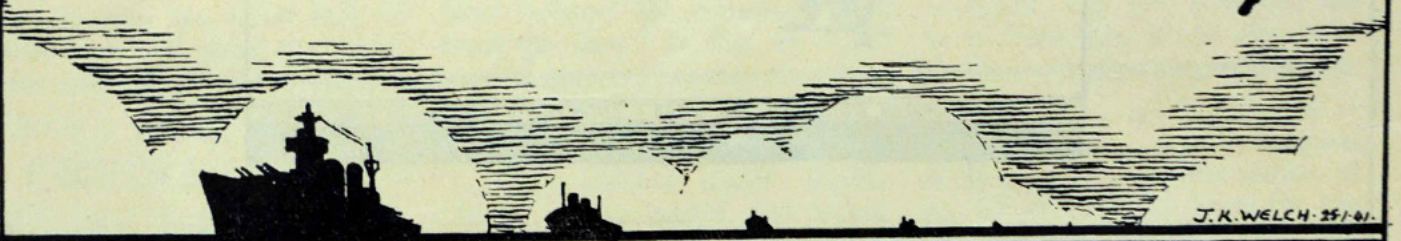
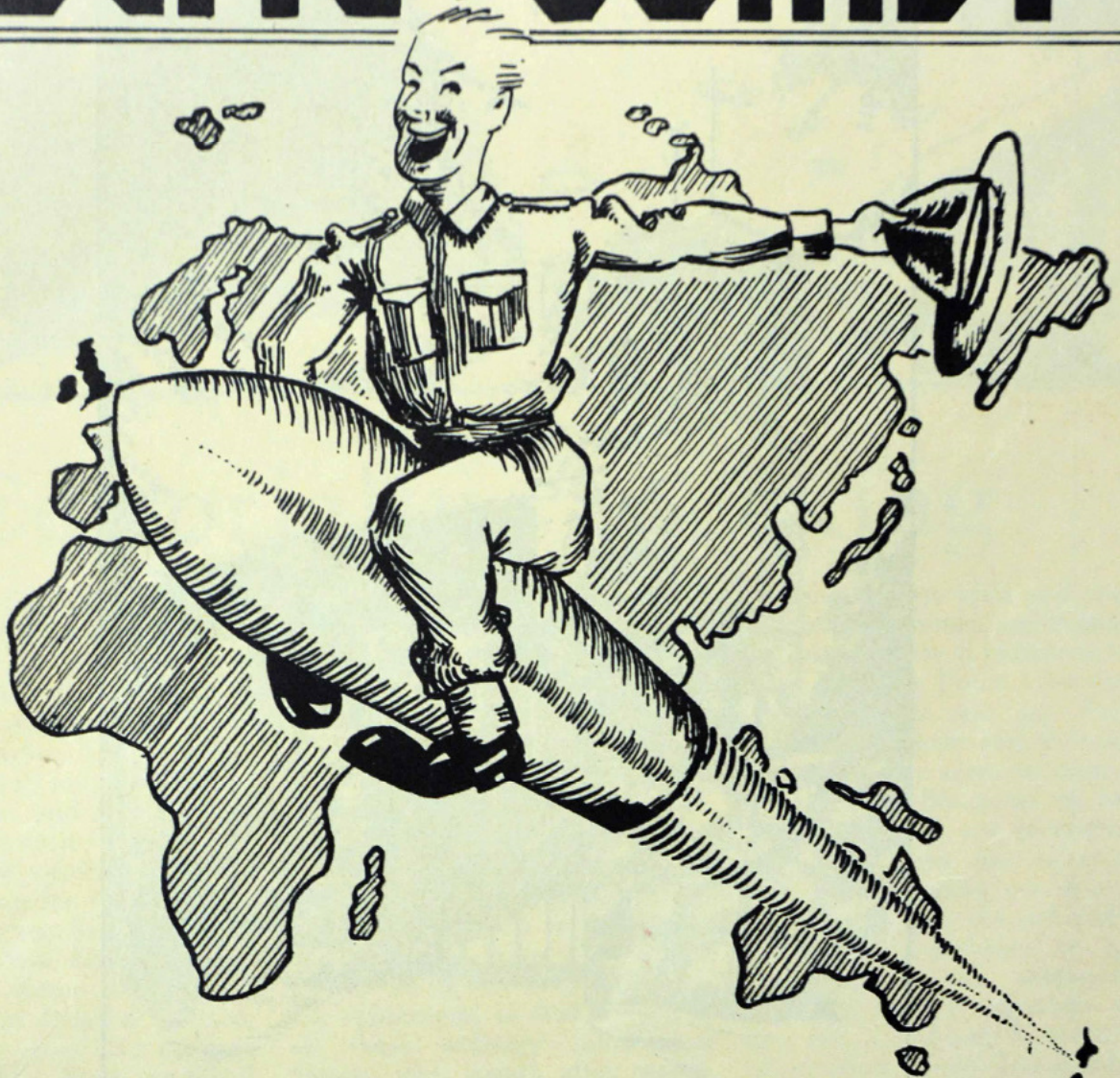


# The BLITZTOURIST



J. K. WELCH - 25/1-41.

# AN ENGLISH BILLET

WESTWELL nestled in a hollow, its loveliness shielded from the outside world by the rolling country known as the Weald of Kent.

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ENROL NOW! JOIN TO-DAY!—and catch up with the Siege of Ladysmith! The Fall of Khartoum! The Retreat from Mons! Gallipoli Landing! And—

THIS GOLDARNED  
BLANKETY — WAR!!!

(Cabin 432)

You came upon it suddenly, and you were more than pleasantly surprised by the sight of the cottages and the inn that partly surrounded the tiny green, and the picturesqueness of the lovely old church half hidden from view by the elms.

It was a pretty place, and you would have liked it at once. As you got to know the people your interest would most surely have turned to love. An American woman tourist would probably have called it a "quaint" place, and she may have tried to carry most of it back home, where it would have borne as little resemblance to the Westwell we knew as a glowworm in the light of day to the radiant miracle that fascinates you in the blackness of the night.

For Westwell wasn't merely a pretty picture, with its old-fashioned red-brick houses and whitewashed cottages and its church and inn; nor just a typical English village where a couple of hundred men, women and children lived and enjoyed and were satisfied with the lives that were theirs. Westwell wasn't simply this or that. For most of us who lived there for the month of October, 1940, it will remain in memory as the very soul of England itself. And how may I define a soul? A soul that embodies all the infinitely varying facets of a human personality and yet a soul that's steadfast, true to itself and its kind. As stable as England itself, because this is England!

Outwardly, for that month, the face of the village was changed. One hundred and fifty of us, one complete squadron of the Divisional Cavalry Regiment, made the place a temporary home. We were welcomed and accepted. We became, for the time being, a part of the village, were absorbed in its spirit, enjoyed its hospitality. But we could never have changed the real Westwell. Rather, if we had stayed long enough, it would have been us who would have lost an identity. And because, fundamentally, we have so much in common with these people, we should hardly have noticed the transformation.

We should, I'm sure, never have realised quite how our attachment for The Wheel Inn grew upon us. And how satisfying we had come to find the gossip and the banter and the philosophy of the men and women who found their way to the inn of an evening.

You must not think it strange if I introduce you to Westwell from the public bar of The Wheel. Certainly you musn't imagine I do it because

we were a thirsty crowd of soldiers and beer and more beer was the apogee of life for us.

Symbolically, socially, spiritually even (and I intend no pun) The Wheel was the village. And it was upon the hub that was the public bar, that life revolved. There the common lot was shared. There the men who toiled steadily all day in the fields and the women who helped them and cooked the meals too, and the young people of the village, met and talked and satisfied that eternal human quest for friendly, intimate contact with one's fellows.

There in front of the darts board, glass in hand, we shall always see John the labourer from down the Ashford Road. Seated on one side are his eager, bantering companions, Norah and Jane and the boy from Eastwell. In his favourite corner, his back bent with the toil of seventy years, sits old William. Playing draughts are two others with whom we passed the time of day. And behind the bar Auntie will preside for ever, her beaming smile, her kindly sympathy and her cheerfulness, characteristics that remain the very essence of Westwell.

A long time ago Grovins Court was quite a grand place, peopled with folk of a different era. And no doubt it used to be a carriage and pair or perhaps a gig and not a light tank or a Bren carrier, that turned into the yard through the arch made by the loft where hops were kept. And no doubt, too, there used to be feminine laughter and the swish of a silken skirt where now there was only the shouting of commands and the tramping of marching feet.

Time had gone on. You could see traces of its passage in the tiles that weren't now so securely fixed to the roof, and in the remnants of the garden that had become too big a task for old Miss Atkinson, who lived there all alone until we came in October. Grovins Court was, in fact, quietly, unobtrusively decaying, and by now, for all I know, may have slipped silently into that other world where dead mansions go when their work is done.

The narrow stairway that ran from the ground floor to the tiny attic under the roof groaned with the weight of our heavy boots as we took possession. Rooms long quiet came back to life, were filled with gear, became for us temporary homes away from home. And in the old-fashioned fireplaces we made blazes that were good to see and to warm our hands by after the cold and damp of Eastwell

in autumn. We overflowed into the loft and made it as comfortable as we could with our straw-filled palliases. It was good to be able to relax on a palliase again after a month or more sleepin' on the ground under the trees.

It was barely two hundred yards to The Wheel, along the tree-fringed road past the big house where the orderly room was and where the hop kilns stood side by side. We strolled along at our leisure and met Lillian as we reached the inn. Lillian, nineteen, dark, and friendly, was bright company and became very popular. This meant there were lots of times when you had to pretend to a greater interest in a "game of skill" with the football machine. For a penny you could, with a lot of luck, get yourself a credit of threepence with Auntie. And if your luck wasn't in there was always Uncle Tom, who was a retired lawyer from London, to console you with stories of what you might do if you cared to expend just one more coin. I wonder how many dozens of pennies that machine got out of us?

We crowded the bar and drank like New Zealanders, but we learned to take our time over a glass, like the people with whom we'd talk the evening away. It became a habit to sit back in the comfortable easy chairs in the saloon bar, to sip our beer and to talk with those who came in. A habit which sometimes tempted us to think that wars were, after all, quite pleasant affairs and nothing to worry about.

There was always a crowd in both bars. It was always bright. Sometimes considerable quantities of liquor were drunk, but rarely did you ever see anyone the worse for his beer. Those who came regularly didn't come

merely for the sake of a beer. They came because they knew that there they would find pleasant company, other villagers, visitors with whom they'd be able to chat. Then the wireless gave you the news at nine o'clock, so that you felt you were in touch with the outside world. And if there was some startling news to take home, well, you knew already what the rest of the village thought of it.

We didn't meet everyone in Westwell, but we remember characters like hunchbacked Captain Chambers, with his racy tales and his dog Poochi. The Captain was always responsible for a lot of light-hearted banter as he ordered drinks, and he was always cheerful, although you might have thought sometimes that he pretended to a gaiety he didn't actually feel. And no doubt the old ex-sergeant-major didn't always think it was just good fun doing a regular shift with other members of the Home Guard. The nights were getting colder. They were going to be far from pleasant on lots of occasions, but just the same he'd be there to keep up the spirits of the others and help them keep a lookout for paratroops.

On a fine afternoon you may have seen them doing a little shooting or some bayonet fighting with the aid of an old sack filled with straw on the tiny green. They laughed as they stuck the sack in the middle and tore another hole for the straw to leak out.

But it wasn't only in The Wheel that we found bright company to while away the dull evenings. Scragg came in to see if he were going home, and told us of the supper he'd had with some people down the road.

"What did you have?" we asked him.

"There was some cake, good cake too," he said, "and biscuits and a cup of tea."

"Who was there?"

"Oh, the woman of the house and another young woman and her husband. The other woman's husband is a prisoner of war, and they heard from him yesterday. She seemed to be very happy about it, for she told me she hadn't heard anything for a long time."

Before it was too late I slipped around to the little shop where old Mrs. Lambert would tell me, as she always told me, that chocolate was difficult to get now, and she might not be able to get any at all to-morrow; but she would give what she had to the boys as they came, and when it was done it was done. That was her rationing system.

But I would be lucky if I got away with it as easily as that. Across the little counter laden with boxes of sweets and a strange miscellany of groceries she would observe that the raiders were quiet to-night, but that she'd heard a bomb fall Ashford way a little while ago, and did I hear it? And there would be the weather which wasn't as good as it might be, although winter was coming, as you could see by the way the leaves were falling. They were quite deep on the roadsides now, weren't they?

"But it's warm inside by the fire," she smiled, her head on one side, her hands clasped in front of her. It was warm inside, and back in our attic I found most of the boys already asleep. Quietly I tucked myself between my blankets, blew out the candle and said good-bye to another day in Westwell.

## Brigadier's Message

(Continued from page 2.)

of relatives who had spent many anxious hours while we were on the sea.

They followed these messages with gifts of parcels to every one of us—destined to make our Christmas a bright one and a powerful reminder of home.

We were delighted with the keen co-operation of the British Army, who had our camps prepared for us—tents erected, fires lighted, and a meal ready.

They rapidly equipped us and made us ready for war, then handed to us the choicest role, that of a mobile striking force, whose duty it was to move swiftly to the threatened point and strike at the invader when he was leaving the sea.

We were not called upon to fight, but ours was a privileged position, and to it we owe those great experiences of moving through Sussex lanes and over the Kentish Weald—of standing to arms on the South Downs where 2,000 years ago Roman Legionaries had stood before us, and of practising

our skill on the heights above Dover—the nearest point to the enemy across the English Channel.

We saw at close quarters the English character, and tasted English hospitality, which we shall never forget, and I, for one, shall always be grateful to my comrades, who, by their quiet efficiency, their natural courtesy, and their excellent behaviour, endeared themselves to all who came in contact with them.

The affection of the British people, largely won by soldiers of an older generation of New Zealanders, and handed to us as a heritage, has been preserved—and enhanced.

Now we are on a new stage of our experience, one that will be sterner than any we have faced, but we will meet it with confidence.

We must expect to meet with harder conditions than hitherto, but whatever comes—heat, sand, shortage of water, and the supreme test of battle—we will be with our comrades and I have confidence that the men of the Second Echelon will bear themselves like true New Zealanders.



"Darling, where is this New Zealand anyway?"

## HOT AIR—or the Steam Spirit

IT was the eve of the Big Attack. Upon the success or failure of the morrow's action depended the fate of the Greatest Empire the vast majority of the European world had never seen; certain elevations to the Peerage; and (though this was quite immaterial) some 25,000 lives.

All was ultra hush-hush. Had not the warning order said manoeuvres? Subalterns therefore had to go to the unusual trouble of visiting the men's lines fairly regularly in order to learn full details and keep *au fait* with the ever-changing plans.

To those who ask "Why could not their batmen have told them?" I have to make the sorry admission that most batmen were AWL, or in detention, and the few on duty were therefore too busy cleaning serge uniforms and sewing on patches to be of any avail in the news line.

Everything went like broken clockwork. Company commanders returned from the final conference with set faces and so much information that it would have been necessary to postpone the attack at least two days,

were all the usual unnecessary details to reach the men through the proper channels.

Platoon commanders therefore boiled down instructions to their sergeants as follows: "O.K. You know it all. Starting time as you said, until they change it. Have someone hang around and I'll let you know. By the way, pass it on that blankets are to be folded instead of rolled, and carried in mess-tins."

Nothing had been left undone. The Flying Thirty-Third, balanced on their toes but not in their pay books, were practically ready for anything. At zero, minus two minutes, orders suddenly came through to repack haversacks, the tin of bath salts being now placed in the left-hand corner and the syrup of figs rolled inside the issue pyjamas.

Brigadier Lyddite, whose reputation as half-back automatically entitles him to lead men into action, was busy touring the back areas, demanding written explanations in triplicate as to why the weekly return of bones and

(continued at foot of next column)

## Dockside Dispute

Troops crowded the rails; the decks quivered gently as the engineers tried out the engines, and all were ready to leave the shores of Britain. Up to a New Zealander still on wharf guard came a group of cheerful dock labourers. "Now then, mate, if you want a fight," said one of them to his companion, obviously a Welshman, "just show this bloke that photo of yours."

The photo, produced from a dirty jersey, proved to be a football group—Dr. Teddy Morgan's team—with the inscription "The victorious Welsh team that defeated the famous New Zealanders at Cardiff, 16 Dec., 1905."

"Victorious my foot!" snorted the New Zealander, and the historic wrangle over that game was re-opened. Remember that try by Deans, the All Black forward? It would have given New Zealand the game, but the Welsh forwards pulled Deans back off the line, and the referee disallowed the try. At least, such is the version of the affair given by members of Gallaher's team, which won all the other games they played, and they still swear by it. The argument became rapidly heated, when a yell from the ship and the shuddering boom of the siren warned the sentry that the gangway was going up. To show there was no ill-feeling, the wharfie made a parting gift of the photo to the New Zealander as he turned to spring aboard.

cracklings had not been made. The Flying Thirty-Third were discovered ten miles behind the starting line, due to a mistake by Brigade in the map reference, which arrived in only twelve figures instead of the usual eighteen. Colonel Blayer, however, decided to remain where he was and fight to the last round, provided the ammunition arrived in time. Meanwhile he ordered a kit inspection.

The remaining forward battalion now made a late start, having waited for the Y.M.C.A. tea car, and the Big Attack was on. It was strangely silent and none could account for the complete lack of any enemy. Only two shots were fired throughout, but the swan proved an old bird and too tough for eating.

It was late in the third afternoon, during an interior economy period, that we learned the truth from an inebriated Aussie who hiccupped into our bivvy.

"Strewth, Digger, we captured this—country—thres—weeks ago. There's no armed—Wop within a hundred—miles. Guess you're too—late, Diggers. Gotta drink?"

# Bombs Over London

This is the story of three men I met in London on my seven days' leave during the 16th to the 23rd October.

Cobber Grey was the leader of their little band. A submarine Lieutenant, he hailed from Tasmania and when I first met him he was recovering from a head wound caused by a steel splinter in his left eye. His head was almost entirely covered with bandages.

Nick, the second member, was a South African from Jo'burg. In the first contingent to go to France from that country, he had been severely shell-shocked just before Dunkirk. He was now convalescent, although still in a very nervous condition.

I met the pair in the cocktail bar at the Overseas Club and they explained their little scheme to me.

For some time past they had been patrolling around Leicester Square at night during air raids. Lieutenant Grey had the full co-operation of the police and the A.R.P. Wardens and the work he had been doing was very much appreciated by them. With any helpers they could recruit from the Overseas or the New Zealand Forces Club they would repair to the Mapleton Hotel in Leicester Square. The proprietor had given them the use of the lounge in his American Bar on the first floor from where they kept in touch with the A.R.P. Post in case of an emergency call. When Cobber, Nick and I arrived there we found that Texas, the third member of the team, had already arrived with three more seekers after excitement, which, with the proprietor of the hotel, who, incidentally was an ex-bruiser and had taught the Southampton police force boxing, brought our total up to eight.

Texas, who was an oil field worker from Dallas, Texas, had enlisted with the Canadian Army at the outbreak of war and had been in this country six months. He had with him another New Zealander who was a civilian worker in an ordnance factory, an officer from the Navy and Robin, a theatre organist who lived in the hotel.

We made ourselves comfortable in the lounge and settled down to wait for something to happen. The alarm had sounded at 7 o'clock and ever since the air had been reverberating to the boom and crack of the barrage. With the naval guns and the AA guns firing as fast as possible, the noise was terrific and the very foundations of the buildings seemed to be shaken. Such was the volume of sound that, when, at half past nine a stick of bombs was dropped half the length of Tottenham Court Road a short distance

away the increase in sound was hardly discernable. However, the blast was so great and shook the hotel so severely that we were left in no doubt as to what had happened.

Adjusting our eye shields and tin hats we sallied forth. The moon, aided by the countless searchlights, provided ample illumination and we joined the trickle of A.R.P. workers who were hurrying to the "scene of the crime."

Although most of the bombs had miraculously fallen in the centre of the road a few had scored direct hits and splitting into three parties under Cobber, Nick and Texas we entered the nearest ruin, which turned out to be a hotel. The ground floor was almost undamaged but the upper floors were very badly knocked about.

Enveloped in dust and falling plaster and rubble we groped our way up the main stairway. It is amazing even now, how many people do not seek shelter in their basements and we could see that anyone who had taken shelter down below would be quite safe. Therefore we left them to look after themselves and lost no time in searching the upper regions. After fruitlessly searching several rooms, Nick and I entered the wrecked billiard room. The place was a shambles. The entire ceiling had collapsed and great gaping holes let in shafts of pallid moonlight. As we stood in the doorway we heard a tapping sound coming from under the wreckage around the billiard table and after a few minutes' frantic heaving and pushing we had moved enough wreckage to extricate the proprietor and his wife who told us that they were the only ones not on the ground floor or in the shelters. They had both escaped with only minor bruises and shock and they said they would find a room for the rest of the night at a neighbouring hotel. They were profuse in their thanks and before going to seek shelter they made us accept two bottles of whisky and filled our pockets with cigarettes.

After making further attempts to see if there were any more persons in the upper regions of the hotel we descended in search of the rest of our gang. They had disappeared and the only person present was a policeman on guard. Nick gave him a packet of cigarettes and asked him to have a drink. "Ho!" said the Bobby and forthwith arrested him for looting. Promptly losing his head, Nick lapsed into a jargon of Afrikaans and English which seemed to rather annoy the copper and, nothing I said making any impression on either of them, I left them arguing and went in search of Cobber. I found him engaged in

helping to dig some bodies out of a wrecked lift shaft in a block of flats.

Leaving the rest of the gang there Cobber and I went in search of the hotel proprietor, Nick in the meantime having been taken to Savile Row Police Station.

By three o'clock in the morning we had found the publican and had no trouble in securing Nick's release. On going back to our base we found the rest of the boys looking very tired and dirty and rather pale after having unearthed seven dead bodies and five whose chances of recovery were very slim. We all went over to Lyon's Corner House for some supper and were still there when the "all clear" sounded at half past four in the morning. We gratefully retired to the beds provided for us at the Overseas League, for some much needed sleep in preparation for the next night's vigil.

In like fashion the rest of my seven days' leave passed. With the personnel of our gang changing from night to night and at one time including an Australian Major and a Flight-Lieutenant from the R.A.F. We prowled the environs of Leicester Square night after night, in search of trouble, with varying fortunes. One night we had a lovely fight with a race course gang, but that's another story.

The amount of help our volunteer untrained band gave during those hours of horror and agony was considerable and I like to think that many lives were saved through our efforts.

On returning to my unit I lost touch with the gang. I shall never forget them. They shall always be before me as I saw them last.

Tired, aching, covered with dust, faces streaked with grime and sweat, standing in the doorway of a ruined building, weary but smiling, with their eyes fixed on something very few of us will ever see.

## My Funniest Experience.

(Continued from page 5.)

kept saying "Hear, hear!" instead of "Amen." Now just a little about the breakfast. The bride's parents went on a pub crawl with nearly all the guests, so it was delayed for about two and a half hours. We began drinking the toasts in the brew from the hops, and about half-way through the list the barman thought it was time he put some life into the beer, so he poured all the glasses back into the jug, and then repoured them into the glasses. It was about then that we went off the beer.

When we arrived back in camp we all agreed it would be a long time before we caught up on anything like that again!

## Portrait of a Country Mess

It wasn't on the outside an attractive house, being no more than an old brick barn crowned with the remnants of vast-roofs; but within, it had been converted to an attractive dwelling. Perhaps its London owners viewed our irruption with a little dismay, wondering how their long, low-ceilinged dining room would fare as a company headquarters' mess. Its well-chosen, dignified furnishings remained, along with the low bookshelves filled with reading that spoke of the owners' width of interests. Autumn was fast flying when we moved in. As we walked the half-mile up the lane from the village each afternoon after parade, the russet and yellow leaves fell faster and thicker from the leafy roof overhead. After-

noon sunlight flooded low across the fields; long blue shadows stretching from hedgerow and tree to the gentle contours of the downs. Against the apple-green evening sky, with its piled castles of motionless cumulus-cloud, a bomber returning from patrol droned over toward Detling. Like fine dust filtering down, the hoarse boom of its engines came faintly to our ears.

We walked round the side of the house, by the stone-flagged path across the neat green lawn; aware of the frosty sharpness in the air, the hazy blue outline of the distant woods. Through the tall, white French windows we would catch the reflection of firelight, and pushed gladly through the muffling "blackout" curtains to the welcoming room, lit only by the

dancing flames. Sounds over our heads, apparently of elephants engaged in the Lambeth Walk, informed us that some of our platoons were settling into the unfurnished upstairs rooms after their evening meal. Someone would switch on the concealed lighting, someone else produce certain vitally important bottles, followed by the cheering clink of glasses and the crack of springs as we sank gratefully into couch and chairs. For a time the war and the everlasting "Will he, won't he?" of invasion possibilities were forgotten.

Everyone who knew that mess remembers how much of its happy atmosphere was due to "Butch"; always irreverent, twinkling with an irrepressible sense of fun; uproarious or thoughtful, as occasion demanded. Somehow ceremony was just forgotten. Perhaps it would not have been altogether a good thing for the battalion to have continued those company messes too long. Undoubtedly they tended to form self-sufficient little groups, but they were very happy little groups. When we left, almost all the leaves were gone from the trees; the chill in the evenings was more raw than invigorating, and the lane was always muddy. But the memory of those few weeks remains, compact of firelight and friendly faces, cemented by the confidence we were beginning to feel in each other. May that at least be no illusion.

## CONCLUSIONS FROM BOAT DRILL

*Very Modern Version.*

We are the boys going way down under,  
Under the deep blue sea;  
All because of somebody's blunder  
Theres' no b—y boat for me;  
No raft, no float—Oh, I'm a b—y goat.  
Oh, why did I board this flaming boat?  
Oh, we are the boys going way down under,  
Under the deep blue sea.  
Services Magazine—

—2

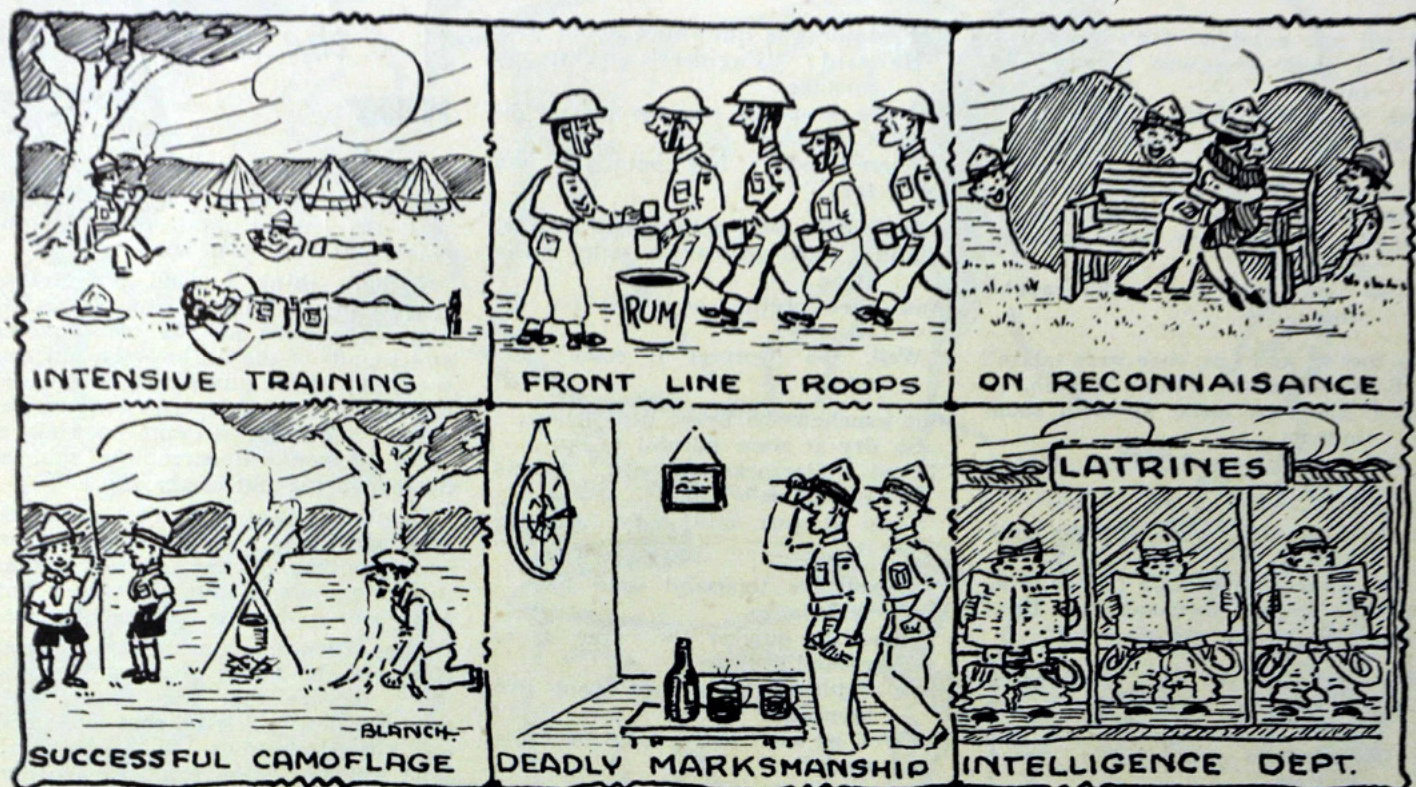


SELWYN H. W. CLARKE

SHIP'S ROUTINE ORDER NO 16. MESS DRESS:  
MEN MAY PARADE FOR MESS IN GREY FLANNEL SHIRTS FROM THIS DAY ONWARD.  
*No man will appear at mess dressed in singlets.*

Once upon a time a certain officer of a certain battalion stopped the leave of a private soldier for two days. That same evening the officer entered a local pub and found the said soldier imbibing the Kentish nut-brown with his pals. Quoth the officer with a soured twist of the upper lip: "I thought I stopped your leave for two days, Private Blank?" Came the un-abashed reply: "Yes, sir; but you did not say which two days, sir."

## HOW WE WON THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN



(WE GAVE THE ARTIST A FREE HAND, SPELLING AND ALL).

## The Old, Old Road

You could just trace where once the road had followed the hillside through the wood. Beneath the prodigal splendour of autumn foliage, and around the smooth grey pillars of birch trunks, spread a deep carpet of fallen leaves, coppery or dulled gold. Ahead a little way the faint track ran out upon a sunlit hillside crowned by a small copse, where something shone for a moment in the sun. It was then that you saw the group of khaki figures and the two mortars in the bracken-filled ditch of the Roman camp; the camouflaged truck run deep into the undergrowth. Your imagination supplied the squat, sturdy figures of Roman soldiery watching the steel-helmeted men of to-day, saying among themselves, "There is war still in Britain, as in Caesar's day."

How many of us realize the important part this forgotten woodland track once played in the life of early England? It is known still as the Pilgrim's Way and traverses the south

of England, in places well bitumened and serving modern needs, in others overgrown and lost. At no point does it turn towards London, for the very good reason that when the road was laid, London was but an obscure hamlet. From Winchester the Saxon capital, to Canterbury the ancient religious centre of Kent, runs the well-trod highway; and from Canterbury to the narrow straits of Dover. Beyond recorded history, the metal of the West was carried down this road in exchange for the goods from Gaul. Older than the Christian faith, older than the Roman roads, is the Pilgrim's Way. In those early times, to north and south were forest and marsh so that only on the high chalk country could a clear path be found.

The great days of the highway were in the 13th century. Then could be seen the nobleman on caparisoned steed displaying his greatness by the number of followers on foot; the monks journeying from one abbey to another, or making with the throng of common

folk the great pilgrimage to Canterbury. Mingling in that crowd through the light and shade of the woods were minstrels wandering from fair to fair, students, merchants, beggars, men-at-arms, freed men in search of better wages and escaped bondmen who would welcome any wages at all. Such would be the varied little bodies of travellers who raised thin hazes of chalk dust along the green face of the downs.

The khaki figures are trickling back down the hillside, stumbling under the load of their weapons. The engine of the truck surges into powerful voice as it moves forward. In a few moments the intruders have gone and the wooded hillside receives again the silence of lonely places. A little breeze whispers sibilantly in the leafy roof, a few leaves fall slowly in twirling flecks of colour. Through all the centuries this little stretch of the way has remained unchanged, murmuring to all who listen its memories of the beginning of our race.

# A Ballad of Mytchett

I'll tell you a soldier lad's story,  
Of a chap who won honour and fame,  
With Andrew at Battle of Mytchett,  
Jack something or other his name.

He was one of the Flying 22nd,  
And his job when a battle begun  
Was to sharpen up blunt-ends of bayonets  
And pull broken pull-throughs from guns.

One day he and Les, they were talkin'  
'Bout tactics like soldier lads do,  
When Thornton came up with some indents,  
And pointing, said "Here, take a screw."

So they looked at what Tom he were pointin'  
And there sure enough on the Bill,  
An order for five thousand sand bags  
For soldiers for use of to fill.

"What say I go get 'em," said Jacob,  
But Thornton said, "Nay, not to-day."  
"I think p'raps you'd better," said Andrew,  
So Jack he just answered "O.K."

Now Jack he drove off to the Field Store  
And politely raising his cap,  
Produced order for five thousand sand bags  
To Major—an Ordnance chap.

The Major he wanted no trouble;  
It were time for lunch and some beers.  
Said he, "Sand bags for M.G. Emplacements  
Are got from Royal Engineers."

So off to Engineers' Barracks  
Went Jacko, his day's work near done,  
And asked them for five thousand sand bags.  
Said Engineer fellow, "What fun!"

"You don't get those sand bags from here, lad,  
For as plain as the nose on your face,  
The authority writ on the indent  
Says Aldershot Field Store's the place.

Now Jack he were getting right ratty;  
He got in his truck right away  
And drove to the Ordnance Field Stores,  
There sure was the devil to pay!

The Major was quite nice about it.  
He said: "Engineer's right, my mistake,  
But we keep all our sand bags at Crookham.  
There's not a bag here you can take."

Now Jack he were getting real thirsty,  
And Crookham twelve miles away stood,  
And there being no pubs on the journey,  
Well, the prospect it wasn't too good.

But somehow the brave little fellow,  
So dry it were painful to spit.  
'Rived at Barracks and said, "Is this Crookham?"

Chap at gate said, "Aye, this be it."

"I want five thousand sand bags," said Jacko,  
"And the quicker the better so to speak!"

Chap replied, "You just want five thousand?"

"Well we ain't had a sand bag this week."

"But if you go back to Aldershot Field Store,

"The shed's number five so I think,

"And give to the storeman this order,  
"You'll get 'em." Jack said,  
"Strike me pink!"

So right about turn to Field Store,  
And there in the shed sure enough  
Were thousands and thousands of sand bags,

In fact, there were miles of the stuff.

Said Jack, "Will it take long to load 'em?"

Storeman replied, "If as how  
"Your truck is backed up to the doorway,

"We'll load 'em in any time now."

But after the truck was in doorway,  
Storeman said, "Ba Goom, that's bad.

"There's truck, and there's door, and there's sand bags,

"But door key's at Crookham, me lad!"

Now Jack he were fair sick of Crookham,

But he wouldn't give in once begun;

And to bring back the key and a storeman,

Well, 'twere only a twenty-mile run.

(Continued at foot of next column.)

## In the Still of the Night

Did you ever realise that utter silence can shriek at you more forcibly than the loudest and most blatant noise? It can, you know.

I don't think I shall ever forget that night. I had gone to bed early, and there were all the usual noises and sounds of the night—men talking, the clump of the guard's boots outside, the sound of a car speeding down the road. Suddenly, without warning, a shrill, demoniacal screaming told of death pouring out of the sky.

Bombs! Eight times that whistling scream. Eight times the crash of an explosion. And close. So close that the cottage shook and quivered. For a moment it was the epitome of noise.

Then silence. Stark, deep silence. Not even the sound of a man breathing. Silence that was heavy with apprehension. Silence that screamed a hundred questions. What damage? Who killed? More bombs? No one knew. No one was prepared to break that thick silence to find out.

Until—simultaneously—everyone broke into a state of rapid, excited speech. The silence had given way to a babel of sound that verged on hysteria; but the thought of the heaviness of the silence remained. It was such an experience that would not, could not, lightly be forgotten.

No. There was no serious damage from the bombing, and no one was hurt—physically. I do think, however, that some of us must have been hurt a little mentally. That silence, you know, with its flood of emotions!

—"Taranaki."

And after the bags were all loaded, Fellow from Crookham made talk. He said, "How do I get back to Barrack?"

Said Jack, "You can bloody well walk!"

Now Les he were pleased with his sand bags,

Said Jack deserved the V.C.,  
But seeing there weren't one handy,  
He fried him some meat roll for tea.

And after the bags were unloaded,  
And all of them filled up with sand,  
He gave Jacko an hour off to listen  
To the Flying 22nd's Pipe Band.





LT-COL. L. W. ANDREW



COL. A. S. FALCONER



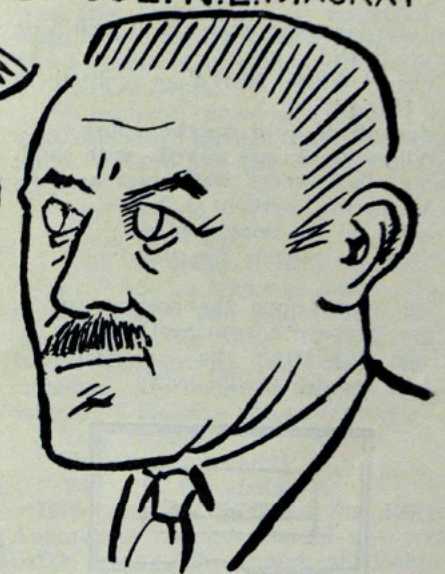
LT-COL. N. L. MACKAY



LT-COL. J. W. THWIGG.



BRIGADIER J. HARGEST



LT-COL. C. J. S. DUFF.



CYRIL MAUDE.



LT-COL. G. J. McNAUGHT



LT-COL. E. J. PULLEYN,

MAJOR G. M. McCASKILL.

# HOORAY!! (F-Forget It!)

Come, Second Echelon, arise  
And put your webbing on.  
We're headed now for sunnier skies—  
Our days of ease are gone.  
No more we'll cast a wicked wink  
At those bashful English tarts,  
Or, scrounge another buckshee drink  
By cheating mates at darts.

Good-bye to all the cosy pubs  
On their peaceful village greens,  
To institutions, cliques and clubs  
With all their kindred scenes.  
Farewell to all the girls we kissed,  
The ATS and Wrens we cuddled;  
Adieu to all the bombs—that missed—  
And siren signals muffled.

No more we'll glimpse the "Bull" or  
"Bush,"  
The "White Hart" or "Bird in  
Hand";  
We're off to join another push  
Whose drinks are mixed—with sand.  
Some other scenes we'll miss as well,  
Appearing without a hat—  
Prelude to the detention cell;  
Still, no regrets for that!

Then again upon the ocean vast,  
See us pace a transport's decks.  
(Hope this trip's the — last!)  
And fed up to the necks.

All herded up like flaming cattle,  
So ill-used and hungry we,  
Yet—blinking heroes off to battle,  
Veterans—of the sea!  
Since every dog must have its day,  
Even poor old wandering us,  
We're now upon our certain way  
To catch the blooming 'bus.  
We'll be in time to win great fame  
(Unless the darned Wops hook it)  
And spoil old Musso's little game,  
Catch his goose and—cook it!

## R. I. P.

4th and 5th Anti-Tank Coys.  
Born 12/1/40.  
Expired 23/11/40.

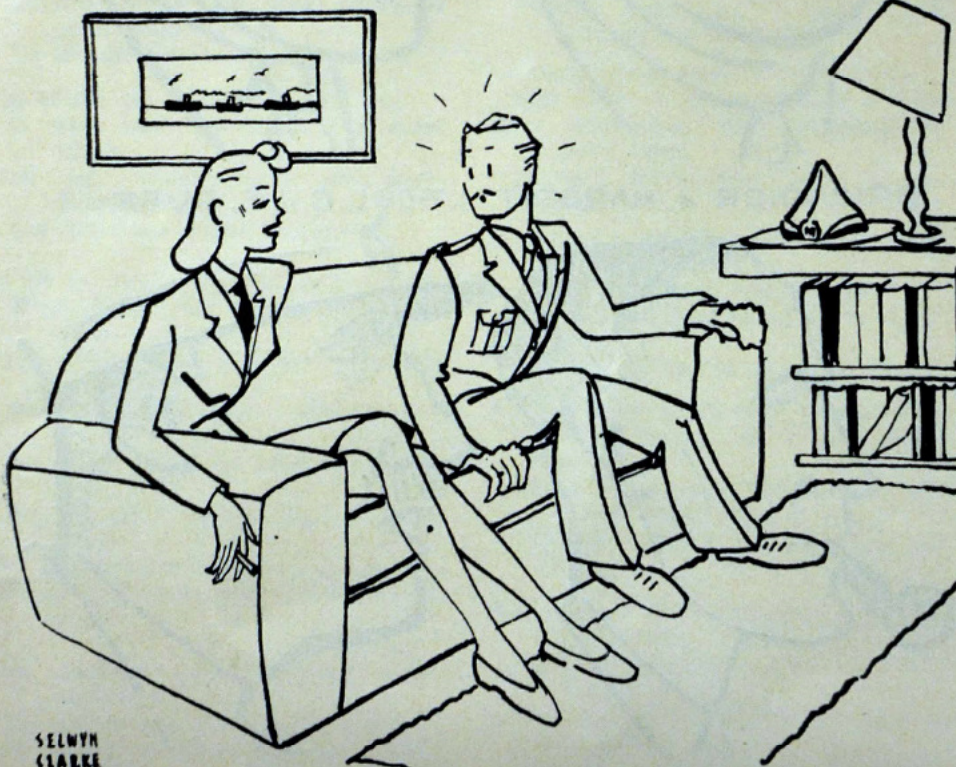
In Trentham they trained on dummy  
guns,  
Every one of those poor mothers' sons.  
While travelling o'er the ocean blue  
They supplemented the ship's gun  
crew.  
In England they were properly  
beggared about,  
Then given Armoured Bedfords as a  
quick way out.  
Being of staunch heart, they survived  
the test,  
And passed to Recce Unit for a well-  
earned rest.

## LISTEN TO THE MUSIC OF THE BAND

Lying lazily on the deck the other afternoon, listening to the "oompa-oompa pom pom" of the Second Echelon Band, it occurred to us to enquire how they had spent their time in England. All of us remember in the early days at Mytchett how pleasantly the band heralded the dawn, trotting the decrepit Colonel Bogey somewhat breathlessly up the beech avenue past Mytchett Lodge. How we lingered in our blankets, listening to the rustle of leaves over our tents and the lilt of music in the bright morning, till the necessity of arising presented itself inescapably.

While at Mytchett the band gave frequent programmes at both the Officers' Club and the Dominion Soldiers' Club in Aldershot. They broadcast from the B.B.C. on August 11, 1940, with an Empire broadcast in conjunction with the Canadians from Bordon Camp on August 14. They also gave two open-air concerts in London, in Trafalgar Square; and at the Royal Exchange. As an anticlimax they performed at the Guildford Fair, which resembles our cattle yards, in connection with an appeal for Red Cross funds. Music was also provided for a series of memorable dances in the Dorchester Hall, London; and during our time in Kent, for services at various churches. The band played also at football matches, on route marches, and in general wherever it was wanted, finding appreciative audiences everywhere. On two occasions the band visited our Forestry units at Cirencester, to the delight of the local people, who had not heard a band for some considerable time. On Tuesday, Nov. 18, the second broadcast was given from the B.B.C., both of the band's programmes being re-broadcast to New Zealand, which was some recompense for their conscientious preparation. The last big function was on Dec. 13, when the band played for a dinner held at the New Zealand Forces Club to commemorate the discovery of New Zealand by Abel Tasman, 300 years ago. The same afternoon was spent in making gramophone records, which by now should be on the market.

In conclusion, the band wish to remind the many component units of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. (U.K.) that, should the need arise, instruments will be gladly laid aside for rifles and the bandsmen take their place beside their "cobbers" to face music of a very different kind.



SELWYN  
CLARKE

DO YOU EVER GO ON NIGHT RECONNAISSANCE MAJOR?



## Robins in the Snow

THE day before we came on board I made the acquaintance of two Robins. The first was a Robin Redbreast, the second a small boy.

Four of us were fortunate enough to travel by car from Aldershot to that mysterious western port W where lay the equally mysterious J24.

Cold as it was when we left Mytchett, it grew colder and colder as we set off across country. After good-byes at Crondall we ran through open country to Odiham, past Basingstoke, and on through Newbury. The further we went, the heavier became the snow.

By four o'clock the red sun was sinking, forming picture after picture of bare trees silhouetted against a rose and grey sky. At Poughley we turned aside from the main road; ran down past the old farmhouse and came into the driveway of the old country house where Sir Alexander Godley lives a quiet life with his books and his birds. Just outside his library window swings one of those bird-feeding arrangements, and there was a little blue tit, upside

down, pecking away at the suet in the inverted bowl. Flakes of snow were still falling, when a very fat Robin hopped into view on the stone ledge, flew quietly to a bird-feeding perch about 20 feet away, and helped himself to a peck or two of food. The black, bare trees, the falling snow and the fat, orange-breasted Robin made the traditional picture of the English Christmas card.

After tea we got on the road again, and headed into the less-wooded, smooth ridges of the Cotswolds. Here was a really snowy countryside, the white being broken only by the occasional dark clumps of beach wood. Following the old Roman Road, we came by dark into Cirencester, the Queen city of the Cotswold country.

Having parked the car we went to our friends' homes to say *au revoir*. To find an English house in the blackout is no easy matter, but someone with a better sense of direction than I had dropped me safely at the gate. Snow was falling heavily and there

was a bitter wind. Once inside the hastily-opened-and-closed door, coldness disappeared in the presence of a warm fire and an even warmer welcome.

I now made acquaintance with the second Robin. He had blue eyes, flaxen hair, and was four years old and rode a bike or, rather, a trike. Father Christmas had brought it—and the dexterous way Robin steered it through doorways and nipped in between chairs and table, gave a strong indication that when he grew up he would be able to drive a New Zealand staff car in London, and once again give London bus drivers a chance to display their intimate knowledge of a man's parentage.

But Robin may also turn out to be an expert investigator. In his eagerness to know the truth, he evidently recognised in me an easy witness.

"Have you got a shooter gun?" was the first sally. I regretted I hadn't, and for a moment Robin looked at me suspiciously as he might look at a Fifth Columnist.

He decided, however, that I was available for further cross-examination. "Have you got a little girl at home?"

"Yes," I said.

"Could I see her?"

I had to make a little speech in reply: "She's a long way away. Over 12,000 miles. You would have to go on a great big ship!" This made Robin thoughtful, but only for a moment. He returned eagerly to the attack. "Has she got a mummy?"

"Yes," I said.

"Has she got a daddy?"

"Yes, I'm her daddy."

Here was a stager for Robin. Apparently daddies should not wear battle dress. Doubt crept into Robin's mind: "Can you be a daddy and a soldier too?" he asked quietly.

And my "Oh! yes" did not seem to thoroughly assure him. He evidently thought that each was a full-time job.

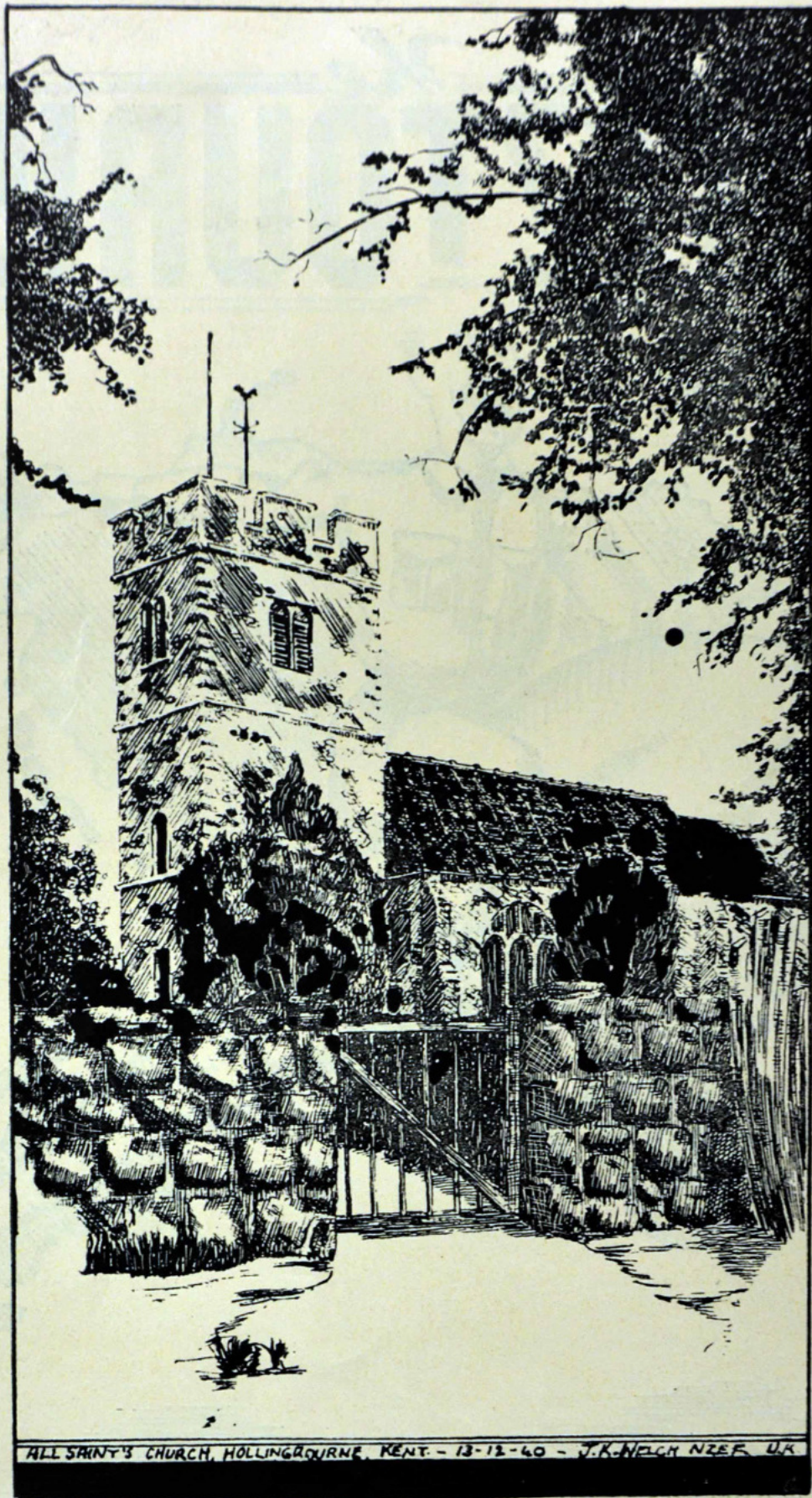
I didn't like to tell him that the Welfare Committee at 4, Charing Cross Road had received several letters on this very subject.

Robin was whisked off to bed. While the snow swirled down outside, I very rudely fell asleep in front of a good fire, so I went to bed too—the last comfortable bed I would sleep in for many a day.

And I dreamed of sunshine and small girls, and manuka hillsides, but awoke to find the grey stone walls of Cirencester and a countryside white with snow.

An hour later Robin kissed me good-bye, and he is a nicer memory than even the fat Robin Redbreast of Poughley.

F.W.



ALL SAINT'S CHURCH, HOLLINGBOURNE, KENT. - 13-12-40 - J.K. WELCH NZEF UK

ARCHIVES ARMY HQ

INITIALS

DATE

RECEIVED

READ

## Passing Acquaintance

IT happened, I suppose, to lots of fellows, and some, no doubt, were even more fortunate than I. I remember the diffidence, almost shyness, that accompanied his invitation to stay with him and his wife and 16-year-old son. Even though I say it as shouldn't, I know he was a little shy about it, not because he didn't know what sort of fellow I was, or who my people were, or if I used a knife when I should have used a fork, or anything like that. Not because of anything like that, but simply because it was something he didn't do every day. Perhaps because he was doing something he had never done before.

You see, I had got off the Exeter train at 9.15 in the evening. I was on sick leave, and I had come to Torquay because a long time ago, on the other side of the world, I'd read something about Torquay being a very lovely place, a warm, sunny spot, where lots of sick people often went to recuperate from serious illnesses. I hadn't been really seriously ill, but I thought it would be just the kind of place I would like then. And if there wasn't anything else, there would be sunlight, and the sun was what I wanted to see again more than anything else.

Anyway, I went to Torquay, and outside the station I asked the man whom I was soon to know as Fred Thorne, Great Western Railway executive and a platoon commander in the Home Guard, if he could

direct me into the town, which, as you will know, is quite a little way from the station. Fred had just got off the same train and was going down to the Royal Oak, by the 'bus terminus, for a quick one before catching the last 'bus to Orient Road, where he and his wife and son live very cosily in a detached villa with a lovely view of the Channel. We walked along together.

I told him I had come down for a couple of days or so. I didn't know anyone, but I thought I would be able to get a bed at one of those places like the C. of E. Institute at Aldershot, where members of the Forces can put up cheaply. Any sort of a bed would do for the night. In the morning, perhaps, I could find a better place.

Fred said he didn't know if there was such a place in Torquay. But he thought a policeman might know.

Then Fred stopped abruptly. "Look here," he said, "will you come home with me? The wife won't mind, and my son will be thrilled. My wife likes walking. If you feel like it she'll show you around. There are some very pretty walks around here."

He said it rather shyly, as I've told you. But he also said it very earnestly, very sincerely. And I think, too, that he was glad he had asked me, because it was something he had wanted to do but didn't at first feel that it might be right. Or, perhaps, that I might refuse.

I know, too, that he was glad when I said I would be very happy to stay with him and his wife and his son. And just before we embarked I got a letter in which he said they all hoped it wouldn't be long before I was able to stay with them again. Just that.

That happened, I suppose, to lots of fellows. And so long as it goes on happening just like that, England and Englishmen like Fred Thorne will always be symbols for me and for you, too, of the things we hold to be most precious, most dear. Symbols of freedom, of free men, simple, kindly, generous. People of our own faith with whom we struggle in common for the common end.

## FOUND

One healthy currant, on the starboard side of a hexagon bun.—Apply B/29.

## STRAYED

Two kippered herrings (mates) from ship's stores. Answer to names of "Bones" and "Salty." Reward.—Apply Ship's Steward.

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
For time brings only sorrow.  
The girls you might have kissed  
to-day,  
May wear Gas-masks to-morrow.  
—(Chalked on a London Pavement.)



LT-COL. T.J. KING



LT-COL. F. WAITE



MAJOR A.J. NICHOLL.

# Dockland Devastated

"THREE to Limehouse," we said to the bus conductor. "If you want to see bomb damage, go down to dockland. It's wicked," he said, guessing we were sight-seeing.

It was a grey, dismal sort of afternoon with a light drizzle, and as we stepped off the bus we instinctively turned up the collars of our greatcoats. Half an hour's walk through dingy streets of dilapidated houses, empty shops and evil-smelling eating houses brought us to the outskirts of Dockland, a two-mile wide strip of land which runs for some miles down the north side of the Thames towards the sea. This territory embraces most of the larger docks, huge storehouses and thousands of homes and tenements. At the bottom of Poplar Road all round us huge factories, warehouses and tenements lay in ruins. The damage became worse as we went along. Whole streets of two-storied brick houses joined together proved mere roofless shells of crumbling masonry. There were miles of such scenes.

We selected a doorway at random and walked in. There were two rooms on the ground floor, a sitting room and a kitchen. The sitting-room furniture was in position just as if in use, but half buried with debris, brick dust and plaster from the shattered ceiling. We climbed the crumbling staircase. Off the landing there was a bath-room. Towels still hung on the rails, tooth-brushes, toothpaste and soap were on the shelves, while rain beat in through the open roof. The next room was a bed-sitting room that had evidently been vacated in a hurry. A bed with the clothes flung back reposed in one corner. A table and some chairs with faded green upholstery stood about the room. All were half buried with debris. On the walls pictures of friends, relatives and members of the family provided a peculiarly human and pathetic touch. The walls were blown right out of the other two bedrooms. We stood and gazed out across one of the most desolate scenes I have ever witnessed. As far as the eye could see there was nothing in any direction except bomb-rent ruins. The inhabitants had long since been evacuated, and now all lay quiet, shattered, isolated. A half-starved cat came yowling up the stairs and rubbed against my leg, purring madly, pleased to see some human being. We got out into the street again.

About half-way down one long street of devastated houses, one roof remained intact upon a house. As we passed on the opposite side an old woman hobbled to the door, and waved

a tattered Union Jack. "Are you all right, ma," I called across the road. "Yes, and I'm sticking to the finish," she shrilled back. "That's the spirit," one of us replied as we passed on.

Down the street again we espied a passer-by and enquired of him where could we obtain a drink. He led the way through what had once been a series of streets to the remains of a pub. One end had been blown away. The roof over the bar was intact; the windows boarded over with sheets of corrugated iron. It was long after afternoon closing time, but who was there in Dockland to worry about the law now? He knocked on the door and someone let us in. Three miserable-looking dock labourers were lined up at the bar. A dirty-looking old woman, with untidy hair, drunkenly administered to their wants. Over in one corner of the bar, before a dying fire, the publican sat, hunched up drunk. I didn't blame him. Outside the wind howled. The tin on the windows clanged mournfully. We had several drinks—on the house—everything was on the house it seemed. One of the labourers had been bombed out of three houses; his wife and kids had been killed. He slept in a cellar among the ruins now—somehow he couldn't leave the place. Just across from the pub there had been a school. One hundred and fifty kids had sheltered there one night. They were being evacuated next day. A land mine scored a direct hit and all were wiped out. Those who were not killed outright were incinerated in the fire that followed.

Later we tramped on through the remains of Cubitt Town. Everything was shattered to pieces. Once we passed a pile of rubble that had been a rag factory. The night this had been blown up, burning fragments of rag, falling like hail, had set many a woman's hair on fire as she frenziedly ran through the streets. Air-raid shelters were few and far between in Dockland. As we came back to Wapping and the beginnings of civilisation again we passed a dwelling that had remained intact, although places on either side had been bombed. A girl came running out of the front door and calling to a passer-by, proudly exhibited an engagement ring. We stopped and had a look too. I praised the ring, and the girl looked pleased. Her lover was alive, working, and she was going to see him that night, so what had the bombing to do with her?

The bombers still hurl their thunderbolts down upon Dockland, but the spirit of those people remains undaunted.

T. M. NIXON.

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*Our Job is to Keep You Fit*

WE ARE THE

**R. A. P.**

(Ye ancient and venerable firm.  
Patron:—The Chief Quack.)  
(Branches all over the Ship.)

Just bring your troubles to us and leave them in the capable hands of Our Representative: watch his expert technique on Sick Parade:—

<i>Diarrhoea.</i>	2ozs. Castor Oil.
<i>What, again?</i>	Give him some cement.
<i>Constipation.</i>	3 number 9s.
<i>Temperature</i>	101.
	2 Dover, 2 aspirins and go to bed.
<i>Cough.</i>	Mist. expc. three times a day.
<i>Spots behind the ears.</i>	Measles; Three weeks in hospital!
<i>Vaccination taken</i>	Beautiful thing.

The line of those preparing to say good-bye to life comes out wreathed in smiles, their confidence in the R.A.P. supreme.

Our Representatives are specially selected for their bed-side manners, their strict observance of confidence, their complete knowledge of all things medical; so that even the most doubting, the most hesitant, the most nervous sufferer can find a sympathetic butcher, a lusty leech, a wise old saw-bones in the

**R. A. P.**

*No task too great, no complaints too small.*

**WE ARE HAPPY IN OUR WORK**

## The First Book of Hargite

NOW it came to pass that the Hargites set out in a great host for the land of Sand where their comrades in arms awaited them. But the mighty ships, when near the land of the Cingalese, turned aside from their going and, with the Dark Continent ever on their right, made haste to the City of Table Mount; thence to the place of Freeman, and still on and on until they found well-earned rest in an inlet of Haggis. All men marvelled, for seventeen thousand miles had they voyaged and only a few had so fallen by the way they could not go on. They were damfools. Many had fallen for a time in the Street of Roses and the district called Six, but their fate was not so hard; nay, they averred it was pleasant, and were able to go on their way with but a little discomfort. But Jimharg saith that these too were damfools.

Now the travellers had little rest in Haggis, but straightway departed for Allshot, in the land of Fogg. Now this town was so named many moons ago when a Klub was formed for the captains of the host; it being a nightly thing for the Jehns and charioteers to bear their masters to their tents, their faces shot with vivid colours from their potatoes. These menials spoke of their lords as "shot", and the term persists unto this very day.

At Allshot Jimharg's mighty men were greeted by Tummus Dados, who in his spare time hired out wine vessels and calabashes of great price for use of the innocent Hargites. Verily this was a swizzle that in days to come caused wallings and gnashings of teeth among the Pips and Non-pips.

Another whose name was large in the land was Grev, whom all knew for short as Dubbleay Q. Emgee. Having sojourned in the land of Sand, he knew all the wrinkles and spent long and arduous days arranging introductions to the many fair birds, Fannies, Wrens and Whatnots around Mitchit. So it was that these twain initiated Jimharg and his warriors into life under canvas in the land of Fogg, clothing and equipping them in readiness for battle. And all found that it was good; they smelled the battle afar off (never

near); they breathed fire and talked big; admiring themselves in their new battle raiment, and demolishing walls and trees with their new iron chariots.

Now upon a day there sped through the heavens from the land of Sand the chief among the men of valour, Bernard Gee Ohsee, the swimmer of the Hellespont. It was his wish that the Hargites should be skilled at arms, and lo! it was so, or was it? Thus it came to pass that the Hargites were stacked by night into clumsy engines of war miscalled buses, or piled into other cantankerous and fearsome chariots, to be loosed upon the countryside in the Great Blackness which had fallen upon the land. Thus was the command given unto them: "Go ye forth to 654321, debus, cease calling vainly upon your gods and find yourselves." So it was that bus met troops, troops lost bus, bus met troops, and both lost route. There was a great scattering of the host, and verily it was a hell of a shambles. Bee Gee Ohsee was amazed at the energy and good intentions of the Hargites, nor did he express surprise when some arrived at 654321 (for some few of the Hargites were not damfools). In this way the warriors rampaged through Sussicks and overran the downs and towns; marching and counter-marching between woods and copses picked at random by Gee Ohsee with closed eyes, a pin and a map. Those who fell by the wayside made advances to the women of that land and were well looked after; the others looking after them with regret. Verily the tribe of Chiropodists gained many kudos but few shekels doctoring the hoofs of the host.

It often came to pass that Gee Ohsee ordered the captains of the host to dine with the great ones of that land, and there was much bathing for the poor, overworked Hargite batmen. Now when the Puttites in the land of Sand heard of this wine-bibbing and merry-making, they rent their clothing and railed in their anger (for they who were the cream of their land had now turned somewhat sour).

Then came a new command to the Hargites, "Go forth into the fields and town of Kentium for three

days," but in the end for sixty risings of the sun did the Hargites take their abode thence, waiting for the Philistines to cross the great waters into Kentium. To the Hargites the waiting became a weariness not to be endured, and many quoth together, "This is no go. Let us fade away and taste of life while a few shekels yet remain." So fade away they did, and in the morning their places knew them no more.

Then indeed Gunit commanders rose in their wrath and were known in all the land as "Februaries", since naught came from their lips but "twenty-eight days". So became the House of Glass a place of rest for the returning Hargites, their shekels spent and their minds turning once more to the husks the swine did eat. Thus it came to pass that Gee Oshee was pipped and quoth to his captains: "There is nothing for me to do in this land, and I must do, or join my fathers unhonoured. Behold, I got to the Puttites. Come thou over and see me some time."

So it was, and the Hargites murmured among themselves, saying: "We also have done our dash and there is no health in us now that winter is upon this land. Let us fold our Grog8 and seek a fairer clime." Thus the land of Fogg knew them no more.

Now, all the future doings of the Hargites, and all the mighty deeds of valour they are about to perform, who shall say when they may be written? Selah.

### Replies to Correspondents

- "Recruit": "Home Service" does not mean being led round the countryside on a halter.
- "Horticulture": The Army Glass House is not a place for the raising of orchids, but for the bedding of the hardy annuals of the 29th.
- "Cavalry": "Hors de combat" does not mean "war horse." It means "camp-followers."
- "T. T.": The order for the most part of the Battle of Britain was "Battle dress"—not "bottle dress."

# Atlantic Symphony

**Y**OU didn't have to be imaginative to feel a sense of drama about that scene, to feel that you were looking at history in the making. It was, indeed, a scene you would never forget.

"You know, I think it's worth while coming to a war, just to see a sight like this." We were on the bridge of the J24, on signal duty. It was an hour or so after midnight, the hour, so says my friend Godfrey Winn, when no man may lie to himself, and Bert meant what he said. Like me, he was caught up in the sheer beauty of the scene around us, and although we gazed the whole shift away (for there was hardly anything else to do at that hour) we still hadn't had our fill.

It had been gloriously fine the previous afternoon, fine after days of fog and cloud and drizzling rain and cold, and it had been good just to stand about in the sun and feel its growing strength as we steamed steadily southwards. For we were leaving the winter and England behind, and a gentle northerly was aiding us on our way.

Now the wind had become almost a gale, and I had to cling with all my force to the handrails of the companionway leading to the bridge. But it was an exhilarating night, and Bert was laughing down at me from the shelter of the covering around the bridge rail. Above, over us all, light, fleecy clouds went scurrying south as though in search of a gentler world,

and it seemed that the moon, now nearly full, was travelling just as hurriedly in the opposite direction. Only you lacked a sense of motion until you turned to watch the other ships of the convoy begin another manœuvre.

They were changing position again. And as we watched the host of ships steaming close together to starboard we saw this one and that one slip back a little and another come forward. A battleship, her camouflage clear in the bright moonlight, changed places with a sleek cruiser. The eye was carried on, on to the farthest ship, to the line of destroyers, low grey shapes on the horizon . . . They formed a complete screen; a screen from the enemy, which, for all we knew, may have been lurking beneath the surface as we watched . . . ready to strike a foul blow at the first opportunity.

But the thought didn't worry us. We had a supreme confidence in the ability of those low grey shapes on the horizon to protect us. We watched them plunge and rise with the sea, and wondered at their seeming casualness, the impression they gave of a quiet, deadly efficiency.

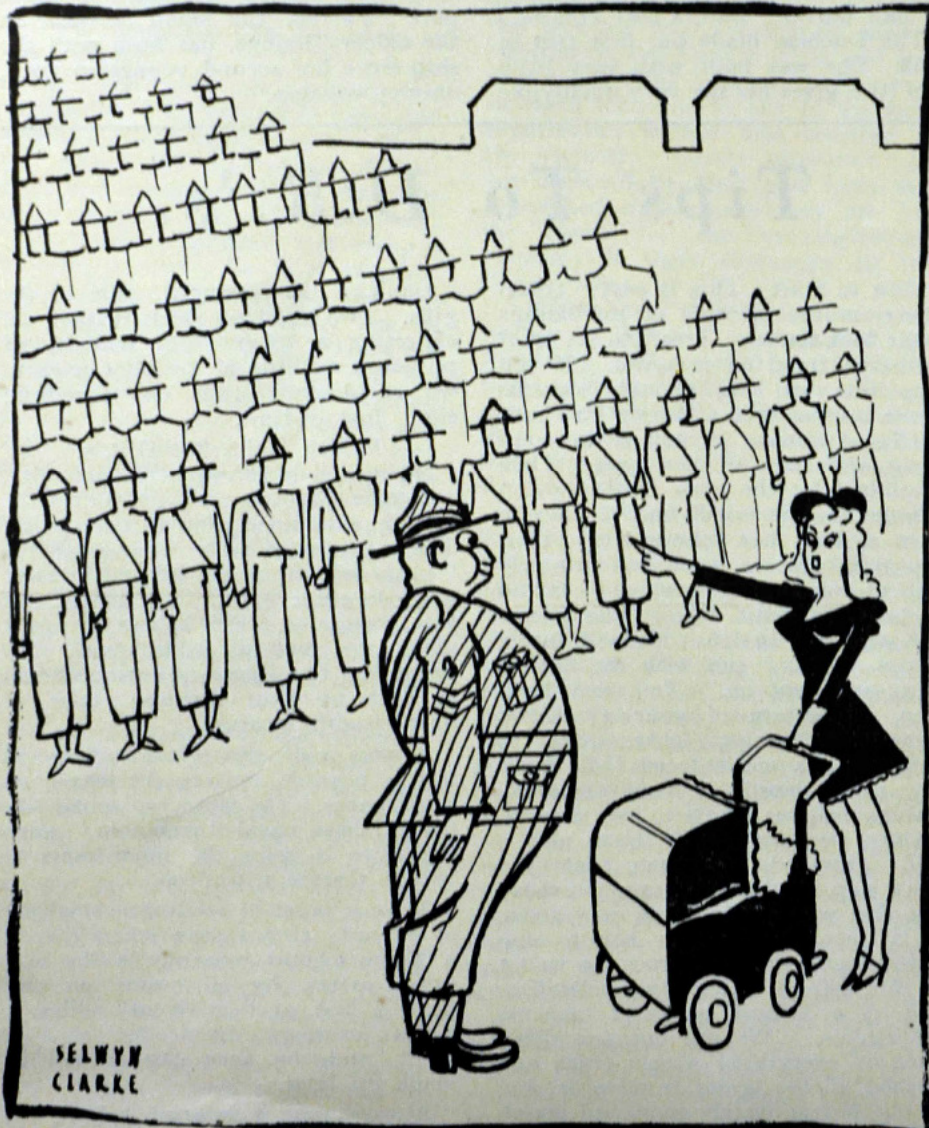
We were rolling about a bit now, and down below some of the boys were beginning to feel that life aboard even a luxury liner wasn't all it might be. But up there on the bridge it was good to be alive, to be able to stare again and again at those other ships pushing south, with us, to a new destination.

How many thousands of men? We didn't know for sure, but we could guess. And by now almost all of them were sleeping soundly, untroubled; safe in the midst of danger. They slept on, confident, like us, of the strength and vigilance of the ships and men of the Royal Navy. There was nothing to fear.

But, we were reminded even as we stared into the night, it was not only to the men of the Navy to whom we owed thanks. For overhead there came a droning, and we looked up to see, cruising gracefully over the convoy a huge, dim bird, a Sunderland flying-boat of the Coastal Command, on patrol; keeping an eye on our scattered ships, watching over us all, ready to bring us aid should disaster come. Thank you, too, men of the R.A.F.

We watched her cruise . . . over this way and back again . . . climbing and gliding . . . till she disappeared in the luminous haze.

"What a sight," said Bert; "what a glorious sight."



ARE THESE THE BLOKES THAT WERE AT CAMBERLY ?



# HELL, SAID THE DUCHESS

THE Duchess's first trip as a troopship was like a private soldier's dream. There were 980 soldiers abroad, and every one of them an officer. They ranged from full Generals to newly-commissioned subalterns, and they had to parade their own fatigues, stand their own submarine watches, polish their own buttons all the way from Liverpool to Bombay. There were seven Generals, headed by General Auchinleck, now C.-in-C. India; 128 Colonels and Lieutenant-Colonels; 428 Captains; and a balance of Lieutenants and one-pippers. With them travelled over 50 high Indian administrators, Sir this and the Hon. that, and 10 army nurses—sorry, 10 senior army nurses.

The officers were almost all Indian Army officers on leave, hastily rounded up and bundled on to the Duchess when the war broke out. The ship sailed an hour after war was declared. Colonels, who arrived cheerfully looking forward to single berth cabins, found themselves waiting three and four hours in the queue while accommodation was allotted, and then going back to the wharf to hump their own luggage aboard. In the lounge captains and majors staggered round under trays of drinks, and queued up outside the service hatch calling, "two gin and lime, three beers, three whisky and water and give me plenty of silver in the change, please." The Worthington and soda-water supplies ran dry on the second day out. When the deck fatigues had finished stacking sandbags round the bridge, they got a job in the Mediterranean sun of painting the funnels. But I'm told the best sight of all was full colonels doing their own washing.

In mid-Mediterranean two destroyers of their escort spotted two U-boats and dealt with them on the spot. The Duchess's passengers and crew breathed a sigh of relief, for right beside them in the convoy was a tramp loaded to the hatch covers with T.N.T. One officer wrote a poem to mark the occasion. The last three verses ran:

"Now t'other destroyers got busy  
Rushin' oop at the 'ell of a bat;  
Then they stopped—and they looked  
—and they listened,  
Just like terriers hunting a rat.

"And they very soon nosed out his  
playmate,  
Three charges at once they let rip;  
'Twere like water main bust'n' in  
High Street  
And Jerry shot base over tip.

"Then the siren of the Duchess of B...  
Gave five bellows of pain and dismay;  
For explosion were quite near her  
bottom—  
Reckon Dook'll 'ave summat to  
say!"

After this trip the Duchess went to Canada and picked up part of the First Canadian Division, and then settled down to carrying evacuee children across the North Atlantic. But in August she began her eastern voyages again, when she took out to Egypt picked troops of the Royal Tank Corps sent out specially for the Western Desert offensive. Within 10 days of landing these men were moving up from Cairo to prepare for the attacks on Sidi Barrani, Bardia and Tobruk.

The Duchess made her first trip in 1928. She was built with very little keel (this gives her her very unladylike

roll) to be able to sail up the St. Lawrence River to Montreal. Fully loaded with 4,000 tons of cargo, her draught is 27 ft. 6 in.; the depth at Montreal is 27 ft. 9 in. In peace time she alternated transatlantic crossings with cruises to the West Indies. Millionaires and film stars strolled in those days on her uncrowded decks (she could take 1,200 passengers in all classes). In the office of the ship's purser, Mr. Armour hangs a photograph of Ann Harding, the film star, standing by the sun deck rail.

The captain this voyage, Captain Tom Jones, came aboard only at the last moment. Her regular captain, Captain W. G. Busk-Wood, broke his ankle just before we were to leave port. Farrell, the small steward in the officers' lounge, has been with the ship since her second voyage in 1928, on 153 voyages.

## Tips To D.R.'s.

**How to Start:** This is easy. Somewhere on the off side of the doings is the kick-starter. Tread on it; let it fly back; tread on it again. If you keep this up long enough someone whose brother rode a Harley way back in Te Awamoot is bound to come along and start it for you. Then heigh-ho! for the open road.

Sometimes you will find it pays to have at least five false starts. Thus you will collect a small but intensely critical crowd, one of whom is bound to be a sarcastic fellow who owned a King Dick in '16. He will surely advise you to "run with the flamin' thing and jump on." You must, however, be certain of your gymnastic prowess. Nothing looks quite so pathetic as a scarlet-faced D.R. panting along beside a running cycle, making helpless efforts to leap aboard.

Once you are under way, all is well; provided, of course, that you don't stop involuntarily, and provided also that you can find your way home. It is important to know how to stop if you really want to. Once the writer of this helpful article was ordered to halt by a Tommy sentry of immense earnestness. We put our feet down hard on everything within reach and pushed all the levers frontwards, but to our horror merely increased speed. "Halt!" roared the sentry, leaping sideways at the last moment.

"Can't!" we screamed, pale to the gills. Two hundred yards further on, expecting a volley every instant, we pushed something at the same moment we accidentally trod on something else. Just in time.

### MORE TIPS TO D.R.'s.

When you have completed your first 100 miles you may sew on your D.R. badges with no qualms of conscience. The experienced rider removes all the "innards" from the alleged silencer so as to achieve real D.R. noises. If you possess a crash helmet, drag it along the road at high speed, thus producing the necessary antique finish to back up your thrilling tales of hair-breadth escapes.

Always ride through a village as fast as possible, making the maximum disturbance. The more you sound like one of those naval "pom-pom" guns the more it helps the inhabitants to realise there's a war on.

Make a point of visiting everything of interest. If you know where there's a Messerschmitt hanging in the telegraph wires, by all means go and have a look at it. Twenty miles is not an overlong detour for such a sight, and the time can always be made up later.

Always wear your crash helmet. It absorbs much of the jar when dismounting.

# East of Suez

THE scene is laid in the shadow of the pyramids, midst the burning sands of the desert, where silently flows the ageless Nile; and the inscrutable Sphinx forever gazes down. The air is heavy with the odour of the romantic East; the stench of rotting offal and unwashed humanity. Stiffly at attention, heedless of that pitiless sun, there stands a body of men. Lanky, bronzed, tight-lipped and steely-eyed, they are unmistakably sons of that far-flung outpost of Empire, Ao-tea-roa.

Facing this fine body of men at a distance of perhaps 50 yards is another crowd which might be better described as a rabble. These men, too, wear the fern-leaf badge, but the uninitiated observer would be hard put to find further similarity between these pale-faced, slovenly wretches and the seasoned fighting men in front of them.

They shift their feet restlessly and at frequent intervals mop the perspiration from their brows. Many have undone the top buttons of their tunics and some even go so far as to chase the flies away. From the ranks of the veterans opposite, full many a lip curls in scorn, for it is only roo in the shade and, after all, the flies are harmless. Periodically, one of the pale-faces swoons and it takes six of his comrades to drag off his bloated form. At this the bronzed veterans cannot help themselves and momentarily, forgetting their iron discipline, words of hot contempt are bandied from mouth to mouth. Their scorn is directed particularly against that part of the rabble wearing white puggarees. "A rum lot!" they sneer as their eyes rest on the Div. Supply Column. And their words are heavy with hidden meaning for the reputation of that unit has preceded it.

Yet the explanation of the difference between these two bodies of men nurtured in the green valleys of the same fair land but so dissimilar in all other respects, is simple. Those of the pale-faces are the pampered Cook's Tourists of the newly-arrived 2nd Echelon, whom Lord Haw-Haw has aptly dubbed "Friedbred's Circus." Those of the bronzed faces are of the 1st Echelon, the scourge of the Wops.

Presently, on to the scene comes a blaze of resplendent scarlet: It is General Friedbred and Brigadier Digest with a swarm of minions in their wake. A deep-throated roar greets their appearance and the two big-shots acknowledge it with thumbs up. Then the band plays the sig-

nature tunes of the 1st and 2nd Echelons, respectively: "When the Sands of the Desert Grow Cold," and "We joined the Army to see the World," and the show is on.

"Men of the 1st Echelon," cries General Friedbred. "We are gathered here, as you know, to welcome the 2nd Echelon to Egypt. At the outset I feel that I must apologize for the great injustice we have all done these valiant men." Here a seemly surge of colour shows 'neath his deep tan. "Most of us in the past have regarded these men in the light of pampered tourists but never were we more mistaken: I stand before you now to explode this fallacy. For yesterday I received from New Zealand a bundle of newspapers, and what I have read has been an eye-opener! I have read of how, for two months, they tenaciously held a position on the English coast and how they faced their baptism of fire with as much fortitude as any of the more experienced women and children of the vicinity. Desert veterans! Be not deceived by their pale faces and debauched appearance—they are but the results of the vagrancies—er, vagaries of their campaign in the Foggy Isle.

"These men, these veterans of the Battle of Britain, have braved the Blitzkreig and laughed at the Luftwaffe. While Hitler's fiery messengers of death hurtled from the skies they courted danger with a nonchalance worthy of the best traditions of the Anzacs."

As he continued in similar vein, the look of contempt was slowly dispelled from the faces of the bronzed veterans to be supplanted by one of growing admiration. As the General's oration reached its smashing climax the applause was long and thunderous. When at last the uproar died, General Friedbred beckoned to the six Egyptians lurking in the background who staggered forward bearing a heavy chest that they deposited at his feet.

"Men of the 2nd Echelon!" cried the General. "I have decided to reward your gallantry in the only fitting manner, and so have had a gold medal suitably engraved, made for each of you. Alternately, you may accept in lieu of same its value in coin: half a piastre. But as most of the half-piastre pieces are bad I advise you to accept the medals. As you file past for your medals I should be flattered if all cooks and Glass House Old Boys would sign my autograph book."

And the applause was tumultuous!

## TRAVEL TALK

We met in the bar of The Waterloo. The war was long over, and he was one of those wealthy Americans motoring through to Milford Sound. We fell into conversation and drinks.

"Travelled at all?" he enquired.

"A little," I said, non-committal-like.

"There's Cape Town now," said he. "Magnificent surroundings, marvellous hospitality."

"Uh-huh," said I. "Know it well."

"Can't beat the Scotch for hospitality though," he came back.

"You've said it," quoth I. "Particularly the country folk."

Foiled, he nursed his drink. "Had a wonderful trip on the *Empress of Britain* once," he murmured.

"Grand ship," I agreed. "But I didn't care for that Cathay Lounge much."

He choked and ordered another whisky. "Mind you," he said, "the Duchess ships were comfortable, and I remember—"

He detailed some twenty great liners he had known.

"Sure," said I. "My experience was the same as yours. Grand ships, all of them."

The man was getting quite a colour up by now.

"No one can ever forget sunset behind the Great Pyramid," he asserted.

"You're right," I agreed, accepting his disturbed offer of another drink.

"Only sight I ever saw to equal it was dawn over Vesuvius," he replied defiantly.

"Mm—yes," I muttered doubtfully. "Not up to moonlight on the Acropolis, though."

"Say, buddy," he stared, "how much have you spent on travel? I've spent fifty grand and you've been everywhere I've been."

"Not a cent," I smiled. The man was thunderstruck.

"What—who—how?" he goggled.

I beckoned for another Waitemata. "Listen, chum," I said, lifting the amber glass, "I was a member of the Second Echelon N.Z.E.F."

He understood.

We drank.

## Personal

Would the Private who said he was in H.Q. Coy., 29 Bn., please communicate with Miss Lucy Winterbottom, Godalming, when he will hear something that will take that grin off his face.

## BOMBED AT SEA

THE bomb fell at ten o'clock in the morning, second day out from the Clyde. A high sea was running, and I was lying in my bunk thinking wearily of sea-sickness. The explosion threw Bill off his bunk, decided me against sea-sickness, and caused Arthur to remark gravely that something had hit us.

He was right. As we hastily gathered together our few poor possessions a further explosion shook the ship—we left the cabin hurriedly and were at once engulfed in a stream of humanity, already toying delightedly with the forerunners of the day's magnificent crop of rumours. We had been torpedoed. We had been bombed. We were being shelled by an enemy raider. We were on fire. We were sinking. Our escort had left us . . . comforted and reassured, we quickly made our way to the New Zealand boat station, shrapnel pattering around us.

The cause of our troubles could easily be seen—a fine four-engined German bomber, making off triumphantly into the sun, pursued belatedly by bursts from our anti-aircraft battery. The machine should have looked dark and sinister; in actual fact it appeared remarkably attractive, outlined hard and black against the blue of the sky.

In the meantime the ship had slowed gradually to a halt, and we lay helpless in the heavy Atlantic swell. The prospects were not reassuring. The boat stations of the N.Z. contingent were aft, directly alongside the magazine. Of the three boats allotted to us, one was to be seen floating gaily about some three hundred yards astern; the second had become unhooked and was gradually smashing itself to pieces against the side; and the third had been blown

by the explosion into the centre of the ship, where it reposed, upside down, in great contentment.

It was, we agreed, a dirty outlook. And if by any means the bomber was able to communicate with a U-boat (a burning question, this) the outlook was even dirtier. But the minutes went on and turned into hours, and still nothing happened. The rest of the convoy had, of course, long since disappeared; but we now possessed a small grey destroyer of our own, which fussed around us in a motherly and extremely comforting fashion.

There remains little of interest to tell. Late in the afternoon the engines started into magical (if weary) life. Slowly the ship gathered way, and painfully we started to limp home. An easy prey, we expected momentarily to feel the shock of a torpedo. But nothing happened, and the next day found us steaming triumphantly up the Clyde. We had had our first taste of fire; it was something to be remembered!

The total casualties were negligible—seven killed and as many wounded in a company of some three thousand. The only man injured in the N.Z. contingent was unaware of the fact until a tear in his pants was pointed out to him . . . his roar of indignation and astonishment at finding a piece of shrapnel securely lodged in his posterior was easily the brightest incident of the day.

Some time after the bombing was over I spoke to the man who had been on look-out immediately before the explosion.

"Didn't you see the 'plane approaching?" I asked.

"Of course I saw it," came the indignant answer. "I pointed it out to my cobbler and said, 'Funny if that isn't one of ours.'"

"Very funny," I said.

desire to do so. This is worth six points easily. The game now opens by setting a starting place and a starting time, the object of the drivers being to prove the minders have arrived late; and that of the minders being to show that the drivers reported at least a square and a half from the correct map reference.

Buses get under way with instructions to keep 150-yard intervals, an order which offers the bus minders all the sadistic thrill of the back-seat driver. The drivers, however, are free to counter this by enticing civilian traffic into the column. The unhappy minder watches point after point going to his opponent as the procession in front of his radiator absorbs a van, fish; ditto butcher; one lorryload of smashed-up Spitfire; one Bofors gun; sundry cyclists and a load of farm manure (the latter counts two points). Orders add that speed will be, say, 15 miles in the hour. This often gives the drivers another point as the inexperienced minder assumes it to mean 15 miles *per* hour, which is not the same thing at all.

Fun may be added by suddenly blowing up bridges *en route*. If the minders so arrange the consequent detour as to entail the maximum of reversing and turning in narrow lanes, they undoubtedly score heavily.

The more unscrupulous driver of course is always liable to stage a breakdown, which, if his technical jargon succeeds in baffling the worried minder, amounts to the equivalent of a Grand Slam. Another move that counts almost as highly in points is the forcing of the troops to debus and trudge dolefully uphill behind their labouring vehicle.

But it is after darkness falls that the game becomes really tense. Once the driver switches on his headlights he loses a point, but unless he does so the minder is frequently unable to follow the route correctly, thus losing three points. In any case, orders are not to show lights at all.

Once the bus loses both the route and the remainder of the convoy, the game is usually considered the driver's, though even then a few determined minders have snatched victory from defeat, rolling proudly home by guess and by God. Further particulars of this exciting but exhausting game may be had from any member of the Second Echelon.

## The Embussing Game

THIS was a new one on us, but one that on arrival in Kent we developed extensively. Two sides, of course, are required—the bus drivers and those we may term the bus minders, the latter usually the more bashful variety of junior sub. The only other requirements are a number of converted passenger buses, the more dilapidated the better, and of course the common soldiery who are essential to all these war games. If the buses

should have a number of broken windows creating a truly Arctic draught, this is worth a couple of points to the drivers even before the game begins. Any driver whose bus is mechanically unreliable is considered to hold the joker.

It is a rule of the game that the bus company starts with a hefty opening score, none of their drivers being issued with a map, or possessing any knowledge of reading same, or any

For Sale: Crown and Anchor Sets, Two-Up and Frazz Combinations, complete with all warning signals.—Apply 29 Bn.

Wanted: One set of Standing Orders that will remain Standing.—Reply to Pte. I. B. Confused, 29 Bn.

## "3 O'clock in the Morning"

ON the night of Oct. 24/25 the various rude hamlets which housed the men of the Second Echelon were wrapt in Kentish slumbers. In the not so rude hamlets which housed the officers the nightly revels had more recently ended and the smell of stale tobacco smoke was slowly overpowering the rival whisky fumes.

In the marble halls which housed the "heads" all save the really hardened poodlerakers were snoring as only your true staff wallah can snore, when lo!—upon the blanketéd shoulders of great and small fell the agitated hands of runners, D.R.'s, orderlies, or what have you?

Their message was brief but pregnant.

"Be ready to move immediately."

It had come. Invasion! There could be no other possible reason. That was the first thought in 6,000 minds—less, say 3.

Reactions varied.

C.O.'s and Adjutants went into a flat spin on principle and promptly. Company Commanders ran round in circles. 2 i/c's did the same but travelled anti-clockwise. Orders flew this way—and that way. Reports were called for—remarks in many cases were uncalled for, whilst from a hundred points on the Weald of Kent arose the plaintive chorus of the Quartermasters.

"But what about breakfast?"

This was indeed a poser.

If no breakfast was served the transport vehicles could be packed at once but the provision of porridge meant delay.

Everyone knew that a hot meal was the standard prescription for men going into action, yet orders were imperative and seemingly made no provision for breakfast; of course rum might have been issued as a substitute for breakfast but the A.S.C. wallahs had already been at the rum and after all a substitute for a substitute is poor stuff on which to repel an invasion.

Eventually a very simple compromise was reached. Some units had breakfast and others didn't.

Meanwhile with a surprising absence of "bitching" the N.C.O.'s and men went quietly about their jobs of dressing, packing, carrying, storing and loading; all in pitch darkness and drizzling rain, with one ear cocked to catch the sounds of distant gunfire.

The fact that no gunfire could be heard did not remove the invasion bogey—maybe Hitler's secret weapon was a silent one.

Possibly there was, here and there, an odd mind, or two, faintly sceptical, but that the "stunt" was taken seriously by most was proved by events. A.S.C. wallahs for instance, struck marquees and loaded hundreds of tons of stores on lorries—medical staffs promptly evacuated patients to civilian hospitals—incidentally thereby running up a nice bill in sterling for Mr.

Nash—and all over Kent slit trenches and latrines were hastily filled in. In some cases surprised owners of Billets were rudely awakened to receive monies and blinking sign receipts for billeting rents.

Around the various unit areas staff wallahs appeared to ask cynical questions, and point out how wrong everything was, only to disappear into the gloom before subordinate commanders could elicit from these great minds anything approaching a reasonable alternativ.

Meanwhile the men—when conflicting and contradictory orders allowed them—went quietly on with the packing and stacking of their "B" kits, the packing and fitting of their "A" kits, through the rainpools and mud they lugged the brens and boxes ammo, the tripods and the shovels, the 2 in. mortars and the rifles anti-tank. In short they worked and worked in such fashion that in a surprisingly short time order arose from chaos and the first faint daylight found scattered platoons lining the streets and roads, packed, equipped, fed, "ready to move," waiting for the inevitable "Ben Hur" with his fleet of lumbering chariots.

Of course "Ben Hur"—true to form—did not arrive. The whole show had been just an "exercise," but for a brief period it did provide the biggest "mass thrill" that the Second Echelon experienced during the weeks it spent in "an operational rôle."

## A Rum Tale

NOW upon a day, before the cock croweth, a certain lord in the land sent forth his messenger in great haste to the heights of Hollingbourne, where slept his mighty man of valour, one Albert, and all his host.

"Make haste," quoth the messenger, "for we move from this place before the clock striketh six," and they answering said, "Yea, it shall be so."

Now darkness was still upon them and the heavens did open and poured forth rain upon them. Mud there was to their knees, and verily they froze to the marrow of their bones. So the mighty man of valour gathered them together saying: "Lo, here in my chariot are two hundred and fifty gallons of Rum that maketh glad the heart of man." So the cold and angry

host were given each man one gill, and then indeed were seen many strange things, for some there were who wept with one another; many there were who didst make merry; and many who didst war with one another in the passage ways and courtyard, for they who drank oftimes quoth with fiery tongue unto their fellows, "Lo, thou art not born of wedlock."

And it came to pass that one who didst add hot water unto his measure, for gluttony, fell asleep in his chair; his measure still in his right hand for verily he could not take it. Then arose one who was a Jew who didst place the measure in safe keeping. And even now the drink still remaineth, for the Jew dost not remember where he placed it.

Now the messenger came again and commanded the host to move to a place, yea even into Dene Lodge, where in an outhouse were stored food-stuffs in hempen bags against days of want. Like unto the Rum these too didst vanish and the place of their storage knew them no more. Then was the mighty man of valour greatly angered and questioned even unto "lights out" one who was suspect, but it availed not.

So as the host journeyed to the East in great ships none spoke of these things save in whispers, but the host of Albert were known among men as Ali Baba and the hundred and forty thieves.

# “Now Is The Hour . . .”

A SOFT Autumn morning in a Gloucestershire wood. On a thick carpet of leaves, grouped all around, were members of the three Companies of New Zealand Forestry Units—men from North Auckland, Rotorua, Westland and Southland, and from every bush district in between.

A demonstration of high tree climbing being over, the parade formed up on the country road. Woods on both sides, Oak, Ash, and those lovely chrome-coloured beeches.

“Quick march!” Bang! Bang! Bang! went the big drum, and we were swinging down the road to the stirring strains of “Invercargill,” the regimental march of the Brigadier’s old regiment.

Down that road along which, centuries before, had marched the Roman legions, came the Band of the 5th Infantry Brigade, 2nd N.Z.E.F. Then a small detachment of Divisional Cavalry; three Companies of N.Z. Engineers, and about a platoon of N.Z. Infantry. The visiting troops were from Mytchett, having come up with the Band and a team of footballers, to keep in touch with the scattered units of the Foresters.

This Sunday morning march was a reunion of New Zealanders twelve thousand miles away from home, and for the first time in history the Gloucester woodlands and valleys echoed and re-echoed with the

rhythmic tramp of New Zealand feet and the music of a New Zealand Band.

Down through those grey-green grazing lands, the noise awoke mobs of yearling Shorthorns to a wild gallop around the tree-strewn paddocks. A farm hand on the ridge stopped, and could hardly believe his ears and his eyes. He, too, came running across the field to stand and stare.

Presently a few small boys turned up on bicycles. Then, where a lane joined the road, were two girls with perambulators. To avoid passing cars the boys with the bikes got in between the band and the Brigadier. The girls with the prams joined them. The babies in the prams got a very rapid ride that morning.

At the order “March at ease” cigarettes came out; the steady clump of Army boots became more noticeable; and so we marched down that country road to the rendezvous for Church Parade.

The Padre spoke in a manly way. He told us of the difficulties of sea travel in those far-off days when our grandfathers and grandmothers made their way to New Zealand in small sailing ships. He emphasised that we needed what the early pioneers had: “Guts—and God.” “It all depends on me and I depend on God.”

After the service, men from many parts of our faraway Homeland got together for the first time for months. Some had not seen each other since

Papakura. Men from the Catlins Bush got together and talked about old times.

The time came for moving off—some to billets round about, some to camps many miles away. The troops formed up around the quadrangle of an ancient building, where the Brigadier said a few words in a soldierly and friendly manner. Cheers were exchanged between the hosts and the visitors.

Then came a dramatic moment. On a quiet note, the band commenced that tune which, with New Zealand troops overseas, has become the New Zealand National Anthem:—

“Now is the hour,  
When we must say good-bye,  
Soon you’ll be sailing  
Far across the sea.  
When you’re away,  
Oh, then remember me;  
When you return  
You’ll find me waiting here.”

These words—and the beautiful air with which they are now associated—never fail to bring a lump into the throat of the New Zealander away from home. A soldier’s life is made up of good-byes: and each one of us coming under the influence of these words and music feels something welling up within.

So in our little groups we went our several ways, much affected by that lovely Maori song, on a soft Autumn morning in kindly Gloucestershire.

F. W.

## Jingle Bells

It was a crazy, childish song but one that just suited the boys’ mood at the moment. We were all gathered in the billet at Camberley after a lively Christmas Eve when Birdie with his foghorn of a voice first sang it. Jingle Bells, all about sleighs and snow and all that. Soon everyone had it on the brain and next day we made it ring through Surrey, Sussex and West Kent, all the way to Maidstone and back. When we were billeted out there a wealthy resident, who adopted the platoon, had invited a dozen of us out for Christmas Day. He had arranged transport and by 11 o’clock on Christmas morning we were sailing blithely through the frosty air. Everything was in tune with our mood and our crazy, lilting Jingle Bells. There were attractive little village inns just where we wanted them; all the girls were free

with smiles; and to make it a perfect Christmas Day, a light mantle of snow lay over fields and cottage roofs.

By the time we reached Maidstone our festive spirit was really wonderful. We had a huge Christmas dinner in the true Yuletide tradition—roast turkey, followed by an enormous flaming pudding, nuts and all the trimmings. Amid gallons of champagne the boys from Waihi soon had those Jingle Bells ringing a carillon peal.

We left about midnight but our driver was totally *hors de combat*, so our host provided another, but unfortunately he did not know the road. We were eight weary hours on the way, wandering all night and covering half of England before we rolled into Camberley, cramped and frozen, but still sleepily ringing Jingle Bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way.

## General Knowledge Test

(Complete each paragraph with one of the numbered alternatives.)

“A mosquito came aboard, bit something in the dark and broke his beak.” He had bitten . . . . .”

- (1) A N.Z. Member of Parliament.
- (2) The chief officer.
- (3) A Sergeant Major.
- (4) A refuse tin.

“A second mosquito bit something juicy, and said, ‘By Jove, that was thin-skinned.’ He had bitten . . . . .”

- (1) A Second Lieutenant.
- (2) The Big Drum.
- (3) Padie’s Batman.
- (4) A ship’s bread roll.

# Hurricane Hero

ALL the lower part of the sky was clear that mid-September Sunday afternoon, but fleecy-white clouds were piled thick overhead. We had seen enemy 'planes cross the blue to the south-east, scores of them, flying fast and very high, like shoals of hurrying whitebait. They would be going to London. Machine-guns rattled in the clouds, and twice we heard the high-pitched whine that some said was the sound of a Spitfire diving to attack. But we could see nothing more, try as we might.

The firing continued, and the next whine, which sounded exactly like the first two, was pronounced by other infantry experts to be that of a German machine falling. Presently, the boys in the Sigs. Office had an unofficial report from "C" Company that a Messerschmitt was down in its area, and a Dornier bomber burning fiercely over beyond Brigade Headquarters. We edged out again from the concealing shade and completely neutralised the protection steel helmets gave, by turning our faces as one man to the sky. Two further machine-gun bursts, one unusually long, were followed by a succession of louder, duller reports. German aerial cannon, Colin said. He went to school with a fellow who is a sergeant-pilot.

The burning 'plane broke free of the cloud straight above us, streaking forward. Someone cheered, and Colin rounded on him like an angry dog. "Don't be a fool!" he snapped, in a tone none of us had heard from him before. "That's a Hurricane—and he hasn't jumped yet." We remembered that Colin's pal flew a

Hurricane. Then he did jump. A shapeless something tumbled away from the flames licking along two-thirds of the fighter's length. It unrolled itself in a long strip, but did not fill. Momentarily we turned away to watch the empty aircraft, now all afire. Still the parachute hung limp like a falling cocoon, except that a swinging, twisting figure dangled from it, and there was a curious light playing about its upper half. Fire! The fabric was burning, and the pilot alternately beating his clothing and tugging desperately at the rigging of cords above him. Seconds were drawn out to become hours. The lower he came, and the clearer we saw him, the more feverishly he seemed to be fighting the fire about his person, and wrestling with the unresponsive harness that was his sole, slender hope of life. Until, after a supreme last effort, he stopped, and spun impotently in the still sunshine as the ground rushed upward, a quarter of a mile from where we stood. Colin ran toward him; and the R.S.M. sent over to the house to call the M.O.

They came back together twenty minutes later: silent, a little strained about their faces, but with the haunting, hunted look gone from Colin's eyes. He had been a flying officer, the M.O. said: so badly wounded, and burned as well, that he could scarcely have lived, even had he landed gently. He would certainly have been unconscious, perhaps dead, before he struck. Colin had gone off alone. The R.S.M., as he went inside, to telephone Battalion, was bitterly cursing everything German.

## The CONFESSION of Junior Officers

(All say).

ALMIGHTY and Omnipotent Colonel we have erred and strayed too often from Thy ways. At all hours wine-bibbing and riotousness goeth on in the Bar, We have left unpromulgated those orders which we ought to have promulgated, and we have allowed wicked men to remove our hats, yea even our badges and pug-garees from us. Our patches distinguishing have we not put on, and verily are we naked in thy sight. Thou hast seen us,

miserable offenders, cleaning our boots and brasses without help of a batman, for which Thou mayest take our Commissions from us and hurl our bodies into that outer darkness whence no officer returns. Thou knowest we have spent our uniform allowance upon the blossoms beside the way, and there is no military value in us. Have mercy upon us, miserable One and Two-Pippers, and grant that we may hereafter live a godly, sober and righteous life, to the glory of Sandhurst, Camberley and Duntroon.

# PETER FRASER'S TOURS

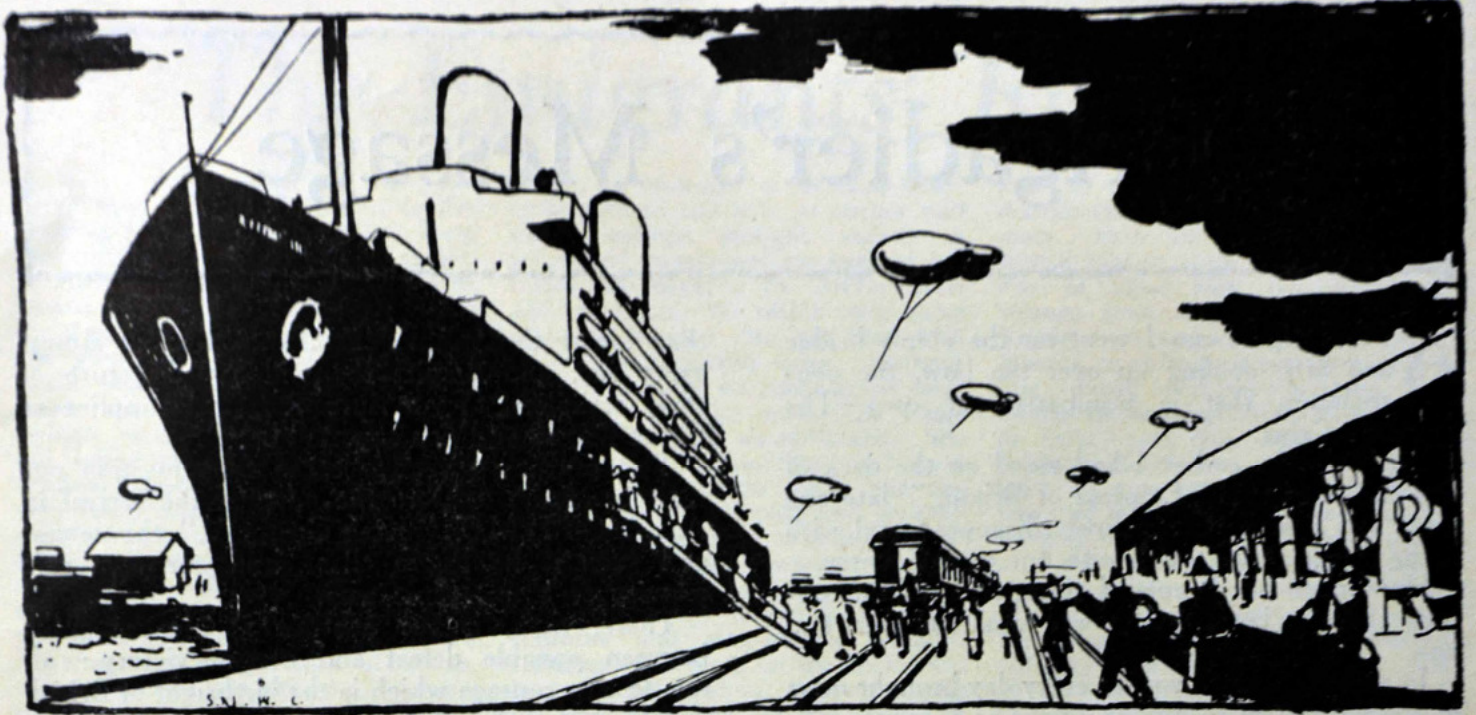
OUR NEXT WINTER CRUISE  
IS ABOUT TO FILL-UP!

ALL LATEST SHIPS—  
—BEST OF ACCOMMODATION  
(IF YOU CAN FIND IT)

DATES OF SAILING AND PORTS  
OF CALL WILL BE RUMoured  
ROUND ALL CAMPS IN N.Z.  
ABOUT  
FEBRUARY AND MARCH.

DON'T BELIEVE THE FELLOW  
ON THE NEXT SEAT—HAVE  
A RUMOUR OF YOUR OWN.

BOOK YOUR BUNK NOW.



GOING ABOARD.

## Editorially Speaking

TO us of the Second Echelon has been granted an experience denied others of our comrades serving overseas; the opportunity to see for ourselves the realities for which we fight. The beauty of Britain, despite its industrial sores; the endurance and humour of its people; the sense of justice and the patience of common folk.

We have seen for ourselves the desolation that war has brought to the land that New Zealanders still call Home. Some recall most vividly scenes of dreadful violence, while to others some tiny incident remains clearest. From my mind the recollection can never fade of a grimy East End street during an

afternoon raid; hideous with the wail of sirens and the dulled thudding of AA guns in the outer suburbs. A small girl of five or six pelted along the pavement, pushing her baby brother in an ancient pram. Her eyes flew wildly from the sky to the road and back, her thin little chest heaved. No further commentary seems required on the insanity and cruelty of our times, or the grim necessity of the task we have set ourselves to do. To us will be given shortly the opportunity to deal a blow for all those ordinary families of Britain who, month after month, have endured the constant threat from the skies; so that we might

be given time to train and prepare. Those men, women, and children in the mean streets of industrial towns have held the Front Line for us.

The motto on our badges, "Onward!" trite and pretentious though it may seem to some, has become a challenge we no longer can ignore. To our generation of New Zealanders has been given the task of binding yet closer the ties that, despite the political and commercial squabbles of peace, clasp us to our mother-land. Gallipoli and Passchendale made us a nation, and only by the results of our efforts in the days ahead, our resolution and our sacrifices, are we in truth sons of the Anzacs.

"REMOVE HEAD-DRESSES."

### CREDO of the PRIVATE SOLDIER

(All together).

I BELIEVE in the Colonel who is my Father and my Mother, dispenser of detention and of leave; and in the Adjutant his only

Confidant who was conceived by Pontius Pilate, born of Shirley Temple, suffered under Buckle Street, was promoted, but is not yet dead and buried. I believe in the infallibility of Brigade, in the mercy and justice of Hargest who sitteth on the right hand of Freyberg the Father Almighty. I believe in the Rottenness of all

Army rations; the Conspiracy of Quartermasters; the Corruption of Sergeants; the Destruction of my Credit; and I hope for the Cessation of Hostilities; the Resumption of Civil Occupations; and Leave Everlasting.

"Replace Head-dresses."

"Stand STILL — that man in Headquarters Company!"

## SUCH FUN

P.T.'s great fun. That is why I think it's such a popular pastime with the men of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. You have only to look at the way they rush excitedly about whenever a sergeant appears with the news that P.T. will be held in half-an-hour. In half-an-hour, of course, you can't find a single man.

Sometimes, though, one is caught napping, as it were, and there follows a pathetic scene as groups of about a dozen men or so begin to divest themselves of their clothing and display an amazing variety of knobbly knees, housemaid's elbows and hairy chests. They stand about in the cool breeze, clutching at themselves as though they had the ague or something, and if you get close enough you will hear them tell the sergeant what a lovely world it is, what with the sunlight and the fresh air and the smell of the good earth in your nostrils, and how good it is to be alive and to be doing P.T. again.

Oh, for the flowers that bloom in the spring, you sigh, and almost unconsciously find yourself joining in the fun, flinging yourself about with a glorious abandonment, as if you were a fairy or this was another scene from the ballet. But I do think we all enjoy P.T. so much, don't you? It's such great fun, isn't it?

## TANTALISATION

Aerial activity over London that night was intense, and I made for my room in the Union Jack Club with such haste that, even indoors, I blundered into the wrong room. The occupant was another New Zealander, who overlooked my intrusion and opened conversation about the raid.

Suddenly he said: "I bet you haven't seen one of these since you arrived in England?" and pulling open a drawer, he withdrew a bottle wrapped in newspaper. Curiosity grew, and I became impatient as he appeared in no hurry to show or share the contents. A few more seconds, like minutes, went by, and the soldier withdrew this object and stood it on the dressing-table. It was unbelievable, but there it was.

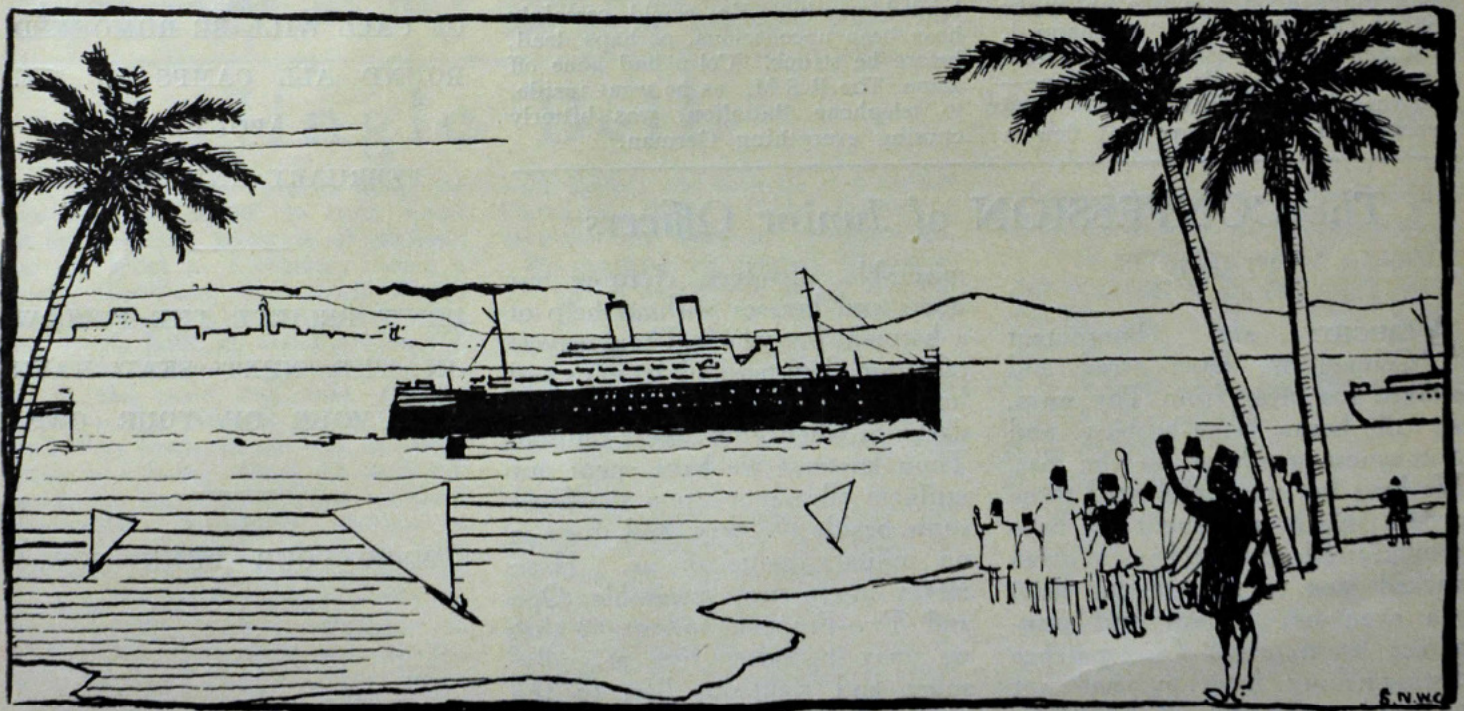
A friend of his working on a ship trading between England and New Zealand had brought over several for him, and this was the last of the shipment! I sat and eyed it. What a break it was to see an object that only a New Zealander could appreciate! There it stood, with its appealing shape and stateliness—a quart bottle of Waitemata Ale in London.

Alas, instead of my new-found acquaintance pulling off the top and handing over the bottle, he carefully rewrapped and replaced it in the drawer to await, he said, a special occasion.

## TO THE EMPRESS

If by any chance we two should meet again  
When you have sloughed the bitterness and pain  
Your regal spirit knew for beauty spent  
At England's urgent call, I shall forget  
The dull drab outer cloak you sadly wore,  
And your little inner meannesses that loss of comfort meant:  
Your lack of cleansing water, cold or hot,  
Your air-conditioning that functioned not,  
Your close-shut ports that made the temper fret.  
These I shall forget, but not the days  
And nights we knew, carefree all, and not  
The comradeship you brought to view.  
The tramp of crowded feet, that too will stay  
A living memory for me and you.  
And on that day, I shall recall,  
Empress mine,  
Your gracious dignity, as you led the line  
Of mighty ships, Grandest convoy of all time.

NOTE.—*This contribution was sent in too late for a previous magazine, and is included as a parting gesture to a fine ship.*



WHEN WE GO ASHORE.





*A lovely New Zealander asked me the way to the Park and since then I have shown him nearly everything.*

# Brigadier's Message

A FEW nights ago I went on the ship's bridge and saw, coming up over the bow, the constellation that is peculiarly our own—The Southern Cross.

Eight months earlier I had stood on the deck of that fine ship the "Empress of Britain" late one night and saw the Cross slowly disappear, and with it the last intimate touch with our own Country.

How much has happened since, and what a contrast there is between the war situation then and now.

In that Northward voyage every day brought news of fresh disasters to our cause. The German rape of Holland, the cowardly but successful attack on Norway without the excuse of one hour's notice, the lightning advance against Belgium, and the capitulation of its King.

Then the long drawn out advance against the French and British Armies; the heroic, but none the less catastrophic Epic of Dunkirk; and just as we arrived on the shores of the Homeland, the hardest blow—the collapse of France.

The two months' story of disasters to ourselves and our Allies might well have crushed the spirit of our people, and would have done so to any but the British Race.

What a contrast to-day as we sail back to join our comrades—wherever they may be. Each day's news bulletin tells us of fresh successes to our arms on sea and land and in the air—we are attacking—on the offensive.

The Armies in Egypt are driving the enemy before them. Italian fortresses are falling with large numbers of prisoners and losses of equipment.

In the Eastern Theatre from Kenya to Eritrea, from the Sudan to Somaliland the Italians are being herded back to inevitable defeat. With accumulating losses in men, with dwindling stores and equipment their case is hopeless.

In the air our forces are attacking daily; defeating the enemy's attempt to complete preparations for the invasion of England, and are carrying the battle nightly into the heart of Germany and Italy, and hammering at the Italian communications with their armies in Greece and in Libya.

At sea our ships are vigilant—they have almost crushed the Italian fleet, and only await its appearance in the open to complete its destruction. Daily

they escort the world's merchant ships on almost every sea, and despite the widespread nature of their activities, they ensure the food supplies of Great Britain and her exports abroad.

Two potent answers to those who question our mastery of the seas are the news of the arrival in America of H.M.S. "King George V," the newest and greatest battleship afloat, and our own safe journey to these tropic seas.

There, then, is the contrast in eight months between possible defeat and certain victory; all due to that courage which is the birthright of British people, and that rock-like determination which rises supreme above disaster.

What share have we of the Second Echelon had in this transformation? Perhaps only a minor one because of our small numbers; but our arrival in the United Kingdom in the depths of the crisis—together with our Australian comrades, and the appearance of the uniforms of our troops in the towns and villages had a wonderful effect.

Here was concrete evidence that the Empire was solid; that the battle of Britain was to be shared by men from the furthest Dominions, and that those who would attack the heart of the Empire must reckon with our race throughout the world.

Our reception will long be remembered by us all. His Majesty the King sent a representative to the port of disembarkation to greet us, and from thence onwards showed a great interest in our welfare, including a memorable visit to our camping area.

The Prime Minister—Mr. Churchill—also sent an emissary and our own High Commissioner—Mr. W. J. Jordan—made a long journey to be present in person at our landing.

We experienced the friendly welcome of the entire population who opened their homes and their hearts to us.

Our own New Zealand people in England rallied to us immediately; they sought out homes for us, entertained us at dances, provided our own Club for us, and spent much of their time and money in making us happy—and they will remember us as we remember them.

As soon as our arrival was announced there came from New Zealand messages of gladness at our safety—from the Prime Minister and from thousands

(Continued on page 9)

# The Emigrants' Return

..... Ailsa Craig on the star-board bow, squat and distant in the morning haze; and a wind from the north was whistlingly cold as any Wellington southerly in this same month of June. . . . Single file up the dour, narrowing Firth as some of the greatest of British ships smell again, afar, the sluggish river waters where they were born. Then of a sudden, as though Heaven and Earth are joint hostesses to our coming, smiling sunshine; and green shores very near, with white farm buildings, grey stone houses, cows grazing and children running. A soft tenderness of landscape such as we have never known. In the lee of the land we lose the wind and the rising warmth of the forenoon wraps itself about us, comforting and safe after the bitterness of the morning and the recent ferocity of the tropic sun. . . . Through the

boom as through a drafting-gate: transports to the left, to anchor and wait; warships straight ahead, to refuel and reprovision for another job somewhere between the Arctic Circle and the Horn. We watch their going with full hearts. One has been with us for ten thousand miles. Without the Royal Navy we could never have got here. She lay across the wharf from us the night we embarked. She led us down harbour the next noon and brought up our rear. She has stayed with us, sleeping and waking, ever since: watching, listening, directing, shepherding, keeping constant vigilance for our safety.

..... Long, lingering hours of sunshine and slow-ebbing twilight. Reading in comfort on the deck until beyond eleven o'clock. Sitting talking far after that, held by the wonder of the pale northern sky that day is so

loth to leave. . . . The bustle of disembarkation. Land underfoot once more. Ears full of a broad, rolling speech that is oddly familiar from the lips of older folk but startlingly strange from children at play. . . . Trains; no second class, but third. Houses, or at least places where people live. Rows upon rows of them, with seldom the weeniest corner for a garden in front, and only bare backyards behind. Each row a continuous building; all rows more or less the same; two and three and four storeys high, all grey or reddy-brown; some prim, all a trifle grim. Homes, nevertheless, through it all; their windows shine, and the smoke of cooking rolls lazily away from bank after bank of massed chimney-pots. . . . Women and countless children, laughing, cheering, blowing kisses or with thumbs stuck upwards in the gesture of good luck



## The Emigrants' Return—Con.

that as yet we do not understand. One woman, who had misread our hats or is a little weak in geography, wildly waving an Australian Ensign from her front door. . . . Factory buildings, shipyards, immense engineering workshops. Barrage balloons aloft all around, and one short-tethered beside the railway. We wave to the crew, and they reply: our first liaison with the R.A.F. . . . More houses and, as the train passes overhead, glimpses of city streets black with scuttling humanity.

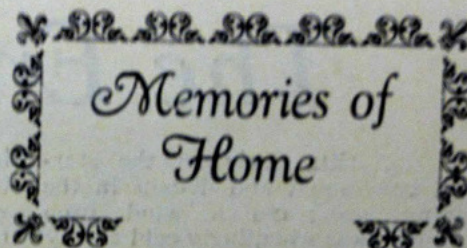
As we stop at the approach to an urban junction, tenements from the very sight of which Antipodean taste recoils: old, dark, grubby, ill-planned, over-tenanted; their walls chalked head-high with childish scribble. No gardens at all; nor any plant life. Impossible to have believed that so many people can live in so small a space. Impossible to have imagined white children so dirty. They are at the fence now, on top of it, over it, calling for souvenirs. In the side-streets long, low, flat-roofed brick sheds, through and around and over which more children swarm. Surface air-raid shelters. The horrors of modern war superimposed on the horrors of slum life. Surely there can be no more ill-favoured spot anywhere. Yet look! Across almost every window-sill, from basement to attic, handkerchiefs, dish-rags, highly-coloured scarves flutter from the hands of women and smiling girls, who shout and beckon, and clutch at the New Zealand buttons and badges thrown from the stationary train. A gay scene—mostly. In the dingiest and dampest corner, where two black walls make a right-angle, an old-young woman with tired, lustreless eyes, one child clinging to her skirt and another held in the crook of her left arm, sways woodenly to and fro at an open window. Her movement serves the double end of hushing the fretful baby and trailing on the heavy, second-hand air outside a faded penny flag, of which the mother holds the staff in her right hand. A relic from the Coronation it is, with their Majesties' portraits drably printed in red, white and blue, and, on a scroll beneath, the legend "God bless the King and Queen." . . . One recalls from the welter of otherwise forgotten reading on the last war a sentence telling how a Highland Regiment captured a stubborn enemy machine-gun post at bayonet point, just before dawn, charging "as if the whole future of their country and the Empire depended upon success." This is part of the future they won. . . . "My God!" exclaims a fresh-faced country boy in trooper's uniform.

"My God!" The words are spoken with the fervent intensity of prayer. . . . Fewer houses, still grouped, but with fields between. Fields well-tended and greenly fresh; but their patterning of the countryside spoiled by great, sprawling black blotches. Slag heaps. And now the clusters of cottages are mining villages. Men and boys coming off shift, faces smudged black, foreheads unhealthy white where caps have been pushed back. Tiny black, mechanical insects crawling out to the ends of the slag heaps, dropping their loads and crawling back again along the spindly overhead way to the pit mouth, as though the endless cable were a spider-web and they its patrolling builders. . . . More farm country; a three-lane motor road; to the nor'-east a new lot of barrage balloons, guarding naval secrets. . . . City again, a tunnel; and there, marvellously towering above our right shoulder, Edinburgh Castle: one with the living rock, the Royal Mile running steeply from its feet, and every stone of the cobbled road echoing history all the way to Holyrood Palace.

. . . . A platform meal "on the War Office"; huge white china mugs of the best tea since leaving home. . . . WAAF's on the station over-bridge up the broad stairway, but behind a locked grille. A scrambling rush for front-line stands by the grille; reluctant turnings away when the guard's whistle sounds for the third time. . . . Hills washed bare to the granite by centuries of rain from the east; then rich, black soil with all the signs of good husbandry. Two men moulding potatoes with a swing-plough; women hoeing; a herd of Ayrshires moving slowly, with trained bovine aimlessness, towards the byre. . . . Presently below us, on the left, the storied waters of the North Sea, blue and peaceful in the late afternoon sunlight; but broken by the smoky, southward plod of little black steamers—five, six, seven of them. British ships, running Britain's errands, unescorted and unmolested, down the length of what the enemy sometimes grandiloquently calls the German Sea. Closer inshore, returning to the almost hidden inlet villages at our feet, stumpy fishing boats, too small to go off with the minesweepers, their crews long past service age; yet ceaselessly baiting their lines and casting their nets for victory.

. . . . Forestry Commission plantations, the sombreness of predominant pines relieved by the lighter foliage of a deciduous band halfway down the hill; and the whole slashed white by the tumbling course of a spring-fed

(Continued at foot of next column.)



## Memories of Home

I long for the land down under  
The land where I was born,  
The land of a million memories  
That war from me has torn.

I long for those dear, smiling faces  
Of loved ones left behind;  
I long to hear those voices,  
Voices of my own mankind.

I long for the lonely splendour  
Of mountain, valley and plain,  
For the music of tui and bellbird,  
And to see our rivers again.

I long for the sounds of the station,  
Sounds that we all hold dear;  
Of sheep as they call one another,  
As night is drawing near.

I long for the bark of a dog—  
A real dog, a shepherd's friend;  
For the low of cattle calling,  
As with my horse I homeward wend.

Yes, New Zealand's the land I long  
for,  
'Tis the land we all hold dear;  
May God grant the day for re-  
turning  
Will soon be drawing near.

stream that pulls itself up sharply in an eddy pool by a moss-crust bridge below. A likely spot for trout. Schools; churches with graveyards close about them. Village names that we have seen before only in books or old letters. Names of the Border clans, on shop-fronts and tradesmen's vans, that are those of our closest friends the width of the world away.

. . . . Ahead, running parallel with the loiterly westerling of the sun, a low, rounded crest, rising to which the engine labours slightly, and loses speed, so that at the top, as we pass, we can see and dimly comprehend tall black lettering on a white board. But the mind has had such a feast to-day that it is slow of grasp. We are down the other side, through Berwick and on the nobly-curving old stone bridge across the Tweed itself before our brain registers what our eyes saw on the hilltop:

SCOTLAND—ENGLAND

The New Zealanders have come Home.

# My Funniest Experience

WHILE we were in Kent one of the lads in my company met a comely wench engaged in hop-pick-

ing. The lad already possessed a weakness for the hops, so I suppose what followed was inevitable. I will

## THE TOURISTS

### — 2nd. ECHELON —



not dwell on the courting stages, as, anyway, you can probably guess at more than I was able to see; but suffice it to say that on the date of the discovery of New Zealand this laddie of mine decided to marry a maid from the East End. Stiffen the crow's! How we tried to dissuade him! But no, there is still something in the saying that "Love is blind."

Nothing would do but that I be his groomsman, so, along with the best man and a guest, we went to the East End. Having a stripe or so, it was left to me to approach the house. The door was opened by a child who said "Tum in," so in we tumbled and were welcomed by the bride's mamma, who said, "We are just common folks like yourselves, so make yourselves at home." What we could see of the place was not bad, as the light was not so good. The bride's father suggested we go down to the local pub, and, being New Zealanders, this met with our complete approval, so away we went. Most of us have watched a seagull pick up a piece of bread and fly away squawking, so that in a moment or two it has quite a number of greedy beaks around it. Well, the bride's father was like that seagull, for we were hardly inside the pub before all the in-laws and out-laws were around us. It finally cost the three of us 27s. each for the night, and we were beginning to wonder who were the guests.

We went back to the house, and with us came Auntie. Now she is quite a lass, is our Aunt; she wanted to learn a Haka, for she had heard of our lads, so "Ginner" was given the job. Could you have seen her as we did then, you would agree there is only one Auntie like this one. All her teeth were missing except the two eye teeth, and for a mouth the old torn sack had nothing on it. The party broke up at 1.30 a.m. with Auntie still on her feet; and did I tell you that Auntie liked gin?

We were shown up to bed, a three-quarter structure for three of us. We laughed ourselves to sleep over the things we saw and heard at the local pub. When we woke in the morning we were given a big shock to see our blanket. It was so filthy, we got up smartly. We decided it was time we had a bath, so away we went to town to get one. As the wedding was at 2 p.m., we returned at 1.30. Now by this time the bridegroom had arrived, and we were told he was down at the local pub, so we said we would have him there on time—which we did—and it was left for the bride to be 20 minutes late.

The Vicar—God bless him—was a broken-down pugilist without a doubt. The bride's father seemed to have the idea that he should agree with the Vicar in everything he said, but he

(Continued on page 11)

## Carriers Stand By

THERE was something absurd, even ludicrous, about it all when you come to think about it now. I remember thinking at the time that even if it were really true I should be getting my "Daily Express" as usual next morning. And I should be reading about the whole affair as if I weren't involved at all. As if it were happening somewhere else and it was my disembodied spirit that was there.

It was like that in England. When I wrote home after reading the headlines in some New Zealand papers, about the terrible imminence of danger away back in September and October, I said I understood for the first time why my mother had appeared so fearful for my safety.

For we weren't alarmed in the least. Not really alarmed. Perhaps just a little apprehensive. It was the kind of morning when anything might have happened. But nobody shall ever be able to say that we were not prepared.

The time was 4.50 ack emma. It was dark. Horribly dark. And rain-

ing dismally. I do not know now whether I laced my boots properly or whether it was my tin hat or my mate's that I wore, but I do remember the sleepy stupor in which I hastily stuffed some things into my haversack and the way I wrapped my groundsheet around my blankets to keep them from getting wet. Germans or no Germans, I hated the thought of getting my blankets wet. Everybody was trying to do the same thing at the same time, and in that little attic at that time in the morning this was almost a physical impossibility. It led to little displays of temper.

Bob said he didn't give a damn if I wasn't ready in time. He would simply leave me behind and the Germans would come along and mop me up. And a jolly good job too. He was a little annoyed because I wasn't on the spot to help him load the carrier, but he forgot all about it ten minutes later and gave me a cigarette.

We stood around the carriers in the drizzling rain and cursed the powers that be for starting a war on such a

morning. But we cursed more quietly than usual. Perhaps a little abstractedly. For even the foulness of the weather couldn't altogether obliterate the other idea that the war, for us, might really be starting; that down on the coast things were happening at that very moment; that hordes of Germans, wetter and colder than we were, had succeeded, at long last, in making the much discussed landing. Perhaps our miserable condition only accentuated all this.

Then came the signal to move off. We rolled out of the greasy paddock and down the road to our allotted positions. A ghostly pale dawn began to streak the eastern sky. The rain lifted a little. We came to a halt and waited.

An hour later we were still waiting, glumly, stolidly, miserable, when a Don R. from Div. H.Q. skidded to a stop beside the O.C.'s carrier. A message was handed over. What did it say?

"It says," said the O.C. with a smile, "that we can all go home again. It's just another manoeuvre."

## MALICE IN BLUNDERLAND

THESE are our transport lines," said the Mad Hatter with an important gesture, indicating a row of battered vehicles, some of whose engines could occasionally be induced to groan into life.

"I suppose," said Alice, "that your mechanics were all transport drivers in civilian life?"

"Oh dear me, no!" cried the Mad Hatter in shocked surprise. "We push all those straight into the rifle companies. You see that fellow trying to start up the ration truck? He was a ladies' hairdresser."

"Oh," said Alice, "I should have thought—"

"You're not paid to think in the army," interrupted the Dormouse severely.

"Would you care to see the officers' riding school?" inquired the Mad Hatter. "They ride motor-cycles now, you know."

"I suppose," said Alice timidly, "you give them a course of instruction first."

"Contrariwise," retorted the Mad Hatter, "We just tell 'em how it starts and let 'em go."

At this point he sidestepped smartly to avoid a motorcycle whose panic-stricken

rider swerved violently into the doorway of a nearby stores tent.

"Goodness!" gasped Alice when the din of collapsing cases and tins had subsided, "Isn't that dangerous?"

"It cheers up the other ranks," said the Mad Hatter loftily, extracting a packet of biscuits from his respirator haversack.

"But the machines must be expensive!" suggested Alice.

"He, he, he!" tittered the Dormouse. "She thinks that matters in wartime!"

"It would if you had to pay for them," said Alice angrily.

"But we don't, you know," said the Mad Hatter, alternately rubbing a biscuit and the rim of his steel helmet. "We just write them off."

"Show her our anti-tank platoon," snickered the Dormouse meaningly.

They went over and looked at a gloomy group of soldiery sitting under a tree.

"They tie explosives on the tail of a tank when the crew aren't looking," explained the Mad Hatter.

"My, they must have to be careful while they're practising," said Alice.

"They never practise," mumbled the Mad Hatter through a mouthful of biscuit.

"They couldn't tell dynamite from old cheese," jeered the Dormouse.

"Then how can they ever learn to blow up tanks?" queried Alice in bewilderment.

"They've never even seen a tank," said the Mad Hatter. "That's why their's is so responsible a job."

"Oh, dear me," sighed Alice. "It doesn't make sense to me."

"As if anything in the army ever did," mocked the Dormouse. "Shall we show her the quartermaster's store?"

They entered a long hut crammed with clothing, boots, hats, blankets, everything Alice could think of.

"I suppose this is where the soldier obtains whatever he requires in the way of equipment," said Alice.

"Not nohow," replied the Mad Hatter. "Quite the reverse. We send him away and make him fill up a form. Then we take the form and give him what he wants in exchange."

"Well," said Alice, "that sounds fairly simple anyway."

"Ah," said the Dormouse, "but we're always out of forms."

"Tell her about our voluntary church parades," grinned the Mad Hatter, finishing the last of the biscuits.

"Why, that's something sensible at last," cried Alice. "I've always said that church parades should be voluntary. It would show whether the troops wanted them or not."

"Exactly," agreed the Mad Hatter. "That's why they're always compulsory."

"She's fainted!" squeaked the Dormouse. "I was afraid she would."

“The Ghouls from ‘Way Down Under’”

WE were four convalescent New Zealanders who, at 10.00 hours on a bitterly cold December morning, were plucked from a comfortable hospital and reluctantly inserted into a draughty ambulance, for delivery to our respective units.

We were dinnerless, moneyless and tobaccoless, and our progress was more than usually hampered by the misdirections of the locals.

However, 21.00 hours found us negotiating the Hog’s Back, by which time the cold was paralysing, and three of us were crouching miserably on one side of the ambulance, while the fourth reclined on the other side.

During a temporary stop our driver was accosted by a somewhat inebriated Canadian, desiring a lift to Aldershot. The freezing blast of air that accompanied his entry did little to prejudice us in his favour and, in our then state of dejection, his incessant prattle about the number of whiskies and brandies he had consumed was, to say the least, galling. When he proceeded to take surreptitious nips from an ample brandy bottle and refrained from passing it

round, reprisals were clearly indicated.

I should mention that it was pitch dark inside our chariot, and, when our Canadian cousin endeavoured to assume a more comfortable position, he placed his hand on the cold plastered foot of our recumbent member.

With a startled query he recoiled into his corner, and three voices promptly informed him that he was sharing his seat with a corpse.

The ensuing silence was broken only by his stertorous breathing and—music to our ears—the gentle chatter of his teeth.

With a mutual feeling that our story needed some embellishments, we set to work. The cause of death was freely discussed and, though it is, perhaps, better not printed here, suffice it that its nature in no way calmed our guest.

Slight scratching noises from his corner indicated that he was endeavouring to put the maximum space between himself and possible contamination.

A discussion on the “deceased’s” character followed, during which it

was agreed that he was a miserable, moaning specimen anyway, and that we were well rid of him, but that he happened to owe us several shillings apiece. This naturally led to conjecture on possible assets on his person, and his watch, fountain pen and cigarette case were promptly lifted from his unresisting form, to be distributed, after considerable dispute.

It speaks much for the “corpse” that he submitted to the rifling without moving a muscle.

This last ghoulish act was a bit too much for our brother-in-arms, however, and from his corner proceeded sundry mutterings about “Goddam tough New Zealanders.” “Why in hell,” he moaned, “did I pick on this goddammed hearse for a lift anyway!”

Stopping on the outskirts of Aldershot, on opening the rear doors, the driver was almost bowled over as our guest precipitated himself into the night. The last we heard of him was some strange French oaths as he enmeshed himself in a tank trap.

Ecstatic shouts announced the discovery, shortly afterwards, that our departed friend, in his haste to be gone, had left behind the brandy bottle.

ONE OF THE WORST THINGS IN THE ARMY IS THE WAY THEY LOAD A MAN UP WITH GEAR



EVEN ON LEAVE WE HAVE TO CARRY OUR GAS MASKS AND TIN HATS



AND ON THE SHIP IT'S OUR LIFE BELTS AND TIN HATS



IT WILL BE A TREAT TO GET BACK TO CIVVY LIFE WHERE WE DONT CARRY ANYTHING MUCH!



CYRIL MAUDE