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OPINION

TOO BUSY?

This month not one contribution to PG has come from the officers' mess. Two of our writers are senior NCOs; otherwise the entire issue is compiled by other ranks.

A poor show, sirs and gentlemen; distinctly a poor show.

* * *

PEE-WEE'S SWAN SONG

Next month's issue will centre around the departure of Pee-Wee from Debort. It will, perhaps, be prepared a little sadly but when all the formes are locked we intend they shall contain a tribute to our number one artist—Harold Hunt.

* * * *

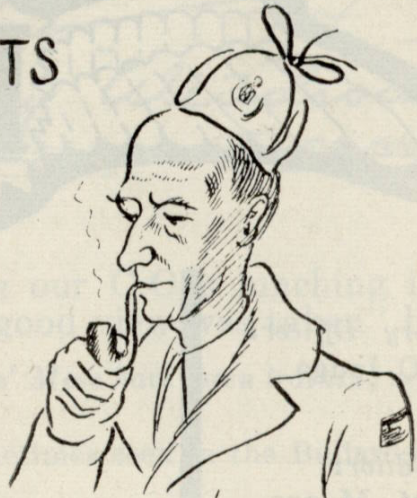
EARLY TO BED

The February P. G. will definitely make its appearance on the fifteenth. Contributors are urged to give their material to a member of the staff or the Y. M.C.A.—NOW.

SPRING FASHIONS IN HATS



The 'Napoleon'



'Shurlock



Little BoPeep



'Grand Lama'



'Granny'



The 'Ear Hook'

RWhitmore
1943.

**Pee Wee Birsts
Into Print
At Larst**



WOT with nobody writing anything, and everything, i hav at larst got my charnst. Evry munth, reglar sinse january 1942 i hav sent in my contribushun for p.g. and just as reglar it has come back to me with a lttul note saying as how the edditer regretted that he cuddent yews wot i had written that time but please try agen as sum day he may be short of cobby. and that day is here at larst.

this Time i hav desided to write about Crismus And How A Gud Time Was Had By All. It started on des. 23rd wen i got a card from sum peepul in new glasgow wot sed we will be pleased to hav the company of a c Peewee for the holiday period over Crismus replkayseevooplay. As i new there was sum gurls going to be there i sed to miself this is the jen and went.

“BEST BLEW”

Although I dont want to bost i look kinda kewt in Bill Joneses best blew and i got up befor him and put it on and wen i got there the gurls sed yew look kinda kewt.

On Crismuseve there was a darns woti went to with Eva who was the nisest gurl of the lot. i remember the start of the darns becos then i was sober but i dont remember the end becos then i was not. There was a lot of giggling amungst the gurls the next day and i diddunt no wot it was for but they later told me they had had to put me to bed. i wish i cud have rememberd that part.

At the party on Crismus night there was lots of fun, an we played games with forfits and the gurls showd me the very latest way to play post offis which i enjoyed very much. in one of the forfits Eva had to slide down the bannisters and we herd a noys which sujested that she had tore sumthing.

We finnishd up the party with a game where we all stud on us heads in the corner exsept Eva who cuddent very well cud she. thank you mister edditer a happy new yeer.

p s Bill Joneses best blew is down for exchanj on the next clothing perayd.

Pee-Wee

CIRCUITS AND BUMPS

With Sgt. Arthur Hailey

1944

As a little boy the writer was once given a diary which contained a space headed "my new year resolutions." These he remembers carefully completing and although time has erased all memory of their wording, there is a vague recollection of something about being nice to the girl next door. Even at this early stage, it seems, he was developing both the "form-filling mind" and the instinct of a cavalier.

This annual habit of washing our socks in public and private has become so hallowed that one hesitates to challenge it. Yet to a person of definite character there appears no good cause to realign his life according to an arbitrary date. If one has to reform, campaign or—more likely—go to the dogs, any other of the year's 366 days is equally opportune.

Howbeit, the fact that some of us do a bit of personal soul-searching at least once per annum, is probably sufficient reason to accept the convention.

What, then, can we ask of this new year?

Four things, we believe:

For our arms—success

For our nation—wisdom

For our loved ones—faith

For ourselves—courage.

It is a lot to ask.

But the year is our own to live.

* * * * *

against infection

When Shakespeare wrote:

"This fortress built by nature for herself

Against infection and the hand of war,"

the medicos were still in chopping block days, so the lines could not possibly have referred to inoculation. However, as (a) the principle of pain remains as ever and (b) in any age the Bard is good for a tag, there's no harm in linking the two to say that December brought the yearly crop of sore arms. As usual, many of the less robust airmen seemed to walk about unaffected while PT-types folded up on their beds until the red (or is it white?) corpuscles should cry "Bingo!"

An afterthought: who inoculates the MO?

room at the inn

Legend has given ours the reputation of a retiring race. It is said, and sometimes truly, that a Britisher will express himself by understatement rather than risk an accusation of sentimentality. We do not believe that this has been the case locally so far as Christmas hospitality is concerned. Nevertheless, it is felt that many airmen will welcome the expression in print of what they have undoubtedly said in person.

This then, to the kindly people of Debert, Truro, Great Village, Bass River, New Glasgow, Amherst, Springhill and other places too numerous to name:

Thank you.

Not for the first year, or the second, nor probably the last, we have shared your Christmas and been happy and proud to do so. You have opened your homes and your hearts, you have done for us, all that our kin would wish to do had they been able.

Later we shall go home—and we will remember.

There was room at the inn.

Yours is truly the Blessing of Christmas.

* * * * *

profit and loss

The bus fare from the aerodrome boundary to Truro is 20c.

From Debert village to Truro it is also 20c.

From the aerodrome boundary to Debert village is 10c.

Now then.

Some of the energetic types walk into Debert village in order to ensure getting on the bus. No-one blames them. Anyone that keen deserves a seat. They pay 20c.

The common herd collect at the corner by the army guard-house and board the bus on its way to Truro. Some sit. More stand. All pay 20c. Fair enough.

The snag arises when the moneyed types (obviously Group A) come along and wait by the army guardroom. Seeing the bus outward bound from Truro, they board it, pay 10c to go to Debert, another 20c from Debert to Truro—30c in all. As a result when the bus gets to Debert village it's already partially filled, those waiting there complete the load, and the fellows who are still at the army guardroom have had it. Next time, those that were left decide, in self defence, to pay 30c and ride into the village. It's a vicious circle.

Not only is the whole business pretty selfish—it's selling your own oppos for 10c a time—but you're putting money into the pockets of the bus company—and they're not doing so badly quite apart from that.

Think it over.

airmen for the use of

Among the trophies of this war, with the aid of which we intend to shoot a horrible line to our children yet unborn, is the Cap Yukon.

"What did you do in the war, Daddy?"

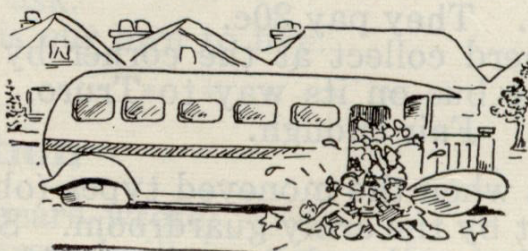
"Well.....um.....er.....I was on active service in Canada."

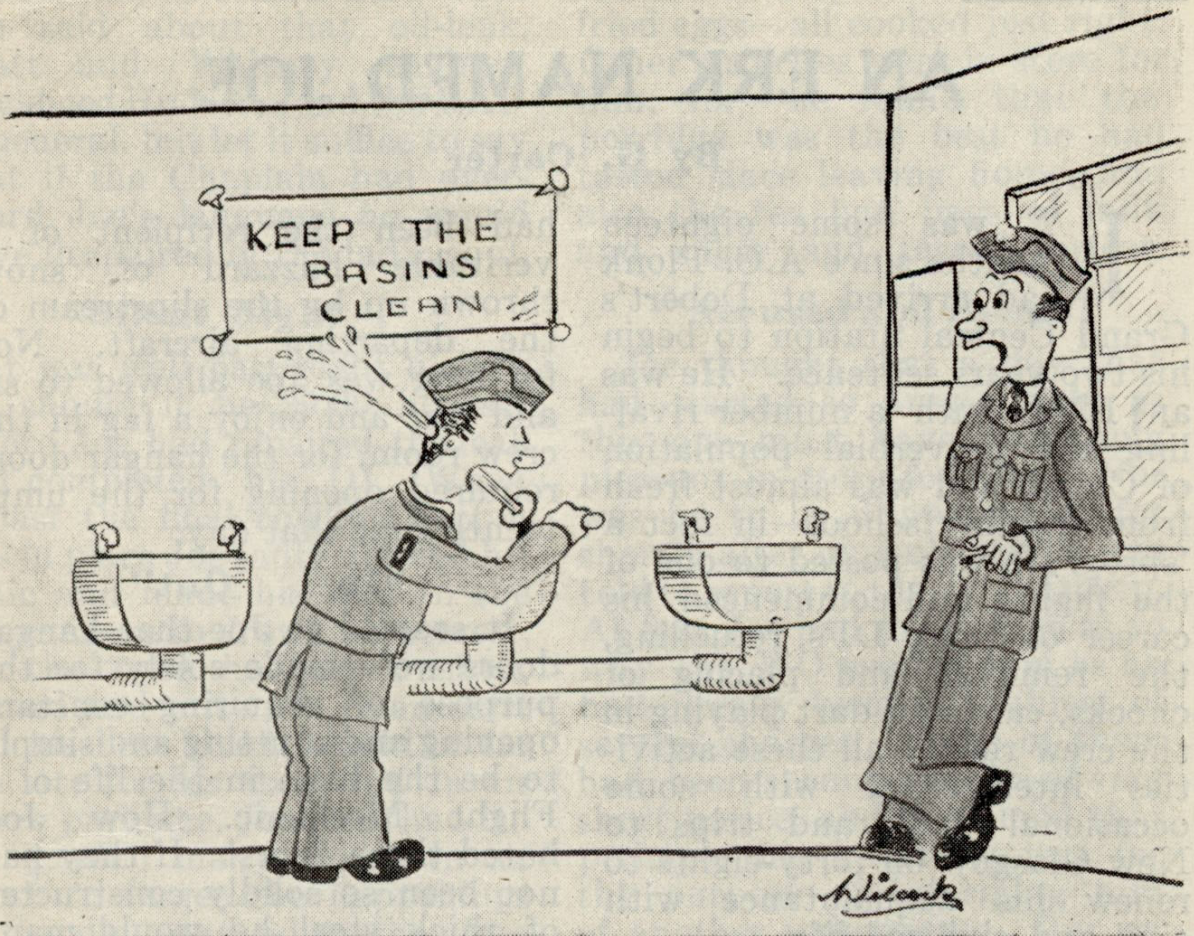
"Was it cold in Canada Daddy?"

"Was it cold? Why there was so much snow that we had to send out search parties for airmen who got lost on their way back from the 'wet.' Let me show you the special hat we had to wear."

Get the idea?

And anyway, even if one doesn't have children, it will always be useful as a tea cosy.





Brrr.....

EVERYONE who entered East Camp YMCA Rec Hall during the first week of December complained of the cold. For a whole week Herb Shepard sat shivering in his office, wondering what could be wrong, and inwardly cursing the people responsible for the heating apparatus.

At last he decided to investigate. He wandered around the hall, examined the furnaces, but could find nothing wrong. Then he enlisted the aid of a member of Works and Buildings. And the mystery was solved.

Right underneath the thermostat was a reading lamp—the largest in the hall. The heat from the lamp was keeping the temperature up to 78 degrees for a space of about six inches around the thermostat. This had the effect of cutting the instrument off from the actual temperature of the room, so that the Rec Hall was almost at freezing point.

The lamp was moved, and within a few minutes everyone was able to shed his parka.

FANTASY

AN ERK NAMED JOE

By G. Carter

IT was some eighteen months since A.C. Plonk had arrived at Debert's Grand Central Station to begin his two years sentence. He was an FME with a number rivaling the proverbial population of China, and was almost fresh from training school—in fact a 'sprog.' He was posted to one of the flights and commenced his career of doing DI's, refuelling, the removal and placing of chocks, card and dart playing in the crew room—all these activities interspersed with some occasional 'bull' and trips to New Glasgow on forty-eights to renew his acquaintance with civil and civilized life.

Now it was December and the snow lay thick on the ground, and Joe was nearing the end of another tiresome day on duty. Yes, thought Joe, it had been a lousy day. 'Chiefie' and his lesser satellites had been binding the whole day long. Several times he had stood in the cold at the wing tips of the aircraft, patiently waiting to remove the chocks while the lordly aircrew made slow and leisurely preparations for their departure. When the pilot was satisfied that his engines and airframes were o.k. and the last tin of tomato juice stowed away, he at long last gave the signal for removal of the chocks, and then Joe made his way to the welcome warmth of the crewroom, though before reaching it he

had been the recipient of a veritable blizzard of snow thrown up by the slipstream of the departing aircraft. Not for long was Joe allowed to sit and rest and enjoy a fag in the crew room, for the hangar doors required opening for the umpteenth time that day.

"In.....Out"

It seemed to Joe that hangar doors were made solely for the purpose of requiring constant opening and shutting and simply to be the bane in the life of a Flight Mechanic. How Joe hated those doors! If they had not been so solidly constructed of thick steel he would many times have destroyed them in a fury of rage. Joe was sure that in the years to come these same doors that he had opened and closed for so many months would remain forever vivid in his memory—an enemy that tortured his days but an invincible and impersonal enemy that could not be destroyed.

Towards tea-time Joe had begun his D.I. and was eagerly anticipating going off duty and the company of a lovely piece he had dated for that evening in Truro. "How that girl could kiss." thought Joe as he removed the engine cowling. "Soon she will be in my arms,"—but what was this? Alas for Joe's plans he found the engine had a big oil leak—a leak that would require several hours to repair. It is

not for me to record here what Joe said about that oil-leak, Pratt and Whitney engines, Lockheed Hudsons, and the RAF in general, but let it suffice to say that if the Chaplain had overheard Joe's language he would have despaired of the lad's soul.

Silent Night

It was well past eight o'clock (or should it be 20.00 hours?) before Joe had repaired the leak and completed his DI. When at last the final cowling button was in place Joe sadly donned his tunic and made his way to the wet canteen to drown his sorrow. By the time he had washed, shaved and put on a clean shirt and his best blue it would be far too late for his date and in Air Force parlance, Joe had 'had it.' He quaffed many a pint in an effort to forget the happenings of the day, and when the time arrived for the orderly sergeant to close the night's drinking session, Joe made his way on unsteady feet to his bunk, and undressing himself with slow and fumbling fingers was soon in his bed and fast asleep.

The next morning as Joe made his way to breakfast he felt very happy for no apparent reason. The world seemed good this morning in spite of the early hour, the darkness, and the snow that was driving down. When Joe reached the cookhouse he found that even the cooks seemed infused with the new spirit. They wished him a cheery good-morning in spite of the fact that Joe had at one time expressed in their presence a very low opinion of their culinary art. Now he was given a nice clean plate upon which was placed several

rashers of crisp bacon and TWO fried eggs—all cooked just right. Other surprises were in store for him, for he found that the porridge was the best he had tasted since leaving home, and also the tea had bags of milk and sugar and tasted perfect.

"Accused and Escort?"

Joe thought that a day that had started so auspiciously as this one must have something pleasant in store for him. Nor was he to be disappointed, for shortly after nine o'clock he was told to report to the WO Discip. At first Joe had misgivings as to why the WO wanted him as he had already been the subject of several charges. Some of them had been sprung on him at very short notice, and it seemed that perhaps this interview was for the purpose of informing him of another indictment. But on entering the WO's office his fears were soon allayed for he was greeted with a smile and informed that he was on the boat-list: Joe would be leaving Debert forever in just a week's time.

He was hardly dismayed at the news and proceeded to tour the camp with his clearance chit, and at the end of the week found himself on the train for (...ssh—Ed.) After a week or so there, there came another train, and this time Joe was wearing a respirator, gas cape and other paraphernalia so familiar to him back home but now seeming strange after two years in Canada. Despite the sagging weight of these things plus two kit bags and webbing Joe was overjoyed as he boarded the train for the port of embarkation. Then followed an uneventful voyag

back across the Atlantic on a huge, fast ship that was the pride of Britain.

Soon Joe's feet were on his native soil, and after a couple of days at a Despatch Centre he found himself on a train for London. As this train drew nearer and nearer to the Metropolis Joe's excitement grew great at the prospect of seeing his home and wife again. His wife!—his beautiful young wife whom he had met just before he had been called up, and whom he had married in a hastily-arranged ceremony during the few days embarkation leave he had been granted before sailing for Canada. There had been just two days honeymoon, two days of heaven. Soon they would be reunited, and in the next fourteen days how he would make up for their two years of separation.

No Dice

It was nearly eleven p.m. when Joe made his way through the blackout down the street in which he lived. Reaching the house he pressed the door-bell eagerly. There was a sound of footsteps coming up the hallway and the latch was drawn back: the door slowly opened and there stood his beautiful young wife. Breathless, Joe paused for a second before embracing her,—but who was this violently shaking him by the shoulder and saying "Wakey, wakey."?

Joe suddenly regained consciousness, and opening his eyes saw the bare walls and the recumbent figures familiar to him these past eighteen months. So it was all a dream after all. Yet one day **his** name would be on a boat list and the dream would

all come true; and so, buoyed up by these thoughts, Joe got out of his bed to begin another day of D.I.'s, check removing, and of course, innumerable opening and closings of that old familiar enemy—the hangar door.



HE KNEW HIS GEN

Bombers of the RAF had returned from a heavy raid on Germany and were circling their base waiting radio permission to land. Suddenly over the controller's radio came a call:

"Request permission to land—only have three engines."

Permission was immediately given to the Lancaster making the request. It made a perfect landing.

A moment or two after there was another call:

"Request permission to land—only have three engines."

Again a Lancaster landed.

Then came a third request over the radio:

"Request permission to land—urgent—only have two engines."

The flare path was illumined and the ground erks waited breathlessly to watch the best landing of the night—by a twin engined Wimpey whose skipper was tired of "stooging around the sky."

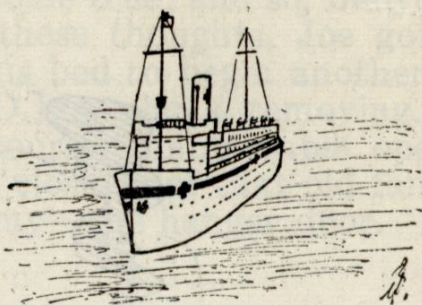
—HENRY

(Thanks Henry—how about some more?—Ed.)



“Nice Try, Sir!”

"BLESSED
ARE THE MERCIFUL"



In October of last year slightly less than five thousand allied prisoners of war, all of them having "no further military value," were repatriated from Germany to the United Kingdom. Of these, eight hundred were aboard the hospital ship "Atlantis" when it put into Liverpool harbour.

A news report has said that as the white ship with red crosses drew to the quayside a voice began to call "Cynthia." Immediately from the battered ranks all along the rail roared a chorus: "Cynthia, Cynthia, Cynthia."

From among the crowd on the dock a tall handsome girl stepped forward and waved. She was Cynthia Elliot, who, taken prisoner with a mobile canteen unit in France 1940, had been put to work by the Germans nursing wounded and captured men from Dunkirk. Among many of these she was sent to Dieppe in 1941 to await an exchange ship. At the last minute however Germany changed its mind and Cynthia was given the task of breaking this news to the men. Released a month before, she had already been a fortnight in England.

Her comment: "I simply had to come to Liverpool, but I didn't expect that terrific shout."

Ours:

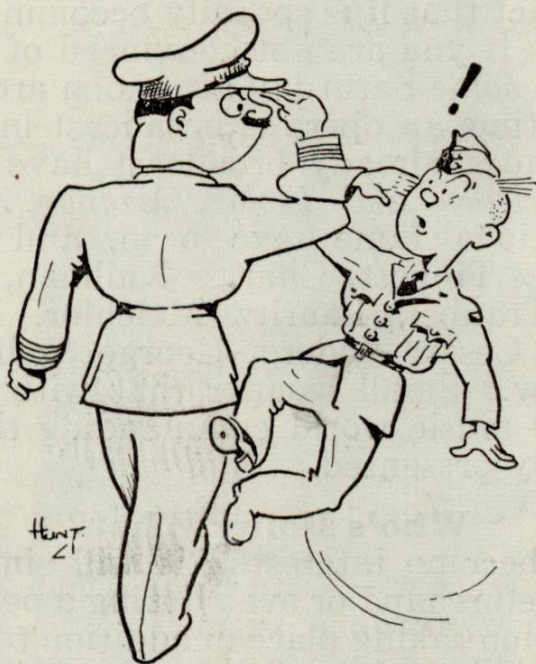
Out of the murk of morning, and in from the Irish sea,
Looms a white ship that's headed on to a Liverpool quay;
No lend-lease in her cargo, no arms for a nation's store,
Only some human driftwood, washed up by the tide of war.
On to the rail they're crowding, the distance is growing less,
But deaf will not hear shouting and the blind can only guess;
The armless wave no greeting, the legless may dance no fling,
But over sullen waters one clear voice is heard to ring.
It calls the name of someone, returns to the crowd, and then:
A symphony of thunder as the ranks of battered men

—Cry: "Cynthia!"

Gone is the power and glory, theirs was a race that is run;
 These have earned above all men a future place in the sun.
 All of their hopes and yearnings are drifting home to that shore.
 Now they are close returning—a dream they need dream no more
 Here lies the Cause of England, the coast and a lapping tide,
 And which—for want of better—we'll say that their comrades died.
 There is a sea of faces, uncertain with unshed tears;
 Braced to that eager welcome for which they have lived these years,
 Yet they have seen one figure, alone of that teeming throng,
 And as her name is uttered an echo strident and long
 —Cries: "Cynthia!"

Oft in our island story a woman has set her hand
 To signal tasks of mercy, that a man may understand
 How hope dawns to the hopeless and strength serves to stay the weak
 How faith can grow through sadness and one's suffering may seek
 An outlet through the courage of a girl who bears the stamp
 Of that divine example by the Lady of the Lamp.
 Thus, when accounts are reckoned and all debits made to one,
 There'll be some credits coming for the things this girl has done,
 And from hearts of common men a clarion call will swell,
 As others yet in Heaven and still more, perhaps, in Hell
 —Cry: "Cynthia!"

—ARTHUR HAILEY



SGT. N. C. A. DOWNES DISCUSSES

THE JOYS OF OPERA

Past issues of PG have contained articles by music lovers upon the subject of symphonic music, but I do not remember one concerning itself with opera. As music lovers may be aware the camp musical appreciation concerts are devoted to opera every third week and it is interesting to note that these concerts are always well attended.

The Corpulent Soprano

When many people think of opera they visualise some corpulent soprano singing a sensuous love duet with a male possessing a stomach beyond all normal dimensions. Generally that is a wrong idea, although it is an interesting speculation to wonder whether the singing voice has, to an extent, been sacrificed to glamour—my own opinion is that it has.

The focus of north American opera at present is the "Met" in New York. Critics report that never before has opera enjoyed such popularity as is the case this season. All performances so far have played to full houses of which a large proportion is service personnel, a statement confirmed by my own experience when I attended a couple of performances recently

Opera In The Street

I do not intend to delve deeply into the realms of opera, but wish to stress the fact that it is speedily becoming popular with the man in the street. If you are not convinced of this I suggest you switch on the radio some Saturday afternoon around three o'clock. Each week at this time an opera is broadcast in its entirety direct from the Met. Those already broadcast have included *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *Mignon*. Artists and conductors of international fame have been, and will be, heard—Lily Pons, Lawrence Tibbett, Charles Kullman, Ezio Pinza, Licea Albanese, Helen Traubel, Lauritz Melchior, Rose Stevens, Sir Thomas Beecham, Cesare Sodero, George Szell, Bruno Walter—to name only a few. Small wonder that with these outstanding personalities of the music world commanding the stage each performance is superbly presented.

Who's Doing What?

If you really become interested it will simplify an opera to study the libretto beforehand or even during a performance. There is a good deal of action taking place in addition to the music and not to appreciate what is happening to the plot is to miss some of the finer points.

Good listening then. I shall envy your delightful hours in the future!



PURKA GEN

SONG WITHOUT WORDS

FICTIONETTE

JITTERBUG

A C, Jerry Jones leaned gloomily against a wall and watched the whirling mass of humanity on the dance floor. He was indeed cheesed off. Only two short weeks before, in England, he had been considered quite a fair exponent of the terpsichoreen art, but tonight, his first attempt at the Canadian style had proved to be a complete dead loss. Every time he had found himself a partner she had immediately begun to bounce about with no idea of time or step as far as he could see, and nothing he did seemed to help matters. It wouldn't have been so bad really if he hadn't been so attracted by that vivacious little brunette in the blue dress, he'd like to know her better, but what chance did he have when she was such a red-hot little jitterbug. There was no doubt about it, he'd have to take this jitterbugging seriously.

* * * *

The next morning, still wondering how to learn the art of jitterbugging, he was working with Bill Smith, the rigger, who had done over two years in Canada. After a lengthy binding session, the conversation switched to dancing, and immediately Jerry became all ears as Bill launched into a recital of the joys of jitterbugging. He had found his man. Apparently there was nothing much to this jiving business really, there was only one basic shuffle step in the elementary stage which was repeated in all directions to become different steps, the real gen was in the body action and facial expression. "A real jitterbug," said Bill "always has his knees bent, his shoulders hunched and grins in a fanatical sort of way." Then he gave a practical demonstration while Jerry whistled *In The Mood*, and Jerry quickly learned the basic shuffle step, which, repeated in different directions became alternately the straight shuffle, the walk the natural turn and the reverse turn opening out into a walk. Whizzo!

* * * *

After three days of constant practice whenever dance music came over the radio and to his own whistling when it didn't, Jerry was ready for further instruction. It was time to tackle the Horse's Kick. This consisted of bringing his partner into the open position up the line of dance, pawing the air with the right foot once taking a step backwards with the same foot and then getting back to his original position by means of the little shuffle step to repeat, with two, and then three pawing movements with the right foot. All this naturally led into the Double Horse's Kick in which the foot pawing is first done up the line of dance, and then, after the partners have turned through 180° towards each other to face

the opposite way down the line of dance, repeating as before with two and then three paws.

Now he was ready for the final stage of throwing his partner away from him though still holding on to her right hand with his left, then pulling her towards him as he went forward to pass her, at the same time transferring her hand to his right then back to his left behind him as he performed half-a-revolution to end up in exactly the same position as before except that he was on the opposite side. The next step was to vary this procedure by retaining his grip on the girl's hand with his left hand as she ducked under his arm while turning into line again, and by pulling his partner towards him, spinning her, then catching her right hand as it came around. He was now the complete jitterbug.

* * * *

All this knowledge of course had been obtained from Bill and practised faithfully in the billet on every possible occasion, using one of the supports between his bed and the one above for a partner, together with a lot of imagination. Jerry had never as yet tried it out with a girl for the simple reason that he had not been to town since that first disastrous visit, but he felt confident that when the time came he would do his stuff. Sometimes he was tempted to seek out the little brunette for a session, but he decided that if he waited until the camp dance in two days time, his first real dance with her would be a much greater success than it would be in town where there were many jitterbug experts. Therefore he remained in camp and kept up his practice with the bed support, ignoring the pointed comments of his room-mates who by this time were quite convinced he was crazy. His hour would come, a triumphant hour which would make all his sacrifices worth while.

* * * *

The night of the camp dance arrived. Jerry was ready for action fully half-an-hour before the appointed time, two knife-like creases in his trousers, face smoothly shaven, hair slicked down, boots and buttons gleaming. His appearance was perfection, this was the night. Inside he was a turmoil of emotions, supposing she didn't come after all this preparation, supposing all his practice proved in vain when he met the real thing.

The suspense was killing. He made his way to the wet canteen where he downed a couple of beers. They made him feel better. When he arrived at the recreation hall, the dance was already under way. Jerry's eyes swept over the couples on the floor until they focussed on the girl he was looking for, she had come after all. He grinned like a Cheshire cat. When the music stopped he watched carefully where she went, then took up a strategic position nearby to be ready for immediate action. Her former partner had left her, the dope, she was chatting gaily with several other girls. The way was clear.

As the M. C. started for the microphone Jerry nipped smarty over to the girl of his dreams, and in keeping with his new role of hep-cat said "Let's hit the timber, kid!" That was the way they

did it in the movies. Her eyebrows shot up, then as she recognized him she smiled her consent. Warm inside with happy anticipation, Jerry led her to the floor as the drummer began beating the skins as an introduction to a hot rendition of Snakecharmer. Boy, would he shake this chick with his snazzy stepping, none of this build-up stuff for him, he was going to start right in on the gen, Ben.

Fixing a fanatical grin on his face he took up the correct posture, took one step, a shuffle and threw her fiercely away. What was wrong, why had she stopped dancing and assumed such an indignant air? This isn't the way it should be at all! She came towards him. "Pardon me," she said, "but I've given up jitterbugging. It's really too **childish, don't you think?**"

SHOOTING THE LINE





Eavesdropping at THE SERGEANT'S MESS



Ding-Dong:

Congratulations of the mess go to Flight Sergeant Jones, BEM, of Station Transport, whose name appeared in the New Year's Honours List.

PG can state authoritatively that this NCO is **not** considering an offer for his services, alleged to have been made by the Hub Bus Company.

* * * * *

All Our Christmases:

So much water—and other liquids—have flowed under the mess bridge during December that it is not practicable to describe the process drop by drop. A reasonably sized trumpet should be sounded however, in honour of the retiring entertainments committee. Thanks chaps.

* * * * *

Hooked:

Wedding bells have tolled for Sergeant Eric Dyer who has been wandering round in a rosy glow ever since the idea first occurred to him.

For Mr. and Mrs. D.—all the happiness they would wish themselves.

Nibbling:

To Flight Sergeant Guppy and Sergeant Francis who, at the time of writing, stand on the threshold of matrimony, the very best—and all that sort of thing.

* * * * *

With All Our Love:

A graceful gesture at last month's mess meeting was the allocation of one hundred dollars to buy presents for members' children who are in the United Kingdom. The gifts may be a little late in arrival but will probably be just as welcome for all that.

* * * * *

The Thin Blue Line:

Up the road to the officers' mess last month trooped Warrant Officers Hay, Duprez, Torrey, Flight Sergeant Davies. Their motto henceforward: "Half a ring, half a ring, half a ring onward!"

Now Voyager:

A final handshake with Warrant Officers Barnes, Johnston, Smith, Flight Sergeant Beasley, Sergeant Teague who have been told: "the wind sits in the shoulder of your sail."

Old friends go; new come. It is the way of all wars. A. H.



DEBERT'S BROADCASTING CHOIR IS SCREENED

Singing Airmen Filmed at Halifax

By George Graves

On the crest of a wave this month is Debert's RAF choir. In Halifax during December its members became u/t film stars. At a carol service in St. John's Church moving pictures were taken which later on will be shown in the United Kingdom and this country. The film in which the choir took part is a pictorial record of social activities which form part of a British serviceman's life in Canada. Choir members are hoping that many of the folks at home will see this film when it is released.

"Deep and Crisp and Even"

Singing in a choir is not usually regarded as exciting but a recent visit to Tatamagouche came close to being so. Just before the day of our engagement there had been a heavy snowstorm and it seemed very doubtful whether we would be able to go at all. However friends from Tatamagouche turned up with four cars and we set off, though somewhat dubiously. We literally ploughed our way along snow-bound roads on which it was impossible to pass another car without going off into deep road-side drifts, usually with disastrous results. Several times we had to dig ourselves out, until there was despair of ever reaching our destination. However we did and—surprisingly—returned safely too, although there was at least one member of the party who didn't breathe freely again until he was safely back at Debert.

Hail And Farewell

A word of thanks to Flight Lieutenant Witt who is leaving Debert. Running any organization under service conditions is a difficult job and we appreciate the work he has put in, the friendly help and guidance he has given.

At the same time a hand of welcome to Flight Lieutenant Kenworthy who will have taken over responsibility for the choir by the time these words appear in print. We wish him—and ourselves—every success.

NEWS OF THE DRAMA

“The Patsy” is Next

Said to be an uproarious comedy, “The Patsy” by Barry Connors, will be the next offering of a section of the Station Dramatic Society. The play is now in production and we can expect to see it during the next month.

“It even makes us laugh during rehearsals” says producer AC Newgrosh, “and you can expect plenty of fun on the opening night.”

* * * * *

“Of Human Conflict”

PG also learns that another play is under rehearsal, this time written by a member of the station staff. “Of Human Conflict,” a drama, is a story with the Battle of Britain as its background. Production date, however, has to had be projected well into the Spring due to a minor catastrophe in the matter of postings.

* * * * *

Chills an’ Frills

Edgar Wallace’s play “The Frightened Lady” is shortly to be performed at Debert by the RAF Dramatic Group of Greenwood.

CHILDREN’S XMAS PARTY

DEBERT’S Rec Hall was thrown open to the children of airmen on Dec. 15th, when the C.O.’s annual Children’s Xmas Party was held.

The proceedings started off with games, after which Reg Dunn showed some comedy films. Then they all sat down to a table loaded with good things—jellies, ice cream—and everything calculated to make a kid’s eyes pop and mouth water. In the centre stood a huge Christmas cake, made specially by A. C. West of the officers’ mess.

When they could eat no more, the children saw the curtains part, and on the stage stood Santa Claus himself (S/Ldr. Perry), who proceeded to give a present to each of them.

Mrs. J. H. Woodin was chairman of the committee of ladies, which made the arrangements for the party in conjunction with S/Ldr. Wills. The hall was decorated for the occasion by Flt/-Sgt. Rockey, A. C. Rotherham, and L.A.C. Pedder. This latter, incidently, worked hard to amuse the children in the costume of a clown.

EVERYDAY SCIENCE

By R. Gregory and M. Dunn

WHAT DO YOU THINK CHUMS?

“ANY old rags, bottles or bones” sings out Syd Walker. Have you ever wondered what happens to all the junk that the rag-man is wont to exchange for a balloon?

Those old discarded rags undergo a process, and can be transformed into artificial silk. Thus science can change your old shirt into a pair of sheer stockings.

Bottles are either used again, or broken up to help in the re-manufacture of glass.

Bones are first de-greased with benzol, and the dried bone, which contains a large percentage of calcium, is crushed and used as a fertilizer.

The fat which is extracted has as its main constituent a substance known as Stearic acid. When caustic soda or caustic potash is added, a sodium salt is formed known as soap, and also a very important war product—glycerine.

The fat is placed in copper cauldrons, steam heated, stirred, and caustic soda is added (about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the amount that is actually

required.) After a period of heating and stirring, the rest of the caustic is added.

Ordinary common salt (sodium chloride) is now added to the mixture, and the soap separates as a curd. This floats to the surface, leaving the “spent lye” which contains salt and glycerine. This process is known as **salting out**.

Removal of the curd now follows. This contains salt, glycerine and adhering lye (caustic), and other ingredients, the mixture being known as **curd soap**.

Dilute brine is now added to this curd soap, and the whole mass is stirred. Separation is carried out, and water is added until the curd mixes completely. Left standing, it then resolves itself into two layers, the upper one known as **settled soap**.

The qualities of soap are varied by addition of divers “fillers,” or scents and dyestuffs. Glycerine is sometimes added to give transparency.

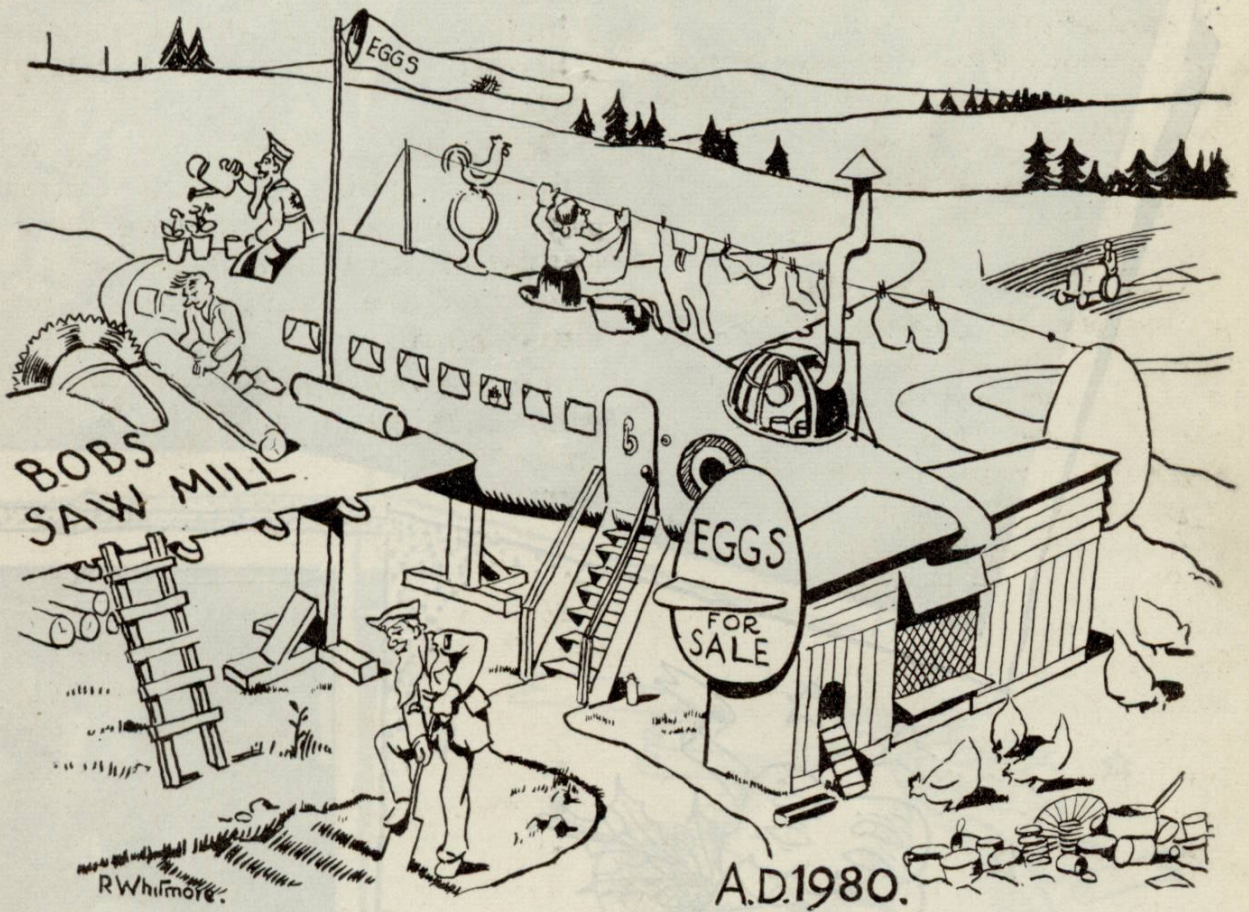
Glycerine is extracted from the “spent lye” by distillation, and used in the manufacture of the high explosive nitro-glycerine

In Winnipeg confusion kept right on tacking along with A. C. Tew, AC2 of the RCAF.

—“Time”

DEBERT

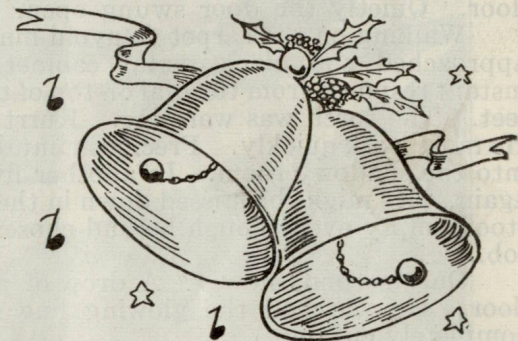
1980



The KIDDIES' XMAS PARTY • TRURO • 1943



• THE PEOPLE WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE •



Photos: Sgt. Bedell

CAMEO TABLE**THE CYLINDER**

By Drew McLaren

GETTING a job in the war plant had not been difficult for Kurrt. The Union had recommended him, and in any case, war plants needed more men.

For three months now, three long, weary months, he had sweated in the grime and heat of an underground workshop where he pushed his wagon to and fro for endless hours. His hands were calloused and his back painful, but all discomforts were mitigated by the knowledge that his family at home were being well cared for by his Fuehrer.

They would not be suffering through lack of food. Nor would they be exposed to the dangers from enemy aircraft that nightly ravaged his beloved Hamburg. After this was all over he would go back. His Fuehrer would remember his bravery and reward him. Just another day and he would have what his Fuehrer wanted so desperately. Just one more day.....

Six a.m. had slipped silently onto the face of the unsuspecting clock. There were sounds of greeting among the guards on the floor above but Kurrt took refuge in the tread of rubber-soled boots. Now he waited for the returning guard to patrol the bottom floor. Slowly the hushed tread came down the corridor where he leaned on his wagon, listening. This was it.

Within a few moments he reached the top of the stairway at the back of the building and was turning the handle of the office door. Quietly the door swung open. He was inside.

Walking on the carpet to avoid making unnecessary sound, he approached the black metal cabinet. Gloved fingers brought instant response from the dial on top of the small cylinder at Kurrt's feet. The torch was warming. Kurrt glanced down at his wrist. He must work quickly. Precious minutes had gone since he stepped into the shadowy room. In another five a guard would be round again. He might be missed down in the basement where his wagon stood empty even though he had chosen his time carefully for the job.

Only seconds now.....A drop of perspiration dripped to the floor. He watched the glowing line steadily. The square was completely cut out.

Snap! Kurrt jumped backwards. He felt a prod in his back. Then something heavy crashed to the floor behind him. Swinging round he picked up his cylinder and left the room. Kurrt was calm. His Fuehrer had taught him to be calm.

"Heil Hitler," he muttered.. and gripped the cylinder tighter.

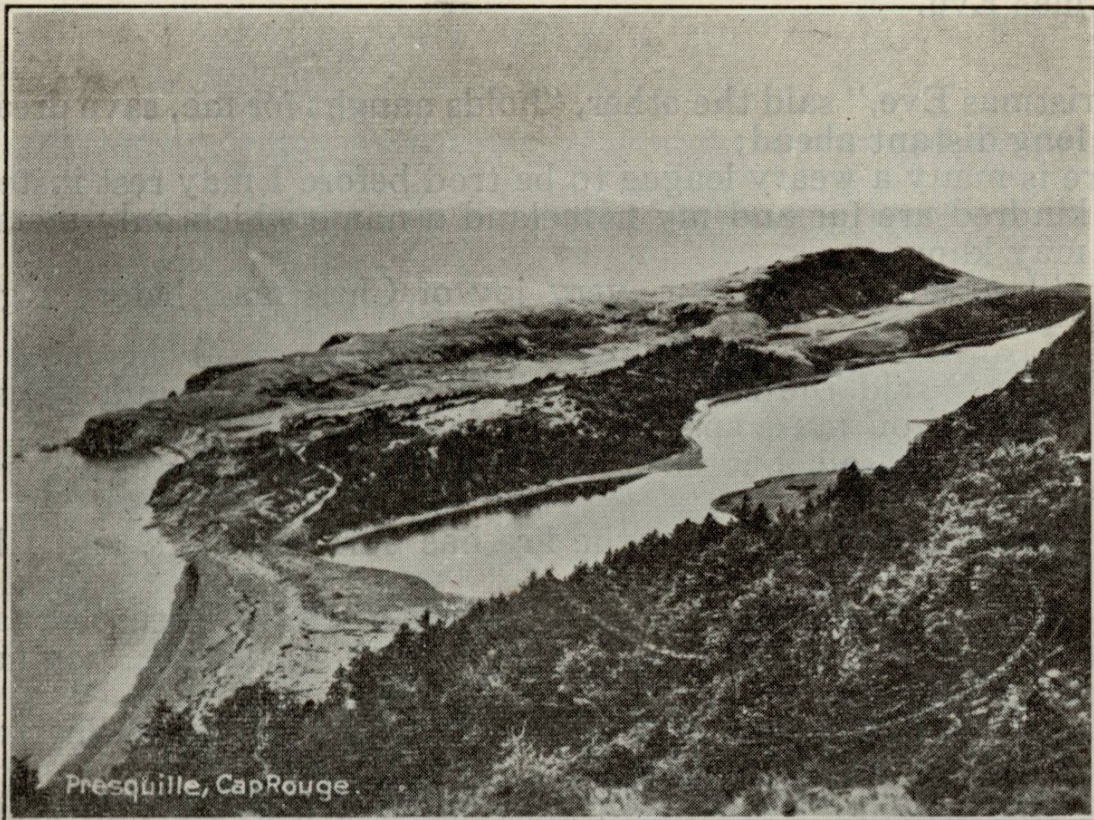
“Heil Hitler,” he muttered, and gripped the rail tighter. He glanced down to his left where the council for the defence sat rolling a piece of paper round the end of his shiny pencil. Kurrt was not afraid. His Fuehrer had taught him never to be afraid.

* * * *

He watched the jury settle. They hadn't need to leave the court. He'd been caught in a forbidden area of a Government war plant. His Fuehrer wanted.....And his Fuehrer had taught him how to get what he wanted, but.....Kurrt smiled now.

That sound which had caused him to jump so foolishly. Had made him upset a metal desk with its silly typing machine. He wondered what his Fuehrer would say when he learned of his failure.

But then, his Fuehrer had not taught his nervous reflexes to remain passive when a hungry mouse got its stupid self trapped, so he would have to do without the blueprint of Mr. Churchill's siren suit!



A scene from the Cabot Trail, Cape Breton

Christmas In Canada 1943

A traveller paused at the spur of a road and gazed at a signpost near.

It proclaimed: "Just around the next corner, friend, you'll enter a brave new year."

He grimaced a little and picked up his pack, swung it on to a shoulder,

Then turned to discover a little more ground ere the year become older.

But before he strode down the narrowing road, there came a hail from behind:

"Merry Christmas there stranger!" echoed a voice, "to you and for all mankind."

The traveller returned his eyes down the way from which he recently came,

To behold, on a horse, a plump little man, who fussily drew in rein

And snapped in staccato a sentence at once: "It's passing strange to believe

That you, sir, should travel this desolate road, alone and on Christmas Eve."

"Christmas Eve," said the other, "holds naught for me, save dreams long distant ahead;

There is many a weary league to be trod before I may rest instead.

My kindred are far and my homeland a name which only mem'ry may know,

But I'll certainly wish you every joy of Christmas, before I go."

"No, stay," said the first, as he dropped to the ground, "this is a night you must spend

Not alone, nor sad, but secure in the home and heart of a worthwhile friend.

My house offers warmth for the fire has burned bright, and I beg that you will share

Of the simple shelter I offer to you with the festive season's fare. So straddle my mount for your footsteps are slow—I see you have travelled far,

Then ride up to the summit of yonder hill and follow the Christmas star.

To the east, in a mile or two, you will find a house that stands in a dell.

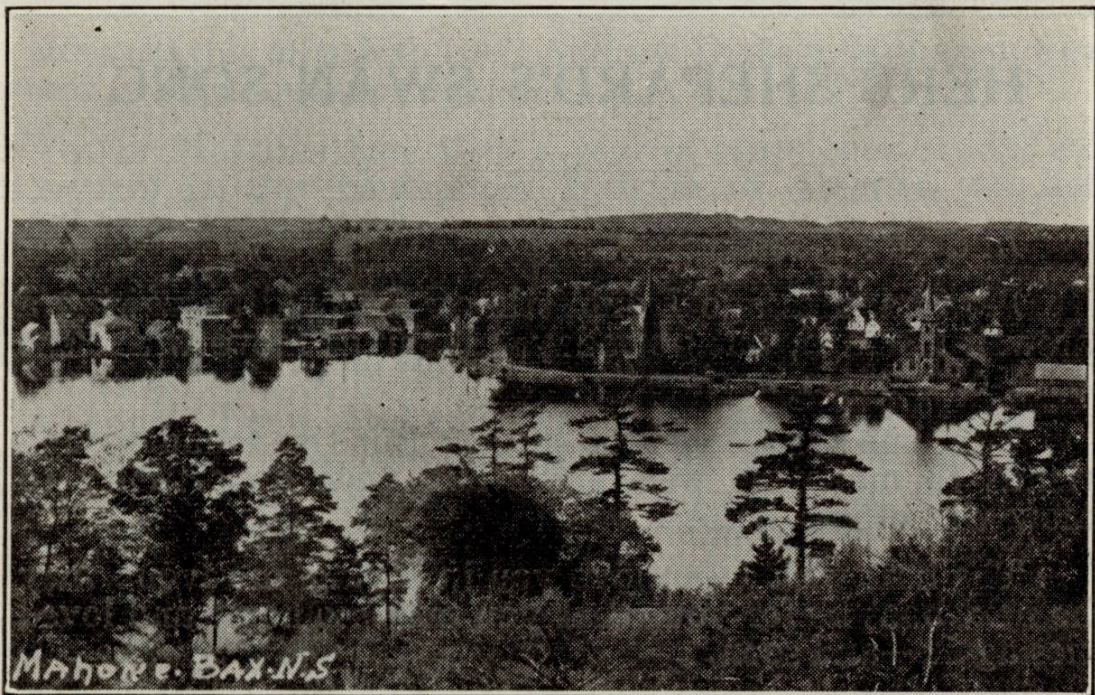
There's a candle-light in the window tonight: Go!—I will follow as well."

So the traveller stayed through the hours of night and rose in the
 morn refreshed
 When he and his host broke their bread, took their leave and both
 were doubly blessed.
 "You have served me right well," the traveller said, "and though
 it is time to part,
 I have staved my hunger and shared of your warmth, and Christmas
 has touched my heart.
 May the goodness of Heaven know you and yours for mercy that
 you have done,
 And a traveller's blessing be on your house thro' the year that is
 to come!"

*There's many a man at the gate of the year, tired from that almost
 finished,
 Who, lifting his eyes at the sight of a friend, has found his strength
 replenished,
 And away from home on an alien shore known what age will not
 destroy.
 That kindness which cares that a traveller shares the glory of Christ-
 mas Day.
 For here is the meaning of Christmases past, the present and all to come,
 As seen thro' the vision of those who have said: "Not mine but Thy
 will be done."*

A.H.

* * * *



A scene at Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia

LOST TO EAST CAMP

EVERYONE in East Camp heard with regret of the departure of Herb Shepard, who has been YMCA War Services Organizer for the past five months.

Herb arrived on the scene just in time to take a full part in the formation of the East Camp Entertainment Committee, and his work in that and other directions on behalf of the lads can never be fully repaid. He worked hard to keep some organization going during the dark days when we in East Camp were left without even a canteen, and it was mainly through his efforts that the educational scheme started off so well.

As anyone who came in contact with him knew, he was always ready to help—ready to drop whatever he happened to be doing if thereby he could be of the slightest service to a caller. The midnight oil burned in his office more often than not, and there was always coffee ready for anyone who felt like washing a cup.

Herb has now gone to Halifax to look after the interests of a Naval depot. His many friends in East Camp will miss him a great deal, while hoping that he will settle down and be very happy with the Navy.

HERB SHEPARD'S SWAN SONG

And now Goodbye.....

Five minutes ago I didn't know I would be writing a farewell message, but nowadays all things move with "the speed of modern warfare."

The time has seemed too short. But I've found enough friends to make me wish there had been opportunity to know the others better.

The best wish I can give you in saying au revoir: may the next boat be for you, that you may see home and loved ones again—and soon.

HERB SHEPARD

DREW MCLAREN PULLS OUT A PLUM



Honours this month to LAC Andrew Dickson McLaren, wireless operator of Headquarters signals.

Author McLaren has, after a year of spare time study, gained membership in the Newspaper Institute of America, an honour granted after a number of successful news assignments.

Writing under the pseudonyms of Drew Alison and (keep this quiet)—Windsock, he contributes frequently to our pages and will, we hope, continue to do so.

Although Drew McLaren was born American his accent is straight Scotch, a feature not surprising since he attended the Royal High School, Edinburgh, and has spent most of his life—so far—in that ancient city. Coming to Canada in December '41, he has remained at Debert ever since, although a rumour which is more than a rumour says it won't be for much longer. PG will be sorry to see him go.

There's only one thing we're wondering. Will "From the Breezes" come to our desk next month written by "Windsock, MNIA.?"

SNIPPED FROM THE RAF JOURNAL**R.A.F. War Service Dress**

His Majesty the King has now given approval for the introduction into the Royal Air Force, as standard dress, of "War Service Dress," which was known previously as the aircrew suit. This dress is to be the standard working dress for all officers and airmen, and will not be worn on any occasion on which Service dress blue would be appropriate. It will not be available from trade sources and will only be obtained from Service sources. Supplies will not be available for some considerable time in sufficient quantities to equip the whole RAF, and therefore an order of priority has been devised in which the various commands and categories of personnel will be equipped.

Chess Facilities For RAF Stations

Facilities to encourage the playing and study of chess on RAF stations are available from the British Chess Federation.

The Federation will provide expert advice and coaching and will also arrange lectures and exhibitions. Where a chess club is formed in any unit, the British Chess Federation will, if desired, assist in its formation and will arrange inter-club matches.

Communications should be sent direct to the Editor, "The British Chess Magazine," 6 Walpole Road, Croydon, Surrey.

Admission Of Airmen's Wives To Hospital

The wives of airmen other than those serving on a regular peace-time engagement, or those who are mobilized reservists who have previously served on a regular engagement, are not entitled to maternity treatment at the expense of Air Force funds in Service hospitals operating with the Emergency Medical Service Scheme.

Certain facilities and advice are, however, provided by most local maternity and child welfare authorities, and airmen serving on non-regular engagements should advise their wives to consult a clinic for their area, the address of which may be obtained from the local medical officer of health.

Any regular airman wishing to arrange for his wife's admission to a maternity hospital at the minimum cost, should apply through his C.O. to the Air Officer i/c Records (C.1), Royal Air Force, Gloucester, stating his wife's full name and address. His wife will then be given information which will enable her to secure hospital treatment free of cost where this is admissable under the regulations and is available, or at a minimum cost where free treatment is inadmissable or is not available.

If an airman is serving overseas, his wife may apply to the Air Officer i/c Records (C.1), Royal Air Force, Gloucester, direct.

Christmas Day 1943



“Though thru’ the year our uniforms divide us,

And we must watch the every word we say;

Here is one hour an’ AC.2 may bellow:

‘Hey Groupy! Is my dinner on the way?’ ”

FICTION FEATURE

EARLY BUS

By Kenneth Ewen

COLIN was glad that Helen had taken on the responsibility of getting them up in the morning. She was good at it, waking as quick and sudden as a little bird, jumping out of bed, slipping into her pink quilted robe, pushing her stubby toes into tiny fur slippers and tripping about the room with a soft padding that always lulled him back into a delicious warm slumber.

One reason that helped her to achieve such wide-eyed wakefulness was the anxiety she felt about not being a fine wife to Colin, well, not exactly a fine wife as much as an efficient one. She had married him in the knowledge that they would have to live on his airforce pay, in a bed sitting-room with limited comfort and certainly far less domestic amenities than she had been used to in her small but comfortable Manhattan apartment.

* * * *

When they had discussed her coming down to join him, he had deliberately tried to discourage her and had painted the winter scene in the little town blacker than in actual fact it was. She had insistently pointed out that a wife's duty was to be with her husband wherever he was. She had assured him quite definitely that she was prepared to share his life and hardships with a keen sense of humour and a happy heart.

He had tried to scare her by stressing the importance of his having to get up two hours before daybreak every morning and travel fourteen miles to Camp on an overcrowded bus and he had told her quite frankly that he could not picture her getting up so early. As a matter of fact he had written: "If you came down here, I should have to be up by five o'clock every morning," which was treating the truth lightly because the bus never departed until seven, and six o'clock was plenty early enough to rise, eat a good breakfast and get down to the bus stop.

Consequently, when she came, she was brisk and business-like, took nearly all the responsibilities from his hands and was so eager to please him and so conscientious as an airman's wife that he felt a trifle guilty because he had never been used to that much attention and he knew darned well he did not deserve it.

He loved her very much. He was crazy about her. But he had wanted to be absolutely certain that she knew the sort of life she was coming to.

As it was, she was perfectly happy and the sort of life they had made for themselves was not half as bad as they had imagined it would be.

Before she got into bed, Helen set little "Ebosa" the alarm clock for a quarter to six and laid him on the floor at her side of the bed where she would be able to stifle his morning rattle with a sweep of her left arm. Then, whilst Colin was upstairs running the shower, she kicked off her slippers, wriggled her toes, shivered, put on her robe and slipped into bed, where she sat propped up with a pillow at her back, devoid of make-up and as sweet and tender as a child.

"Well, dear," she said, when Colin came down, "do you feel better?"

"Yep," he said, "I feel pretty good now."

"Don't be long before you come to bed," she told him anxiously, "because you have to be up early in the morning and I want you to get up when I call you—you mustn't be late, dear." A frown appeared between her eyes. "Wouldn't it be awful if you were late and they stopped your living out?"

"Oh, they're pretty tolerant about things like that," he said. "So long as you don't make a habit of being late."

* * * *

He hung up his dressing gown, began to comb his hair and, seeing the loose gingery strands falling on his shoulder, grimaced in the mirror.

He walked over to the bed and switched on their bedside tablelamp. Clicking the main electric light switch, he extinguished the cluster of lamps in the centre of the room. The one light from the tablelamp gave the room a different air of cosiness.

Then he climbed into bed the way he always did, lying flat on his back over the blankets, drawing up his knees to his chin, rocking and squirming until he was between the sheets. "This," he said, gratefully, "is the best moment of the day!"

Helen smiled down at him. "What did you do today? Did they work you very hard?"

"About the same," he answered.

"You don't like it do you?"

"It's pretty grim at times, but it's better than in lots of places."

"How was the bus this morning?"

"Full as usual."

"Were the roads icy?"

"Like glass—like glass with jagged edges and as dangerous—that's the only thing I really hate—getting there and coming back."

He reached over to his table for a book. "Do you mind if I read?" he asked.

"Of course not. I want you to read, to enjoy your books; you get so much from them."

Helen pondered, biting a finger. She slipped from the bed and, from the pyramid of brightly jacketed volumes on the shelf over the rough-bricked fireplace, chose a book.

* * * *

"What are you reading, dear?" Colin asked, though rather absently.

She showed him the cover. "Cooking for Two."

After a while she lay the book down, open, face to the blankets.

"What would you like for breakfast?" she asked.

Breakfast was awfully important to her. She liked Colin to leave in the morning having consumed a leisurely, satisfying meal; orange juice, cereal, bacon and eggs, and coffee which was her speciality.

"Would you like pancakes?" she said.

"Flapjacks?"

"No, pancakes."

"Sounds attractive. Could you make 'em?"

"I could try, the book gives the instructions, it seems easy, we'll try in the morning. Anyway you'll have a good breakfast before you go on the bus. Do you ever feel you need anything, I mean more coffee or a hot drink at the bus stop?"

"Well, I haven't done so far. In any case there wouldn't be time, there's always a helluva line waiting for the bus and unless you get in with them you don't get a seat. I like to get a seat so I can finish off my sleep."

"Why, can you sleep on the bus? I thought it was always so crowded. You told me yesterday about the soldier who had his elbow in your eye most of the way."

"You can sleep after a fashion. I guess after four years in the airforce you'd be able to sleep on a clothesline."

"I don't like the idea of your travelling on that horrid bus."

"Neither do I."

* * * *

Instinctively, as though he might be safer for her action, Helen snuggled closer to him, dragging her pillow under her head. "Don't you think you should sleep now, dear?" she asked.

Colin kissed her lightly, smiling at her tenderly. He felt sleepy suddenly, sleepy and warm, utterly contented. "Yeah, yeah," he said and yawned.

"That's Brooklyn," she said.

"Then it's not polite?"

"Not exactly right. But don't get it wrong, there are a lot of nice people live in Brooklyn."

"Yeah," he yawned, "a lot of nice people live in a lot of places. Goodnight, darling."

"Goodnight, honey."

Lastly Helen said, "Get up when I call you in the morning."

He grunted something like, "Uh, huh."

* * * *

Helen woke from the nightmare still feeling the terrific searing heat of the flame after the gas tank had burst, seeing the fiery tongues leaping along the coachwork of the bus, peeling off the paint, first the new top coat and then, the brown blisters of the old paint underneath. In the midst of the flames the cracked and broken windows had begun to melt and, at one window, there had been the distorted, horribly disfigured face of Colin calling to her.

AEROUNATICAL TERMS EXPLAINED



HAROLD HUNT

Kitty Hawk Goes Into A Dive

Mercifully, the shock had awakened her before the bus had become a charred and twisted wreckage, but she lay for a few seconds in the dark, trembling violently, feeling sick, not remembering where she was. Then she remembered because Colin was lying beside her, safe, asleep. She knew that because she could feel the warmth of his presence, hear his steady breathing. For reassurance she put out her hand where she thought his head should be, and there was his hair ruffled on the pillow. At first she thought of waking him, but she didn't, instead she buried her face in the pillow and sobbed, exhausted sobbing, part fear, part horror, and finally great shaking sobs of relief.

She had no idea how long she lay there in the dark, but afterwards when she was calm, perhaps half an hour afterwards, she began to remember bits of the dream that had been as convincing as a photograph. The most significant part of the dream now was not the dull-shining iced road, nor the way the bus had slewed round before it turned over, but the glimmer of the lighted sign she had noticed on the back of the bus as it had passed her before the accident. She remembered with a shock that the sign had clearly read "Seven O'clock Bus."

* * * *

She wasn't superstitious, nor had she considered herself psychic, so it didn't occur to her immediately that the dream might have any connection with the future. When she had added the facts together and suddenly seen the dream as a whole, the probable truth hit her below the belt, sickeningly, like a sharp blow. The impact left her in a panic. She was quite incapable of reasoning. Curiously though, in that moment of panic, without thinking, because she was a woman, she knew that she must stop Colin from catching the seven bus.

For a long time, really a long time, she lay in the dark wondering how in the world she could stop him without divulging the truth of her fear. She knew it was no use explaining the dream to him.

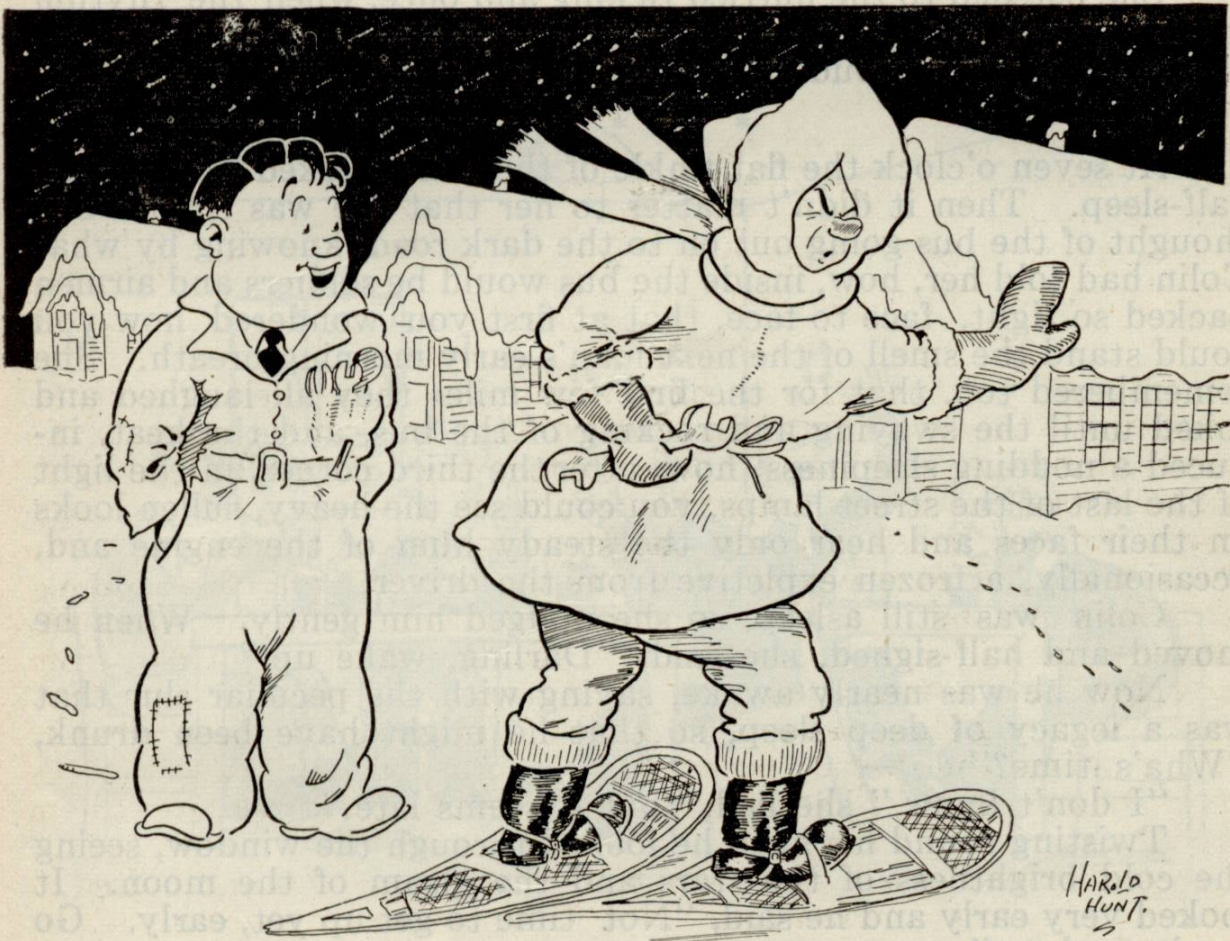
She remembered how, when she had once jokingly used a childish charm to bring about a spell of good weather for his leave, he had remarked, with horror, and a certain adult austerity, "But good Lord! you don't believe in those things, surely?" and how, at that time, she had known there was no use arguing with him.

Finally desperation made her think of the time, and quietly, so as not to disturb Colin, she slipped out of bed, picking up the clock, carrying it to the dressing-table. Momentarily, the flare of the match she struck puckered her eyes, and then, at the same time, catching a sight of her pallor in the mirror, she saw it was three o'clock. Before the match had burned out she knew what she must do. Quickly with a twist of her fingers she altered the alarm to go off at seven instead of six o'clock. She was sure that Colin would not wake this morning, of all mornings, to ask the time. Even if he did she was sure he would grunt and turn over and go to sleep again.

She didn't sleep much after that. She kept getting unreason-
 able desires to get out of bed and look at the clock. Every time
 Colin made a noise in his sleep she was scared that he might have
 slept long enough and want to get up, though he had never done
 that before.

Around four-thirty, as near as she could judge, moonlight
 suddenly flooded the room, yellow beams striking obliquely through
 the long, narrow window at the head of the bed.

She pushed the clock away from the head of the bed to where,
 by lying on her left side she could just discern its hands, shadowy,
 incredibly slow.



"First Winter in Debert, Chum?"

"I'll look at the clock," she said. Laying over the edge of the
 bed, she peered into the dark. "Don't be mad at me. I—I must have made a mistake
 last night—I set the alarm wrong—it's ten after seven!"

He sat upright suddenly, her words having pierced the film of
 sleep, so that now, clearly awake, he fully comprehended the
 position. Then he dropped back onto the pillow, rather disheartened,
 not angry, but only being sure that he had missed the bus. "Well,"
 he said, philosophically, "I'll have to catch the eight bus that's
 all."

Colin had wanted to ask Helen to leave the pancake experiment
 until he had a day off. But when he got down from the bathroom

She didn't sleep much after that. She kept getting unreasonable desires to get out of bed and look at the clock. Every time Colin made a noise in his sleep she was scared that he might have slept long enough and want to get up, though he had never done that before.

Around four-thirty, as near as she could judge, moonlight suddenly flooded the room, yellow beams striking obliquely through the long, narrow window at the head of the bed.

She pushed the clock away from the head of the bed to where, by lying on her left side she could just discern its hands, shadowy, incredibly slow.

She listened to the hurried ticking and once, when the rhythm missed a few beats, the silent interval between only the fraction of a second, seemed louder than the regular tempo, startling her.

* * * *

At seven o'clock the flat tinkle of the alarm jerked her out of a half-sleep. Then it didn't matter to her that she was tired. She thought of the bus going out on to the dark road, knowing by what Colin had told her, how, inside the bus would be soldiers and airmen packed so tight, face to face, that at first you wondered how you could stand the smell of the next man's early morning breath. She remembered too, that for the first few miles they all laughed and joked until the swaying and rocking of the bus, and the heat, induced a nodding sleepiness, how, after the third corner, in the light of the last of the street lamps, you could see the heavy, sullen looks on their faces and hear only the steady hum of the engine and, occasionally, a frozen expletive from the driver.

Colin was still asleep, so she nudged him gently. When he moved and half-sighed, she said, "Darling, wake up!"

Now he was nearly awake, saying with the peculiar slur that was a legacy of deep sleep, so that he might have been drunk, "Wha's time?"

"I don't know," she lied, "but it seems late."

Twisting round his head he looked through the window, seeing the cold brightness of the stars and the gleam of the moon. It looked very early and he said, "Not time to get up yet, early. Go to sleep, dear."

"I'll look at the clock," she said. Leaning over the edge of the bed, she peered intently at the clock. After a deliberate pause, she said, "Don't be mad at me. I—I must have made a mistake last night—I set the alarm wrong—it's ten after seven!"

He sat upright suddenly, her words having pierced the film of sleep, so that now, clearly awake, he fully comprehended the position. Then he dropped back onto the pillow, rather disgusted, not angry, but only being sure that he had missed the bus. "Well," he said, philosophically, "I'll have to catch the eight bus that's all."

* * * *

Colin had wanted to ask Helen to leave the pancake experiment until he had a day off. But when he got down from the bathroom

she had already mixed the flour and milk and had the griddle heated: He started in on his griddle, hurriedly, with occasional glances more habit than anxiety, at the clock. He was halfway through his cereal when he heard her exclaim softly, "What's the matter?" he asked. "The pancakes are burning," she said. "I'm sure I mixed them right."

He got up from the table and walked over to her. They checked the procedure on the package and under number three instruction it said, "Grease griddle very lightly, spread grease thinly." Colin ran his fingers over the hot surface of the griddle. "I don't want to stir a note of alarm," he said cautiously, "but did you put any grease on the griddle?"

They looked at each other. They burst out laughing. "Never mind, darling," he said. "I've had some toast."



"So I said to him Squadron Leader or no Squadron Leader....."

"Naturally if you were unlucky."

"There are emergency doors on all the buses but they don't work, anyway there'd be such a panic everyone would be killed in the rush. But don't think of things like that. Thinking that way is bad for your digestion."

"But you will be careful, dear?"

"Of course, I always am."

"Supposing," she said, "there was a crash, not your bus, another one, would you see it?"

"I expect so. If I didn't, I should soon hear about it when I reached camp."

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They looked at each other. Then she burst out laughing the way he had taught her to do when anything went wrong. But her laugh was thin and very near to tears. However, he didn't see how nervous she was.

"Never mind, darling," he said, "I'll have some toast."

* * * *

A little later she said, "Hurry, Colin, you'll miss the bus! Will you be very busy today?"

"Fairly busy."

"Do you think you'll have to stay behind to make up for the hour you lost this morning?"

"No, we're not producing stuff. It all depends on the weather and a certain amount of luck what time we finish."

"Well, I hope the bus gets you there under the hour this morning."

"It should do, it's not so crowded at eight o'clock. The roads are bad though."

"You might get a seat." The crease began to appear between her eyes again. She said, "Colin, suppose anything happened to the bus. I mean suppose it ran into a ditch, or turned over, or crashed through one of those stupid little bridges—do you suppose you'd be killed?"

"Naturally, if you were unlucky."

"Suppose the bus caught fire, could you get out?"

"There are emergency doors on all the busses but they don't work, anyway there'd be such a panic everyone would be killed in the rush. But don't think of things like that. Thinking that way is bad for your digestion."

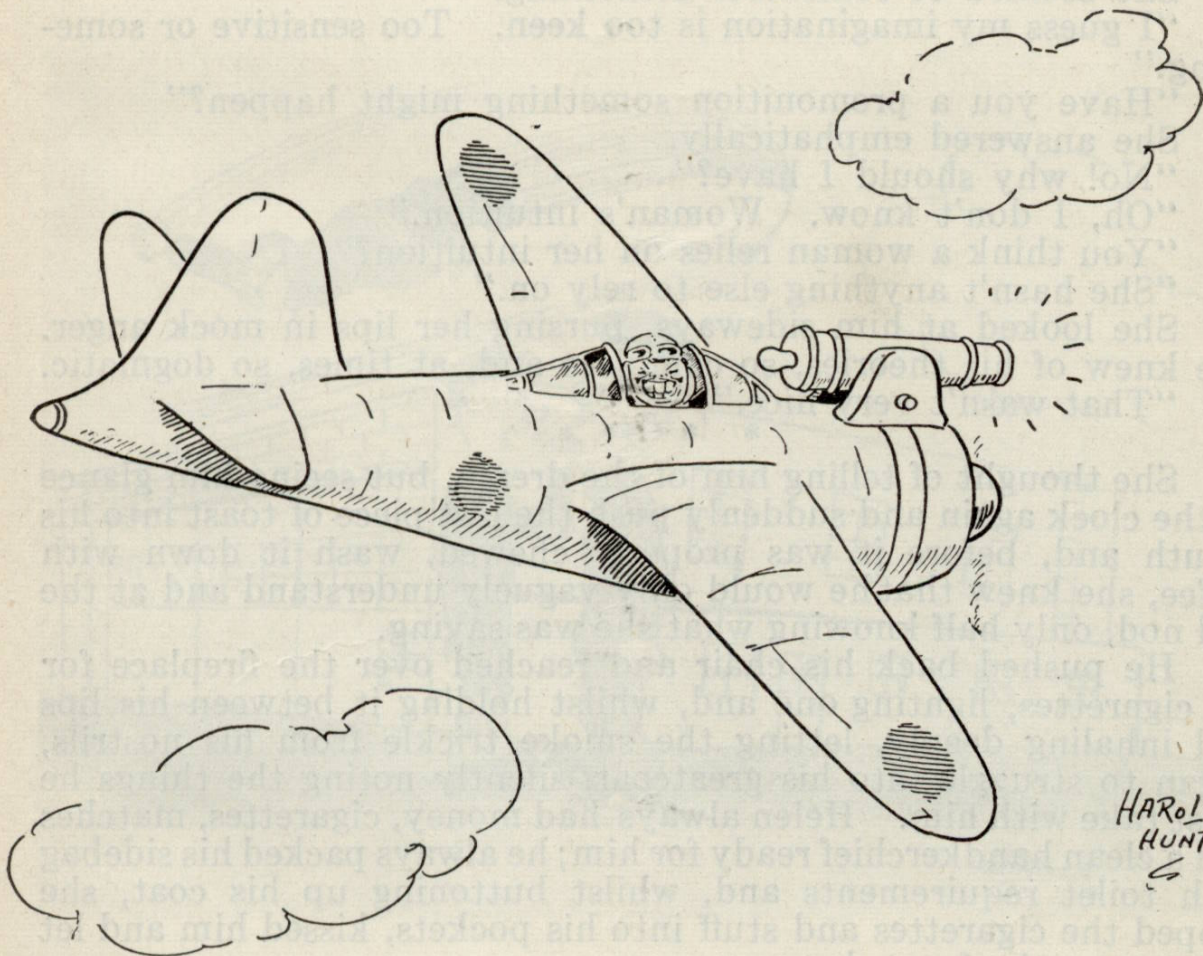
"But you will be careful, dear?"

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* * * *

"Supposing," she said, "there was a crash, not your bus, another one, would you see it?"

"I expect so. If I didn't, I should soon hear about it when I reached camp."



"White man have cannon—Jap have cannon too!"

"You'd tell me if anything happened on the road. I mean you mustn't keep things from me just because you think I might be worried."

He was irritated but keeping his mind in control, trying not to show his exasperation.

"Now look, darling, what's the matter with you this morning, you're not talking right?"

"I feel depressed that's all, as if.....oh, it doesn't matter. Only, Colin, I'm always glad when you're back safely."

She seemed to remember something.

"I guess my imagination is too keen. Too sensitive or something."

"Have you a premonition something might happen?"

She answered emphatically.

"No! why should I have?"

"Oh, I don't know. Woman's intuition."

"You think a woman relies on her intuition?"

"She hasn't anything else to rely on."

She looked at him sideways, pursing her lips in mock anger. She knew of his theories, so complete and, at times, so dogmatic.

"That wasn't very nice."

* * * *

She thought of telling him of the dream, but seeing him glance at the clock again and suddenly push the last piece of toast into his mouth and, before it was properly chewed, wash it down with coffee, she knew that he would only vaguely understand and at the end nod, only half knowing what she was saying.

He pushed back his chair and reached over the fireplace for his cigarettes, lighting one and, whilst holding it between his lips and inhaling deeply, letting the smoke trickle from his nostrils, began to struggle into his greatcoat, silently noting the things he must take with him. Helen always had money, cigarettes, matches and a clean handkerchief ready for him; he always packed his sidebag with toilet requirements and, whilst buttoning up his coat, she slipped the cigarettes and stuff into his pockets, kissed him and let him out at the front door.

He always said, "Don't come to the door, darling, you'll catch cold."

Then he went out into the piercing morning, walking fast and finishing off his cigarette, as usual throwing it away half-finished because his ungloved right hand was frozen. The stars were hard winking lights, the frost on the road and sidewalks crackled in the darkness and, beyond a few lighted windows he could see the people dressing.

As he approached the bus stop, he passed the first of the factory girls dressed in long pants and sweaters, huddled inside inadequate coats, scurrying to work. Then the factory whistle blew and, as he came around the corner, the bus was drawing up to the front of the queue.

After he had gone, Helen would drink a cup of coffee and go back to bed for two hours. This morning her mind was unsteady with doubt. She stood for a long time thinking of what Colin would say to her when he returned in the evening. He had never been particularly communicative and would tell her little of what happened during the day. She could always tell when the day had gone wrong for him, he would be so quiet, preoccupied with his own thoughts that when anyone spoke to him he would not hear at first and, when the question was repeated, his mind, dispersed into the dusty recesses of the past, would be a long time focusing upon the present. You had to drag information from him but, once on the beam he would talk eagerly, tirelessly. Sometimes fragments of information and interesting little incidents would explode from him involuntarily and, without his knowing it, he could be very amusing and witty. But it was the bad things he tried to hide; only, this preoccupation with what had gone was like a mirror you looked into behind his back, seeing his trouble, and it needed tact not to let him know you knew of it.

* * * *

If she went out, Helen thought, she might hear something of the accident before he arrived home. When a kite pranged, she always knew the details before Colin. At first she used to think that he wasn't allowed to divulge such information, but she began to learn that often he was genuinely ignorant of matters that concerned the camp.

The dream had now become a certainty. She thought of the bus sliding off the road, sideways like a crab, of the awful moment when, with the wheels spinning uselessly in the air, the first tearing metallic sound cracking the morning stillness and, the engine still ticking over, confused shouting from somewhere inside the twisted metal and splintered wood, would prelude the few faint spirals of smoke.

The day now went on like this. Jagged like the end of a nerve. Touched by the raw memory of the dream. Rendering her incapable of action. Wearing down her mind.

* * * *

When at last Colin came home, around six-thirty, she was making the soup for their dinner, and immediately he began to change into his civvies.

Afterwards he mixed them rye highballs, rather strong ones, and drinking they stood in the centre of the room, close together. She asked the old question, "How was it today, darling?" "Fair enough," he said.

His face was close to her hair and he could smell her perfume.

"What about the bus?" she asked.

"I caught the eight."

"Did it matter that you missed the seven?"

She felt the breath of his careless laugh on the back of her neck.

"For once, darling, I had a perfectly legitimate excuse for being late."

"Why?" she asked breathlessly.

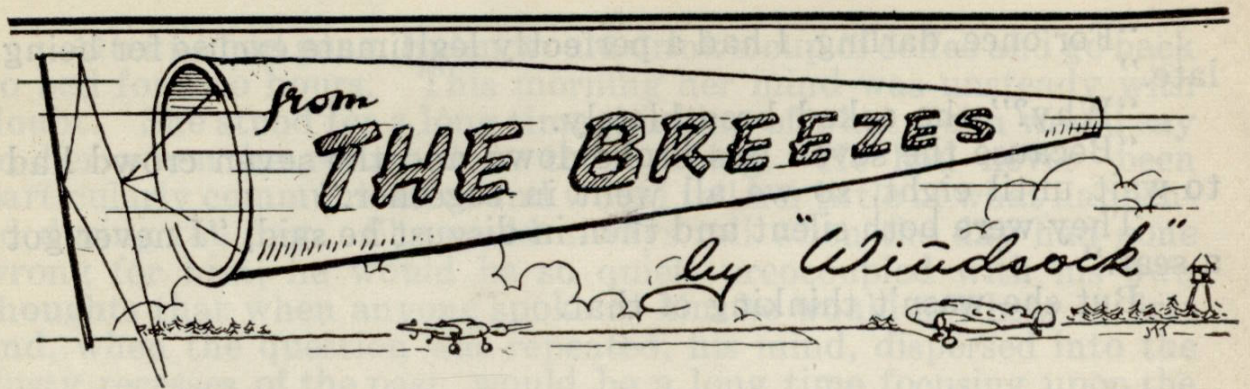
"Because the seven bus broke down and the seven crowd had to wait until eight, so we all went in together."

They were both silent and then in disgust he said, "I never got a seat."

But she wasn't thinking of that.



Pee-Wee says: "My turn next month."



Main item of the month concerns Flying Officer X (DFC) who went into Truro one November afternoon "to see if the liquor store is open." He has now returned to make up his log book for December!.....

They tell me that a recent examination caused considerable anxiety in camp circles. It seems "two bits is two bits" even in accounts!.....

There appears to be some doubt concerning the present whereabouts of "Scruffy," but I do know that "Zero-Zero" the Ops Room cat was buried at sea from a "kite!"

It is whispered that George Washington with his little hatchet was busy in the Sergeant's Quarters recently!.....

I'm told the Airmen's Christmas dinner was extremely palatable. The annual exception, of course!.....

Speaking of Christmas dinner, I've been asked if chefs were borrowed to prepare the festive fare!.....

It's surprising the number of reasons airmen have for being anxious to display their first G C "badge".....

They say one of our Sgts was mistaken for Public Enemy No 1 while pottering around with a can of paint a short time ago!.....

I notice it doesn't take newcomers long to acquire the popular "cafe habit".....

Hear that one of our NCO staff pilots made an oratorical hit in Springhill during the Christmas holidays. Anyhow, he's had lots of phone calls since!.....

Then there's Flying Officer "M" i/c section "S" Who asked what the reference numbers on the inventory were for!.....

I believe one of our "mule drivers" was once attached to a tank regiment!.....

Pink elephants, pink gills and pink eyes are common enough, but pink soup is something one could only dream about!.....

Heard a Sgt. (20 months total service) say to an airman (22 months LAC) "How's promotion in your trade?" Reply censored!.....