



Maud Hart and Delos Wheeler
Lovelace Family Papers.

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5750 words.

PANCAKES A LA GUERRE

By Delos W. Lovelace.

~~A sense of personal grievance dressed Roy's mood in thorns. He jerked a shoulder, incredibly light without the gold bar forbidden at the Front by G.H.Q., and kicked at the road which ended beneath his feet.~~

Rearward, under the ^{morning} cockerow sun, lay Alsace. Ahead, beyond the machine gun platoon's dugout, khaki uniforms popped up and down the war-hacked hill like gophers to squint cautiously across the wirestrewn valley toward Mulhausen.

A lot too cautiously, Roy conceived, and shoved out a disapproving under lip. The grimace was fatal. Temporarily his sober air had discounted the salmon pink freshness of his round cheeks, and his brown head's lack of the last maturing inch of elevation; but the impatient lip pushed the last shred of disguise from that youth which he so much desired to hide from the army in general and his platoon in particular.

Thoughtlessly, he made the betraying gesture again. This do-nothing policy, he had long since decided

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was the bunk. The Heinies were smart, of course. But when you knew they knew you had orders not to attack, and when you knew they had taken advantage of those orders to pull everybody out of their Line except a few peglegs, then why not change the orders? Why not attack? Why not stir up trouble?

An outfit had to get experience. What was a training sector for? A few grenades th'wucking off at night because the fatheaded infantry got scared by rabbits, and a few shells who-ooshing over in the daytime, didn't teach much. Somebody ought to straighten out this salient. The way it bulged, like a cow backing out of a barn door, was a crime. Roy cocked his overseas cap across one smoke-grey eye. Holy Mike! It couldn't have been worse if Gurnam had been kicked up five flights and put in command!

As usual the thought of Gurnam drove all other irritations from his mind. He mumbled: "Captain Snoop-around!" And the sobriquet conjured up a sequence of pictures. Snoop-around at the First Officers' Training Camp--at Camp Dodge--and, finally, in France, kept at Division headquarters as a sort of odd job granny. Recalling how often he had been a target for Gurnam's precise, schoolmasterish criticism, Roy curled his toes. Someday he'd hang one on Gurnam or break a leg trying!

He glanced to his left where a path ran over crackling October leaves to a Browning machine gun perched on an anti-aircraft mount and half wished that Gurnam would come around. Because, for once, he congratulated himself, everything was right enough to suit even Gurnam. Dead right!

usually cheerful despite a constantly frustrated ambition to weigh flour, bag sugar, grind coffee and make change all in the same breath; but worried now, his employer saw, from a desire to avert any incident hurtful to trade.

With a sense of virtuous restraint, Matthew compromised by gazing unresponsively through the window.

The street before him faded out from the dusty village after a short half mile and then, with an air of relief, got quickly up to the pleasant height of Smithy Hill. For Matthew, this solitary satisfying break in the level land beyond the houses had a fanciful charm. An object fluttering against the yellow cottage upon the brow of the hill stirred his private recollections. He visualized the blackened shop which gave the Hill its name. He saw old Oscar Nissen stooping over an anvil, his gentle mouth incongruously framed by fierce viking moustaches; and Ragnhild tonging the red hot metal for her grandfather's hammer while her blue eyes turned to the masculine intruder with Amazonian suspicion.

"It didn't take this town long to let you know you couldn't have their trade if you monkeyed around the old coot and his girl, eh?"

With slow irritation Matthew turned around. Jeff was bending his huge body in a bantering curve, thumbs hooked in the pockets of a soiled black knitted vest.

It was, Matthew told himself, just about time somebody took a fall out of this big bird.

"I'm the only ---" Jeff broke off as he sighted

of guilt. In all his married life he had tried to conceal only one other secret. That was when, noting in his perusal of the Tribune's Housewife Page, that wives objected to charming secretaries, he had hired Miss Zigo without telling Helen. One day he had found the two lunching together.

"You know her?" he had exclaimed in consternation. He was guiltless; Miss Zigo held her place solely upon merit. But remembering the Housewife Page he glanced to see if Helen's Cupid-bow mouth was bent accusingly. It was not. Peculiar. He teetered like a cat on a sun-scorched pavement. Miss Zigo smiled. Helen smiled.

"We just thought it would be nice to know each other."

What duplicity! Neither had said a word to him.

But their duplicity was as nothing to that which he felt when, resolute to test his scheme of provocation, he dropped into his easy chair behind the evening paper.

A footstool was gently insinuated beneath his feet.

"Has it been a hard day?" Helen's soft voice asked.

Robert kicked the stool away and scowled cloudily over his barricade of newsprint. This was according to plan. But a little qualm seized him. The soft cerulean blue of her dress became Helen beautifully. The long, drippy sleeves were slit to show bits of her white arms. He wanted to pull her down to his lap. He resisted the impulse. His plan was for her good, too. She would be freed to marry someone who would make her happier.

A sudden resentment was mixed with the sense of sacrifice aroused by this reflection. It would, he felt, be just like her to marry.