

# **PUNCTURED YANK PLANES AID EACH OTHER TO LAND**

## ***Advise by Radio How Flak Hits.***

A U. S. 9TH AIR FORCE BASE IN FRANCE, Aug. 13 [Delayed]—(AP).—Lt. Richard Kik Jr. of Kalamazoo, Mich., and Lt. Charles E. Rife of East Cleveland, O., were shooting up German tanks east of Mortain when Kik's Thunderbolt was hit by flak.

Rife called him and said, "You're smoking."

"Yes, I got hit pretty bad," Kik replied.

Capt. Henry Mazur of Lowell, Mass., flight leader, cut in on the radio conversation, and told Rife to take Kik back to the base.

### **Other Plane Is Hit.**

They had no more than gotten under way when two direct hits punched holes in both wings of Rife's plane.

"Now I've had it," Rife called to Kik.

"I can see the holes in your wings, but your engine isn't hit," Kik advised, forgetting his own troubles. "Shove the throttle forward and keep up speed."

"I don't think I can make it," Rife replied. "My flap is gone, the aileron is gone, I can't turn left. I'm going to belly land."

"Listen, Rife, you can't belly land. You've got a bomb hung under your wing. Get some altitude and bail out."

### **"You've Got to Land.**

"I can't bail out because I've been hit in the back and I'm afraid it cut a hole thru my parachute."

"You've got to keep going, then. Keep cool, Rife. We've got to make a landing," Kik pleaded.

They kept coming until they appeared over this French base. Ground personnel listening to the radio conversation were pacing and chewing their nails.

### **Lands at 160 M. P. H.**

Finally Rife's landing gear was observed coming down slowly. He was pumping it down by hand.

Rife nosed his ship down and his wheels touched the ground at 160 miles per hour. Kik, his engine beginning to blaze and spurting oil, was right behind him.

As Rife climbed out of the cockpit three pieces of shell fragment fell out of his parachute. He was not hurt.