

Being Trailed by Gestapo in Lisbon is Not Pleasant

This is the 16th of a series of stories about a trip to London and return, taken by a group of Canadian newspapermen of the invitation of the British Government. It is written by Hugh Tompkins, who represented The Canadian Weekly Newspapers' Association and the stories are written exclusively for the weekly newspapers of Canada.

I'll never forget the night we left Ireland behind and flew away toward Portugal in the largest seaplane I ever saw, the good ship "Berwick," which later became famous when it carried Winston Churchill back over the Atlantic from Bermuda to Britain.

We left the peaceful little village of Adare, in Southern Ireland, about ten o'clock on Friday night, driving by bus along the winding, walled roads, through a couple more tiny hamlets, and down one last hill to the seacoast. Once again, there was a hurried session in the little customs house, though no baggage was opened for inspection. One more entry was made in our passports, and we fled out on the pier and down a shabby gangplank to the launch.

It all seemed strange to me that night. There I was in Ireland, where I had never expected to be. Behind us on the hills, lights shone in the few houses, not exactly what we had become accustomed to during a month in England, where everything would have been black. On the pier a powerful searchlight swung around picking out at times the shape of the big winged boat on the estuary, throwing its black shadow on the cliff behind until it looked like two ships, one grey and one black.

One launch had gone out with the mail and I climbed into another with a dozen fellow passengers. One or two loads had already gone aboard. The bay was rough and our launch went out beyond the seaplane, drifting back past it. The crew missed the rope thrown from the plane and tried again. The second time they had better luck and we climbed aboard the big boat which is a part of the body of the plane and down through the narrow door.

The interior looked familiar. This was another Boeing plane, similar to the Clippers by which I had crossed the Atlantic some weeks before. Even the pattern on the tapestry that covered the walls was the same. But this was a later model and larger.

There were no berths for the passengers that night. There wasn't room for them. We were packed in too closely, and we sat up all night in the comfortable seats. After we rose from the water, there were no lights either. The plane was to fly down opposite the unfriendly coast of France, always in danger from enemy raiders, and the only safe way to go was in the dark. And even that was not too safe, as we all realized. So we sat sprawled around in all sorts of queer shapes, trying to sleep and having some success, at that.

Aboard the Berwick
I don't think Pan American Airways would have tried to fly a Clipper on a night like that. The waves were high and the wind was off-shore. That made it necessary to go away out into the estuary and taxi toward the land, with the ship gaining height fast enough to clear the range of low hills. Besides, the plane had a heavy load. Three times, the Captain tried before he finally lifted off the waves and into the air. Each time he went further out into the open ocean.

I sat at the little window and looked out at the waves, thrilled beyond anything I had known on the trip before. I could see two of the four huge motors and the long wing with a green light out near the tip. The waves splashed up over the window when the motors speeded up. Twice the waves were so high they came up over the wing-tip, obscuring the green light. Then we turned toward the land, and there was louder roar, and I could feel the clapslap of the waves on the bottom of the ship, growing less violent and finally disappearing, and we were in the air.

The great ship curled towards the south. The wing tip light and all the interior lights went out. Down below, little Irish villages showed through the clouds, also the city of Limerick, for Ireland has no black-out. Minutes later, there were two or three lighthouses, and the moon shining on the open sea then nothing more but clouds for hours and hours.

Lisbon from the Air
Lisbon, as seen from the air, is one of the most beautiful of cities. The Berwick arrived over the mouth of the Tagus River just before the sun came up over the hills behind Lisbon. (The interior of Portugal is quite mountainous in spots, especially toward the large forested hills that could be seen on the Atlantic, mostly little sailing ships, but a few steam trawlers. Then there was Estoril, the heady resort at the mouth of the river, and then Lisbon set on several hills. A new airport was being built outside the city, with broad modern roads leading to it, in contrast to the narrow lanes of the city itself. An Oriental cemetery with little

tombs inside a high wall provided an odd touch.
Twice the ship circled the city, losing height, and came down on the river beside a Pan American Clipper, preparing to leave in a few hours. "How nice it would be," I thought, "to transfer from one plane to the other, without even bothering to go ashore." But wartime travel isn't that easy in Europe.

Lisbon is one of the most romantic cities in the world at present. It's a poor magazine that hasn't had some story dealing with Lisbon and its refugees, its spies, the German Gestapo and such like. There has been a whole series of moving pictures about Lisbon, such as "One Night in Lisbon," "The Lady Has Plans," and "Affectionately Yours." The general impression seems to be that anything can happen in Lisbon, I believe that is true, anything can happen there, and most of it does happen. Some of the things that have happened are probably more exciting than anything the fiction writers have produced. But alas! Some of the true stories must be kept secret until after the war.

I didn't see much of Lisbon the first time I was there, but on the return trip, I saw far too much, and I do not care if I never see Portugal again. Even when peace comes again, I think I would decline an invitation.

Lisbon After Dark
On the eastward trip, the short stay in Lisbon and suburbs held some excitement, but it was pleasant. The Clipper arrived after dark. My first impression of the Tagus River was that it consisted of acres of mud flats. The tide must have been low that night and the bright searchlights on the plane and on the shore shone on the mud as the Clipper circled around in search of its anchorage. The trip to shore was over a long pier that ended in the Customs office. There the British Embassy people picked us up, supplied us with plenty of escudos (the Portuguese money) and gave the taxi driver directions where to take us.

There followed a wild taxi ride through the narrow streets of Lisbon and out to Estoril. It was far more exciting and undoubtedly more dangerous than the Clipper trip across the broad Atlantic, but we arrived breathless at the Estoril Palace, the finest hotel in Portugal. (It is this hotel you see in some of the movies). There was a midnight dinner in the magnificent dining room, along with the crew of the Clipper, then a few hours' sleep, and away again in the early morning darkness to Cintra, the airport that is used by British, Dutch, American and Italian planes. And so to England.

Seven Days in Portugal
On the return trip, I spent seven days in Lisbon, which was about five too many. It was mid-October when autumn storms were interfering with the Clipper schedules. At first it seemed, I might have to wait ten days for a place on a Clipper; then it was more definite. It might be three weeks. As it has since turned out, it might be never. A prominent Canadian who returned a few weeks later had to go by way of Africa, Brazil and Trinidad to get out of Lisbon. The city is full of people trying to get out. For some of them, it is a matter of life and death. They must leave before the Germans get them. A place on the Clipper was not to be measured in mere dollars then (though it cost over \$500 westbound). So I stayed in Lisbon with seven other Canadians, and as the days passed slowly, our plight became so desperate that we returned at last on a refugee ship, "part of a cargo of cork," as Bishop Remson puts it. As I have said, Lisbon is beautiful from the air. So is the rest of Portugal that I had seen from the plane. From the ground, parts of the capital city are beautiful and everything is interesting. But under its picturesque exterior, there lurks dangers, even in peace time. Now the whole city is full of danger and intrigue.

For the first time, the question of money began to bother us, when we learned we might be in Lisbon indefinitely. We could bring only \$10 such as American money out of England under the strict wartime rules. Out of that, we had to pay our fare home from New York. Other expenses began to come up. We held a conference, and pooled our resources at a last, finding that we had just enough to stay one week at our hotel in Lisbon. We knew nothing of the language. For two days, we lived like paupers, boarding every escudo, till the British Embassy came to our aid and guaranteed our hotel bill.

Headquarters of the Gestapo
We stayed at the Hotel Victoria in Lisbon, not at the expensive Palacia. It had been recommended to me by an American foreign correspondent in London. "It's new and clean," he said, "so long as you don't mind staying in the same hotel as the head of the German Gestapo in Portugal." I laughed that off. In London, they sounded like an added adventure. So, on my recommendation, we stayed at the Victoria. It was new, and clean, and cheap, and the meals were good. And we saw the head of the Gestapo, not just once, but too often. His men kept a close watch on the eight can-

The Week at OTTAWA

Specialty Written for The Acton Free Press by MARGARET ECKE Canadian Press Staff-Writer

OTTAWA, (CP)—The spring house-cleaning atmosphere pervades Ottawa this week as House of Commons members clear up odds and ends of the legislative schedule on the floor of the House and give various phases of wartime legislation a thorough airing in committees.

The political sweeping-out-of-corners started last week when the parliamentarians returned from the recess that took them back to their own constituencies for the manpower plebiscite held April 27. When they resumed sessions at the capital the people had rolled up a majority of more than a million votes on the affirmative side of the plebiscite question: "Are you in favor of releasing the government from any obligation arising out of any past commitments restricting the methods of raising men for military service?"

There is much speculation as to what effect the vote will have on Canada's manpower mobilization plans. The day after the plebiscite vote, Conservative House Leader Hanson urged an immediate statement of government policy.

Invisible Tanks
Cross Britain by the Trainload in the Night

Tanks are now being carried by "invisible" routes in Britain's ports on special wagons in trainloads of 21 at a time. Production is so arranged that batches of them are ready at night, when they are loaded on the trains and sent to the ports by special routes so as to arrive there in the dark. The result is that very few people in Britain have an inkling of this "invisible" traffic.

The new "reerack," or flat wagon on which two heavy Valentines can be carried, is a special feature of these tank trains. Where there is not a loading dock a ramp is used, but the tanks can, if necessary, climb aboard themselves. Worked out by the railway operations experts in conjunction with the War Office, "reeracks" allow the full width of the railway gauge to be used so that with the larger tanks there are only inches to spare.

Probe War Cost
Meanwhile a committee of 24 members of the House of Commons has been set up to examine government war expenditures. The committee, which Prime Minister Mackenzie King assured would not be limited or restricted in its scope, was set up April 30 after a heated two-day debate in the House of Commons.

During the discussion C. E. Johnston, (N.D. Bow River) charged that some war industries, including "perhaps, the three largest plants in Canada," making trucks and similar equipment, were "deliberately slowing down production." War industries, he went on, were "deliberately held back by the government."

The war expenditures committee was re-established on the same basis as last session. War Services Minister Thorson supported the investigation and suggested full inquiry into the operations of the department of munitions and supply.

An important announcement was made last week to Canada's mining men by Finance Minister Isley. He told the House of Commons on Thursday that income and excess profits tax concessions will be provided in the 1942-43 budget to encourage prospecting for important base metals needed for the war effort. Tungsten, manganese and aluminum were named as some of the essential metals.

adlans. It gets on your nerves in a few days.
The Avenida da Liberdade is the main street of Lisbon. The name, as you may guess, means "Avenue of Liberty." It stretches north and south up a broad valley between Lisbon's ten hills. The avenue is reputed to be one of the most beautiful in all the world. I don't doubt it. It is wide. Down each side is a broad roadway, in the centre is a four-lane highway. In between the outer strips and the centre, are gardens with palm trees and edible chestnuts and benches to sit on under the palms or on the grass. Here and there are sidewalk cafes, where everything can be had to drink from ice cream sodas and strong coffee to much stronger things. The roadway circles around many monuments or fountains and all the sidewalks are of mosaic—little pieces of colored marble laboriously laid by hand into patterns. Not only are there scrolls and flowers, but the history of Portugal is written there for those who can read the language.

Up and down the Avenida, there is a steady stream of traffic. On the roadways at the side, old-fashioned street cars with open sides pass every few seconds. I never saw so many street cars on one street anywhere. The automobiles are mostly tiny cars and one could ride half a mile in a taxi for six American cents. Most of the people are on foot, many of them with bare feet.

There is poverty everywhere in Portugal and it intrudes even on the beautiful Avenida. Hundreds of women pass in an hour, with baskets on their heads containing silvery fish or grapes or flowers. Men carry cases of wine or heavier loads. Many of them have little fancy wicker baskets with a bit and handle. I was curious about them. One day I followed an old lady. She stopped occasionally to pick things off the street. At last she sat on a bench and I sat down beside her. She opened her hamper. On the lid of the basket, she had a louseshoe magnet. With the magnet she tested all the metal scraps. The iron ones she put in one pile, the non-ferrous in another. There's no need for salvage campaigns in Lisbon. Nothing goes to waste.



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