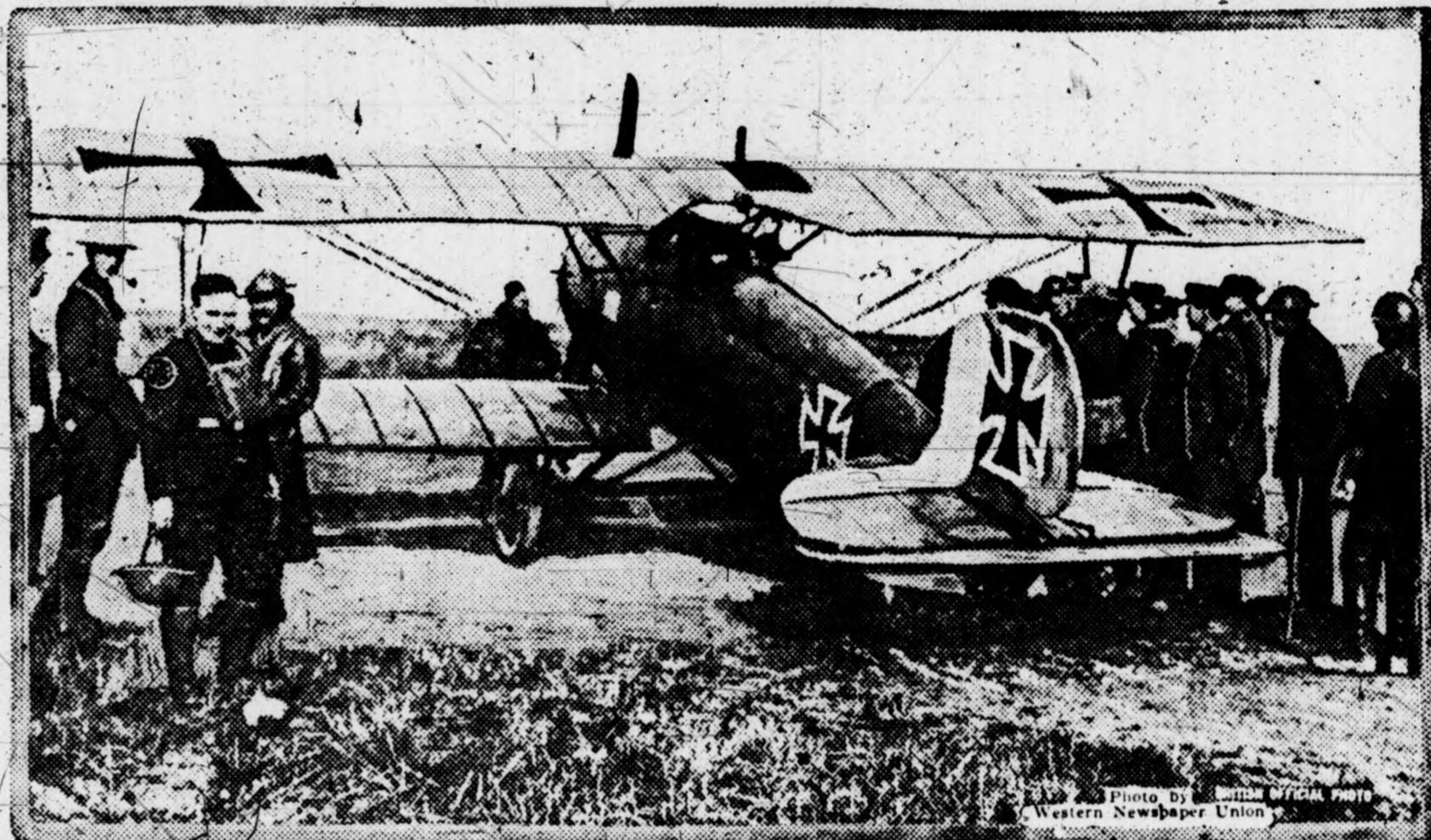
Tulsa, Okla.—Harry Hoog, an employee of a caulking company, while working in a fourth floor window of an office building lost his balance and fell out. A snarling cry was the sum of his injuries. An awning had just been lowered beneath the window. He lit on it and rolled to the sidewalk, lighting on his feet. He had struck his arm in the descent on a flower pot in a lower window.

AMERICAN TRANSPORT COVINGTON TORPEDOED



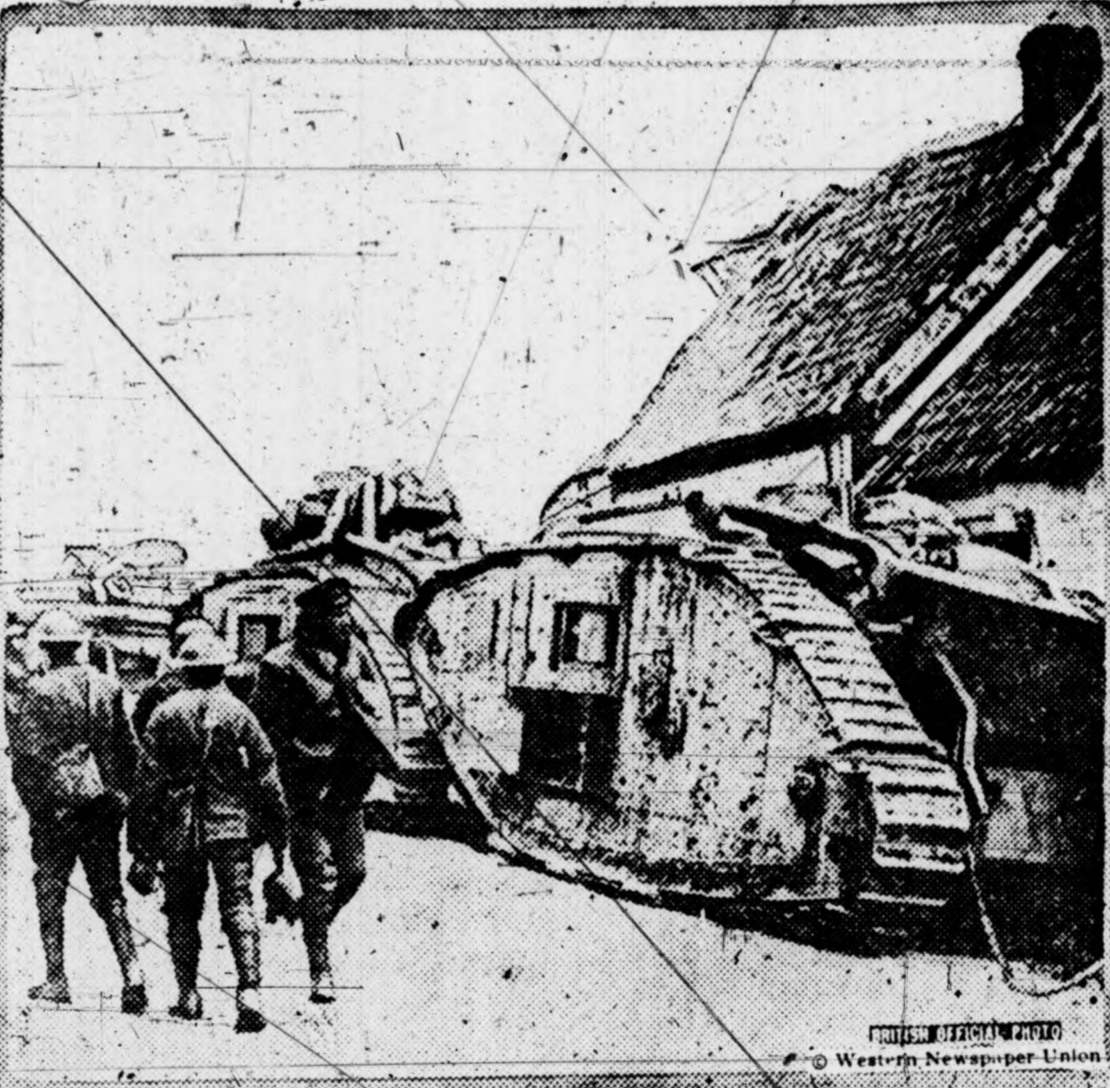
The United States transport Covington, formerly the liner Cincinnati, which was torpedoed while on its return trip from France. Six of the crew were lost.

GERMAN ALBATROSS IS BROUGHT TO EARTH



This German scouting airplane of the Albatross class in an encounter with a British airman was brought to earth. The Hun pilot was injured in the fight and unable to wreck his machine after landing behind the British lines.

BRITISH TANKS MOVING TO THE FRONT



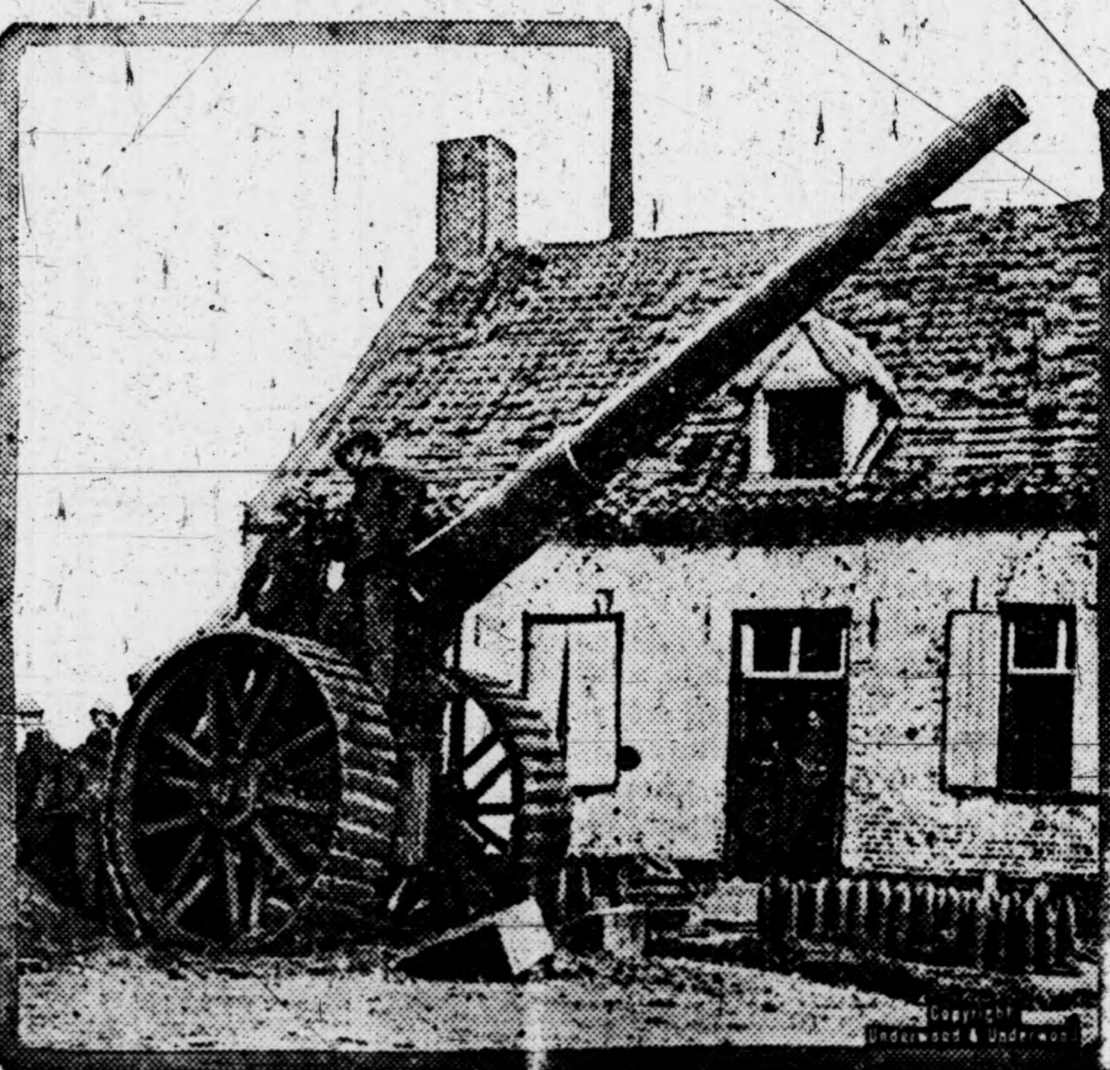
This official British photograph shows some British tanks moving up to the battle line to meet a German advance.

COMMANDER OF THE COMFORT



This is Charles Malden Oman, commanding officer of the American hospital ship Comfort which the government planned to send across the Atlantic without convoy to test Germany's respect for the Red Cross emblem. The plan may be abandoned, since the Germans recently sank a Canadian hospital ship.

GUN HIGHER THAN THE HOUSETOPS



One of the giant British guns that have been instrumental in checking the German offensive on the western front. A gun of this type is used only for long-range firing, and can fire to a distance of about 15 miles. They are placed far in the rear of the infantry.

To Learn Fate of Sun.

It is by means of new stars that astronomers hope to establish what will be the ultimate fate of the sun and its attendant planets. Every star, and the sun is a star, is rushing through space at enormous speed. The sun is traveling toward Vega with a velocity of 12 miles a second. Other stars are known which possess a speed of 350 miles a second. There are in the sky great clouds of dark meteors, such as obstruct our view of the milky way. When a star hits one of these clouds there is a flash of fire as it tears its way through. If the swarm is small the star may escape, but if it is large the star is destroyed and its fragments go to increase the cloud that caused its destruction. The English astronomer who first observed the new star says that it represents a catastrophe of enormous magnitude in inconceivably remote fields.