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MODERN BOY

EVERY SATURDAY

2^D

No. 13. New Series
MAY 14th, 1938

EIGHT STORIES

Including—

WHEELED DYNAMITE

*Nick Forrest, Boy Speed King,
in Germany*

By CLIFFORD CAMERON

*(Cover Illustration by
Roland Davies)*

Sky-Detective Jagers in

S O S

By JOHN TEMPLER

DOUBLING FOR ARCHIE

*Comedy-Thriller of the
Film Studios*

By COLIN ROBERTSON

THE WALKING LOCO

Fine Railway Yarn

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FUN, NEWS, REAL LIFE
ADVENTURE



SURPRISE ATTACK

Stealthily King of the Islands swam towards the Dawn, risking his life in a desperate attempt to recapture his ketch. One false move, and all would be over!

By CHARLES HAMILTON

Flying
Knives

KEN KING swam with swift but silent strokes his head a dark speck on the gleaming surface of the lagoon of Kohu. Hardly more than a cable's length from the beach opposite the old pearler's hut his ketch Dawn was at anchor, so still in the hot tropical afternoon that her shadow scarcely stirred in the water.

Swiftly, steadily, the boy trader known as King of the Islands, swam nearer and nearer to the deadliest peril—to certain death if an eye fell on him as he came. But it was a chance to recapture his ship.

Van Duck was far away with most of his black crew, and the three Solomon Islanders he had left on the ketch were leaning on the rail on the farther side, staring across the lagoon in the direction in which their master had gone in the boat. Had they looked round, they must have seen the boy trader—and a whizzing knife would have sealed his fate. But the fuzzy heads did not turn.

There was no sign yet of Van Duck returning in the boat. That he had crossed the lagoon to attack Barney Hall in his lagoon, Ken knew; he had heard the firing and had seen the Tonga trader in frantic flight from the pursuing blacks. Some of the blacks had fallen in the fight on the lugger. The rest were hunting Barney Hall in the bush, and Van Duck could not pull back without his boat's crew. How long the Dutchman would remain on the lugger, in the creek on the opposite beach, Ken could not tell. But he knew that he had time for what he had to do.

One of the fuzzy heads stirred, and Ken's heart missed a beat. He shot on into the shadow of the ketch. Now, if the blacks looked round, the hull hid him from their eyes.

His hand was on the ketch now. He steadied himself there and listened, his heart thumping. He dreaded to hear the pad of a bare foot crossing the deck above—to see a black face staring down over the rail. He was utterly at the mercy of the blacks if he was seen.

Lolling idly on the rail, chewing betel-nut, the blacks were speaking in their own dialect of Malaita. King of the Islands was reassured as he listened to their crackling falsetto voices. They had not seen him. No thought of danger was in their minds.

Ken reached up to climb on board. He would have given all the pearls of Kohu, real or fabled, for a firearm. With a six-shooter in his hand, he would not have feared the three blacks or twice as many. But he had only a bush-knife, and the blacks were three to one. There were firearms on his ketch if he could reach them. But he knew how desperate the chance was as he climbed up over the low freeboard of the Dawn.

He made no sound, but the water dripping from him as he drew himself from the lagoon made a light splash, and he dreaded that it would reach the ears on the other side. His eyes were on the black boys now—three black figures in dingy loincloths, glistening backs turned towards him. One of them stirred, and Ken's heart leaped. But the black boy only reached up to his fuzzy mop of hair for a renewed supply of betel-nut, which he crammed into his thick-lipped mouth. Then, grunting, he lolled on the rail again with his companions.

It was a matter of hardly more than a minute, but it seemed an age to him, before Ken drew himself up on to the deck of the Dawn, only the width of the deck between him and the savage blacks, who would have turned on him like wild beasts at a sound of alarm.

The bush-knife was in his hand now. It was a terrible weapon—nearly two feet long, heavy, keen-edged as a razor.

Silently he tiptoed towards the open companion. It was between him and the Solomon Islanders, but he hoped to

reach it unheard and unseen, and slip below. He was only a few feet from it when one of the blacks turned his head.

The astonishment in the black boy's face as he saw the white man, dripping with water, standing on the deck behind him, was ludicrous. He stared at the boy trader as if he fancied him a ghost—as, for the moment, perhaps he did, for he was one of the boat's crew that had left King of the Islands to drown on the outer reef. He uttered a loud, startled gasp, and his companions turned.

Ken made a desperate bound for the companion. As he plunged into it a knife stuck quivering in the wood by the doorway. It had missed him hardly by an inch.

Ken stumbled down the ladder, and fell headlong into the cabin below. But he was up in a second, and racing across the cabin to the little state-room forward. Trampling bare feet rang on the companion behind him. Knife in hand, the Solomon Islanders rushed below.

King of the Islands leaped into the state-room and shut the door. As he did so a knife crashed into it, sticking there and quivering. Even as the knife struck, Ken secured the door. There was a yell in the cabin, and a sound of heavy knives hacking at the state-room door. But that door was of teak, and not likely to yield soon.

In the state-room were two bunks, used by Ken and his mate, Kit Hudson. The space under each bunk was filled by long drawers, with strong locks, in one of which arms and ammunition were packed. The keys had been taken by Van Duck. They were locked now. It was no easy matter to break open a strong lock, set in hard wood; but the knife designed to hack a way through the hard tendrils of tangled bush, was a useful weapon. Using it as a hatchet, King of the Islands hacked at the drawer, while the yelling blacks in the cabin hacked at the teak door of the state-room.

The lock loosened at last, and Ken dragged the drawer open. The next moment a Winchester rifle was in his grasp, and he was grabbing up cartridges. He slung the rifle over his shoulder and loaded a revolver. As he swam from the beach and ever since he had boarded the ketch, he had faced sudden and fearful death. Now he was master, ready to face the blacks—and prepared to deal with Van Duck and the boat's crew when they returned. Revolver in hand, he stepped to the door, unlocked it, and threw it open.

"You feller boy! You run along deck!" His voice rang sharply.

A black hand went up, with a knife in it. King of the Islands fired on the instant, and the Solomon Islander, with a bullet through his shoulder, dropped the knife and staggered. The other two blacks bounded back, snarling. Ken stepped out into the cabin after them, menacing them with the revolver.

"You hear me, ear belong you!" he thundered. "You drop that feller knife along floor, you run along deck, or, my word, you plenty kill-dead along gun belong me."

The knives clattered on the floor, and King of the Islands drove the blacks back to the deck.

PETER caught his breath as he stared from the narrow opening of his coral cavern, far out on the outer reef of the island. It was hours since Ken King had left him there.

Looking out in the sunlight, he watched for King of the



Revolver in hand, Ken drove the Solomon Islanders up on deck, forced them to leap overboard.

Islands. He had saved the boy trader from death on the reef the night before, but he could not help him in the desperate enterprise he had now undertaken. He waited, and watched, and listened—dreading that King of the Islands had gone to his death—hoping to see him return.

At the sight of a figure on the reef, he fancied, for the moment, that it was Ken King, and his eyes brightened. But it was only for a moment. The figure that burst from the thick bush on the shore and staggered out on the reef was not the slim, handsome figure of Ken King. It was the form of Barney Hall, the ruffianly trader of Tonga, who had hunted Peter through the length and breadth of Kohu.

Peter crouched back in the narrow passage in the rock. He fancied that the Tonga trader must have gained the upper hand in the fighting with Van Duck and his crew, and was again in search of him. But as he peered from behind a jutting spur of coral, he realised that that was not the case.

He did not need telling why the Tonga trader had fled out on the reef. Van Duck's black boys were hunting him. There was death behind him, though his pursuers were still out of sight. Barney Hall was at the end of his tether, and he had to hide like a hunted animal, or die under the knives of the black crew that had hunted him across the island.

That he was exhausted, his look and every movement showed. But he staggered on, scrambling over rough ridges of coral, stumbling into crevices and gullies, and scrambling wildly out again. Hidden in the cave-mouth, Peter watched him in fear and terror, and yet with a glimmering of compassion. Brute and ruffian as Barney Hall was, savagely as he had hunted the boy whom he believed to be the pearler's son holding the secret of the cache of pearls, to the boy who watched, still he was a white man, hunted by black savages, reeling with exhaustion as he continued his desperate flight.

His wild glance turned on the rugged face of the cliff that jutted from the reef. It was there that he had tracked the boy, when the coming of the rival pearl-poacher had forced him to give up the hunt and think only of his own safety.

He was hardly twenty feet from the boy who crouched behind a jutting spur of coral, thick with clinging seaweed. He halted, and his panting, laboured breath came plainly to Peter's ears.

He tottered as he stood, his knees sagging under him, the revolver almost falling from his nerveless fingers. Strong and muscular as he was, that desperate flight, winding through the thick bush round the lagoon of Kohu, had robbed Barney Hall of every ounce of his strength. At that moment he could hardly have lifted a hand in his defence. Standing unsteadily, he scanned the rugged face of the coral cliff with wild

eyes, and Peter could read the desperate hope in his looks, of finding there some hiding-place from pursuit.

From the bush came a loud, sharp yell, answered by another and another. The pursuing blacks were not far away, calling to one another as they hunted the white man. Barney Hall ceased to scan the cliff and stared back the way he had come, in dread of seeing a ferocious black face. Then, with a gasp that was like a sob, he ran on. His foot caught in a straggle of seaweed, and he pitched on his face.

Peter saw him strive to drag himself to his feet. But his strength was spent, and he sank down in the mass of seaweed over which he had stumbled and lay half-buried in it, incapable of further movement.

Peter made a movement. But he crouched back again as a brawny black figure, knife in hand, ran out on the reef. He suppressed a cry as he watched the Solomon Islander. Evidently the blacks knew that Barney had fled out on the reef, and were pursuing him there.

The black boy came to a halt, standing on a hummock of coral and scanning the reef on all sides.

Had Barney Hall made another movement, it would have cost him his life. But he lay without motion, crumpled in the great mass of seaweed, and it hid him from the keen eyes searching from a distance.

Had Barney Hall made another movement, it would have cost him his life. But he lay without motion, crumpled in the great mass of seaweed, and it hid him from the keen eyes searching from a distance.

The boy caught his breath. The Solomon Islander had vanished for the moment, but the discovery of the Tonga trader was inevitable unless—

Peter hesitated. Then he crept out of the cave-mouth and ran swiftly to the spot where Barney Hall lay. He stared as Peter grasped his shoulder, and stared with glazed eyes, making a feeble motion to lift the revolver.

"Quick!" breathed Peter. "Quick!" Barney Hall stared at him stupidly. It was not the savage face and uplifted knife of a black Malaita boy that he saw—

—it was the pale, scared face of the boy he had hunted for the secret of the pearls.

"The pearler's son!" muttered Barney Hall. "Black Tom Daly's son."

"Quick!" Uttering only that word, Peter strove to drag the burly trader to his feet. His strength was not equal to Barney's weight. But it dawned on the ruffian's dazed and dizzy brain that the boy was striving to help him, to save him, and he made an effort, and staggered up, leaning heavily on him.

From the island came yells. From the reef, a yell answered from the black boy who was searching among the gullies. The ferocious howls of the Solomon Islanders spurred Barney on to a final effort. Half-led and half-dragged, he reeled into the cave-mouth, staggered a few paces, and fell. His senses left him, and he lay insensible in the coral passage.

SURPRISE ATTACK

Peter left him lying where he fell. From a fissure in the coral, he dragged armfuls of seaweed and stacked it at the narrow opening of the cave, until from without, the opening looked like a fissure into which the tide had drifted seaweed, leaving it there in receding.

Behind that frail barrier, useful for concealment but useless for defence, Peter crouched, and he trembled at the sound of footsteps and voices—padding footsteps of naked feet, high-pitched voices of black Malaita boys. But the footsteps and the voices passed, and Peter, the perspiration thick on his pale face, breathed again.

Massed Attack!

KING of the Islands stepped out on to the deck at the heels of the Malaita boys, his face grim, his finger on the trigger.

"You feller Malaita boy, you run along beach!" he snapped.

The blacks hardly waited for the order. Three swift splashes sounded under the rail of the Dawn, and the black boys were swimming for the beach.

Ken stood at the rail, revolver in hand, and watched them. Soon they were scrambling out of the water, and as fast as they could run they scuttled up the beach and disappeared into the bush.

King of the Islands looked across the lagoon. There was still no sign of Van Duck returning in the boat. The black boys would carry him the news. And that, when he heard it, the freebooter would make a desperate attempt to retake the ketch, Ken had no doubt. But now that he had recaptured his craft, he was prepared to defend it against all comers.

Sooner or later Kit Hudson would arrive from Lu'uo with his crew. Hudson could hardly fail to guess the course Van Duck had set in the stolen ketch, knowing that the Dutchman was after the pearls of Kohu. Until he came, Ken had to hold the ketch and defend it. Van Duck, who had left him to drown on the reef, and who believed that he was food for fishes, would find that he was very much alive. The hostilities between the rival gangs of pearl-poachers had given him this chance, and fortune had favoured him in making the most of it.

That the attack would come, he was sure, but he had time to make preparations for defence. The black boys, even if they lost no time, had to make half the circuit of the lagoon to reach Van Duck; and even then, most of his crew were scattered in the bush hunting for Barney Hall. It was likely that he had several hours, at least, but he did not lose a minute.

Under the burning sun, aching with the tropical heat, but tireless, the boy trader worked. Long coils of barbed wire, dragged on deck, were unrolled and stapled to wooden uprights, jammed in cleats on the rail. That was the usual defence of the ketch, when the Dawn sailed in dangerous waters and traded with treacherous islanders. More than once Ken had owed the safety of his ship to the barbed wire defence, that stopped a sudden rush of natives from their canoes.

It was hard and heavy work single-handed. Everything that was needed was kept in readiness on the ketch, and it was quick work for the whole crew to put up the defences—two lines of barbed wire one above another, from stem to stern. But for one man it was a herculean task.

A single wire had been run all round the ketch a foot above the rail, before Ken paused for a rest. It was already a strong defence, against the bare limbs of the blacks. But he did not pause long, and he was at work on the second line of wire when a boat shot out from the opposite shore of the lagoon.

Ken's face set grimly at the sight of the tanned face and red beard of the Dutch freebooter in the stern. Even at the distance he could read the fury in the Dutchman's rugged face.

Probably Van Duck had been hardly able to believe his ears when he learned that King of the Islands was not only living, but in possession of the ketch. He had not stayed to gather all his crew—there were six black boys in the boat, pulling. Some of the Solomon Islanders, Ken could guess, had fallen in the fight with Barney Hall, but others were hunting the Tonga trader, and every now and then he heard the echo of their shrill voices as they called to one another.

Ken picked up his rifle and stood watching the approaching boat. As it drew nearer, the Dutchman half-rose, his eyes glued on the ketch. It seemed that even yet he could hardly believe that King of the Islands was there. But as he picked out the figure standing by the rail, he shook an infuriated fist.

Ken levelled the rifle across the rail. From the boat came the crack of the Dutchman's revolver, as he stood and fired over the heads of the black boys sweating at the oars. The roar of the rifle answered the rapid crackling of the revolver, and a bullet pitched into the boat.

There was a yell as the hot lead tore along a bare black leg. Ken fired again, and one of the blacks sprawled over, his oar slipping from the rowlock into the water. Wild yells rose from the whole crew.

Van Duck, brandishing his revolver, roared to them to pull. The rifle rang again, and a bullet crashed into the stern seat hardly an inch from the Dutchman.

Another followed it fast, but already the boat was swerving from its course. Infuriated as he was, the Dutchman realised that he was rushing on death. Over the Dawn's rail, only Ken's head and rifle showed—but the whole boat's crew were openly exposed to his fire. The Dutchman roared to his crew, and the boat swerved away, bullets splashing in the water round it as it went.

King of the Islands swiftly reloaded the Winchester, watching the boat as it circled round the anchored ketch at a safe distance.

If the Dutchman was watching for a chance to make a sudden rush from a different quarter, it was hopeless. Ken's eye was not off him for a second. At length, spluttering oaths in Dutch, the freebooter pulled for the beach and landed with his crew.

Ken dropped the butt of his rifle to the deck. He knew that this was not the end. The sun was dipping behind the nodding palms on the western side of Kohu, and when darkness came, the attack would be renewed.

As the dimness grew, he heard calling voices on the circling shore of the lagoon. The Dutchman was gathering his whole crew. The pursuit of Barney Hall mattered little or nothing to him in comparison with regaining possession of the Dawn.

While his crew called to their scattered comrades in the bush, and on the outer reef, the Dutchman stood watching the ketch with savage eyes, till her graceful outlines faded in the falling night.

But though he could see the ketch no longer, sounds from her floated to his ears—the tap-tapping of a hammer knocking in staples, busy and incessant. Ken King was finishing adding the second strand of barbed wire to his defences, and every minute that the attack held off was useful to him. The second line of wire was completed when, at last, Ken ceased his labours. By that time, darkness had shut down like a cloak on the lonely atoll in the boundless Pacific.

Not a glimmer of a light showed on the ketch. In dense darkness, King of the Islands waited and watched, rifle in hand.

Peter Springs a Surprise

BARNEY HALL lifted his head and looked round him stealthily in the glimmer of the ship's lantern in the coral cave. He was alone.

He had dragged his weary limbs into the interior cavern, and sunk down on a bed of palm-leaves and moss where, the previous night, King of the Islands had slept. For hours he had hardly stirred. Of Peter he saw nothing and heard nothing, and for a long time did not even think of him. The boy had blocked the narrow cave-mouth with seaweed, and the searching Solomon Islanders had not discovered it. The exhausted ruffian had lain half-unconscious for hours—and when he stirred he found that food and water had been placed by his side. He ate and drank, and lay down to rest again, and doubtless slept, for when he sat up at last darkness had fallen, and the ship's lantern, on a hook in the coral wall, had been lighted. Peter must have come and gone.

Barney scanned the circling cave in the dim light. It was spacious, though the entrance passage through the cliff was so narrow. A score of fissures gaped in the coral walls—a honeycomb of caves. In one of those dim recesses, no doubt, the boy had his quarters. Sitting up in the palm-leaves, Barney groped stealthily for his revolver.

It was gone—his cartridges were gone. He concluded that he must have lost them when he collapsed on the reef and Peter had dragged him into the shelter of the cave. It mattered little. His foes could not find him here and he did not need a weapon with the boy. By the side of the coral cave, he saw a small canoe—the canoe, he could guess, in which Peter had once escaped him on the Kohu lagoon. It was a glad sight to his eyes, for it meant escape from the island where death lurked, but not without the pearls.

Barney was a hard-handed ruffian; but he felt a pang at the thought of repaying

News for Stamp Collectors

POLAR SOUVENIRS

STILL another glowing chapter in the story of Polar exploration—the recent Soviet "ice-floe" expedition under Papinin—is recalled for us in Russia's newest stamps. Actually the stamps honour the four flyers who took Papinin and his three companions to their Polar observation post. The flyers hoisted the Soviet ensign at the Pole—a fact that two of the new stamps does not let us forget. For their symbolic design shows an immense Soviet flag planted firmly in the Pole and encircled by the four aeroplanes. The two lower values, the 10 and 20 kopeks (the former is illustrated here), show the route taken by the flyers Polewards. It is a pity that more direct mention of Papinin and his fellow scientists is not made on these stamps, for their months-long stay on an ice-floe is an epic of endurance ranking amongst the greatest Polar exploits of all time.

We already have stamp portraits of two of the Russian aviators which the new series expressly honours. Remember the series of 1935 featuring the "Tcheluskin" rescue of Professor Schmidt from conditions similar to those of Papinin and his companions recently? On the 25 kopeks value there's a portrait of Vodopyanov, and on the 30 kopeks we see the head of Molokov—heroes both in an adventure which narrowly escaped ending in disaster.

Actually, the stamp album has several

other interesting links with Polar exploration. What about the Amundsen Polar flight series issued by Norway in 1925? And, going back down the years, and turning the album pages at New Zealand some of us, maybe, come across stamps which are direct links with two of the greatest names in British Polar work—Sir Ernest Shackleton and Captain Scott. Though few people know of the fact, Sir Ernest was, among other things, first Postmaster of the British Antarctic, and when he set sail at the close of 1907 from New Zealand, to try to reach the South Pole, he carried with him a stock of stamps. These stamps were the then current New Zealanders overprinted "King Edward VII Land."

Like Shackleton, Scott assumed the title of Antarctic Postmaster when he set out on that gallant trek of his for the South Pole on November 29th, 1910—the trek from which he never returned. His ship's stock of stamps were the then New Zealand r.d.s., overprinted "Victoria Land." A short while later, it was decided to add a 1d. value to the stock, and by a tragic coincidence these were issued on January 18th, 1913—the very day on which the news of Captain Scott's death reached the outside world.



ARMAMENTS RACE

(See opposite)

Overseas Readers, too!

You fellows who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well!

find on Kohu, where pearls have never been found before. I reckon there's enough to divvy. Half for you and half for me. What you got to say to that?"

"Nothing!"

"See here," said the Tonga trader grimly, "I reckon I'm giving you a fair deal. But I ain't taking no for an answer. I don't want to hurt you after what you've done, but if you don't point out where the pearls are cached, here and now, I'm taking you by the neck and twisting it till you do. Got that?"

To his surprise, Peter smiled. Timid as he had always seemed, he did not appear alarmed by that savage threat.

"What you got to say now?" snarled Barney.

"Nothing!"

"By hokey! That does it, then!" And the ruffian made a rapid stride towards the boy.

The next moment he stopped. Peter's hand whipped out of his pocket and a revolver—Barney's own revolver—looked the Tonga trader full in the face.

"Stand back!" said Peter. His voice was steady. "Stand back or I'll shoot you dead where you stand."

"By hokey!" stuttered Barney. Slowly the Tonga trader backed away. Peter watched him over the revolver. That faint smile was still on his face.

"You see, I did not trust you," he said quietly. "I have saved your life, Barney Hall, after you had hunted me like a wild animal, but I'll shoot you like a dog if you lift a finger against me."

Barney Hall backed away to the farther side of the cave. Then Peter, turning, disappeared into the tunnel that led out on the reef, leaving the Tonga trader muttering curses.

At the opening on the reef, Peter pulled aside a tangle of seaweed and looked out into the glimmer of the stars in the darkness. Somewhere on Kohu was King of the Islands. It was long, long hours since he had left the coral cave, and Peter dreaded that he had fallen into the savage hands from which Barney Hall had so narrowly escaped. Where was King of the Islands? What had happened to him?

As if in answer to his thought, there came a sudden roar of rifle-fire from Kohu, echoing and re-echoing amid the wild, fierce yells of savage blacks.

Peter caught his breath. He knew now what had happened to King of the Islands—he was fighting for his life in the darkness!

Next Week:

DUTCHMAN'S PRIZE