A Feature Page

NEWS PARADE

By G McG.

WHAT DOES WINTER HOLD?

The present war has made many changes in our everyday life. We don't do the things we used to do, nor do we do the things we continue to do in the same way. Right now we are thinking of sports. Ever since the war started sport has been a near casualty in Georgetown. Baseball was the first sport to be disposed of for the duration, and now things look rather gloomy for hockey this winter.

During the past two seasons hockey has continued in town, although under rather strained circumstances. Players were gradually becoming fewer, as the boys donned the King's Uniform, until now even the so-called old-timers seem to be few and far between. War plants have taken some, and their spare time is limited by commuting, and with gasoline rationing becoming even more strict, it looks as though hockey may also become a war casualty here.

We don't want to paint a picture from a pessimistic point of view, but we must face the facts. Players are scarce — Have you any suggestions?

At the hockey club banquet last Friday night, the president of the club said that he would leave it for the public to decide at a general meeting, whether we should attempt to organize this year or not. Some outside players are still available, but transportation would be a big item.

Should we not have hockey this winter, there would be many long and lonely evenings for a great number of dyed-in-the-wool hockey fans in Georgetown. We suggest that you attend the public meeting when called, and bring along any suggestions you may have for the continuation of the sport in war time. If O.H.A. hockey is not advisable, maybe a town or rural loop could be formed. Let's get something underway. There are long winter nights ahead, and the boys overseas would enjoy reading our "hockey roundup."

WHY BRING THAT UP?

Over the week end we called on some friends who had built a new home for themselves. It was a fine home, all so new, and clean, and handy. We inspected it from the cellar to the roof, and of course, compared it with our own. But all the time we could not help but think of Cousin Cyrus' letter to his 'ain folk.

Cousin Cyrus had struck hard luck in the years of depression, and at last had got employment, probably in a war industry, and writes Cousin George to tell him all about it. Cyrus and his four kids and their maw "et," "slep" and lived generally in a space about as large as the living room we were entertained in, and to move into a six-roomed house was something to write home about. But for us to try and tell about his success and how they became accustomed to their new home would spoil an interesting letter, so we will let Cyrus take over here.

"Dear Cousin George: We got a house. It has got six rooms in it. One room we eat in. Another room we just kinda set in. Then there's another room where maw does nothing but cook in. There are two rooms be don't do nothing else but sleep in. But the wash room is the one we all like most. There's a looking glass on the wall where you can see yourself. Underneath the glass is a big bowl, where you wash your face and hands in. When you get real dirty, there's a big tub against the other wall where we wash ourselves all over. There's another bowl that sets on the floor. This had us fooled for a while, but we got it figured out now. It's to wash our feet in. The bowl had two lids on it when we moved there, but I took them off as they kept falling down on my feet. The top lid maw is using for a dough board. We framed paw's picture with the other lid. Come and see us sometime.—Cyrus."

"NAZI EYES ON CANADA"

Those who heard the last of a series "Nazi Eyes on Canada", on Sunday evening in a CBC broadcast, with Orson Wells starring as the Weekly Newspaper Editor, could not help but realize what would happen to Canada should Hitler and his gang be successful. The programme stressed the necessity of purchasing Victory Bonds, so that our boys might have tools sufficent to cope with a ruthless enemy.

For his broadcast Mr. Welles became a newspaperman, and assumed the part of Sam. J. Dornan, Editor of the Almeda "Dispatch", Almeda, Saskatchewan. The broadcast showed by the description of everyday Almeda Community folk, how their lives would change under the tyrannical heel of Nazi Conquerors.

Sam J. Dornan has served 22 years as a Director of the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association. He is known by every weekly editor in Canada, and by many of the most important figures in the daily newspaper field. He has been a powerful influence in Saskatchewan politics. Today, his five sons are in uniform—his eldest, a Captain in Ordnance was wounded an the Dieppe raid.

"Back From Libya"

MATTHEW H. HALTON

Matthew H. Halton of the Toronto Star is one of Canada's most famous war correspondents. He has just returned from the desert after a year and a half with the Empire Forces who are defending Egypt and the Nile. He spoke over CBC National network on Sunday, October 4th, immediately after his return to Canada, and his address was so interesting we reprint it here:—

A few days I was in a wasteland of sand and battle 10,000 miles away—now I am home. Only a few days ago I wakened at first light in a British tank leaguer near the Qattara depression, and there was a knocking in my heart—I was going home. We broke leaguer and dispersed into battle formation. We rolled up our beds and made tea. I bumped once more across and through the yellow sands, and called at brigade headquarters to say good-by, and then at divisional headquarters and then at Corps, and then reached the coast road near the hot white blinding garden of death called Alamein. I had a last swim in the sea, and drove for the last time down the dark and cruel road along which a great host of British soldiers have gone to war. Down the hogsback road we drove. I was glad to go but sad to leave. Down every foot of that road I had seen something of courage or humour or agony—and now I had "had the desert", and was going home.

WHERE GUNNERS DIED

Here was the spot where we saw the gunners die on their guns on the day of July the third. Here was the advanced dressing station where we were machine gunned. Here's where our new boys were caught in the minefield. Here's where we went in with the Ghurkas in the night attack. Dickie was killed just over there, you remember? Here's Immayid staging post—there's the petrol point we couldn't find—here's the burnt-out Messerschmitt.

And then the battle-field is left behind, with its little crosses in the sand. The battlefield where the East was held, where so many of us learned in the drifting smokerack what we were—it's left behind, and we come to the Arabs standing beside the road with eggs and figs in their hands and shouting, "Eggis, figgis!"

And so Alexandria—and one last look at the harbour where we used to guard the destroyers for the death ride into Tobruk. You say good-by to the friends for whom alone the year-and-half was worthwhile—and then to Cairo. You fly from Cairo to Khartoum, from Khartoum to West Africa. At dawn in West Africa you get into a bomber and 30 hours later you are in Maimi, and then at the New York airport, where a dream comes true.

WHERE COURAGE GROWS

The contrast between home and a battlefield in the western desert is too wide and wild and strange to describe. I can only ask you to try to imagine it. We are all fighting for our lives, for all we have and are, but some are doing more than others; they are fighting in indescribably terrible conditions, so please remember them. You, who always have food and water, and a bed to sleep in, you who have your loved ones at your side as I now have mine at last, I ask you never to forget. You have trees! You have running streams! You have the laughter of children and the smiles of women! To us all these things were heavens which did not bear thinking of, and before going on I ask you to remember that. Remember it even when you see a flower or hear a bird. As Kipling said:

"Flower ye trample underfoot
"Floods his heart abrim—
"Bird ye never heeded,
"Oh, she calls his dead to him!"

The week before I left, in that dead land where nothing grows but courage, I saw a victory and a revenge. The Germans attacked with their main striking force and the Eighth Army stopped them. No major battle was fought, yet it was one of the decisive actions of the war. I am confident that Rommel will never strut now before the pyramids to invoke the 40 centuries that look down.

Once we thought he might. Once the fat prize was almost in his hands. It was the end of June. We had retreated for hundreds of miles, we had lost Tobruk on a desperate, evil day, our armour was gone, our great army was reduced to a few battle groups, tired and incoherent and terribly mauled. Rommel pushed headlong to Almein and the delta of the Nile lay before him like a bowl of gems. He mounted an attack and in those dark hours it seemed that the story of the Eighth Army was told.

ENEMY WAS HELD

But somehow the enemy was held. One bayonet charge in the moonlight by the lean, cool New Zealanders, one gallant sacrifice play by a squadron of British tanks, one sortie after another by British, Canadian and South African airmen flying half dead with exhaustion—these things held the triumphant enemy. And now our reinforcements were arriving from England. Toward the middle of July we were able to make counter-attacks designed to push the enemy off his balance as he gathered himself to spring. We paid a high price there in those attacks. I cover my eyes still when I think of those splendid but terrible hours on Ruweisat Ridge when I saw the boys go in from the start line and never saw them come back. But the enemy was delayed. The war is shorter for you, your sons' lives will be saved, because of that awful hour and a half on the morning of July 13th, when the English lads went in their tanks for their first close view of death.

At the end of July it was a race. The new troops were arrivingfrom England—every day we saw more new boys coming keen and wide-eyed into our dust bowl of battle. The hundreds of new 25-pounders were coming up, the hundreds of new anti tank guns, the hundreds of new tanks. In spirit too the army was refreshed. Churchill had been to see us, he had visited the tanks in their hull-down positions, and given us tough new fighting generals. Swiftly the rebuilt army was shaped and we waited for the shock. We knew Rommel was coming. His great mass of manoeuvre of two German tank divisions and the crack 90th motorized division, and his 164th parachute division from Crete, and a whole Italian armored corps, was gathering at Himeimat. The army worked like a hill of ants and every new day was a gain. Our hopes rose.

TERRIBLE INITIATION

The moon ripened and began to wane. There was a tension now, especially among the new troops waiting for the terrible initiation. Every night when we went to sleep under the stars we expected to be wakened by the shock of battle and a world in eruption. A morning came when I got out of my bed roll and wrote in my dairy for the fourth time "They don't attack!" But a few minutes later a friend came over from brigade headquarters. "It's started," he said. I sat on my bed roll and looked at the men waiting at their tanks and guns, and I thought of the cause and of the stakes.

I thought of them again on my first morning in Canada, when I sat up in bed having breakfast, reading in the paper that fighting had started again in the desert, with British troops and tanks attacking in the Munassib depression. This is where Rommel had attacked us. He came through our minefields in the south, on the edge of the Qattara depression. This country is the wasteland of nothing, and here as the sun rose that day British soldiers set themselves to fight, to the last if necessary and without withdrawal or surrender, for fairer lands, for the life of the army, for Egypt and the Nile.

The enemy came manoeuvering, probing here and jabbing there, and cautious as a fox. And as you know they were beaten back. I was there with a British Infantry Brigade and its guns. About one-third of these men had fought in the battle of France, some of them had been on the beaches at Dunkirk, so to watch them was to watch a revenge.

First I was with a regiment of 25 pounders during a co-ordinated shoot against a concentration of enemy tanks and lorried infantry charging our position. They put 1,000 shells among the enemy in eight minutes and at the same time scores of bombs from our aircraft were dropping on the same spot. It was a fearful sight. When it was over I joined one of the tank columns attacking the beaten enemy. We rumbled into the depression where the burnt out enemy vehicles lay smouldering, where the dead Germans lay clutching Egyptian sand. One of them had a letter from his mother. "We were so glad to know," she wrote, "that you are out of the Libyan desert and in beautiful Egypt."

LAST DAY IN DESERT

It was my last day in the desert. There was the dreary wasteland stretching away for 1,000 miles. There was the vast plain of hard gravel and soft sand, the dead land. There was the "distance piled upon distance, further than human enduring"—except that men endure it. The desert scene was at its wildest and dreariest. Our guns were shelling the withdrawing enemy, and enemy shells whistled in and bit among us. Plumes and clouds of sand mixed with black smoke drifted across the desolate plains and soldiers were covered thick with yellow dirt. An enemy petrol truck would explode from time to time in a paroxysm of flame and the sound of it, a deep vomiting roar, reached us a few seconds later. The enemy dead and some of our own lay there with their troubles and suffering over. We were divebombed, the Stukas howling down at us at 400 miles an hour, machine-gunning us as they dived and then released their bombs. A Stuka was attracted by our fighters. It paused in the air as if stabbed in the back, and it came down in a long moan and hit the ground in a spasm of flame. That was my last day in the desert—and I still wonder which is the real world, that or this.

The picture of a tank battle is in my mind now. A tank battle seems to move very slowly, and you have a strange feeling of detachment as you watch it. The tanks advance like huge rumbling black beetles with their giant guts creaking, and they stop to fire. The enemy tanks withdraw and you see the shells from one of our 25 pounders pursuing one of Rommel's big Mark Four's. It is as if a great puff-ball were pushing a beetle in enormous leaps, and finally seizes on it and envelops it. And at times we have seen our own tanks caught up on the enemey's superb anti-tank guns and destroyed.

MAN OF MEMORIES

Night fell at last, and coolness came. Our tank crews sat there, silent and grim, with victory on their shoulders. Our column drew together in close leaguer, vehicle touching vehicle, tank touching tank, and white flares lit the night as Boche signalled to Boche. Men gathered in little knots to eat their bully beef and listen to the radio, or sank to the ground overpowered. My last night in the tank leaguer, I got into my sleeping bag and looked up at the stars and I was a man of many memories. Memories of victory and memories of defeat—but all memories of British courage and humour and good comradeship, and the positive certainty that we often withdraw but always at the last return, whether it be to Dunkirk or Bengazi.

I shall think of the day when we went through the wire into Libia in our great offensive last winter, and of the first fighting I saw at El Gubi, and of the dramatic race to link hands with Tobruk.

MOON LIGHTS ATTACK

I shall think of the terrible tank battles during those days at Sidi Rezegh and El Duda, and of our two-po under-gun tanks racing in to get into range of the enemy tanks with the big 75-mm. guns, and of the two companies of the Essex Regiment charging the enemy in the moonlight at El Duda and taking 440 German prisoners. That night, countrymen, on my word, I heard the German squeal.

I shall think of the day when the main enemy tank force chased some of us back to Egypt. We raced from noon till dark in a running battle, and scores of our vehicles were destroyed as we ran. An English cameraman's vehicle was hit, and he was bleeding when we picked him up, and he roared, "It makes you larff, don't it?" When we got back to the wire we were cut off, so we spent ten hours going through 10 miles of German minefields and then fought our way through the Italian positions to get into the arms of the Fourth Indian Division at Sidi Omar.

I shall think of that day, Nov. 25, there at Sidi Omar, when I stood on top of a truck to watch a battery and a half of our guns over 400 yards away stop and smash a powerful force of German tanks trying to overrun our positions, and of the thousand men who stood cheering as if at a game.

I shall remember the time at Gazala when I joined the brigade which was the spearhead of our left flank and chased the German enemy 50 miles in a day, including time off for two battles and I shall think of the Buffs who were wiped out there.

CHARGED GUNS ALONE

I shall remember the hour at El Adem when the battalion was blinded with dust and smoke and blood and one little Cockney charged the German guns alone.

I shall think of the shambles of Derna airdrome, and of going into Bengazi men singing in the dark. It was the and of the way we sang "Auld Lang Syne" that night, when we were thinking, as I think now, of stout hearts now dead or in captivity.

I shall think of the terrible moonlight retreat from Bengazi, or of the young lieutenant commanding a troop of howitzers in the delaying action at Sollum last June— the boy who said: "You'd better go now . . . . How nice of you to come and see us"; or of the night when we were cut off by the Germans near Mersa Matruh.

I shall think of the hour when all seemed lost at Alamein and we heard men singing in the dark. It was the Australians coming up singing "Waltzing Matilda"; and of the cool men of the destroyer Kandahar, now lost, with whom I ran the gauntlet into and out of Toburk; and of the great General Gott, whom I last saw at Buqbuq sick at heart with the news that Tobruk had fallen, and walking up and down in the sand, and then saying "You never win if you wait for your reserves."

It is natural that I should never forget the Eighth Army. But neither should anyone else. From the point of view of the men—British, Australians, New Zealanders and the rest—no finer army ever marched.

Poetry

THE GOODS

You've got to have the goods, my boy,
If you would finish strong;
A bluff may work a little while,
But not for very long.
A line of talk all by itself
Will seldom see you through;
You've got to have the goods, my boy,
And nothing else will do.

The fight is pretty stiff, my boy;
I'd call it rather tough,
And all along the route are wrecks
Of those who tried to bluff—
They couldn't back their lines of talk
To meet the final test.
You've got to have the goods, my boy,
And that's no idle jest!

— Dodge News

MY BOY

He was so very dear to me,
My little boy of three,
As every morning out he'd go
To play so happily.
Sometimes he'd fall, then come to me
For comfort for a while,
I'd pat his little curly head
And say, "Be brave and smile."

He older grew and off to school
He went so willingly—
To study, play and fight sometimes
With boys as fine as he
Then sometimes, hurt, he'd come to me
For comfort for a while;
I'd put my hand upon his head,
And say, "be brave and smile."

Now he has gone across the sea,
My boy of twenty-three,
To fight to keep me safe from harm,
From a ruthless enemy.
Before he went he came to me
For comfort for a while;
I held him close, and then he said,
"Goodbye, be brave and smile."
And if perchance he never comes

Back safe unharmed to me,
But gives his life as others do
For the cause of liberty,
I'll pray that I may have from God
His comfort for a while,
And strength to go on, day by day,
And just be brave and smile."

The above verse was written by Mrs. Harvey Clark of Hagersville, and dedicated to her son, Wilson Clark, in the 102nd Field Artillery.

RETURN FROM DIEPPE

I thank Thee, God, that, I am Battle-tested,
I will not have to dread the fear of fear
And can it really be that I was in it,
That rain of fire and steel, and still am here?

And was it I, aboard the crowded troopship—
That tin hat, gas-mask—were they really mine?
Did those who love me feel I was in danger,
Those dear ones far beyond the horizon line?
It seemed so odd that they, perhaps were sleeping,
Not knowing I was headed out to sea,
Part of the dagger-head, with planned precision
Aimed at the heart of Germany.

The shores of France! And did my Dad at Vimy
Feel this exultant thrill, this surge of power?
I gripped my gun—never another Dunkerque!
I had been born for this—this war my hour!

I just remember horror all around me,
And men who never knew the name of fear—
I thank Thee, Lord, that I am battle tested,
That I have tasted death, and still am here!

NOTHING MATTERS NOW
but..