

OCT 31 - May 28  
1943 - '40 - 1944

Diary.

Thos H. Raddall II

Oct. 31, 1943 to May 23, 1944.



OCT. 31/1943. SUNDAY. Fine & cool, showering towards night. To Milton this afternoon & took the kids for a ramble to Hollow Log. Halloween has left its mark on the Milton school, 3 of the 4 wooden privies overturned, the basketball posts & hoops torn down, the flagpole overthrown & dragged to make a great brace holding the front door shut.

Tonight the Victory Loan committee put on a free movie show in the Astor Theatre for adults only, & asked me to give a "pep talk" for 5 minutes from the stage. The audience consisted largely of war workers from Thompson's, the Mercy wharf, & the townsite at Cowie's, so I didn't talk much about patriotism, sacrifice & the other usual themes; I told them bluntly that the war & their prosperity would end very suddenly one of these days, & that war veterans would have preference in post-war jobs; there would be at least 3, & probably 5 years of hard times, when they would need every cent they had saved. Probably it did no good, most of the younger men are spendthrifts. The spectacle of so many fit men having a good time at high wages, when the boys in the service are having a tough time at \$1.30 a day, always nauseates me a little. And these poltroons will be first to howl when unemployment comes.

MONDAY, NOV. 1/43. Sunny & cold. This afternoon drove Grandma Freeman & Aunt Marie Bell to town for tea with us. Aunt Marie, a pleasant though neurotic old

maid, used to worry herself frantic over chimney fires & burglars. Now she has decided she is slowly dying of cancer & is making arrangements for the disposal of her property, etc.

I called on old Miss Janet Mullins this afternoon & found her sitting in the sun on the lee side of her house, bundled in sweaters & reading the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. She is nearly 80 & was given up for dead long ago by Doctor Theode Ford. Still very bright & quite active, still lives alone in the crumbling old Mullins house amongst the darkies, & keeps about a dozen cats. Asked me if I thought there was a life after death. Said I'd never given it much thought. She said rather belligerently, "Well, if there's one for humans there must be one for cats;" and added, "and dogs and horses."

War: it looks as if the Russians have won a really great victory in and below the great bend of the Dnieper river, in which a large German army was caught, was saved by a counter-attack at Krivoi Rog, & is now abandoning its stores & guns in a hasty retreat. The southern jaw of the Russian trap has also cut off the Germans in the Crimea by seizing the Perekop isthmus.

Tuesday, Nov. 2/43 A cold night & a dull day. The great Moscow conference has closed, & Eden, Hull & Molotov have signed an agreement which binds Britain, the U.S. and Russia to fight Germany together & to stand together after the war to preserve the peace. Amongst the agreements was one which

decrees all Germans guilty of atrocities in occupied countries shall be brought before the courts of those countries for trial after the war. In Canada, 8,500 coal miners in Alberta & British Columbia are on strike for an extra \$2 a day, also time-and-a-half for the 6th day of work each week, and full pay for holidays. In the U.S. 500,000 soft coal miners are "out" again, & President Roosevelt has taken over the mines in the name of the U.S. govt & ordered the strikers back to work at once.

Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, 81, has married a 30-year-old woman radio operator. He has been a rather ~~feckless~~ bore, sponging on his friends & acquaintances for years, a caricature of the young poet who once set Canada in an ecstasy. His ~~brother~~ brother, Theodore Goodrich Roberts, was in Halifax last year, living precariously on odd newspaper assignments.

Bill Wilson, parson's son, reading theology at home, came in for a yarn & a glass of beer tonight. Says he was present when our local Croesus, Ogilvie, phoned New York and bought a cruising yacht for \$40,000. It formerly belonged to Henry Ford's son, Edsel. Ogilvie & his family are now living on board the thing in New York harbour, waiting for the hurricane season to pass; he plans to sail to the Bahamas after Christmas.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 3/43. Rain all day. Restrictions on the sale of coal imposed throughout Canada owing to strikes. Goldwell, the C.C.F. leader, has hurried into print to associate himself

with the strikers in all their demands. War: continuous fighting in the Italian hills as the 5th & 8th. armies slowly advance. Heavy daylight air raids on Germany & the Low Countries by U.S. & R.A.F. planes, accompanied by fighters. The Germans sent up plenty of fighters to oppose them but got the worst of it. Our loss, 10 planes.

Russians have crossed the Kertsch Strait into the Crimea & also are pushing down along the Perekop isthmus.

Apart from German troops cut off in the Crimea, there are said to be many thousands of German wounded in the sanitariums on the southern coast, all of whom must be evacuated by sea in the face of the Russian Black Sea fleet.

In the Pacific, fighting goes on in the Solomons, where our forces have landed on Choiseul & Bougainville islands. Our air force bombing Burman railways & river traffic constantly.

Badoglio is having difficulty in forming a provisional Italian government. Count Sforza, Italian liberal exiled in the U.S. since the rise of Fascism, & now a prominent voice in Allied-occupied Italy, has refused to serve under King Victor Emmanuel or Crown Prince Umberto. On this account Badoglio is believed to have demanded the abdication of the King in favour of the 6-year-old Prince of Naples, the country to be governed by a regency.

THURSDAY, Nov. 4/43 Overcast, with showers. Trees bare, birds gone, depressing weather. Put storm windows on my office; got Howland White with his ladder to put on the bedroom & bathroom storm windows - payment, 1 quart of beer. Put on storm doors. Stowed lawn roller in garage. War: Tuesday's air raids (reported yesterday) on Wilhelmshaven in daylight (~~the~~ U.V.A.F.), and on Dusseldorf & Cologne by night (R.A.F.), resulted in over 4,000 tons of bombs dropped on those cities. In Italy British troops have taken the key Massico Ridge after hard fighting & the Germans have abandoned Isernia & fallen back to the next line of hills. Russians are at the gates of Kherson at the Dnieper mouth & seem to be crossing the lower Dnieper everywhere. In the Pacific, MacArthur announces another incredible air raid on Rabaul, with 3 Jap destroyers & 8 transports sunk, 2 Jap cruisers & many other transports hit by 1000-lb. bombs, 67 Jap fighter planes shot down - all for a loss of 19 U.S. aircraft.

In the U.S. the striking coal miners have been granted their entire demands & now will have a daily wage of \$8.50. Another triumph for their truculent leader John L. Lewis.

SATURDAY, Nov. 6/43 Dull weather continues, with patches of sunshine in the mornings. Legion girls busy selling poppies today. Nova Scotia apples 75¢ a peck. Eggs 60¢ a dozen. Meat supplies are regular, fish supplies spasmodic. War: the Russians have

taken Kieff, their third largest city, a great triumph on the anniversary of the establishment of the U.S.A.R.

Turkish officials conferring in Cairo with Anthony Eden; rumours that Turkey is about to (a) grant the use of certain bases to the Allies, (b) permit supplies to Russia via the Dardanelles. U.S.A.F. made big raids on Munster & Gelsenkirchen. Washington reveals a sea fight off Bougainville in the Solomons 3 days ago in which 1 Jap cruiser & 4 Jap destroyers sunk. No Allied loss.

Sunday, Nov 7/43

A bleak overcast day. To Milton this afternoon & took the kids up to Hollow Log, where they amused themselves with bridge-building for 2 hours while I built a fire & kept it going to keep warm.

Was: the spate of good news continues & one is inclined to keep one's fingers crossed in the spirit of Kipling's "Recessional".

The Russians are chasing the Germans far beyond Kieff, & the German situation in the whole Ukraine seems to be going from bad to worse. Stalin says that his troops have killed 1,800,000 Germans in the past 12 months. (But Russian figures on German casualties since 1941 now total over 9,000,000, a manifest absurdity; Germany has never had more than nine millions under arms.) The truth, if known, would be staggering enough; as Churchill said last year, "The German army is bleeding to death on the vast Russian plains." The U.S. air force carried out another big

raid on a German industrial town today; their "Flying Fortresses" are now escorted by long range Thunderbolt fighters & their losses are much less. In Italy the Germans are slowly giving ground before our attacks; it is believed they have 5 divisions facing the 5th Army, & 3 divisions facing the 8th Army - surprisingly small forces if they really hope to keep us out of Rome. It is revealed that on Nov 5th, at night, a single airplane, unidentified, bombed Vatican City. There was some damage, no casualties. With suspicious promptitude the Germans declared themselves innocent. But the choice of Guy Lawrence Night for the job has all the marks of the cunning German mentality. Allied sources say our planes in the area were all grounded on that night. The German ambassador to Turkey, the wily Von Papen, has been recalled to Berlin for consultation. The Turkish foreign minister is still in Cairo conferring with Eden. In the Pacific the allied air forces have struck again at Rabaul; they caught a big Jap convoy there, just arrived from Japan via the Carolines, & claim 2 cruisers sunk, 7 cruisers damaged, & hits on many destroyers & merchant ships. U.S. submarines also are taking a steady toll of Jap shipping; some experts say the Japs can't stand this pace another 12 months, considering their vast front & its demands on shipping.

MONDAY, NOV. 9/43

Dull weather still. Took my rifle & hunted all afternoon in the woods east of the river road near Third Stillwater Falls. Later, saw a bull moose in woods near Guzzle Pond. But no deer.

War: Germans bombed London last night, the usual small raid but this time a big bomb exploded in a busy crossroads & casualties were heavy. German front west of Kiev seems to be wide open & Russians are plunging through.

Germans trying to assemble ships in Rumania & Bulgaria to evacuate their army from Crimea. Stalin says Germany is on the brink of catastrophe. The coal strike in western Canada is at an end; no details but we presume that the strikers have got more pay, as usual. Halifax agog over a visit by an eccentric Ontario millionaire, name unknown, who drove through the streets in a taxi passing out \$5, \$10 & even \$100 bills to service men, waitresses etc. He gave the taxi driver \$2000. Described as a big man with a big cigar, wearing a fur-collared overcoat & a plain felt hat, he confounded patrons of a restaurant by eating 4 dozen oysters - 1 dozen "breaded" & 3 dozen raw.

THIS WAS THE FENELTON, VISUAL CONVENTION COY. THAT WAS PART OF AN AT CIVILIS FALLS. HE USED TO TRY BEING GAVE IN A NEW BEARING IN MOUNTAIN THE 1930s.

Hitler spoke today at Munich on the anniversary of the abortive "putsch" of 1923; he was in his old familiar vein, declaring that he & Germany would fight on to victory, that the Allied coup in Italy had failed, that he had plenty of reserves to meet the threatened Allied invasion in the west, that England would be



destroyed when he got around to it, & so on.

TUESDAY, NOV. 9/43

A dark day, blowing hard & raining. Edith's uncle Hugh Dunlap died very suddenly & peacefully last evening. The amateur Santa Claus in Hfx (see yesterday) has been identified as Harry B. Maclean, 60-year old head of Dominion Construction Corp. of Toronto. Reputed worth millions, has been giving away money in this haphazard fashion for 10 years. The casualty lists from Italy are a regular feature of our daily papers now, as the Air Force lists have been for years.

Mr. Churchill speaking at the London Lord Mayor's banquet today predicted that 1944 would be the bloodiest year of the war for Britain & America, warned that Germany still has 400 divisions despite losses in Russia, hinted that a renewed assault on Britain by Germans equipped with new devices was a strong possibility. He said flatly that the back of the U-boat campaign had been broken.

This seems confirmed by figures issued officially today, showing that "at least" 150 U-boats were destroyed in the North Atlantic in the past 6 months. The almost daily toll of Jap planes destroyed, ships sunk, soldiers killed, as issued by General MacArthur's H.Q. in the S.W. Pacific, seems more & more fantastic. Yet U.S. army men returning from that region swear the figures are largely accurate. If so, the Japs are committing a sort of mass suicide in those obscure islands the Solomons & New Guinea, and will be out of the war in another 12 months. They are a strange people & anything is possible.

WEDNESDAY, Nov. 10/43

Cloudy & mild. Hugh Dunlop buried today. I was unable to attend as I had promised to address the Fortnightly Club of Halifax today. (This breaks a resolve made two years ago that I would refuse <sup>further</sup> invitations to address public gatherings. But the president of this club is the wife of Charles Fowler, Hfx architect, & a cousin of Irving Bain, local Ford dealer, who offered to drive me to Hfx & back, thus removing my most potent excuse.)

The luncheon was held in a private dining room of the Nova Scotian Hotel, where I found myself the lone male in a gathering of 50 or 60 women, most of them middle-aged or elderly, & very smartly dressed. My subject "Early days in Halifax." Since it is a women's club I talked chiefly about costumes, & they seemed to find it interesting. Dinner with Mocher at the Kibbles' new home on Fernwood St., Armdale. Left for home about 9:30, arrived 12:30, minus my keys, to find the house locked & Edith retired & under the power of a sleeping draught. Had to throw stones against her bedroom to arouse her, & probably aroused the whole neighbourhood. However, like Barnacles Bill the Sailor I finally got in.

THURSDAY, Nov. 11/43

Again dull weather - the 10th straight day of it. Attended the Armistice or Remembrance Day service at Soldiers' Monument this morning. A naval detachment & a detachment from the air station were present, also the Legion & about the usual gathering of citizens. In addition to the usual wreaths there were several laid on the monument by families of men killed in this war.

I bought a poppy wreath in memory of my father, as has been my custom for many years, & young Tommy placed it at the base of the monument during the appropriate part of the ceremony.

Friday, Nov. 12/43

Rain.

War: R.U.F. made a big raid on the Mont Genis tunnel in the French Alps, & the U.V.A.F. did a similar job on the railway in Brennes Pass, thus blocking the lines of military traffic into Italy from France & Germany, for the present anyhow. Fighting continues in southern Italy, where snow is now falling in the mountains. Russians still hustling Germans westward from Kiev. De Gaulle & Giraud have had another quarrel & Giraud has withdrawn from the French National Committee, although he retains command of the army. One result of these divided councils is a violent disturbance in Syria which French authorities seem unable to control. Syrians want independence now, not after the war.

They remember what happened to French promises after the last war. Victory Loan total in Queens County (Fifth Loan) came to \$1,068,600 - of which Mersey Paper Co took \$450,000.

Allied H.Q. in the S.W. Pacific reports another big air raid on the Jap base at Rabaul, with 1 Jap cruiser & 2 destroyers sunk, 7 others damaged; 24 Jap planes shot down over Rabaul, & 64 other Jap planes shot down in an attempt to bomb the U.S. aircraft carriers. Allied loss, 17 planes.

Ottawa announces that owing to a dire shortage of section men in certain parts of Canada, soldiers of home defence

units in low <sup>medical</sup> categories will be employed on railway maintenance. Many coal miners in Alberta are still "out" despite pleas of union leaders to return to work.

SATURDAY, NOV. 13/43 I am 40 today. After dinner went to Eagle Lake with Parker & Dunlap. Rain began as soon as we left home, & all the way up the N<sup>o</sup> 3 Pond in the punt it simply poured & continued all night.

SUNDAY, NOV. 14/43 Up before daybreak. Weather still overcast but wind west & cold. The others were tempted to stay in bed but I had a hunch we were "going to get some meat". As it turned out, Hector was the lucky one. Going down Eagle Lake in the red canoe we came upon a pronghorn buck standing at the water's edge near the old burn. Hector, in the bow, made a nice shot. We gutted it, hung it up, & went on up the brook to Long Lake. Reached the canoe at the edge of the Hemlock Hill, walked about 150 yards & came upon a fresh deer track. Parker & Dunlap stood discussing this evidence in whispers when I looked up the slope past D. & saw the deer itself, a fine buck. I couldn't shoot except by firing past D's shoulder so I called his attention to it. He fired, missed. The buck turned & D. fired again. The buck ran, tail up as if unhurt but there was a thick trail of blood & we found him stone dead within 70 yards of the canoe. P. & I hunted the rest of the ridge but saw nothing. Returned. West gale blowing but we managed to creep up the west shore of Eagle Lake with our heavily laden canoe & got

our dinner about 3 P.M. Carried the deer down to the punt, hard work. Put the camp to rights & carried our gear down. Reached N°3 dam just after dark. Home at 8 p.m.

D. tells me that Thompson Bros. payroll for 1943 will be over one million dollars. Says secret service men are here investigating a serious bit of sabotage on one of the refitting corvettes. Someone at night smashed all the delicate instruments topside - including the bridge, the radio room, Asdic set, R.D.F. gear, etc. - with a heavy hammer. It is believed to have been a drunken member of the crew but the crew are mum & nobody knows.

Monday, Nov. 15/43 Overcast, cold, with a glimpse or two of sunshine. Took my rifle up river this afternoon for a last hunt (season ends today) & cruised the woods between N°3 & Georgie's Brook. No luck, for the second consecutive year. War: U.S. airmen bombed Sofia & gave the Bulgarians something to think about.

The 5th Victory Loan reached something like \$1300 millions, so Ottawa announces. Famine in India still very bad. Much criticism in London of the Indian govt., which should have foreseen it & taken appropriate measures. In the Bahamas, after a trial which interested even a world at war, the French ne'er-do-well Marigny, who married young Nancy Oakes against wealthy Harry Oakes' wishes, has been acquitted of Oakes' murder. He promptly announced his intention to re-marry Nancy under Roman Catholic rites (she is Protestant); and the church in the Bahamas (with an eye on the Oakes two hundred millions) promptly

announced its willingness to ignore Marigny's two divorces "because of course the Church does not recognize the two previous marriages."

Was: it becomes more & more apparent that the German retreat from Russia, while harassed & made costly by Soviet pressure, is nevertheless a deliberate withdrawal made to shorten front lines and l.o.f.c. By this means Hitler will have a big striking force in reserve for the war on two fronts. Give them a month or two to rest and refit and these German veterans might strike a heavy blow at our small forces in Italy. We are told that the sea war goes well, despite new U-boat tactics & torpedoes. The air war seems to have lulled a bit; bad weather perhaps. German mosquito-bombers raid London & other southern English towns almost nightly, however, and our mosquitoes return the compliment to Berlin & other German cities. Fighting continues in the Dodecanese, where the Germans have sent crack air-borne & sea-borne troops to overcome British & Italian garrisons. They seem anxious to bar any attempt to use the Dardanelles.

THURSDAY, Nov. 18/43 The first snow fell last night. Just enough to whiten the ground & the roofs this morning. Temp. 20°. Much drunkenness & noise amongst the naval men who filled Main St. last night. They were holding one of their weekly dances at the Masonic Hall (the high school hall is not available except on Friday nights) & the permanent naval shore patrol (4 men) told Edith at the J.O.D.E. club that "it was just a steady march from the dance hall to the jail."

Was: Winter snows & rains in the Italian hills, together with German

counter-attacks, have practically stopped our advance. The Russians around Zhitomyr, where they had pushed to within 60 miles of the Polish border, have suffered a sharp reverse & given up much ground.

The British & Italian troops on the Dodecanese island of Kos have surrendered to superior German sea, land & air forces after a tough fight; - the second of our expeditions to meet this fate in these islands.

London papers are critical. Germans claim 5000 Italian, 3000 British prisoners.

Tonight I went again to the clinic & donated blood for plasma to be used in service hospitals. Many naval men attend the clinics. They get a 48-hour leave after each blood donation so it is quite popular.

The naval staff in town now includes a dentist <sup>really an Army A.C. man</sup> who has a small office in the same building with Dr. Donald Smith on Market. Also there is a small "sick-bay" in two rooms over the Royal Bank, presided over by a petty officer, with one or two beds, a large stock of drugs & etc; this is for treatment of petty sprains, cuts, etc, & for anti-venereal treatment. It is thought that a naval doctor may soon be stationed here.

FRIDAY, NOV 19/43 Yesterday was the first fine day in 16 days, today the sky is heavily overcast again. Two brick buildings are going up fast on Thompson Bros property, one a machine-shop for the marine slip, the other a new foundry. Piles are being driven for foundations for their new garage on Market St.

WAT: Germans are now attacking Samos, the last of the Dodecanese islands occupied by British troops when Italy fell. The Russians

say nothing of their defeat near Zhitomir but claim the capture of the important railway junctions of Korosten & Rhyechitza to the north of it. R.A.F. made heavy raids on Berlin & Ludwigshafen last night. U.S. bombers have been busy on the Norwegian coast. Much fuss in Hfx papers over closing of the rolling mill and nut & bolt works at Trenton, N.J., but it appears to be part of a general reduction in certain types of war production in Canada for which there is now less demand; shipbuilding (merchant) is being reduced, for instance.

John Hackenley, Anglican bishop of Nova Scotia, who died two days ago at his summer home at Lahave, was buried with great pomp in Halifax today. Many tributes to him in the press but my impression of him (see July 2, 1941) was that of a harsh and intolerant old man whose set purpose was to introduce "high church" ritual into the whole diocese. This impression was so strong that I sent my children to the United Church instead.

SATURDAY, Nov. 20/43 A fine day, sunny & mild. We let our furnace go out in the morning & didn't re-light it. I walked to Milton & back & found it hot work. Bishop's drug store bought by Larry Seldon, who is getting town clerk Hector Macleod to run it. War: Russians admit their withdrawal from Zhitomir; apparently their advanced forces over-reached support & the Germans couldn't resist taking a crack at them. R.A.F.'s big raid on Berlin (700 tons) is said to have done great damage. Airways have begun another attack on Jap positions in New Guinea.



SUNDAY, Nov. 21, 1943. Our lone day of Indian summer brought back the rain, which poured all night & culminated in a slam bang thunderstorm from 6 A.M. to 9. Tommy has the rabbit-keeping urge (last year it was chickens) & yesterday lugged a number of old fruit boxes from the town dump to construct a hutch behind my garage.

MONDAY, Nov. 22/43 Dark all day, with a drizzle falling. At noon I was guest speaker of the Kiwanis Club at Mersy Hotel. Subject, "The good old days." Tommy's birthday & a lively party this afternoon. Edith conjured a few candies & baked a cake and even doughnuts for the great occasion. War: Russians seem to have had a smart rap on the nose at Zhitomir & have backed away towards Kiev. <sup>← actually they are Canadian armoured div. 5th</sup> Canadian 2nd division has landed in Italy from England. Germans claim capture of Samos, the last British post in the Sodecanese. In the U.S., the fuel controller Ickes (pronounced "ickees") has made a bitter attack on the wartime oil development at Norman Wells in Northern Alberta. Ostensibly to supply oil to U.S. forces in Alaska, the U.S. Army has spent \$120,000,000 on the project (including a 550-mile pipe line) & proposes to spend \$30,000,000 more. Ickes says the whole thing is a gift to the Imperial Oil Co. & the Canadian govt. Ottawa says the whole thing was a U.S. idea from start to finish.

TUESDAY, Nov. 23/43. Easterly gale with rain last night & today. None of the British or U.S. radio bulletins mention arrival of the 2nd Canadian Div. in Italy; was it a slip in Canadian censorship? The

RAF gave Berlin its heaviest bombing yet, <sup>↓</sup> last night. 26 planes lost. In the Pacific, U.S. marines have landed on islands of the Gilbert group, a direct approach towards Japan. Bitter popular feeling in England over the release from prison of the fascist Sir Oswald Mosley & his wife, on grounds of health. The Mosleys were personal friends & believers in Hitler, & founded a "Blackshirt" party in England, with the fascist salute, etc. They have been interned since 1940. Russians admit the situation on the southern flank of their Kiev salient is "dangerous." British, Greek & some Italian forces were successfully withdrawn from the island of Samos. Germans claim 6,000 prisoners, presumably Italian.

My old reserve unit here, "C" Coy of the P.L.F. is commanded now by stiff old Ernie Smart, the former C.V.M. The 2/c is the postmaster, Jack McGorry. I hear that no further commissions will be given because the unit will probably be reduced to a platoon in the near future.

10 P.M. Irwin, editor of Maclean's, phoned from Toronto & offered me (on behalf of Maclean's & the Reader's Digest) \$400 plus expenses to Sydney & Montreal to do a story on some fliers just rescued from an island in Greenland where they crashed on a flight from Scotland to British Columbia. I shall wire in the morning accepting the job, though I hate to leave my novel.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 24/43

RAF gave Berlin another terrific pasting last night, 20 bombers lost. Both raids were made in thick weather, & some commentators suggest that the British have evolved a means

of spotting targets that normally would be weather safe. Swedish citizens who left Berlin after Monday night's raid say the damage & casualties were enormous.

The Gilbert Islands are now in U.S. hands, their Jap garrisons wiped out. Canadian 1st Div., after a rest, is in action on the 8th Army front again; heavy rains & mud hampers operations there.

Irwin wired saying he was closing a deal with the rescued flyers (for an exclusive story, presumably) & would let me know when to start. I was all packed to start today.

Visitors tonight, a Lieut. <sup>DATA</sup> ~~Cast~~ from the corvette "Port Arthur" in port, & his wife, a dark & beautiful girl from Trinidad.

They were interested in the author of "H.M.G.," they said. The author found them even more interesting.

TUESDAY, Nov. 25/43 Sharp frost last night. Yesterday & today were sunny & mild. Two glorious walks around Milton after all the rain & mud. War: 8th Army has forced a passage of the Sangro river in Italy & has beaten off several counter-attacks. In the Solomons U.S. navy claims 4 Jap destroyers sunk in a ship-to-ship action, no U.S. loss.

Fleing neutral diplomats & observers still bringing out of Germany lurid accounts of the havoc in Berlin. This city has received 12,000 tons of bombs, compared with Hamburg's 10,000.

Much ado in the U.S. over the 7th Army commander, General ("Old Blood & Guts") Patton. It is revealed that during the Sicilian campaign Patton visited a casualty clearing station, found a "nerves" case weeping, called the man a coward,

slapped him & ordered him back to unit. Eisenhower severely reprimanded Patton but left him in command. (Patton apologized to the soldier afterwards.) In Halifax the Navy is taking over the big "Y Depot" of the Air Force at Willow Park, whence thousands of empire trainees have sailed overseas. The A.F. will remove its embarkation camp to the vicinity of <sup>Montreal</sup> ~~Moncton~~. It is one of the drastic steps being taken to reduce the housing shortage in Hfx.

Friday, Nov. 26/43

Irwin wired this morning saying the Montreal affair was off. A newspaper syndicate had got to the flyers first & bought exclusive rights to their story. Maclean's fools me this way every once in a while. Last year it was a trip to Labrador. A frosty night, a lovely day. War: R.A.F. pounded Frankfurt last night & sent Mosquitoes to worry Berlin again - the 5th raid on Berlin in a week. In Russia the Germans have evacuated the city of Gomel, after destroying it in their usual methodical manner. In New Guinea the Angaks are still fighting for Sattelburg Ridge. (SHOULD BE SÄTTELBURG) In Cape Breton 12,000 miners have demanded another \$1.25 a day & further concessions re overtime, working hours, etc.

Bill Jerudrey called, representing a committee of the Legion appointed to nominate officers for 1944. Asked if he could put my name in for president. I said yes.

Saturday, Nov. 27/43

R.A.F. ~~mosquitoes~~ bombed Berlin again last night. Yesterday U.S. bombers made a big daylight raid on Bremen.

admit 29 bombers lost; claim 56 German fighters shot down. Washington admits heavy casualties in the capture of the Gilberts but says the Jap garrison of 4000 died to a man. Later: the R.A.F. attack on Berlin was a heavy one; cost 32 bombers. There was a "diversionary" raid on Stuttgart at the same time. Drove to Bridgewater this afternoon with Edith & the kids for a bit of Christmas shopping. The "landing-craft" factory at Helbrille now employs 500 men - 400 of them French-Canadians, imported owing to scarcity of local labour. Suffered a blow-out in one of my poor old tires; close to the railway line, with a freight passing, puffing up the grade - result, didn't hear the tire go & failed to stop quick enough to save further damage to the tube - which had to be patched in ten places. As I am not a "war worker" I cannot purchase new tires or tubes & must lay up my car when the old tires & tubes finally collapse. This is a little galling when I see "war workers" joy-riding with parties of shrieking girls, taking numerous fishing & hunting trips by car, etc., and when I see service stations apparently well stocked with tires & tubes for sale to people approved by the government.

Tear in a Chinese cafe in B'water, where for my sins I had to sit next to a juke-box blaring over & over again the latest musical horror from the States, "Pistol-packin' Mama."

Thunder, lightning & pouring rain tonight, the power plants knocked out for a time & all the County in darkness.

Sunday, Nov. 28/43 Cool & overcast. This afternoon Jimmy & I with Roy Gordon drove to Big Falls & walked to Eagle Lake camp, where Parker, Smith,

& Dunlap had spent the week end. I took Tommy in the green canoe to see the beaver dam & house below the camp. Found the sides of the house torn out & several new steel traps set all round it - property of old John Francis, Indian, and Jim Buchanan, our Queens County fish warden, who does not believe in conserving anything but fish. We observed his canoe lying in the bushes near our camp. Parker reported the other beaver houses at Haunted Bog & in Long Lake brook ruthlessly broken into & the dams destroyed. All this is the result of the gov't's weak concession of 2 weeks for beaver trapping after years of "closed season", in order to satisfy a small number of greedy ~~but~~ and insistent men. Gov't's "precaution" to prevent a general slaughter was to require that each trapper take out a license (#2), limit each license to 3 beaver skins; all skins to be marketed through the provincial gov't, which will pool the proceeds, deduct #2 per skin (royalty), & distribute the residue. Trappers expect to net about #30 per skin. Beaver are so easy to trap that many of the men at Thompson's plant quit their ~~usual~~ work for a day or two in order to clean up a quick profit. Some have taken as high as 40 or 50 skins. The system of "getting around the law" is to get all your friends & relations to take out trapping licenses & then market your surplus skins in their names.

War: Russians appear to have lost Korosten in the German trap west of Kief, which was sprung at Zhitomyr & now seems to have pinned a considerable Russian force against Pripet Marshes. On other parts of the long front the Germans are still

withdrawing, but they are yielding nothing in the Crimea, the lower Dnieper or before Leningrad, where Russians need ground most.

RAT sent Mosquitos over Berlin again last night.

The Germans are frothing at the mouth over the destruction of Berlin, threaten all sorts of reprisals. In Italy "Monty" has told his 8th Army that the stage is set for a "colossal crack" at the Germans to drive them north of Rome. Newspapers in London & Washington are hinting mysteriously of a "big piece of news developing on the diplomatic front". Some suggest that Stalin, Roosevelt & Churchill are in conference. Another guess is that Turkey is about to enter the war against Germany.

Scallops, breaded & fried, for supper tonight; purchased in B'water yesterday at 55¢ lb. They get them at the Lakeview mouth somewhere. This is a delicacy we have not seen in Liverpool for at least 3 years.

MONDAY, NOV. 29/43 Overcast & cold; ground frozen all day. I got out my winter overcoat. Fresh boiled clams in the shell for supper, an unusual treat in November. Ralph Johnson provided them. He went to Port Joli on Saturday, found the duck-shooting pool, so dug clams instead. Says there are, at a guess, about 500 wild geese wintering at Port Joli; a small lot compared with, say, 1933.

I bought a barrel of apples (Mackintosh Red, & Northern Spy) for \$3.75 from Hebb's farm at B'water & have stored them in Dunlap's cellar. Fruit & vegetables won't keep in mine on account of the furnace.

TUESDAY, NOV. 30/43 Snowing hard. War: U.S. airmen bombed Bremen again in daylight yesterday, lost 29 bombers & fighters

In Italy the 8th Army has now entirely crossed the Sangro & is fighting in the hills beyond. Gov't announced that 8,927 deer were shot in N.Y. this season, of which 5,019 were bucks.

A new Trans-Atlantic flight record. A "Liberator" bomber with 15 men & considerable mail aboard has flown from Montreal to Britain in 11 hours 35 minutes - a distance of 3100 miles. It had a 45 mile tail wind most of the way, which gave a ground speed of about 275 M.P.H. Pilot was a Canadian.

McClelland & Stewart's edition of my "Pied Piper of Sipper Creek" is on the bookstands. A cheap job; the paper fair, the print and layout poor, the binding worse. I had sent them an "author's note" to appear on one of the front pages, acknowledging the courtesy of Blackwood in waiving the Canadian rights. M. & S. chose to ignore it & I do not like their choice.

WEDNESDAY, DEC 1/43

Temp. 22° last night. Kids are wallowing in 3 or 4 inches of snow, just enough to crust the ground, roofs, trees & window sills & turn the view from my den to a Christmas card.

Rumours persist that Churchill, Roosevelt & Chiang Kai Shek have met in Cairo & gone on to Teheran for a talk with Stalin. U.S. airmen day-bombed Solingen yesterday in force.

Twelve labour unions in N.S., mostly in steel & coal but including the big shipbuilding unions, intend a 1-day strike on Dec. 28/43 as a threat to the Dominion gov't. in connection with their demand that Ottawa compel the owners of the nut-bolt-and-plate mills at Trenton to recommence operations. The owners say these mills have long



Mr Charles S. D. Roberts died today in hospital. See Nov. 2/43 entry

been operated at a loss, that a recent demand of its 1000 employees for higher wages made further operation impossible. Owners are part of the Dosco combine, much hated by the unions.

Glen Crowell came tonight, had a keg of very good cider from ~~the Valley~~ North Queens in the back of his car. Insisted on my taking a gallon or more; as I lacked a funnel, & the keg a spigot, we poured the stuff into Edith's big tea-kettle first, then into a wine-jar. All by flashlight in the snow. Passers-by doubtless thought Glen was peddling a keg of smuggled rum. Certainly there was a suspicious brown stain in the snow afterward.

THURSDAY, DEC. 2/43 Fine & cold, snow melting a little in the sun.

A strangled baby was found in the harbour a week or two ago, & a Frank girl from Milton is in jail for it. Her husband, a soldier, has been overseas 2 or 3 years. Nat: 8th Army has 1,000 German prisoners & is still fighting forward. Russians seem to be halted at last. It is now revealed officially (Reuters let the cat out of the bag yesterday) that Roosevelt, Churchill & Chiang met in "north Africa" with their staffs (Chiang's included his clever wife) & drew up a joint alliance aimed at the total defeat of Japan, & restoration to China & other rightful owners all the lands taken by Japan since 1914. Young Bob McBlair, son of George, & a bank clerk in Toronto for some years, has come home to take the job of town clerk. Halifax is agog over the disappearance of Paymaster Commander F. M. Johnson.

R.N., together with his 9-year-old daughter Nadia. He was senior officer of "H.M.S. Canada", the Royal Navy's small office & depot at Hfx., & his 2/i/c. is my brother-in-law P/Lieut. W. E. Kibble. Johnson's wife, an exotic & extravagant Russian "princess" whom he met & married in <sup>Constantinople</sup> Petersburg during the last war, Yava de Piers Lumenuk, left him Nov. 15 "to spend the winter in New York". It is thought he killed Nadia & himself in a canoe on the Northwest Arm. A letter was found on a table, addressed to Kibble, saying that he (Johnson) had put his affairs in order, and "this is the end for me & mine". (see Dec. 9/43, Dec. 14/43, May 4/44, July 14/44)

FRIDAY DEC. 3/43 The snow remains. Drove to Port Mouton with Mrs. Bain this afternoon. He is in charge of Liberal patronage in South Queens & had a \$500 breakwater repair job to award. He conferred with somebody in a fishhouse & returned to the car with a large carton full of live lobsters - "tinkers", too small for legal sale. Edith & I had a fine supper of fresh boiled lobsters. No news of the tragic Johnson affair at Hfx. It is believed by the police that Johnson killed Nadia with an axe in the boathouse & then dumped her body & himself into the Arm from a canoe. Naval divers are searching for them.

War: R.A.F. bombed Berlin heavily last night, 41 bombers lost. U.S. airmen have been bombing Toulon & Marseilles; the Germans had re-floated some of the French warships scuttled at Toulon, & are building a new submarine base at Marseilles. Roosevelt & Churchill have vanished again, are rumoured to be meeting

Stalin at Teheran. Heard tonight that Charles Holden died of spinal meningitis at Aldershot Camp, where he had charge of a recreation hut operated by Canadian Legion War Services. The doctors tried everything including the new drug "penicilin," without success.

SATURDAY, DEC. 4/43 "War time" (clocks advanced 1 hour) continues & is accepted now without a thought, although we get up in the dark these December mornings. This morning a foggy air makes daylight later & weaker still; at 9.30 A.M. it is still half dark.

At Hfx. navy divers found the body of Nadia Johnson in the N.W. Arm. the head crushed with axe blows, her clothing weighted with stones.

War: R.A.F. smote Leipzig last night with 1500 tons of bombs; cost 24 bombers. In Italy the 5th Army has attacked in conjunction with 8th, using terrific air & artillery bombardment; & Germans, badly mauled, are retreating slowly towards Rome.

Officially announced that Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin & their staffs have conferred together at Teheran; no details of the talks.

Aircraft production in the U.S. last month was 8,789 planes.

Spent evening at Irv. Bain's with Edgar Wright, Cliff Millard, Clarence Hemeon, Ralph Johnson, playing poker; a game I have not played since my first (and very expensive) lesson at Partridge Island 24 years ago. A 5-v-10 limit - I came home with \$1.25 won - sucker's luck.

SUNDAY, DEC. 5/43 Rain, sun, snow flurries, a bleak day for Charlie Holden's funeral. I marched with the Legion to the church & then to the old Methodist cemetery near the jail. We held our simple ceremony, a brief eulogy, the strewing of poppies, the sounding of Last Post.

I walked over to Bristol with Brent Smith, who has his father's memoirs just finished in typescript. (I started taking notes in 1937 or '38 from Wm Smith's dictation but found I hadn't the time for a thorough job & persuaded Brent to undertake it.) It has taken 5 years or more to compile - 500 sheets, letter size, single spaced, a marvellous picture of Liverpool life & times from 1867 to 1918, when Wm Smith retired. He had been logger, fisherman, seaman (rose to first mate in L'pool square-riggers in the southern trade), deep sea diver & rigger. I told Dr. Harvey, provincial archivist, about it & he offered to have 3 copies bound provided the Provincial Archives could retain one. Brent has agreed.

To save fuel, the Liverpool Baptist & U.C. congregations have decided to hold joint services for the duration of the war, using each church alternately. Madden's drug store burgled last night. The burglars (naval men are suspected) broke in the front door, a very bold procedure in what is probably the most public spot in town. It proved to be a half-mild casual labourer from out of town. He was arrested while trying to pass a lot of copper & sent to jail.

Monday, Dec. 6/43 Fine & cold. It is officially announced that allied leaders at Yeheran decided on a combined assault against Germany from east, west & south, to take place in 1944. Fighting in Italy has become a slow battle of attrition like those of 1916-1918, with massed artillery barrages & savage hand to hand fighting for small posts & trenches. Allied aircraft have sunk 6 U-boats in 8 days in the North Atlantic, with no loss to the convoys attacked. Cape Breton coal miners have been granted extra pay of \$1<sup>00</sup> per day.

and 1 week's holidays on full pay. At the same time Mackenzie King announces a new scheme to avoid inflation & maintain a price ceiling. How far it will succeed in the face of the labour chorus demanding higher wages remains to be seen. So far the govt has been too weak to set a price ceiling. Influenza is raging in England, with many deaths, an ominous reminder of 1918-19. Canadian Air Force casualties so far in this war are given as 10,025 killed, missing or captured - the number of wounded is not disclosed.

This afternoon, fulfilling a promise, I took Tommy to the woods back of Wildcat Rock to set rabbit snares. Old Will Smith went with us & showed us where & how to set the snares.

WEDNESDAY, DEC 8/43 A general meeting of the Queens branch, Canadian Legion, in their rooms over Seldon's drug store. I was elected president for the year 1944. Parker & Smith are on the executive for 1944 also.

Harry Clarke of Maclean's Mag. phoned from Toronto asking if I would go to Montreal & do a re-write job on the story of the Greenland fliers. I said I would for \$300 & expenses. He said he would have to consult Reader's Digest; later he wired accepting my terms.

THURSDAY, DEC 9/43 I phoned T.C.A. at Hfx this morning & got a berth in a plane for Montreal tomorrow. Wired Mount Royal Hotel to reserve a room (what a hope!)

Caught the 1:30 train for Hfx & rode the whole way in a shabby old car full of sailors from a Canadian destroyer at Shelburne, off to Hfx on a 4-day leave. A merry lot, drinking much beer (which they purchased, at great risk of losing the train, by furious

dashes in taxis to the liquor stores at L'pool & Bridgewater) and blithely ignoring the No Smoking sign. I got off the train at Armdale, thinking it would be a shorter way to my mother's flat on Chebucto Road. Found the city wallowing in snow & slush, & the Wartime Taxi Association gave me an impudent "Armdale? No cars!" when I phoned. Hilda met me, & a naval officer at the gasoline station gave us a drive to Mum's flat. There, from Kibbie & Hilda, I got details of l'affaire Johnson not given to the public. The exotic "princess" Yava was really a White Russian refugee from the Crimea, whom Johnson met & married in Constantinople in 1924. She was then posing as the widow of a Polish count but was probably the refugee mistress of a Russian officer, by whom she had certainly had 3 children. She & Johnson got along, with occasional furious quarrels, until the Germans' 1940 blitz on London, where Johnson then had a post in the Admiralty. Yava decided to flee to America, (remembering vividly her Crimean days, no doubt) taking the only child of their marriage - Nadia, born in 1930 or '31. Johnson was furious, refused to give or send any money. So Yava had to make her own living in New York for 2 years - as a housekeeper-companion, sometimes even as a cook, and a charwoman. In the meantime in London Johnson began a liaison with his secretary, a clever young woman who got him to register his invested savings in her name, & to make over his life insurance to her. Then, in

1942 Johnson was transferred to Hfx as chief accountant offices of "H.M.V. Canada", the R.N. shore establishment there.

He was always very fond of Nadia (Yara was not) & had a certain moody passion for his wife; so a reconciliation took place & Yara & Nadia came to Hfx to live. There, about the spring of this year, Yara came upon a bundle of letters from Johnson's chère amie in London. She does not read English quite as well as she speaks it, & the references to investments & life insurance puzzled her, so she got my sister Hilda to translate certain passages. (Awkward for Hilda, but she bowed to Yara's furious personality) She then told Hilda ~~that~~ of her hard life in New York & declared "Now it is my turn to have a good time and Soushka" (Russian for 'darling', her pet name for Johnson) "is going to pay for it and suffer for it." Then began the series of expensive parties & entertaining in the grand manner which set all Hfx buzzing last summer & fall. Yara demanded that Hilda help her shop for silverware, china, etc. (<sup>Hilda</sup> she could scarcely refuse the wife of Ribb's boss) & for no less than 3 fur coats, one of which cost \$2,000. Yara's exotic costumes (she never wore a hat, always flowers or feathers in her hair, & her taste in colours was barbaric) attracted attention wherever she went. At one of her parties (Lieut. Gov. Kendall & his wife were among the 40 or 50 guests) she wore such a striking costume that Don Fraser of the New Glasgow "Eastern Chronicle" published an alleged

correspondent's letter of protest against such extravagant goings-on in wartime - especially on the part of the wife of a senior R. N. officer. Somebody sent the clipping to Yava, & there was a storm, & Frases had to retract; but the damage was done. The R. N. doesn't like publicity of that sort in colonial posts. The reduction of the R. N. establishment at Hfx. had been in the wind for some time. Now it began to come to a head. And Johnson had been "borrowing" Admiralty funds to pay Yava's debts. Disgrace, dismissal without pension after a lifetime in the navy, were staring him in the face. In the middle of November Yava, having had her fling, departed for New York "to spend the winter". There she was knocked down <sup>in a street accident</sup> & almost fatally injured. Johnson was sent for, & this proved the last straw; he went insane, returned to Hfx., murdered Nadia with an axe, disappeared himself, & left a queer incoherent note addressed to Kibbee. Kibbee is working night & day to get the accounts up to date - Johnson had struck no balance of books since last April, & over a million dollars has passed through H. M. V. Canada's account in the meantime. Johnson had removed & burned at least 4 pages of the cash book. Police are still dragging the N. W. Arm for Johnson's body & have circulated his description all over the continent. Hilda is afraid to stay alone in her bungalow at Armdale, with Kibbee away in the city all day & Johnson possibly still alive. She & Kibbee are the only



people who know the "inside story" of this tragic affair & it's possible that Johnson might try to do away with them. In the meanwhile Hilda stays in town with Mum all day & goes home with Kibbee at night.

FRIDAY, DEC. 10/43 Trans-Canada Airways sent a car for me at 6:45 a.m. & we journeyed to the Dartmouth airport via Nova Scotian Hotel, picking up several people on the way. Paid \$1.60 for this car fare: regular fare is \$1 from Nova Scotian Hotel to airport. At the I.C.A. office in the hotel I bought a single ticket to Montreal, \$37.70, & as my baggage was over the 40 lb. limit (chiefly due to my portable typewriter) I had to pay 15¢ a lb. for the excess = \$2.80. The I.C.A. waiting room is in the midst of the big new R.C.A.F. field behind Eastern Passage, with runways, hangars, workshops in all directions. Dawn was just breaking & the air seemed full of military aircraft with others taking off, or warming up. At 8:10 we filed into our plane through a door near the tail. The plane was a twin-engined low-wing monoplane of metal that gleamed like silver; not large, perhaps 50 feet long, & seating 12 passengers. Through the open door of the pilot's cabin we could see the pilot & co-pilot in their high seats fingering a complicated array of instruments. Our baggage was stowed in a compartment in the nose. The heating system depended on the engines, so that the air in the cabin was frigid for the first 10 minutes, & the stewardess, a young blonde with a merry smile & a smart uniform that displayed her fine figure & shapely legs, spread a warm red Kenwood

blanket over each lap. We kept our hats & overcoats on. All the window ~~was~~ curtains were drawn "for military reasons" & we took off with nothing to see but each others backs in the light of the twin rows of reading lights. After 10 minutes we were permitted to draw the curtains & unfasten safety belts, & as the cabin was then very warm & comfortable one could take off hat & coat & relax. Below a rather monotonous winter landscape unrolled: - snow, brown patches of hardwood forest, dull green patches of softwood, all threaded with streams & splattered with frozen lakes. The plane flew at 150 M.P.H. just under the cloud ceiling at about 2000 feet. Occasional wisps of cloud drifted past the windows. The air was a bit bumpy for the first half hour, after that the plane seemed to be suspended in space by a string, unmoving - until one looked at the ground. Amongst my fellow passengers were Laurie Ellis of the C.P.R., a plump & pleasant R.C. priest - Father Quillan, a young sailor flying to Charlottetown on 48 hours leave, and a fat squat old Jewess who spoke very broken English. Half an hour out of Dartmouth we were crossing Minas Basin, passed over Five Islands, a strip of woodland & the Cobequid Mountains, then the pink expanse of Cumberland Basin with the Fundy tide out. Passed right over Sackville - Mount Allison looked very small & insignificant - and came down to earth on the Moncton airport at 9 a.m. Here again the activities are largely military, with little

yellow trainers & bigger twin-engined grey bombers landing & taking off & sailing overhead in all directions. One or two of our people changed here for the P.C.I. plane & new passengers took their places. At 9.15 we were off again. The stewardess had provided each of us with a Kfx morning paper & chewing gum (which helps to alleviate the ear-pressure effect of altitude). Now she served breakfast. I'd had breakfast in Kfx, but I accepted a cup of her excellent coffee. Once in the air we could smoke as much as we wished. The plane flew over southern N.B., crossing the St. John river about 30 miles up from the city of St. John, then straight across Maine, flying over the little town of Millinocket. I went to sleep about there, & didn't wake until we approached the St. Lawrence river. At about 12.10 Kfx time (11.10 in Montreal) we nosed down to the Dorval airport, 12 miles outside Montreal. A car was waiting & we drove in to the Mount Royal, where my reserved room awaited me. I phoned Murray Chipman, of Maclean's Montreal office, also Mosley of the British United Press to arrange about seeing the fliers tomorrow. Shopped in Eaton's store on St. Catharine Street for a doll for Francis, & got them to mail it to L'pool. After dinner in the coffee shoppe in the Mount Royal basement I got cigarettes & a couple of cigars, retired to my room for a fine hot bath. My right <sup>ear</sup> very painful & nearly deaf, one unpleasant result of the change of altitude on landing at Dorval. Harry Clarke

of Maclean's phoned from Toronto & we had a long talk about the story; he is bursting with the desire to assist me in every possible way; I think Maclean's is rather keen after the publicity they will get out of a reprint in Reader's Digest, which has a circulation of eleven millions. Snow is falling tonight.

SATURDAY, DEC. 11/43 Awoke feeling better, my right ear nearly normal. Chipman's secretary phoned to say she had a letter of instructions etc. for me from Clarke & was sending it over to the hotel by special messenger. Mosley arrived at the hotel at 10 a.m., a pale young Englishman, very bland, very eager to be my guide, philosopher & friend; but last night I made sure from Clarke that I was a free nigger as far as B.U.P. was concerned; I prefer to play a lone hand. Temperature 5° below zero outdoors. We got a taxi & drove up to the Ross Memorial Hospital - a sort of de luxe annex of the Royal Victoria, high on the slope of Mount Royal. Two of the 3 fliers are here being treated for frostbite; the third, Snow, suffered comparatively little & has gone to his home in Digby, N.S.

The plane's skipper, Robert E. Coffman, is a tall, sallow man of 32, slowly recovering from frozen feet. His wife is with him. Their home is in Baton Rouge & both speak the most delicious Louisiana drawl. My reception & Mosley's was polite but chilly & I guessed that a pestering by B.U.P.'s reporters had thoroughly soured the ground for me. The first thing to do was to get rid of Mosley, which I did

politely but promptly. Then I enlisted the aid of Mrs. Coffman who was, I saw, very anxious to see a more accurate account of the affair than the tale as printed by B.U.P. Coffman thawed a lot when I told him I was not a professional news hawk. After 2 hours I left, got lunch in the Oxford Hotel grill in University Street. Spent the afternoon at the hospital with the plane's navigator, a good-looking boy of 23 from Camrose, Alberta - Norman C. ("Ted") Greenaway. He is very reserved, anxious to forget the whole affair, but quite cooperative.

Dined at the Mount Royal & retired to my room to study the B.U.P. story & draw up a list of questions & points to discuss with the fliers tomorrow. 10° zero tonight.

SUNDAY, DEC. 12/43. Spent this morning with Coffman, who is now very friendly & cheerful. This afternoon is public visiting afternoon & I decided to leave the boys alone. Had some notion of hiring a sleigh for a drive around the city but a snowstorm came up. This also spoiled an intention to call on Stephen Leacock, who lives out along the Côte des Neiges. Talked by phone to Clarke in Toronto, told him I could get the story in another day, & intend to fly home Tuesday & write it there. He was very agreeable, asked me to phone him tomorrow night. Studying the B.U.P. story & my notes all evening.

MONDAY, DEC. 13/43. Spent the morning with Coffman & his wife, eating pecans - a friend had sent them a sack-full from Louisiana. They showed me how to crack them - you take

two in your fist & crack one against the other - & it made a fine medium for conversation, like whistling. Cuffman gave me, for a souvenir, an emergency ration kit (containing matches, malted milk tablets, chocolate, barley sugar, benzodrine, a rubber bag, & a tiny compass) which he had carried back & forth across the Atlantic many times, also across Africa, the Nile Valley, Iraq, India, Algeria & Morocco. He had left it with his kit in Montreal before he made this last unfortunate trip.

All afternoon with Greenaway, very helpful. I feel I've got the real story now, & nothing is to be gained by pestering the men further. Tonight phoned TGA & reserved a seat in the plane leaving for Iffx at 1 p.m.

Went out into the cold ( $15^{\circ}$  below) to find a theatre, dived into the Palace on St. Catharine Street - & saw Abbott & Costello in a talkie. The title - "Hit the Ice" !!!

TUESDAY, DEC. 14/43 Went up to the hospital this morning for a last chat & farewell to Cuffman & Greenaway. Bought an antique English silver bracelet in Saks store for Edith's birthday. Packed, paid my hotel bill. The airport taxi picked me up at 12. & whizzed me away to Dorval. Temp. still  $15^{\circ}$  below. A long wait in the airport. The plane one half hour late on the trip from Toronto. TGA provided us with lunch in the airport restaurant, an interesting place, full of fliers, army & civilian, of U.S., Canada & at least 4 airlines, coming & going continually. We boarded our plane at 1:30, taxied

down to the end of the runway for the takeoff & stopped suddenly. A fuel pump had conked out. We passengers had to unbuckle our safety belts, get out & wait another 1/2 hour in the airport (no hardship). I bought a copy of "Madame Bovary" in the canteen & we got away in a blinding whirl of snow at 2 p.m. (3 p.m. Nfx time). Flying above heavy snow clouds practically the whole way, in bright sunshine. Read "Madame Bovary" half through, between Montreal & Nfx. Made the usual 15-minute stop at Moncton, the flare paths marked with strings of white, green, blue lights, very pretty in the dusk. One of my fellow passengers was a captain, R.C.N., who told me casually he had just flown from England via Iceland & Greenland in a Liberator bomber. Our little window blinds all drawn 10 minutes before arrival at Dartmouth, so missed the spectacle of Nfx from the air after dark. Airport taxi to Mum's house via Dartmouth Ferry took 1 hour - exactly the time consumed in flying 120 miles from Moncton to Dartmouth. Dined in a chink cafe. Sat up till 1 a.m. talking to Kibbe, who is still struggling to balance H.M.V. Canada's cashbook. Helda said to me with the Raddall bluntness "If you ask me, I think Kibbe's just trying to cover up old 'Doushka'" No sign of Johnson's body yet.

WEDNESDAY, DEC 15/43 Up at 6 a.m. The Wartime Taxi Ass'n. condescended to send a cab but a snowstorm was in progress & I reached the station with barely time to buy a ticket & scramble aboard,

leaving my baggage to follow on the next train. The usual dull journey to L'pool. Finished "Madame Bovary". If I could write like Flaubert what a novel I could make of "L'affaire Johnson".

FRIDAY, DEC 17/43 Lovely weather. Temp. 5° above zero last night; about 4 inches of snow on the ground. Roosevelt has arrived back in the U.S.A. but it is revealed that Churchill is lying gravely ill of pneumonia in a British hospital in the Middle East. Last night R.A.F. dropped 1500 tons of bombs on Berlin; cost 130 planes.

U.S. bombers made a big daylight raid on Innsbruck. In the Pacific, U.S. troops have landed on New Britain & are fighting their way towards the big Jap base of Rabaul.

SATURDAY, DEC 18/43 Mulder. Stores are flocked with people; there is money to burn but little to buy with it. Small stocks of shoddy goods not subject to W.P.T.B. price regulations are selling at amazing prices, e.g., a small toy rifle & bayonet, entirely of wood, crudely made and painted, which might have fetched 25<sup>s</sup> in pre-war days, is selling at \$1.98. There is little or no candy. One store received a small quantity yesterday, sold it in 50<sup>s</sup> lots, first come, first served, & was invaded by a yelling clawing mob (mostly the Why-not Town type, flush with money now) who practically carried it off in half an hour. The gov't liquor <sup>store</sup> still sells a fair amount of beer, but no wine, & only 7 bottles of spirits per day - first come, first served.

MONDAY, DEC 20/43 Mr. Churchill is recovering, for which we thank God. Sent off the Goffman story, after working day & night on it since I got home. It is a "ghost" job - my name will



not appear. War: the slow grind continues on the road to Rome. Generally admitted that our high hopes in Italy, after the Fascist collapse, were ill grounded. The Germans were there in strength. But secondary results are most valuable - large German forces tied to the French Riviera, Jugoslavia & Greece, our new ability to supply & reinforce the Jugoslav patriots under Tito, our complete naval & air control of the Mediterranean. Today U.S. airmen raided Bremen, lost 25 bombers & fighters, claim 42 German fighters shot down. Russians are striking towards the Latvian border after a short breathing spell; the German counter-thrust towards Kiev seems held at last.

TUESDAY, DEC. 21/43 A thaw after freezing weather. Rain at evening & a great wind shaking the house all night. War: R.A.F. dropped over 2000 tons of bombs on Frankfurt last night; cost 40 planes.

U.S. railway unions threaten to strike Dec. 28 (the midst of the holiday rush) if their wage increases are not granted.

Drove to Milton this afternoon with Tommy & Frances & cut a Christmas tree & gathered pine & hemlock branches. The river is covered with ice from the pine grove to Milton. Still a couple of inches of snow in the woods.

THURSDAY, DEC. 23/43 Clear & cold, 10° above zero at noon, with a strong wind. Walked to Milton & back this afternoon. Trains & busses are jammed with travellers, mostly service men on leave. War: Russians are pushing hard towards Riga along the Moscow road. The 8th Army continues its steady battling against German

positions near the Adriatic. Germans are fighting with skill & fury. Canadians are fighting in the streets of Ortona; casualties here & in the battle of Moro river said to be "quite heavy".

Russians have hanged 3 German soldiers publicly in Karkov, found guilty of killing civilians there. Berlin is furious, and with the twisted Nazi mentality declares reprisals will be made against "Anglo Saxon" prisoners, presumably airmen captured in bombing raids on German cities.

FRIDAY DEC 24/43 Cold & clear. Walked to Milton & back this afternoon. A lovely Christmas scene along the river.

Was: R.A.F. dropped 1,000 tons on Berlin last night, cost 17 planes. Today R.A.F. & U.S.A.F. unleashed a terrific air assault on German positions in the Calais area, supposedly attacking the new German rocket guns, capable of firing a huge charge into England according to refugees. But it may be the preliminary to the long awaited invasion.

President Roosevelt today named General Eisenhauer supreme allied commander on the "invasion front".

Influenza raging all over eastern Canada. Some plants have 30% of employees sick. Edith developed it yesterday but is dragging herself around. Marie Freeman is down with it so their plans to have Xmas dinner with us are "shot". The kids & I trimmed the tree tonight. Great excitement. Tommy informed us in a woebly voice that he knew there wasn't any Santa Claus. But Frances remains a firm

believes & has a quaint pencilled note pinned to the mantel.

Irv Bain dropped in this afternoon with another donation of fresh lobsters - delicious. My liquid cheer this year is limited to a few bottles of beer & 2 quarts of indifferent brown sherry called Kenmans, from Australia (@ \$1.70 per quart)

No bell-smucklers tonight - the war has proved too much for them at last; nobody has candy or fruit to spare, and we have no nuts at all except a pound or two of salted peanuts I brought from Montreal. About 11 p.m. a number of old friends arrived - Charlie & Florence Williams, Austin & Vera Parker with Annie Ritchie, Carl Conrad, Ralph & Grace Johnson, Hector & Marion Dunlap. We were able to furnish sherry, beer & Nova Scotia cider, & some sweetmeats. Then the whole crowd moved over to Johnson's house, where a young B.C. officer of the corvette "Alberni", Lieut. Ackhurst, & his wife joined the party. Finally to Parker's where we found the Rah Murrays & Mrs. (Lt. Com.) John Harding - Mrs. Harding, a cripple with a thin intense face, moaning that she felt "lower than a whale's belly" because John's corvette was only getting a 6-weeks refit while other corvettes were getting a forecastle extension as well. From there home at 1:30 a.m. Temp. just zero, a lovely night.

SATURDAY, XMAS DAY The kids were awake at 6:30; dark & crackling cold but we all got up & inspected the largesse of Santa Claus. Later in the morning I took the car to Milton with a load of gifts for the Freemans & Aunt Marie, stopping at Dunlaps' en route to pick up their donations. Lovely day. Kids skating across the river above

Hill's Grove. Christmas Dinner - just ourselves, sitting about the board in paper hats & listening to the daily news broadcast which comes always at ~~to~~ the noon hour - for 4 years we have sat in silence for our noon meal, listening to the news from various British & U. S. stations. The kids find it irksome. We heard the King broadcast a message to the armed forces & the empire, speaking clearly but with the momentary hesitations that comes from his slight impediment of speech.

Was: R.A.F. & U.S.A.F. again plastering the Pas de Calais with bombs & machine gun fire - 2000 fighters & bombers, & not one lost. Mr. Churchill's health continued to improve.

Sunday, Dec 26/43 A wonderful day, sunny, mild, yet not mild enough to melt the snow & ice. Drove to Milton this afternoon. People skating on the river above Shipyard Point, & we saw 40 or 50, mostly youngsters, skating all over the ice from bank to bank above Hill's Grove. Visited with the Freemans (I mended their radio lead-in) & Aunt Marie, who regaled us with root beer, ginger ale, cake & candy. I walked up to Potanoc & down the east side, saw a fine big beaver on the shelf of ice along the river bank, contentedly nibbling at the stems of waterside bushes, & old "Gusty" Manthorn regarded it with longing eyes. Spent most of the evening helping Tommy assemble model planes which we cut out of pre-stamped sheets of hardwood.

At 8 p.m. the radio announced that the British home fleet, while escorting a Murmansk convoy, has sunk the German battleship

'Scharnhorst' off the North Cape. Hurrah! The boys on the Murmansk run have waited a long time for a chance like that.

Among other new appointments in preparation for the grand assault on western Europe: - Bernard Montgomery will command all British troops under Eisenhower. Sir Harold Alexander will command British & U.S. troops in Italy. Supreme command in the Mediterranean goes to Sir Henry Maitland-Wilson, a surprise, for his only battles (not his fault) have been failures at boots, in Greece, & lately in the Dodecanese Islands. Patient, faithful Andy MacNaughton gives up command of the Canadian Army overseas, due to ill health; his place taken for the time being by Kenneth Stuart. We learn that on Christmas Day at 3 a.m. all U.S. & Canadian east coast defences - land, air & sea, also civilian emergency organisations, were given an alert which remained in effect all day, due to a U.S. Intelligence warning that Germans intended some sort of surprise attack, probably by ~~an~~ aircraft ~~carriers~~ carriers. Nothing happened.

MONDAY, DEC 27/43 Rain. Most of the snow disappeared from roads & fields. General Eisenhower on leaving his Algiers H.Q. for Britain today, made a flat prediction that victory over Germany would be complete in 1944.

TUESDAY, DEC 28/43 A howling west gale, thermometer dropping fast. Ortona has fallen to Canadian troops after a savage week's battle. I have met in town a number of lads from my old platoon in C Coy, since enlisted in the regular forces & looking very smart.

They are home on Xmas leave from camps as far away as Ontario, and shook my hand delightedly & were good enough to suggest that my training had been of real help to them.

The steady waning of the U-boat war is clear now in the sharp reduction of marine insurance rates & the steady slow-down in U.S. & Canadian govt. shipbuilding. Gov't has slowed down other war production in certain lines, closed some plants altogether (like the nut & bolt plant at Trenton) & C.C.F. leader Goldwell says there are 100,000 skilled workers out of jobs in Canada as a result.

WEDNESDAY, DEC 29/43. Fine, cold, windy, grand for walking. No snow but plenty of ice. Dust blowing on the roads. Hear the govt. has bought the Elmwood Hotel here as a naval hostel, after much rumour & months of dickering. War: British light naval <sup>and pair</sup> forces have sunk 3 German destroyers & 1 blockade runner in the Bay of Biscay - the 9th blockade runner caught this year.

Jason Breed of Mill Village some days ago brought me a bundle of papers & blueprints, some marked "Secret", relating to his brother Fred's invention of the "seadrome". Briefly it is a scheme for huge floating airdromes to be stationed at intervals across the Atlantic & Pacific to facilitate trans-ocean flying. Correspondence shows the Admiralty examined the scheme last year & turned it down as too expensive. (An American named Armstrong has a similar scheme but his design for the "drome" is faulty according to Breed.) Jason had a notion I could write an article on it for one of the leading

Canadian or U.S. magazines, & get some free publicity for the breed "drome." I said the scheme was rendered needless by the development of sustained ocean flight routes such as the North Atlantic hops via Iceland ~~and~~ or the Azores; & refused to attempt to write it for magazines. If I'm wrong I shall feel a fool one of these days. Fred Breed ~~was~~ is an eccentric genius from Mill Village who became a cable telegrapher & after some years in South America invented the Breed teletype, a machine which revolutionised cable telegraphy & made his fortune. He has lived in England ever since. Brother Jason is a sort of pensioner of Fred's, I believe. He lives on the old home place at Mill Village as a sort of country gentleman, & spends the winters in a suite at the Lord Nelson, Halifax.

Thursday, Dec. 30/43 Sunny, cold, fine skating weather. Was. R.A.F. dropped 2000 tons of bombs on Berlin last night. Russians are in Kozosten again, after losing it in the German counter-offensive Nov. 28th. Canadians are pushing beyond Ortona up Adriatic coast in snow & rain. In Canada, after 2 years' absence from grocery shelves, a small quantity of canned salmon has been released; a ration ticket is to be used, to ensure fair distribution. Today the U.S. Air Force sent 1500 bombers & fighters over Southwest Germany. This swarm of aircraft, day & night, over Germany gives us all a savage satisfaction. The Hun doesn't like the dose of his own medicine. General Montgomery said last week "Every bombing brings the end nearer; I'd like to see a German town wiped out every afternoon."

FRIDAY, DEC. 31 1943

Fine, cold. The Russians have taken Zhitomir again, thus making 1943 a year of almost unbroken victory for the United Nations, on land, sea & air. Everyone confident that 1944 will see the final defeat & surrender of Germany.

Tonight we joined our friends the Parkers, Johnsons, MacDonalds, Veinots, Dunlaps, Theiss's, Williams in a theatre party ("Sixie", a musical tale of the old South, starring the crooner Bing Crosby. (The chief point about the picture was the elaborate & beautiful costumes & settings, all in Technicolor.) Then to Veinots to see the New Year in; everyone seemed to have ~~saved~~ <sup>saved</sup> something of his liquor ration for the occasion & we spent some merry hours there & finally at Larry Seldon's. Home at 4 a.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 1, 1944

Cold, overcast, squalls of big snowflakes from time to time. Our kids skating all this week on "Drew's Pond", a little bog-hole in the edge of the school woods, directly across the field from my den windows. Drove to Milton with my family for New Year's dinner with Grandma Freeman & ~~the~~ "Big" & "Little" Aunt Marie, this afternoon. Chicken with all the fixings, including some of Grandma's delicious home-canned green beans; and a sherbet & a birthday cake for Edith - with 8 candles. Two five-cent pieces in the cake went by the usual "accident" to Tommy & Frances.

SUNDAY, JAN. 2/44

Fine, cold, walked around Western Head this p.m. with Parker & Smith. Later brought the Freemans & Aunt Marie down by car to dine & spend the evening. War: R.A.F. dropped



over 1,000 tons of bombs on Berlin last night, cost 28 bombers.

Our troops in Italy still fight their way forward in miserable weather. Russians are only 20 miles from the Polish border opposite Zhitomir.

MONDAY, JAN 3/44

Fine, cold. R.A.F. dumped another 1,000 tons of bombs on Berlin last night, cost 27 bombers. U.S. day bombers were busy over France during the week-end, one target being the Hispano-Suiza (aero engines) works near Paris. In New Guinea & the Solomons, U.S. & Australian troops continue their amphibious attacks with steady success; while keeping absolute control of sea & air they can land anywhere, cutting off Jap troops in fortified positions — precisely the formula used by the Japs when they over-ran the East Indies.

TUESDAY, JAN 4/44

Fine, cold. Nat: an estimated 2700 allied aircraft swarmed over the Calais area & dropped 3000 tons of bombs. Generals Eisenhower & Montgomery are in England, busy at their new posts. Rumour that MacNaughton resigned command of Canadians because he & "Monty" could not get along; also because Canadians had been split between two fronts instead of fighting together as an army. Cossack patrols are now in Poland on the heels of the retreating Germans. U.S. destroyer "Turner" sunk by explosion (presumably torpedos) off Sandy Hook.

WEDNESDAY, JAN 5/44

Overcast, cold. Young Arthur White, who joined the R.C.A.F. over a year ago, is home on embarkation leave wearing a pilot's wings. Reduction of war production continues; many steel plants reduced or closed; huge govt. explosives plant at

Nobel, Ont., closed, its 1800 employees dispersed to other industries. All building of corvettes & other escort craft, in Canada, is to cease at once, except for keels already laid. Building of merchant ships in Canada, already reduced, is to be cut still more. All these signs show the prevailing confidence that 1944 will see Germany conquered.

War: U.S. air force plastered Kiel yesterday, lost 37 planes, claim 90 Germans shot down. R.A.F. plastered the Baltic port of Stettin last night. Major raids like these still get headlines but the fact is that Allied aircraft are swarming all over ~~the~~ Europe, day & night. Russian armies still grind across the snow into Poland & towards the Baltic.

Friday, Jan 7/44 Overcast, raw east wind, but still no snow; dust blowing along roads. Some excitement in Milton a few nights ago. Young Mack Boland has for 2 years been the lover of a Maarten girl who married one of the Wentyls on School Hill. Wentyl is overseas in N.W.S. Regt & the wife stays with her grandmother, old Anne Maarten, in a shack at the corner of School Lane. Boland's car, parked in the shadow of the schoolhouse, just behind the shack, until all hours of the night, had become a regular part of the evening landscape until midnight of Jan 3rd, when a dynamite explosion damaged it severely, shattered all the windows on the east side of the school, & wakened the whole village. Police have arrested Otto Nelson's boy, 18 yrs, whose sweetheart is a sister of the absent soldier.

War: The R.A.F. has for some time been using a "revolutionary new plane, which has no propellers but is "jet-propelled". It is very fast

& has been nicknamed "The Squirt" Inventor, an R.A.F. group captain named Whittle, who had worked on it since 1937. The plane is being mass-produced in the States for R.A.F. All this information is just now released by London & Washington, so presumably the Germans have bagged one or more of the "squirts". Russians are pushing into Poland & thrusting hard at German troops in the Dnieper bend, where Moscow announces the capture of Kirovo, a big rail & road center.

SUNDAY, JAN. 9/44 Fine, cold. Drove to Milton this afternoon & called on Francis Tupper while my family visited Grandma. Francis keeps Bachelor's Hall in the old Tupper house where his father & grandfather lived as well-to-do lumbermen. He lives in the dining room, where he cooks over a small iron stove, keeps a big stack of firewood, & is surrounded by an incredible mess — tables laden with paper & history books, old chests & linen presses filled with more books & papers; filthy old rags, socks, pieces of whittled rubber tire, scraps of paper, a cat and bushels of dirt. Every cranny & corner of this big cluttered room is a solid mat of cobwebs, & the ceiling is a shiny black from the fumes of his cooking. The room smells as bad as it looks. He has a bank account but does some logging on a small scale on his own land & fills his leisure in studying local & other history. Just now he is engaged on his magnum opus, a rambling, amusing miscellany of local history & legends collected during his lifetime & now appearing in instalments in the Liverpool Advance, entertaining but of no use whatever as history — which is what he thinks it is.

TUESDAY, Jan 11, 1944

Cold, overcast. A small diesel-engined ship (a former rum-runner) foundered off Little Hope late yesterday afternoon. The crew of 7 took to this boat, which leaked badly, & after rowing all night reached <sup>Northampton</sup> ~~London~~ harbour this morning. The men were taken to the emergency hospital in the <sup>University</sup> High School basement & are now in charge of the women volunteers, most of whom are trained nurses. They are being treated for frostbite & immersion but are expected to move on to Halifax tomorrow - a queer mixed lot, a Newfoundlander, 2 Yugoslavs, an Egyptian, a Bahamian (the ship was bound to the Bahamas with a load of fish) a Greek and 1 nondescript. (See Aug. 19, 1932) {SHE WAS THE FORMER BAHAMIAN RUM-BONNET "ELEUTHERIAN", RENAMED AT THOMPSON'S, LIVERPOOL, YEARS AGO}

War: Bitter fighting continues in the snow of the Italian mountains. Russians claim that German retreat from the Ukraine is now a rout. A Fascist court at Verona, in German-occupied Italy, has condemned to death Count Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, for conspiracy with Badoglio against the Duce last year.

Russia announces that she intends to keep that portion of Poland which Red troops occupied in 1939 & are now re-entering; she claims the territory belongs to her anyway, that Poland stole it in 1921. Today 600 U.S. bombers & fighters raided aircraft plants in western Germany; the Germans put up a furious fight all along the way. U.S. claims over 100 German fighters shot down, admit loss of 59 bombers, 5 fighters, say the objectives were smashed, call it the greatest air battle of the war.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 12/44

Cool, overcast. Am suffering insomnia and digestive troubles, together with bronchitis, which never leaves me

now - due to excessive smoking. A miserable combination.

War: 2 Spaniards tried & shot at Gibraltar for sabotage. Berlin says Count Ciano, old Marshal De Bono & 3 other members of Fascist Grand Council which deposed Mussolini, have been shot at Verona for treason. No tears here. Ciano & the others were opportunists who sought to jump over on the winning side; they had been rabid Fascists. Allies are making repeated day & night air raids on Sofia, & there is a good deal of bombing in support of Tito's partisan forces in Jugoslavia, now hard pressed by German columns.

Tonight in the Legion rooms the officers for 1944 were installed - including myself as president. A number of ladies of the Auxiliary came to watch the ceremony, & later joined us in a repast of excellent lobster chowder. In my address I put forward the idea of a Memorial Hall at the war's end, to house the Legion & its auxiliary & to form a general welfare bureau & headquarters for war veterans of Queens County and their wives.

FRIDAY, JAN 14/44 Fine, cool - the 18th consecutive day of dry weather.

War: Officially announced that allied shipping losses in 1943 were only 40% of losses in '42, while ship production was 2½ times that of '42.

SATURDAY, JAN 15/44 Fine, cool. Rabbit hunting at Port Mouton this afternoon with Parker & son, Johnson, & Charlie Williams - who rejoins his ship soon. We got 10, of which 3 fell to me. Rabbits very scarce this year. Good going in the woods, no snow,

all brooks & swamps frozen very hard. Coming back along the highway in the dusk we found the people of Port Mouton, Hunts Point, etc. burning off the scrub bushes & grass in their pastures, a fine blaze in the dark - and a remarkable sight in mid-January. War: last night R.A.F. dropped 2000 tons of bombs on ~~Hamburg~~ Brunswick, while "mosquitoes" raided Berlin & Magdeburg. Lost 38 bombers. All day hundreds of Allied aircraft swarmed over northern France, bombing & machine-gunning ground targets, with light German opposition.

SUNDAY, JAN. 16/44 Cold, clear. To Milton with my family by car this afternoon. <sup>From</sup> there walked with Brent Smith to Rapid Falls, where we crossed the upper end of Cowies' Falls power-dam pond over the ice & examined the site of Rapid Falls mill. Only the tall brick chimney stands as it was, all the buildings have vanished, & the old wooden dam looks shaky.

MONDAY, JAN. 17/44 Fine, cold. A phone call took me to (Laurier) John Cameron's stuffy little office at 5 p.m. There I found Cameron, Seth Bartling Sr., Paul King, representing the Liverpool Board of Trade - plus Austin Parker, Tom Ratchford, Donald Smith. On behalf of the Board, Cameron made a funny little lecture on the Duties of Citizenship and blandly informed P, R, V. & myself that we had been selected as candidates for mayor & would we kindly settle the mayoralty here & now amongst ourselves? The reason for

this odd procedure, it appeared, was that the town election comes in February, & it is desired to put forward a candidate who has the united support of the "steady" part of the population, in case the C.C.F. party should put forward a socialist. I promptly said I didn't want it; Smith ditto; Parker suggested Ratchford, who protested - not too strongly - and at once found himself under a strong fire of persuasion from the whole company. He agreed - on condition that Mersey's president (Col Jones) and Chairman of directors (J. McV. Stewart) give their consent. That seemed assured & so we left together very happily, Cameron adjuring us in his odd stammer to "keep this meeting absolutely confidential."

WEDNESDAY, JAN 19/34 Rain, after 22 straight days of dry weather, no snow, & dust blowing in great clouds along the roads - a winter miracle. Much stir over a court martial of medical officers at Fredericton, where a man named Smith died of acute diabetes in the army hospital through careless diagnosis - and within two days of examination by a draft board, which passed him as fit for service. C/O at the hospital a Lt. Col. Baird, a classmate of John Wickwire at Dalhousie. War: Through the carefully ambiguous official communique from 8th Army H.Q. today it is clear that a Canadian attack yesterday against German positions along the Orielle River, on the road to Pescara, was defeated. The few parties that succeeded in getting forward had to be withdrawn. But all this fighting is light compared with 1914-18. Canadian casualties

WEDNESDAY  
↓

in Sicily were 2,439. In Italy to Jan 18/44 they were 2,073 - and this includes the Moro River fighting.

THURSDAY, JAN. 20/44 Light rain all day. Mud. Afternoon at Doc Ford's trying to get details for memorial plaque to his son Syd. Difficult because Ford, always rather stupid, has become a mono-maniac on the subject - declares Syd was the greatest flyer ever seen, multiplies by 3 or 4 the number of planes Syd shot down, etc. Syd, a fine modest chap, would turn over in his grave. Tonight attended the blood clinic for my 3rd donation, which I'm told entitles me to a bronze pin. Many sailors there. War: Germans have retired from Novgorod, the big Russian city south of Leningrad. Anthony Eden has conveyed to dictator Franco a stern warning from Britain on Spain's pro-German policy. Latest incident is the placing of bombs in cargoes of oranges loaded at Valencia for Britain. Fine old Canon F. G. Scott, padre to the Canadian Corps in the last war, died yesterday in Quebec at 83. He was a close friend of my father's & frequently administered the rite of communion to him privately in his tent before going into battle; and was himself severely wounded not long after Dad was killed in action at Amiens.

FRIDAY, JAN 21/44 Mild, sunny, muddy, like a spring day. All the ice has gone out of the river. Jonesie has frowned on Tom Ratchford's proposal to run for mayor, so the committee are still hunting a man. War: R.A.F. dumped 2300 tons of bombs on Berlin last night.



cost 35 bombers, 9 of them Canadian. Steep fighting on 5th Army front in Italy, where British troops have fought through the hills to the Appian Way. Heavy daylight bombing on German positions in Pas de Calais area. A British submarine has sunk 3 Jap supply ships & a cruiser of the Kumara class in the Malacca Straits - the first sign of British naval activity in those waters in many months.

SATURDAY, JAN 22/44 Mild, sunny. Rabbit hunting at Port Mouton this afternoon with Parker, Dunlap, & Parker's spaniel pup - who had a fine time but proved a confounded nuisance. During the afternoon we had all sorts of weather - sun, rain, sleet & snow. I got 4 rabbits, A 2, & J 4. War: R.A.F. dumped 2000 tons of bombs on Magdeburg last night, cost 55 planes. In Italy, British & French troops have landed from the sea behind German lines near the Tiber mouth. British authorities at Trinidad have arrested an Argentine diplomat en route to Germany, charging him with espionage; Argentine army officers in a recent coup set up a sort of Fascist regime in the country & have shown much evidence of hostility to the United Nations.

SUNDAY, JAN 23/44 Mild, overcast. To Milton this pm & had a yarn with Roy Gordon, who said an Avro Anson twin engine plane of Fleet Air Arm (R.N.) stationed at Garmouth N.S. made a forced landing on the ice of Lake Rossignol last Wednesday (Jan 20). Her landing gear would not operate & she slid down on her belly & skidded along the ice with little more damage than bent

propellers. A companion aircraft landed on the ice & picked up the 2 men of the crew, took them back to Yermouth. On Friday a F.A.A. truck arrived in L'pool with 2 officers & 4 ratings to salvage the plane. Gordon showed them where to drive their truck on to the ice at Indian Gardens, & the Milton forest ranger Geo. Nile accompanied them over 1st Lake, 2nd Lake & finally across Rossignol. The stranded plane sat on the ice not far from the old outlet (now flooded) of Yeaton Lake, & a wide pressure crack, partly thawed, barred the truck's way. Nile went ashore, cut poles & built a rough but stout bridge across the fissure. The airmen took some big jacks from the truck, jacked up the plane, & got the wheels down into place. Then they manhandled the plane across the "bridge", hitched it to the truck & towed it down to Indian Gardens. There (using the Mersey Co's camp for quarters) they overhauled the plane, fitted new props, and yesterday flew it away. A neat bit of work.

ANOTHER PLANE DOWN IN A  
FUTURE WEEK. ~~WILL BE~~ BY  
THE ADMIRALTY OF CANADA. 1941

War: With its usual stupidity (or mania for secrecy) our Army refuses to say exactly where our troops have landed south of Rome, although the Germans are well aware of it & have in fact announced the loss of the little port of Nettuno. According to one correspondent the Germans recently moved 3 divisions of crack troops from the Rome area to the front facing our 5th Army. "Our Gen. Alexander seized the opportunity, & so far our landing force has met only slight opposition."

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 26, 1944

Two lovely days; yesterday walked around Western Head, today to Milton & back; sunny, frosty; roads bare and hard and quite smooth. Thompson Bros.' new foundry, which has been operating some days, now announced with great eclat in the Hfx. papers. War: our force which landed at Nettuno seems to be making slow progress, despite the lack of serious German resistance. Perhaps it is only a small force, after all. Russians have opened a drive south from Leningrad. Sharp air fighting over Rabaul in the Solomons, where Yanks claim 40 or 50 Jap planes shot down.

FRIDAY, JAN. 28/44

Yesterday rain all day. Today blue sky, sun, only a light breeze, temp 40° at noon, road a little muddy. Still no snow, the most "open" winter anyone remembers. The town's little political pot boils merrily. At the last minute Ross Byrne (now making a small fortune as lawyer for Thompson Bros. - i.e., political link between the firm & the govt) persuaded Bert Kempton to run for mayor, Hector Dunlap & a chap named McCaul for two of the 3 vacant councillor's seats. All are Thompson employees. Thompson Co. has just built a fine new brick foundry equipped with every modern device, is building a fine new garage & will in fact have a fine new plant - all at govt. expense - when the war ends. On these matters the town has wisely refused, so far, to make any tax concessions, or concessions for light & water consumption. Thompson Co.'s move is obvious. But as soon as Byrne's move was known, Edgar Wright jumped forward as candidate for mayor, & he together with councillor-candidates

Barney Mosher, Hubert Nickerson, Hector McLeod, have a joint advt in the "Advance" asking support as true candidates for the town. Cecil Day, "Advance" editor, twitted me today - "You know, your name was first choice on the Board of Trade's list. If you'd entered for mayor, nobody'd have opposed you, & we'd have been spared this whole fracas!" The cream of the joke is that the local C.C.F. party, which the B. of T. feared, has not entered a single candidate.

War: R.A.F. dropped 1500 tons of bombs on Berlin last night, cost 34 bombers. Still little news from the Allied landing south of Rome, where in spite of a complete surprise & no German troops in the area for at least the first 2 days, our troops seem to have got at most 12 miles inland and on the average about 5 miles. Russians have cleared the Leningrad-Moscow railway & are pushing south & west. Leningrad's final deliverance was celebrated by 20 salvos from 350 guns in the city defences. Usually these victory salutes are fired from guns at Moscow. Russians some weeks ago recaptured the forest near east Polish border where last spring (see Apl. 25/43) the Germans claimed to find bodies of "20,000 Polish officers & men, prisoners murdered by the Russians in 1939". On the strength of this the Polish govt in London raised a fuss & Moscow promptly severed diplomatic relations. Now the Russians have done some investigating (English & U.S. correspondents were present) & have opened huge pits in the forest & found remains of about 10,000 Poles. Documents on some bodies show the men were alive

in the autumn of 1941, & it becomes clear that this hideous mass murder was in fact committed by the Germans themselves. Certainly it is of a pattern with the mass murders carried out by Germans in Kiev & other cities, & for which there is plenty of evidence, Russian & German.

Today the British & U.S. gov'ts made joint statements, accusing the Japanese of starving, beating, torturing Allied prisoners; thousands of British & U.S. prisoners have died & the rest are in a terrible state of malnutrition & ill-treatment. The statements are made on the eye-witness accounts of several officers & men who escaped recently, and it is added, sombrely "this information is now released because there seems no further hope of getting supplies & medicines to our prisoners in Japanese hands."

Spent this evening at Johnson's with a young naval surgeon-lieut. named Paddon, from a corvette in port. His people have long been connected with the Grenfell Mission, & apart from college he has spent his whole life in Labrador. Shubby, pale, large round grey eyes, 29, well groomed black hair; clever, humorous, a little pleased with himself, extremely talkative; very good company.

SATURDAY, JAN. 29/44 To Eagle Lake camp this afternoon with Parks, Smith, Dunlop, Lt. Com. John Harding. No snow but ice everywhere along the road, treacherous footing in the woods. 12" ice on Eagle Lake snowed about 1" in the night. War: R.A.F. heavily bombed Berlin again last night & today U.S. air forces carried out an 800-bomber daylight raid on a town in west Germany.

SUNDAY, JAN. 30/44 Fine sunny day. The others went rabbit hunting,

I stayed at camp, logging & splitting firewood & cooking the dinner. John had a quart of Navy rum which was a pleasant change from the tinted water we buy from the Liquor Commission at \$5 a quart. Gordon walked in, with his dog during the afternoon. Home at 7. War: big R.A.F. raid on Brunswick last night, & today another heavy U.S.A.F. daylight raid. Today is the 11th anniversary of Hitler's accession to power in Germany. He made a brief radio address to Germans, playing all the old tunes, e.g. he was a man of peace, England had plotted the war, the present issue was civilisation (Germany) versus Barbarism (Russia), and warning Germans that 1944 is going to be a hard, hard year.

Tonight our radio news said bluntly that the new 5th Army landing at Nettuno had been a failure strategically. It had been designed to draw off German reserves from the Cassino front. Instead the Germans drew all their reserves from Rome & actually attacked on the Cassino front, driving U.S. forces back across the Rapido river. We now have 6 divisions on a narrow beach-head south of Rome, & the German attitude seems to be — "now you're there, where are you?"

Monday, Jan 31/44 Overcast, cold. I have a cold, my first since last winter. Am fighting my indigestion with Amphogel, recommended by a Navy doctor. War: R.A.F. plastered Berlin again last night, & today the U.S.A.F. made a big daylight raid on Klagenfurt. Russians advancing from Leningrad are said to be close to Estonian border. In the Pacific, U.S. naval &

air forces are attacking the Marshall Islands, on the direct road to the Philippines. Japs say fighting is going on ashore.

TUESDAY, FEB 1/44 Snowing lightly all day. Grandma Freeman & the two aunts Marie came down in my car for the afternoon & evening. I have a wretched cold. Voted at the townhouse this morning for Edges Wright (mayor) and Nickerson, Mackod & Dunlap (councillors). My vote for Dunlap from personal friendship, otherwise I heartily disapproved the attempt to get a Thompson Bros. government for the town. {G. Terry, R.C.M. & Margaret (sister) married at Trinity Church today}

WEDNESDAY, FEB 2/44 Temp. 5° above zero this morning & blowing hard, but sunny. Am confined to the house with my cold; misery in my right cheek, eye & nostril & temple - the old sinus infection.

Result of yesterday's town election. The keen interest is shown by the heavy vote, unusual in town affairs. The Thompson candidates were all defeated.

LIVERPOOL - For Mayor: E. J. Wright 614, G. Kempton 411, 168. Councillor: elected, H. McCool 742, H. Nickerson 693, E. Meador 438; defeated, H. Dunlop 407, E. McCaul 308. Terms unexpired: G. Henderson, J. A. Charest, F. Meazar.

THURSDAY, FEB 3/44 Again windy & cold. Still confined to the house. A steamship taking coal from Hfx. to St. John has been lost in the Bay of Fundy. Bodies of crew washing ashore on Digby Neck. censorship, no details. War: in Italy the 5th Army has fought its way to the outskirts of Cassino, key to the mountains. U.S.A. F. bombers & fighters to the number of 1100 attacked Wilhelmshaven today. Russians have taken Rovno in Poland, have crossed Estonian frontier next the Baltic, & are thrusting hard towards Odessa in the far south. In the Pacific, U.S. forces have captured one or two of the Marshall Islands, & fighting continues. Halifax ago

over a daring hold-up <sup>5</sup> days ago, in which a 16-year old high school student named ~~Butler~~ <sup>Fogarty</sup> Nolan got \$1100 from the cashier of the Lord Nelson hotel. He was arrested in Montreal & returned to Hfx. in custody yesterday. General MacNaughton is back in Canada; refused to talk to newspapermen except to say that he was in perfect health & had never felt better in his life, & that one day he would tell the inside story of his replacement as commander of the Canadian Army Overseas.

SATURDAY, FEB 5/44 A lovely day, climax to a cold but sunny week, & I have been confined to the house since Monday. Was: U.S. warships sank 3 German ships in South Atlantic; they were running the blockade with rubber, oil, etc. from the Jap-held East Indies. Russians claim to have 10 German divisions trapped on the Dnieper near Cherkassy. Hard fighting in Italy around Cassino & on the Battino beach-head, where Germans are attacking fiercely. Scandal in Quebec city, where 500,000 lbs. of meat stored in a Federal gov't warehouse have been condemned as unfit for consumption. This coincides with a statement by Canada Packers that all storage facilities in Canada are choked with meat. Why, then, are we rationed on meat? U.S. has cut off oil shipments to Spain, where dictator Franco still professes his strong friendship for Hitler & Mussolini, who put him where he is. Spanish press & radio have been strongly anti-British, & British & U.S. consulates have been mobbed by "Phalangists" lately.

SUNDAY, FEB 6/44 Rain all night, mud & mist today. Drove to Milton this afternoon. Feel punk. Was: Canadian minesweeper Chedabucto sunk



in collision off the N.S. coast. Steamer lost in Bay of Fundy (see Feb. 3) was Greek ship "Aikaterine T"; apparently sank with all hands - 26 men. Bodies of 2 British navy gunners on board have drifted ashore & were buried with naval honours at Digby. All experts are puzzled by the Russians' deep plunge into Poland, where German resistance has been deceptively weak; strategically it looks like suicide but Stalin seems sure of himself.

MONDAY, FEB. 7/44 Lovely day, sunny, cool breeze, mud everywhere. Had a short walk this afternoon, my first in a week; lovely. Dinner this evening on board the corvette "Algoma" now being fitted with an extended fore-castle at Thompson's. Our hosts, a Lieut. Hyman, of Winnipeg, & Sub. Lieut. Brown, of Vancouver, our fellow-guests, Jerry, Hubert & Lawson Pickerson & their wives. The usual navy hospitality, an excellent dinner, a variety of drinks, & we played bridge & talked in the little wardroom till midnight. Freezing hard tonight.

TUESDAY, FEB. 8/44 Fine, cool, blue sky, dust on the roads again. Walked to Milton & back. At the railway bridge the contractors now have about 25 bungalows erected & finished outside; this extraordinary open weather has enabled them to make a showing. War: Russians have captured Nikolopol, the big manganese-ore mining centre on the lower Dnieper. In Italy, Germans are pressing our <sup>11</sup>Settuno beach-head hard. U.S.A.F. gave Frankfurt another heavy pasting by daylight today.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 9/44 Another marvellous day; walking is marred only by clouds of dust thrown up by passing cars & trucks. Some people blame this winter's prevalence of colds & flu on the dust. Legion meeting

Tonight in the rooms over Seldon's store. It was decided to renew the Bingo game which was operated all last year in the Legion hall; difficulty in obtaining suitable prizes, but Curtis, one of the Vice Presidents is manager of the "Elbrite" store & thinks he can get enough rayon stockings, Kettles & other rare bric-a-brac to keep the game going. The game is against the law but is operated here & elsewhere by Legion branches & by R.C. churches, & the law winks.

War: Kwajalein, chief island in the Marshalls, is now wholly in the hands of the U.S. Pacific forces. They give fantastic figures on casualties - over 8000 Japs killed, against something like 1500 killed, wounded & missing on the U.S. side.

In Italy our force in the Pontine Marshes ("Rettuno beach-head") is hard pressed; the whole area is swept by German fire, & we are losing much transport off the shore by bombing attack.

All reports agree that a golden opportunity here was muffed by the landing troops, though censorship forbids saying whether it was poor generalship, timidity of troops or lack of support. Certainly "Jumbo" MacArthur-Wilson, whose whole career in this war has been one of failure, (Greece, Crete, the Dodecanese, etc.) has made a bad start as G-in-C. Mediterranean.

THURSDAY, FEB. 10/44 Snow squalls this morning. About 1" of snow on ground. The Navy is operating Elmwood Hotel as a home from home for crews whose living quarters are under repair here.

War: U.S.A.F. made another big raid on Brunswick <sup>yesterday</sup> ~~today~~, cost 37 bombers; they claim 85 German fighters shot down.

FRIDAY, FEB. 11/44 Grey sky all day & tonight a snowstorm, although the barometer gave no warning. Mother phoned from Hfx tonight to tell me that Bill & Hilda leave on the 16th. for Brunswick, Maine. He has been transferred to a Fleet Air Arm station there, & they are having to sell most of the furniture & equipment they bought so expensively a year ago, as it can't be transferred across the border. "Kibbie" seems to have been held responsible to some extent for Commander Johnson's defalcations. He was sent away from the office on 3 weeks "sick leave" by the new S.N.O., & <sup>now</sup> comes the transfer to a minor post at Brunswick. (See entry Dec 9/43 & Dec 2/43) I'm sorry for Hilda, not for "Kibbie", who for the past 3 or 4 years has been having a good time with the Navy "cocktail fleet" in Halifax & regarding the war as a glorious picnic. Perhaps this business has shaken some sense into him. Mother is worried & now that she is alone in Hfx. I shall renew my pleas (made many times in the past 5 years) that she come & live with us.

War: U.S.A.F. raided Frankfurt today, lost 25 planes, shot down 135 Germans. At Ottawa, Minister of Defence Ralston insisted to the House that Gen MacNaughton was physically unfit to command the army overseas & read a letter from Mc.N. in England dated Dec. 7, saying so himself. Ralston admitted sharp differences of opinion between the general & himself on matters of policy.

SATURDAY, FEB. 12/44 Blizzard blew itself out this morning, about 8 inches of snow, & the fall continued lightly all day. This is our first real winter weather since Christmas. War: situation at the Nettuno

beach-head in Italy is officially "grave". Germans are attacking in superior force from all sides & a continued series of gales has prevented the landing of supplies & support by Allied aircraft.

In Burma our forces are under sharp attack by Japs on the Arakan front in the thick jungle.

MONDAY, FEB. 14/44 Splendid weather. Kids enjoying the snow (I spent yesterday afternoon in the garden helping them build a snow fort & later took part in a snowball battle with them.) Frances quite sick this morning, has complained of abdominal pains for weeks; I phoned Doc Wickwire, fearing appendicitis. He came & examined her thoroughly, was uncertain, & put her on a liquid diet.

War: Russians are approaching Pskov, near the Baltic, & have bombed Helsinki heavily. Three Finnish politicians have arrived in Stockholm; rumour says they are negotiating peace with Russia. In Italy better weather has improved the situation of our troops in the Nettuno beach-head. Estimated that Germans now have 17 divisions on the Italian front. The Luftwaffe is striking at London almost every night; London says the raids are small nuisance affairs, Berlin talks of "hundreds of German planes over London", "vast destruction", "huge conflagrations", etc.

TUESDAY, FEB. 15/44 Rain all day & a heavy S.E. gale which played havoc with lightning & phone wires. Enough snow remains to whiten the ground. War: every day heavy & continuous Allied bombing of the Pas de Calais. Much fuss over an ancient Benedictine monastery on the top of important Mount Cassino, south of Rome. Vatican asked

Allies to spare it & of course Germans fortified it. After 2 weeks of struggle, which cost Allies much blood, it was decided yesterday to bomb it to pieces. As the U.S. aircraft roared in for the attack, hundreds of German troops poured out of the monastery. Our troops in the Nettuno beach-head are holding their own & making some counter attacks. Ottawa says 2,300 Canadian Indians are in the armed services, 92 of whom are from Nova Scotia, 166 from New Brunswick. Tonight I phoned Alf to say farewell to "Kibbie" & Hilda. She & Mother have been almost inseparable since Hilda was born (in 1914 - she was called Hilda because it meant "war-maiden") & both feel very sad.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 16/44 Gale blew itself out last night. Freezing again this morning. Last night R.A.F. (many Canadian planes took part) gave Berlin another heavy bombing - the heaviest yet, over 2500 tons of bombs, carried by 1000 to 1500 planes, & all dropped within 20 minutes! Lost 45 planes.

FRIDAY FEB. 18/44 Heavy rain, which with the ice everywhere underfoot, made the most treacherous footing I can recall. Went with Legion members to the funeral of plump old Corie Sayers, of Brooklyn. Service in the R.C. church at 9 a.m. Once again I was impressed with the witch-doctory atmosphere - the candles, the red lamp, the little boys continually bowing, kneeling, fetching vials etc, the jingle of the boy's bell, & above all the mumbo-jumbo of the priest, gabbling Latin in an undertone, practically the whole time with his back to the people, performing mysterious rites, drinking wine etc. We walked in pouring rain to the new R.C. cemetery, (adjoining the old Congregational cemetery on College Hill)

and the road was so icy that the hearse & other cars had to make a run for it, clawing wildly up the hill with a great rattling & scraping of chains.

For our own little rite at the graveside we could get no real bugles, so had 3 boys from the band, playing "Last Post" & "Reveille" very cautiously with the aid of a sheet of music held wetly in the wind.

War: German attacks continue against the ~~Helms~~ Helms beach head. Gen. Alexander very wroth with correspondents whose dispatches cast doubt on our ability to hold it, & he has imposed a more severe censorship.

Russians say they have mopped up the remains of 10 German divisions trapped in the Dnieper bend; according to their figures only 3000 Germans (mostly officers) escaped by air transports; they killed 52,000 & captured 11,000, with all stores, guns & equipment.

In the Pacific, the big U.S. force which took Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands has now moved on to Truk, in the Carolines, which the air photos show to be a great naval base, well fortified, with elaborate air fields & a Jap "Singapore". Heavy fighting is in progress, but no news of a U.S. landing. More likely a sea-and-air raid to "soften 'em up" for a landing later.

As a by-product, aircraft in this force caught a Jap convoy near New Britain & sank 15 ships, including 1 destroyer.

In the U.S., the presidential election campaign is getting underway; several Republican candidates, notably Wendell Willkie. Democrats seem to be waiting to see if Roosevelt will offer for a 4th term. The heavy & dark censorship which has made this the least understood of all wars now reveals 2 marine disasters (a) G.P.R. liner "Empress of Canada"

torpedoed & sunk off Sierra Leone last summer with loss of 400, mostly Italian prisoners. (b) unnamed troopship torpedoed & sunk off North Africa "some weeks ago" with loss of 1,000 - all U.S. soldiers.

SATURDAY, FEB. 19/44 Temp zero at 7 a.m., with a bitter N.W. gale all day. War: Germans raided London quite heavily last night, about 100 bombers. They lost 8. Tommy has the aeroplane model craze & nearly drives me crazy too, demanding my help in all sorts of constructional dilemmas just when I'm facing the greatest dilemma of a novel - the last 13 chapters.

SUNDAY, FEB. 20/44 Zero again this morning. Drove the family to Milton this afternoon, had a fine walk to Potanod & called on old Francis Supper; found him sitting in his filthy & tattered armchair before the stove, wearing all his f. & t. clothes (including windbreaker & cap - the cap stuck on backwards) shaggy, unshaven, unwashed, ill with a cold. A foul plate & mug & a blackened billy-can stood on a chair at his side. He greeted me in his indifferent fashion. I wanted information about place-names up river, but he wanted to talk about the family La Tour - & did, insisting amongst other things that Madame (Charles) La Tour was a half-breed, translating passages from the French of Abbé Despres, & smoking a succession of cheap little cigars from a package on the table.

War: R.A.F. dropped 2300 tons of bombs on Leipzig last night - a long trip & an expensive one - 79 bombers lost, with 500 or 600 airmen. Today the U.S.A.F. made the heaviest daylight raid yet, with an enormous escort of U.S. R.A.F.,

R.C.A.F., R.A.A.F. & other Allied fighters, all aimed at German aircraft-mfg. towns. They lost 27 planes, claim 61 Germans.

Washington says the sea & air attack on Truk, the big Jap base in the Carolines, was a smash hit: - sunk, 2 Jap light cruisers, 3 destroyers, 1 seaplane tender, 2 gunboats, 2 oilers, 9 cargo ships; destroyed in air & on ground - 201 Jap planes. Lost, 17 U.S. planes, 1 U.S. ship damaged.

A German attempt to get submarines into the Med. by sea has been "stopped" at Gibraltar - 3 sub. definitely sunk.

MONDAY, FEB 21/44 Fine, cold. Have completed all but the closing chapters of "Rogue Sudden". "Capt. John Randall, of "I'm Alone" fame, died in hospital at Hfx. yesterday, will be buried here tomorrow. Last night R.A.F. bombed Stuttgart & today U.S.A.F. bombed Brunswick & other German aircraft-mfg. towns. This makes 8,000 tons of bombs dropped on Germany in 48 hours.

TUESDAY, FEB 22/44 Fine, cool. Roads bare, just snow enough to whiten the fields, river ice rotting in the sunshine. Hardly a cloud. I walk to Milton & back every fine afternoon. Every day the little squadron of "Gladiators" (or "swordfish") & "Arro-Ansons" from the Fleet Air Arm training station at Yarmouth comes sailing slowly over Liverpool & Milton, morning & afternoon, a feature of our life now for many months. Lt. Com. John Randall buried today with full naval honours in the C. of E. cemetery, officers & men from corvettes in port supplied a firing party; quite a few naval officers came from Hfx. in smart R.C.N. cars driven by smart R.C.N. girls. Randall had been ill of a mental disease for some months. He had a



Weddy's editors in  
id of their own. As we men-  
terance is a big subject su  
and a variety of  
-in  
-17  
-18  
-19  
-20

strange career. A Newfoundland, he served in the Boer War, & in the R.N. in the first Great War. He brought his family to Liverpool in 1923 when he was skipper of a rum-running schooner, "I'm Alone", which operated between St. Pierre & the U.S. coast & frequently refitted at Thompson Bros. plant here. In March 1929 the "I'm Alone" was sunk by gunfire from a U.S. coastguard craft & it became an international incident which made Randall famous. A year or two later the family left L'pool, but returned to live in a rented house at Fort Point about 2 years ago; as Randall was again serving in the navy. He had been on pension, discharged for medical reasons, for some months before he died & had lived at the Fort Point house with his family until a few days ago when he was removed to hospital.

Was: Churchill in the House of Commons today gave one of his masterly summaries of the war. He said Hitler had obviously decided to defend Rome to the last ditch - as he defended Stalingrad, Tunisia & the Dnieper Bend; there were now 500,000 German troops in Italy. Altogether Germany has 300 divisions, many of them reduced in strength by the Russian fighting, but all of them in a high fighting spirit still. Allied air attacks had drawn 4/5 of Germany's fighter planes to the west, as well as "large" German <sup>ground</sup> forces. He promised air raids on Germany of a size & intensity not yet known or seen, & reiterated that this year we are going to strike in the West with everything we have. He did not promise that the war with Germany would end in victory in 1944 - it might & it might not.

## Famous Captain Passes On

Died at Camp Hill Hospital February 19th., 1944. Lieutenant Commander John Thomas Randell D. S. C., R. N. R. Born at Port Rexton, Newfoundland January 1st, 1877.

He joined as a private in the Royal Canadian Artillery and served in the Boer War, later becoming a Mounted Scout and was decorated by the Duke and Duchess of York when they visited Newfoundland.

In December of 1911 he joined the First World War as a Lieutenant in the R. N. R. and was later promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He served his country for the duration and during that time was decorated at Buckingham Palace by King George V with the Distinguished Service Cross and was also awarded the Croix-de-Guerre with two palms by the French Government.

The British Admiralty bestowed upon him the Oak Leaf to wear on his general service ribbon.

He offered his services again for present war and was sent to Newfoundland to take the post of N. C. S. O. which he held until his illness in 1944.

He leaves to mourn his loss a wife, Gertrude Elizabeth Randell and two sons, John Randell of British Guiana and Edwin Randell, Pilot Officer of the R. C. A. F., also four sisters and one brother.

Funeral Services took place on Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 2.30, at Trinity Church.

strange career. A Newfoundland R.N. in the first Great War.

when he was skipper of a rum operated between St. Pierre & the Thompson Bros. plant here.

by gunfire from a U.S. coast national incident which made the family left L'pool, but returned Point about 2 years ago; as he

He had been on pension, discharged before he died & had lived at a few days ago when he was

War: Churchill in the his masterly summaries of the decided to defend Rome to the

Tunisia & the Dnieper Bend; there were now 500,000 German troops in Italy. Altogether Germany has 300 divisions, many of them reduced in strength by the Russian fighting, but all of them in a high fighting spirit still. Allied air attacks had drawn 4/6 of Germany's fighter planes to the west, as well as "large" German <sup>ground</sup> forces. He promised air raids on Germany of a size & intensity not yet known or seen, & reiterated that this year we are going to strike in the West with everything we have. He did not promise that the war with Germany would end in victory in 1944 - it might & it might not

is War, & in the Liverpool in 1928

"Alone", which refitted at in Alone was sunk

some an inter- year or two later house at Fort ng in the navy.

or some months to his family until

gave one of had obviously added Haltingrad,

Since the outbreak of war, the R.A.F. has lost roughly 10,000 planes, with 38,000 airmen killed & 10,000 missing.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 23/44 A snowstorm of big flakes & not much wind, all last night & today until noon; then pouring rain & a fearful mess everywhere. No labour available to shovel snow but the town secured the services of a number of sailors from corvettes in port to clean off the sidewalks along Main Street.

I am still taking Amphogel for my digestive troubles but it seems only a temporary palliative. Insomnia, partly due to indigestion I think, has been a curse to me for weeks.

War: the Japs have, surprisingly, admitted their ship losses in the Truk raid; they admitted loss of aircraft was about 60% of the U.S. claim. Anyhow they are openly alarmed at the trend of the war in the south Pacific & have dismissed the chiefs of staff of both army & navy.

Yesterday U.S.A.F. made a heavy daylight <sup>raid</sup> on aircraft factories at Regensburg, Bavaria, today on Klegenfurt, near Vienna; both operations based on the fine Italian fields at Bari. Germans have lost 7,000 men in futile attacks on our ~~Kettuno~~ beach-head.

Tonight's German air raid on London was heavy; they used new "stratosphere" bombers & a new blockbusting bomb which they call "Fat Emma".

SATURDAY, FEB. 26/44 Wednesday's snow, which half thawed & then froze, & today is melting in the sunshine, makes a fine mess of the roads. The storm which followed the rain did great damage along

the coast. Rumors of several shipwrecks but as usual nothing published - except the loss of the new Halifax pilot schooner "Camperdown", ashore on Thrum Cap, no lives lost. I get some odd calls on my time these days; the University Women's Club, of Wolfville, the Kiwanis club at Hfx, Bridgewater & L'pool, the Rotary club at Hfx, all want me to address them. Jonesie keeps me in continual correspondence with regard to Sid Ford's picture; his primary concern is self advertisement, of course, & is a bit ruffled because I told him flatly that no name should appear on the memorial plaque but Sid's own. Harry Madden is making the speech in reply to the address from the throne in the Provincial legislature next week, & wants me to help prepare it. Thompson Bros. (busy juggling their fat wartime profits) are setting up the new garage (still to be built) on Market St. as a separate company to be called the Something Sales Corp & want me to suggest a name that is well known, that is part of local history, that "will suggest something long established". (Answers, Rossignol, the first known trader in these parts.) My Legion correspondence runs all the way from applications for membership to dickering with Bill Lynch, the Hfx. proprietor of a travelling fair, who pays the Legion to sponsor his show every year in the outskirts of L'pool (merchants don't like to have it right in town) & wants to arrange his summer's schedule. Edith back today from Hfx. laden with purchases of kid's clothing, canned vegetables, etc., almost unobtainable in L'pool. She says the Hfx. stores are well stocked

with tinned foods which our grocers can't get at all. She got a chance up with the Ralph Johnsons who went yesterday & returned this afternoon. Road slippery.

War: The great bombing of Germany continues. U.S. day bombers from Britain & Italy continue their hard smashes at German aircraft factories, the R.A.F. striking at night, very often at the same targets. — Regensburg, Augsburg, Stuttgart, Würth, Schweinfurt, & the Austrian ball bearing works at Steyr. Germans have raided London (with fire bombs mostly) the past 4 nights & there has been heavy damage although the enemy forces do not exceed 150 planes per raid. One bomb struck residence of the Queen of Holland & killed 2 of her household staff. Quentin Reynolds, famous U.S. war correspondent now making a lecture tour, draws a very grim picture of German defences along the Channel coast & declares a successful invasion is practically impossible. In the U.S. the political pot is boiling merrily. Roosevelt seems to have lost the love of many of his own party in Congress because he accused the whole Congress of putting politics before the war effort. (The columnist Walter Winchell calls them the "House of Reprehensibles"). The efforts of Roosevelt & his wife to remove discrimination against negroes have antagonised the white South, the chief strength of the Democratic party. But Willkie, busy campaigning for the Republican nomination, has also spoken strongly in favor of the negroes.

MONDAY, FEB. 28, 1944

Thawing weather, temp. as high as 50° F. in the sun at noon, freezing at night. Frost coming out of the dirt roads, a mess. Still plenty of snow at the roadsides. Three soldiers home from long service in Europe, discharged as physically unfit - a Macleod & a Whynot boy from L'pool, & Frank Sears from Milton. I had old Sam Glode, the Milton Indian, at the house this afternoon for a yarn about Indian place-names, etc. in South Queens. He is 66, won the D.C.M. in the last war as a ~~sapper~~<sup>sapper</sup>, an intelligent & sturdy old fellow, one of the best guides in our woods.

At 10 p.m. while I was deep in my work (typing a clean copy of Roger Hadden for the publishers) Sam turned up again. He had done some shopping & spent the evening at the movies, & someone who had promised him a drive to Milton had gone off & left him. I got the car out & drove him home to Two Mile Hill.

Keddy the building contractor came this evening to look over our second floor, where Edith wants another bedroom. He says it can be done at a cost of about \$250 - tearing out a cupboard and taking part of the south bedroom now used by the kids, & part of the bathroom.

TUESDAY, FEB. 29/44

Misty, thawing. Tonight the Kivans Club had a fish chowder dinner ("meatless Tuesday") in the Masonic Hall. Amongst their guests were the new mayor & council and 3 soldiers - two of them the first disabled men to return to L'pool. (A Macleod boy with left arm amputated at the elbow, & a Whynot boy with his left elbow shattered & useless. The 3rd chap was one of John Will Anthony's boys of Milton, now in the R.C.A.M.C. & on leave from his hospital ship, "Lady Nelson" which incidentally brought the other boys home.) They got home 2 days ago by bus from Halifax.

I was the invited speaker & by a coincidence I had chosen for my subject "When Johnnie comes marching home." I went over the lessons learned from the period after the last war & pointed out the necessity of a building properly equipped to house the Legion & provide a headquarters for the boys where their unemployment & other problems could be discussed & arranged, pension claims made etc, & which would take the place of the G.M.C.A., K of C., Legion & Salvation Army recreation huts to which they had become accustomed in their years of service. I suggested a Memorial Hall. I also discussed the problem of jobs.

The Kiwanis Club has appointed a committee to work with town officials & the Legion on veterans' re-establishment. First thing to be done is an arrangement with R.F. by which we shall be advised when soldiers are being returned home & by what train or bus, so that we may arrange a suitable greeting for them. These 2 boys came into town unannounced & unwelcomed.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11/44 Rain & mist, snow going steadily. Our butter ration is being cut in half, temporarily we are told. We have been getting  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb each person per week. On the other hand, meat rationing has been abolished for the time being, due to a surplus of meat in Canada, so the newspapers inform us today. War: Finland has asked for Russia's peace terms & Moscow's reply demands unconditional surrender, adding that Finland must assist Russian troops to throw out the German army of occupation. No reply officially from Helsinki but Finnish papers say the terms are too severe & the country should fight on. R.A.F. gave Stuttgart

another plastering last night - 1800 tons of bombs. British cruisers "Spartan" lost, also destroyer "Warwick"; both items stuck away on back pages of the newspapers in odd corners, with no details - typical of the absurd official tenderness for the public morale.

THURSDAY, MARCH 2/44 Sunny but bitter cold & blowing hard after the long thaw. At 1 pm. Keddy's man commenced ripping out partitions upstairs. Penty came in & thinks he can make the plumbing changes all right. Parker tells me Tourin Copeland died in Florida on Feb. 28. I had not seen Copeland since the early 1920's when he & his small family lived in L'pool. He then represented Tidewater Paper Mills of Brooklyn, N. Y., to whom the Macloed Pulp Co. sold its product. An American, he later joined International Paper Co. & forged ahead, became manager of the I.P. plant at Three Rivers, Que., then the biggest in the world. At the time of his death he was managing all the huge I.P. interests in Canada. He was 53. His only son, Bill, is in the R.C.A.F.

FRIDAY, MARCH 3/44 Temp. 2° above zero at 7 a.m. Howling gale & bitter cold all day. Published figures for the 12 months ending Nov. 30, 1943, show total <sup>gross</sup> sales in N. Y. \$15,324,000. Of this our Liverpool store sold \$215,695, an astonishing figure until one considers 300 to 600 navy men in port all the time on the average, the 500 was workers at Thompson's, the 80 men at the Air Force station, etc.

War: German pressure on the Pettuno beach-head continues. British subs. have torpedoed a Jap aircraft carrier and a cruiser in the Malacca Strait. Britain has ceased sending arms &



equipment to Turkey, fed-up at last with the equivocal policy of the Turks, who are obviously getting all they can out of the war, from both sides, with no intention of firing a shot.

Monday, March 6/44 High winds & bitter temperatures since last Thursday.

Am hard at work on a clean typewritten copy of "Roses Sudden" for the publishers, "polishing" as I go. Sent carbon copy of chapters 1-37 to Dr. Jim Martell by insured parcel post today.

Am anxious to get his & Margaret Ellis' comments. It is just 13 months since I began the actual writing of this novel, all hard & continuous work except for a week's hunting last Fall.

War: U.S. bombers with escort of long range fighters made a big daylight raid on Berlin today - the first daylight raid in force on that target. Our "mosquitoes" have been stinging Berlin & other German centres every night since the last big R.A.F. raid.

Russians have cut the main Odessa-Lemberg railway near Ternopol in a sudden hard push from their big salient into Poland.

Finnish newspapers still insist Russia's terms for surrender are not acceptable. A bad fire yesterday gutted the Halifax port immigration depot & soldiers' reception centre at Pier 21.

Later: U.S.A.F. lost 68 bombers 12 fighters in today's raid on Berlin; they claim 123 German fighters shot down.

Wednesday, Mar 8/44 Legion meeting tonight. The two boys (MacLeod & Whynot) lately returned, crippled, from overseas, were present & received a welcome. I appointed Austin Parker chairman of the Building Committee with instructions to prepare a preliminary survey of the proposed

Memorial Hall, with an estimate of cost. Much business got through about 10-30. Austin come home with me & we discussed the post-war problem of the returned soldier until the small hours.

The ~~the~~ "Wartime Housing Project" at the Corrie place is now making steady progress, many young French Canadians employed.

35 houses are erected (10 ready for occupancy) & 40 more are to be built.

THURSDAY, MAR 9/44 Snow squalls & sunshine at intervals all day. A letter from J. W. McClelland, of McClelland & Stewart, informs me today that my "Pud Piper of Dipper Creek" has been awarded the Governor-General's Medal for Canadian fiction for 1943.

Was: a huge U.S. bomber & fighter force estimated at 1500 to 2000 planes, struck at Berlin yesterday for the 3rd time in 5 days; cost 38 bombers, 16 fighters; they claim over 100 German fighters shot down.

Premier MacMillan reports Nova Scotia had a surplus of nearly three million dollars in 1943, most of which will be set aside, (like the two million surplus of 1942) for post-war development.

SAUNDAY, MAR 11/44 To Eagle Lake with Smith & Parker, cold day, snow frozen hard, good walking; the lake has a good coat of ice. Found a fresh wild-cat track on the ice just in front of camp. Much evidence of mice in camp. Beans for supper & sat around smoking & yarning & listening to radio till after midnight. Temp tonight about zero.

SONDAY, MAR 12/44 We got up very late, breakfast 10-30. Gordon & dog "Laddie" arrived at 11-30, both hungry so we had dinner at 1, beeksteaf, spuds, turnip, pie. Spent afternoon sawing up a fallen spruce tree near the camp, carrying wood to camp. Home at 6-30.

Monday, March 13, 1944.

Rain. Germans have evacuated Kherson on the Black Sea; they must soon leave the Crimea. Some days ago Washington asked Cise to kick out the German & Jap consulates in Dublin, which have been centres of enemy espionage throughout the war. Britain joined in this request. De Valera refused, of course. Today Britain has suspended all passenger traffic with Cise "except on matters of state importance", in a move to shut off the passage of Irish agents working on the enemy's behalf.

Letter from Col. L. H. Mackenzie, (Veterans' Welfare Officer at Hfx.) re my complaint of poor treatment received by two crippled veterans. (See Mar. 2.) These boys of the West N.S. Regt were wounded in Italy; Morris Macleod has lost his left arm near the shoulder, Raymond Whynot has his left elbow <sup>partly</sup> ~~shot~~ <sup>crippled</sup> away. They arrived in Hfx on the hospital ship "Lady Nelson", were taken for a medical check-up to Bogswell St hospital - the most dreary & dilapidated military building in Hfx. - & after two hours <sup>were</sup> ~~went~~ sent to N° 6 Depot camp on Chubucto Road, where they were accommodated in a hut with a number of conscripts of the Depot Battalion. Finally they were shipped off to L'pool by bus, without any advice to next of kin, or to the town; the bus deposited them outside the Post Office & the boys had to walk a mile home.

I wrote Hfx. with strong objections to this system of handling, & recommended (a) "Medical check-up at some more cheerful place than Bogswell St hospital, (b) A reception centre, properly staffed and equipped, and away from all troops, where these men can stay in comfort & in cheerful surroundings while awaiting transportation home

and (c) Prompt & accurate advice of the boys' homecoming.

Col Mackenzie says he is working on (c) & has forwarded my letter to the Deputy Minister for consideration of (a) and (b).

TUESDAY, MARCH 14/44 A merry hubbub upstairs with two electricians at work in addition to our musical carpenter. Talked over the proposed Veterans' Reception Committee (for L'pool) with Parker; he has been appointed by the Kiwanis Club to look after their part in it. I phoned Col Mackenzie, asked if he could come down next Monday (20th) and address the Kiwanis Club at noon & a general citizens' committee in the evening, re the reception & rehabilitation of returning soldiers. He agreed very readily. The Empire Air Training Scheme seems to have trained enough airmen or nearly enough; 28 training stations in Canada are to be closed this year, a few at a time; most are in the prairie provinces.

Wednesday, March 15/44 Sunny, cold, snow gone from the fields but chunks of ice hang on everywhere. War. Allie made a terrific air raid on the vital town of Cassino in Italy, where U.S. troops have struggled in vain for many weeks; they dropped 2500 tons of bombs on the town, already shattered by artillery fire. Other Allied air forces raided Brunswick in Germany today.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16/44 A heavy air raid on London last night, one of the worst since 1940-41. Allied air forces gave Augsburg a blitz. Germans continue their steady withdrawal on the eastern front; Russians are now across the Bug river, moving towards Rumania. Royalty statement from MacLelland & Stewart to Jan. 31/44.

They have sold more copies of "The Red Piper of Dipper Creek" in three months than Blackwood sold in three years!

Our house still in a semi-wrecked condition; our musical carpenter hammers & saws away, warbling sentimental songs in a strong Lunsenburg County accent. Plumbers & plasterers are hung up waiting for supplies.

Blood clinic in the high school basement, my 4th donation since last autumn. Many sailors & airmen there.

I finished "Roger Sudden" after 12 months 10 days of the most earnest labors. Sent the carbon copy to Jim Mastell & Margaret Ellis for perusal.

Last week four well-known U.S. writers died: Col. John W. Thomason, 51, Marine veteran of 1918, wrote mostly about that war & the U.S. Civil War, illustrated by sketches of his own; Hendrik Willem Van Loon, Dutch-American, 62, newspaperman who turned to producing simple versions of the Bible, the Arts, the dawn of mankind, etc, also illustrated with his own sketches, which were very bad; Irving S. Cobb, short story writer & humorist, 67, who had a go at movie acting in his later years, his first short stories of Kentucky were his best, one of them, "Words and Music" I consider a classic; Joseph C. Lincoln, 73, who wrote simple humorous novels of Cape Cod, one a year for 40 years.

SATURDAY, MARCH 18/44 Lovely day, sunny, with a strong but mild wind which kept Tommy busy in the Drew field with his kites. I pruned my shrubs & cleaned up my small estate without a coat on & felt warm at that. War: Germans are hanging on to portions of Cassino despite the terrific bombardment. The

U.S. troops there have been replaced by New Zealand & Indian troops who are fighting busily amongst the ruins. In the East the wide German retreat continues. Russians are in Dubno (Poland) and have arrived on the upper reaches of the Dniester river facing the former Rumanian province of Bessarabia

SUNDAY, MARCH 19/44 Sunny, windy, bitter cold, temp.  $5^{\circ}$  above zero at 9 a.m.

Walked to the railway crossing above Brooklyn with Brent Smith & returned along the railway. War: R.A.F. blitzed Frankfurt last night: U.S. air fleets from England & Italy bombed German towns today. The idea now seems to be to invite the Luftwaffe to come up & fight, by hovering over some particularly tender target; then the Hun has an invidious choice of losing planes in the air or in the factory. Sometimes he fights & often he doesn't. This has convinced many of our experts that Germany's air power is broken. I suspect the wily Hun is saving aircraft for the great battles when we cross the Channel. Russians have crossed the Dniester into old Rumania, a movement which threatens the whole German hold on the Black Sea coast. Sharp fighting continues in Burma, where Chinese troops under U.S. general Stillwell are pushing down towards the British who are moving on Akyal.

Political pot boils in the U.S.; a definitely Republican trend, plus dissensions amongst the Democrats, are making things difficult for President Roosevelt; he may not run for office again.

MONDAY, MAR 20/44 6 inches of snow fell today in large fluffy flakes, no wind.

I attended the Kewanis luncheon & was asked to introduce Col. L. H. MacKenzie, a nice old boy, a tall kindly shrewd Scot from Pictou County

who was adjutant of the 25th N.S. Battr. in France & Flanders during the last war, & in 1918-19 commanded a column of Canadian, Serbian, & White Russian troops which fought its way 600 miles from Murmansk to Lake Orega. His decorations include the D.V.O., V.D., Croix de Guerre, Russian Order of St. Anne, Russian Order of St. Vladimir, the Serbian Order of the White Eagle. He spoke to the club on Veterans' Rehabilitation. He spent the afternoon with me spinning yarns of the amazing Murmansk affair, & had dinner with us.

At 7.30 we went to the Legion hall & held a meeting with men & women representing local organisations & churches, with a delegation from North Queens. We set up a Veterans' Rehabilitation Committee for Queens County under the chairmanship of R. H. Lockward, ~~president~~ manager of the Royal Bank, who has been the driving force behind the Red Cross in the County since the outbreak of war.

Sub-committees were set up for Pensions, Employment, Disabled men, Personal Services, Reception, Women and (I am chairman of this one) Vocational Training.

WEDNESDAY, MAR 22/44 Sunny, cold. War: Finland has officially rejected Russian peace terms & one can only presume that Hitler has convinced the Finns of a resurgence of German power in the east sometime soon. German troops have taken over railway, telegraph & all other vital facilities in Rumania, Hungary & Bulgaria in a swift coup designed to stiffen these wavering allies. Italy: - the fight goes on for the strategic town of Cassino, where the Hun has flung in new crack troops. The terrific air bombardment accomplished nothing; the

Germans simply pushed a new garrison into the ruins before our assault troops could reach the west end of the town. In the North Atlantic in the course of a 20-day patrol along the convoy lane, 5 small British sloops have sunk 6 U-boats definitely, & damaged others - the greatest single success in the Atlantic was. They were led by the Royal Navy's ace sub-killer Capt. "Johnnie" Walker.

During the month of February not a single ship was lost in the North Atlantic by U-boat attack.

Had a short walk out the Port Mouton road, lovely in the sunshine. A mysterious appointment made by Bill Joudrey took me to Seth Bartling's office, where Seth asked me to accept the Progressive-Conservative candidacy for the Queens-Lunenbourg (federal) seat in the next election. I refused, said I was a writer not a politician. Went next to Royal Bank, picked up Lockward, & spent the rest of the afternoon soothing the ruffled feelings of Charles Smith, manager of Thompson Bros. who was incensed over a remark made by McGorry (our loud-mouthed postmaster) at ~~last~~ <sup>Monday</sup> night's meeting, and had withdrawn the support of his firm from the rehabilitation committee. (McGorry had accused Thompson Bros. of giving war veterans a shabby deal.) McGorry is a fool, Smith a stiff neck. Between them they presented the Rehabilitation Committee with its first problem.

THURSDAY, MAR. 23/44 U.S. bombers made a heavy daylight attack on Berlin yesterday, dropped 1500 tons of bombs, lost 22 bombers & fighters, all from



A.A. fire - there was no opposition by the Luftwaffe. R.A.F. followed it up with Mosquito raids at night on Berlin & elsewhere, plus another blitz on Frankfurt - cost ~~30~~ 32 bombers.

SATURDAY, MARCH 25/44 A wonderful spring day, the sun actually hot, the sky cloudless. In the afternoon I walked with Parker out the Port Mouton road to McAlpin's brook, thence back to town along the railway, my jacket & cap off all the way - I was warm in my shirt sleeves.

Tommy has been having a fine time with the big new kite made for him by Howland White, flying it from Ad. Mt. Millen's pasture on Cemetery Hill; today the old boy chased him, Jack Dunlap, & a dozen others off his property, shaking a stick. Most of the kids lost their kites in the trees, dropping everything & running, but Tommy managed to save his.

Met Clarke Murray in town & asked him to set up a Veterans' Reception Committee at Caledonia to look after boys coming home via the New Germany railway.

SUNDAY, MARCH 26/44 Drove to Milton this afternoon & called on Big Aunt Marie and Grandma Freeman. Roads still muddy but drying fast. Winston Churchill spoke to the world over the radio this afternoon for 45 minutes, a summary of the war picture, his first broadcast in more than a year. He warned that our forthcoming operations in the West will include many feints, false alarms & dress rehearsals designed to confuse the enemy. In Rumania the Russians have reached the Pruth river & seem to be meeting with little or no opposition.

In Poland they have surrounded Varnopol & Kaminitz-Podolsk. Today R.A.F. & U.S.A.F. made tremendous air raids over Germany, Holland & France; 2700 planes were up.

Mount Vesuvius has been in violent eruption for 9 days, the worst eruption since 1872, although only 30 lives were lost.

Monday, Mar 27/44 Fine & warm. Grandma Freeman & the two Aunts Marie came down for the afternoon & evening & we went to see Cousin Jean Conrad's new son (& the last of our winter apples, which have kept very well in Dunlaps' cellar) & later went for a drive as far as Port Joli. Rain & sleet at evening. War: last night R.A.F. dropped 2800 tons of bombs on Essen.

Today the U.S.A.F. sent 2000 planes on various bombing missions over France. The Canadian army newspapers in Italy, "Maple Leaf", and the U.S. army paper, "Stars & Stripes", both published in Italy, describe the Cassino battle as a "failure". What will the generals say to this, one wonders.

Tuesday, Mar 28/44 Rain, sleet, sunshine, a howling gale. Plumbers busy about the house yesterday & today. Capt. Tuttle of the (reserve) Brigade Staff at Hqs. in town today on business concerning the local company of Princess Louise Fusiliers; asked me to reconsider my decision not to return to the company as captain & O.C. Told him I was too busy with other matters - the simple truth.

I am full of unrest these days, longing to get away & stay away. I've often wanted to try my hand at movie-writing & I think if I could get any decent offer from one of the film companies I'll take it.

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 29/44 Sunny, cold wind; walked to Five Rivers & back. Stephen Peacock died in a Toronto hospital last night, he was 74. His humorous writings made him famous, yet he was a teacher of economics at McGill all his life practically. I don't think anyone took his writings on economics seriously. War: Russians are in their old Black Sea port of Nicolaev & have crossed the Puth into old Rumania. Our air forces made heavy raids as usual over France. The Germans made a really heavy attack on Bristol on the night of the 27th. — It appears in our newspapers today under a small headline & is dismissed in 17 lines.

THURSDAY, MAR. 30/44 Sunny, cold. Have another attack of bronchitis plus a painfully stiff neck & right shoulder. Heard a song sparrow this a.m. the first in my small estate. War: Russians have taken Bernovitz in Galicia, one of their old 1916 battlefields, & the Germans seem to be pulling out of their last pocket of south Russia.

FRIDAY, MAR. 31/44 Heavy rain all last night & this morning. War: R.A.F. raided Nuremberg in force last night & suffered heavily — 96 big bombers. It looks as if the Germans have worked out a successful defence against night bombing at last. Brig Gen. Ross, head of A.R.P. in Canada, was in town today inspecting the Liverpool arrangements, which are now in charge of Harry Paterson, 35, chemist at the Mersey mill, a pale sharp-faced, bustling, furry Scot, very earnest, a man who gets things done but with great ado. The Navy are still ripping the innards out of the Elmwood Hotel on Main St, making large dormitories, a "mess deck," etc.; the place will contain a web canteen as well. The new "town fathers" have presented us with a 25%

increase in taxes — due mainly to a reduction in electric light rates forced upon them by the Public Utilities Board. The town had been making a very pretty profit & applying it to General Account. Now we get cheaper lights but must fork over more taxes.

SATURDAY, APR. 1/44 Sunny, cold. I played an April Fool trick on myself by walking to Five Rivers bridge & back (10 miles altogether) in a pair of new sneakers, which blistered my feet. Like all civilian footwear now they are of the poorest materials & workmanship. The ersatz rubber is black and so friable that it leaves a black mark on the floor wherever you scrape your foot, also it breaks off in chunks wherever struck on, a sharp stone in the road.

As a result of the lifting of federal restrictions on breweries we are to get more fuel — in Nova Scotia 36 quarts per month instead of 24. Perhaps the Ottawa Fox has heard the dirty that is going the rounds: —

"Sing a song of sixpence, a bottle full of rye,  
Six and twenty ounces for a month's supply;  
When the war is over we'll all begin to sing:  
"Now we've finished Hitler, where's Mackenzie King?"

SUNDAY, APR. 2/44 Fine & warm. Spent morning at Royal Bank with Lockwood, Don Smith, Jack McBlair, drawing up constitution & by-laws for the Veterans' Rehabilitation Committee of Queens County. Took the kids for a hike along the harbour shore to Black Point, where we had a fire & they had a picnic lunch, or rather tea; left home 2 pm. returned by the highway at 6 p.m. The shore is littered with woodwork & odds & ends thrown into the harbour by gangs refitting naval craft in L'pool & Brooklyn. Tommy found a small smoke-bomb & was busy pounding it with a rock when I found him &

threw the thing into the woods.

MONDAY, APR. 3/44 Cool, overcast. Two small R.N. trawlers are refitting at Thompson's - minesweepers. A shocking affair at Milton last week. Old Mrs Jones (83) who is very deaf & lives alone on Supper's Hill, was attacked & badly beaten by a naval rating who broke into her house at night; he robbed the place & departed leaving the poor old lady tied to her bed. Naval police & R.C.M.P. are working together on the case.

The first robin appeared on my back lawn just before sunset today. War: Russian troops pouring across the Pruth into Rumania. Allied bombers from Italy made a sharp raid on Buda Pesth, their first visit to the Hungarian capital. British naval aircraft bombed & hit the German battleship "Virutz" in the north Norwegian fiord where she has sat undergoing repairs ever since our midget submarines torpedoed her there last Sept. Sharp fighting continues in northern Burma ~~which~~ where a Jap force has penetrated the jungle & has all but surrounded our base of Imphal (Manipur, India) while a force of ours is doing the same for the Jap base of Mejitkina. Young general Orde Wingate, eccentric leader of British commando troops there, was killed last week in a plane crash.

TUESDAY, APR. 4/44 Sunny, cool. My feet still sore from Saturday, nevertheless I walked around Western Head this p.m. & enjoyed it.

War: Heavy U.S. air raid on Bucharest. In the Pacific, U.S. air forces claim to have destroyed 288 Jap planes on the ground at Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea. Moscow radio has called on Rumania to surrender.

THURSDAY, APR. 6/44

Fine. Roads drying. Sharp frost every night. Got my car license & gasoline ration book, same cost as last year. There is no new license plate; the single 1943 plate is still to be carried on the rear; in front, in the top centre of the windshield (inside) is a red sticker about 4" x 2" which bears print to the effect that the car is licensed for 1944; in the lower right corner of the windshield is my AA gasoline sticker. My gas ration book, which must last me till April 1945, contains 40 coupons, each of which is good for 3 gallons at present ration scale. Each coupon must bear the 1943 car license number - this is to check trading in loose coupons; the gas-seller must compare the coupon number with the car license, also he must remove the coupons from the customer's book himself. If I get through this year on my old tires it will be a miracle, & as yet there is no sign of new tires for "non-essential" civilians.

War: the news commentators & reporters are still holding (heavily censored) post-mortems on our defeat at Cassino. In India the Jap surprise move against Imphal seems to have thrown our own movement into Burma into confusion; the 17th Indian division has retreated into Imphal, losing one tenth of its transport on the way.

Big coal strikes in Britain, especially in the Yorkshire fields, have tied up industry, & at last the govt is taking firm measures.

This morning at 7.15 the town was aroused not merely by the clang of the old fire bell but by the loud banshee wail of the new air-raid siren recently installed on the firehouse tower. The cause - a fire in a hen-house owned by Jim Keay, retired railroad agent, near the town limit on Brooklyn road.

SATURDAY, APR. 8/44 Fine, cool. L. & B. Saw & Uda.

SUNDAY, APR. 9/44 Rain last night, dull all day. Legion at its last meeting decided on a church parade today - the 27th anniversary of Vimy Day; all were enthusiastic, but our actual turn-out was just 17 men. We marched to the United Church, a very good service; the dull weather rather dimmed the Easter parade of the ladies as well as ours. The Milton assault case was solved on Good Friday (see Apr. 3 entry). The corvette "Algoma" was about to sail & as her crew had held a dance in Milton hall on the night of the assault, the police decided to examine them, beginning with an identification parade. Old Mrs. Jones is still confined to her ~~home~~ bed, so the crew were brought to Milton in cars & ushered into the bedroom under guard.

First a group of 5. The old lady (stone deaf) shook her head. Then a group of 4. Another shake. Then a group of 3. As the 11th sailor walked in, she identified him at once. The police checked his fingerprints with those found on objects in the room. He was young, only 17. His shipmates cursed him heartily outside, & in the police office in town he confessed everything. He elected to be tried under the Speedy Trials Act, & Magistrate Reid on Saturday sentenced him to 5 years in Dorchester penitentiary. Everyone feels that he got off lightly.

MONDAY, APR. 10/44 Dull, foggy. War: the Germans, outflanked by the wide Russian sweep through Bessarabia, have abandoned Odessa. They seem to be hanging on <sup>to</sup> the Crimea.

TUESDAY, APR. 11, 1944.

I have a miserable cold, caught from Frances. Misery, body & soul. Wish I was dead.

WEDNESDAY, APR. 12/44

Got up this evening after 24 straight hours of hell, lying in bed, sneezing, weeping, coughing. No better now but can't stand lying still any more. The plasterer, Alec MacDonald, worked on the bathroom walls for a couple of hours last night. He won't be in again till Friday night. A tall, lantern-jawed, loud-voiced, cantankerous, independent man of 35, he is the only plasterer in town & works or not as he feels. This is the sixth week that we have lived with a torn up second floor & no bath. Keady had stated positively that the job would not take more than 2 weeks. My wife, at whose insistence the job was undertaken (just when I needed every possible bit of peace of mind for the final chapters of my novel) estimated the cost at \$230 or \$240. I shall be happy if the bills are less than \$450, & I figure it will be 2 months altogether by the time the painter is finished. This is the idiosyncy of doing anything in this line in time of war.

FRIDAY, APR. 14/44

Up, though still pretty sick. A bad session. Thought a good deal of it but considered the mess & gave it up. Plumbers in, stuffing toilet etc. They went off dooly at 3 pm. leaving waste pipes from kitchen sink & bathroom washstand emptying on to cellar floor. Furious westerly gale all day, with snow flurries.



SATURDAY, APR. 15, 1944

Fine, warm. Redlam upstairs & down - 3 plumbers & 1 carpenter. War: the Germans are evacuating the Crimea; their rearguards, after holding the narrow approaches of Perekop & Kertch until the last minute, are now racing for Sebastopol with Russians in hot pursuit. In Poland the Russians have taken Tarnopol after a 3 weeks' battle. On the west the allied air forces continue their heavy air raids. In India the Japs have taken part of Kohima & now completely surround the British garrison of Imphal & its 90,000 inhabitants. The official reports from Delhi continue to reflect the calm "this-isn't-really-bad-you-know" state of mind which cost us Singapore & Burma.

In Liverpool, a young C. of E. parson named Pitcairn, of the Mill Village parish, has been convicted of using rationed gasoline for unauthorized purposes, of having loose gas coupons in his possession, of attempting to persuade a gas station attendant to sell gasoline without coupons at all.

MONDAY, APR. 17, 1944

Drizzling yesterday, rain & snow flurries today. Depressing. Talking to the young petty officer in charge of naval victualling here. He says there are 900 men on ships in port for refit at the present time. Amongst other things they eat about 900 lbs of meat (including bacon) a day, & 1800 lbs of vegetables. The victualling office is on Water St. in Mickerson's cold storage building, where the navy has taken over three large refrigerated rooms. The rail siding runs past the door & huge quantities of food pass in & out every week. The variety is astonishing to

a civilian who has long been unable to buy anything but necessities, & it is no wonder that so many of the men are indifferent to invitations to dine in homes ashore. As the P.O. puts it - "all you can offer 'em is a soft seat - they can't get that aboard ship."

There is still a brisk trade in food luxuries between victualling P.O.'s on the ships and the employees of Thompsons & Mersey, & the wives of officials at these plants are able to put on elaborate refreshments at parties. This has been going on so long that no one raises an eyebrow any more.

TUESDAY, APR 18/44 A meeting of the Historical Society tonight, old D. C. Mulhall, the sheriff in the chair. Business only. This is the first meeting of the Society since the summer of '42, indeed it has been dormant since the war began.

WEDNESDAY, APR 19/44 A fine day for a change. Irv. Rain invited me to a "Stumble Inn" party. This is a group of Liverpool merchants who since 1931 have had a card party every Wednesday (half-closing day in L'pool) in the old red cottage of Roges Inness at Summerville Beach. I drove out with Rain at 2 p.m. & found Hubert and "Kawsie" Nickerson, Victor Leobey, Roges Inness, Jim Donnelly, Bruce Shandlet, Larry Seldon having the first drink of the day. There was plenty to drink - rum and beer. Each of these men has employees who don't drink; the employee takes out a liquor ration book & passes it over to the boss; the staff of the gov't liquor store wink at the practice. (Rain told me he had bought 5 dozen quarts of beer in 4 days; the new ration is supposed to be 3 dozen a month.)

Guests beside me were Frank Strum, who acts as a sort of harbourmaster to the naval craft here, and Bob Lawrence, a lieutenant from one of the corvettes. "Rawsie" & Jim D. went off somewhere & came back with 50 lobsters ("tinkers" - too small to be legal). <sup>Bob</sup> ~~Anger~~ & I took on Strum & Inness at quarts & played till supper time.

Bain & Scobey were cooks & the stuff was delicious - thick steaks broiled over an open fire, mashed potatoes, French-fried potatoes, pickles, turned pears, cake, cheese, coffee. After supper they sat down to the serious business of the evening - Donnelly & Chandler at cribbage, the rest at poker. Strum & I acted as waiters, rushing the beers - they kept us busy. About 11 pm. we ate the lobsters after boiling them in sea water over an open fire - delicious.

I came in to L'pod. with Chandler at 1.30 am., leaving the rest still hard at poker, a noisy but good-natured affair that looked as if it might go on till daylight.

THURSDAY, APR. 21/48 Sunny, cool. Had a walk around Western Head, my first good walk in 2 weeks. Much to do in town over the doctor shortage. "Mike" Smith's withdrawal from practice leaves Murray & Wickie to handle all the medical calls of South Queens, apart from a few cases in the care of Doc. J. W. Smith, who is old, & Doc. J. R. Ford, who is mad. With the town's population swollen by war-workers (many of whom have married on the strength of big wages) & their families, this is serious. The workers seem to be mass-producing babies as well as ships etc., & the two small nursing homes, Mrs. MacNeill's & Mrs. Robinson's, are swamped with maternity cases. Now, Mrs. MacNeill has decided

not to accept any more maternity cases from Doc. Wickwire - something he said about slackness at her home, I gather - & Wickwire wants a maternity home established at once as a community project. All this has sent Mowbray Jones into a burst of activity - Mowbray wants a first rate general hospital in Liverpool at a cost which he estimates will be \$100,000 to \$150,000. This would suit the doctors, of course, but most people here point out that we have a good ambulance & the Bridgewater hospital is less than an hour's drive away, over a good paved road open summer & winter, & I think they have the right of it.

Our carpenter has nearly finished; nothing to be done now except to push opaque glass into the bathroom window - & we are awaiting the glass. Now begins the quest for a painter.

War: terrific air raids, night & day, over Germany & northern France; our aircraft from Italy continue to bomb rail centres like Belgrade, Sofia, Budapest.

Russian troops have fought past the historic battlefield of Balaklava & are now in the outskirts of Sebastopol, which is burning.

SATURDAY, APR. 22/44 Last night R.A.F. sent 1100 bombers over France & Germany, dropping 5000 tons of bombs (1800 of which fell on Cologne.)

This afternoon Parker, son Jim, Dunlap, son Jack, & I with son Tommy, went to Eagle Lake - the youngest kids' first over-night stay in the woods. Bright sun, clear sky, calm. In the deep woods on the trail the remains of snowdrifts hang on as slabs of ice, but nearly everywhere the ground is bare & old leaves are dry & rustling underfoot.

Reached camp about supper time; after eating, Jim & I took Tommy in the green canoe down to the fishing hole at the lake outlet, & he fished there diligently till dusk with no luck. Too much water - the brook is in spate. The kids were allowed to stay up as long as they liked & didn't go to bed till close on midnight. Jack & Tommy slept together on one of the cots. I slept outdoors on Dunlap's canvas stretcher, a frosty night & I had to button up my sleeping bag all round. Very clear, stars bright, owls hooting & a loon.

SUNDAY, APR. 23/44 The kids were up, skylarking, about 7 a.m. & spent most of the day fishing for suckers off the wharf & hacking down an old hemlock snag 2' through the butt (but rotten) with dull axes. The rest of us cut some firwood with D's new crosscut saw (badly "set", which made hard work of it). In mid-afternoon D & I took Jack & Tommy down the lake in the red canoe. Showed them the beaver house in Haunted Bog & went half way up the brook to Long Lake to show them a beaver dam also our rock hide-out for deer hunting. Came on 3 turtles sunning themselves on the bank & D. caught one 18" long & fooled with it for a while to the great interest of the kids (it was a vicious snapper). Supper & then down the track to Big Falls, where 2 porcupines occupied the kids for a time. Lovely weather. Home at 9 p.m. (We saw 12 deer at the roadside between Big Falls & the Snyffe Pond)

MONDAY, APR. 24/44 All afternoon making arrangements for the unveiling of Red Ford's portrait in the town hall next Friday.

WEDNESDAY, APR. 26/44

Black weather, dull skies, rain, sun, & snow. Russell Williams, painter, began work on our upper rooms. He is employed at Thompson's during the day & can only work evenings from 6 to 10. For assistant he has one of the half-caste "Minks" - Gordon Corby.

War: The day & night air bombardment of Germany & the occupied countries has now reached a terrific pitch, beyond all previous imagination. Germans are still holding Sebastopol. All quiet on the Italian front.

FRIDAY, APR. 28/44

Tonight in the town hall assembly room (now used as a clubroom for service men by the S.O.D.C.) the portrait of Syd Ford was unveiled in the presence of a crowd of citizens. Mowbray Jones (all fagged out in uniform as a major in the Reserve) made the presentation on behalf of his father, & a squad of Air Force men from Happy Landing acted as a guard of honour & carried out the unveiling. The mayor called on me to speak on Sydney's life & I talked for about 15 or 20 minutes. The relatives of other boys killed in this war were present by special invitation and it was a rather sad occasion. The portrait is a good one, in oils, painted from a photograph taken just after Syd had stepped out of his Spitfire after a sweep over France. It was done by a Montreal artist, Francisco ~~de~~ Suarto.

SUNDAY, APR. 30/44

Fine & warm, the best day yet. Picnicked at Greenfield beside Ponhook Lake at the Boy Scouts' camping ground, Edith, the kids, Grandma & Marie Freeman. The log camp built for the Scouts ten years ago has been allowed to fall into disuse. Speed, the provincial

commissioners, felt that all camping should be done under canvas. There is still plenty of ice in the green woods. Many mayflowers. Wai: Canadian destroyer "Athabasca" sunk in a night action with German destroyers off the French coast; 85 men reached shore & are prisoners of the Germans. One German destroyer was beached & burnt. Incessant air raids over Germany & France. Hot ground fighting in Burma.

Monday, May 1/44. Drove to Kpa for a week's research at the Archives re the possibilities for my next novel - also to see Hilda who is home gathering up her silverware, etc.; she & Kibbie have a flat near the Fleet Air Arm training station at Brunswick, Maine. Kibbie flew up from Brunswick yesterday in an old Walrus plane. Spent this evening at Jim Martell's, where also were my old friend Rev. J. H. A. Nicholson, Fred Hawes, Marion Gilroy.

Tuesday, May 2/44. All day at the Archives. Tonight at Martell's invitation I was a guest at the annual "Halibuton" of King's University. (This is Concaenia Week) We met at Martell's - Muggah, of the Attorney-General's Dept, and Kutsenko, the Soviet vice-consul - & walked to Pine Hill College, where King's has been sheltered since its own buildings were taken over by the navy. 40 or 50 men, young & old, sat at small tables in a classroom, presided over by Prof. Burns Martin on a dais. There was a programme of entertainment - songs by a tenor, a very good monologue on "Mowing a lawn" by a student named Archibald, several solos by a dapper little concert pianist named Bedford -

all this to take the curse off the speeches. (Most of the speakers were C. of E. clergymen, all of them long-winded, if witty). Everybody smoked, & refreshments were served about midnight. I was called upon unexpectedly to respond to the toast to the guests, & took occasion to remark that I'd never dreamed of attending a gathering dedicated to the memory of the convivial author of *Ham Slick* - and finding them all drinking ginger ale. They yelled, for Haliburton dinner in peace time is or used to be a very "wet" affair. Even the new Lord Bishop (Kingston) smiled. The affair ended with the pushing together of the tables, a standing in circle with linked hands for "Auld Lang Syne", a verse or two of the King's song, & the shouting of the King's yell. Prof. Bennett, Rev. "Sammy" Prince with his lock of false hair, Winfield of the telephone company, Andrew Merkel of the Can. Press, & others came up & talked to me, & at last Merkel drove us home to Martelle, where I'd left my own car. Home at mother's flat on Chateaux Road about 2 a.m. (The evening's proceedings included a talk on the Report of the Dawson Royal Commission - which has been examining Nova Scotia with a view to post-war rehabilitation - by a clever and attractive young chap named Ward. The blackout signal came in the midst of his discourse & there was a scramble to draw blinds & close the big folding doors etc & reduce the lights to one. Ward talked on, however. I gather that the Report has rather shocked the provincial



govt. by its frankness in pointing out failures to conserve or decently exploit various natural resources, etc.?)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3/44 31 years ago today I sailed with my family from Liverpool (England) for Hfx. in the old Allan liner "Carthaginian".

Worked at the Archives all day. This evening I spent with Andrew Merkel. Jim Martell & Muggah came along later from another function at King's. I had read some of Merkel's poetry, years ago, & liked it. He doesn't look like a poet - a portly man of middle height with a rather red, plethoric face, straggling grey hair & a pair of bright bird-like eyes. He has been head of the Canadian Press Bureau in Hfx for 25 years. He brought forth rum, grape juice & ginger ale, & we spent a famous evening calling up the ghosts of the "Long Fishermen" - the group of Bluenose poets who foregathered in the late 20's - Robert Norwood, Charles Bruce, Merkel, Bob Leslie, Kenneth Leslie, Bliss Barman, Evelyn Tufts, Ethel Butler - and made verse & wassail at Merkel's house and elsewhere. Merkel ran off, for our benefit, a movie film, taken by himself, on the occasion in (I think) 1928 when the Long Fishermen chartered an old schooner called the "Drama" & sailed out of Chester for a day's cruise amongst the islands of Mahone Bay. As guests they had a bagpiper in full costume, also the famous James D. Gillis, author of "The Cape Breton Giant", who is no mean piper himself. (There were close-ups of

"Jimmie D." playing his pipes, playing his fiddle, eating at table, making a speech, etc.) Merkel conducted for years a correspondence with Bliss Carman & other unique literary figures & has preserved all their letters, Christmas cards (with their own scrawled verses) etc, a wonderful collection which Jim Martell urged him to present to the Archives. He consented. Home at 2 a.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 4/44 Archives all day. Was visited there by Barbara Brantwyre, who had journeyed by train from Elmadales especially to see me, a little lean wispy of a woman in a God-awful pink hat. She writes detective stories for the Montreal Standard & others & is anxious for advice regarding a novel she has written. I told her to send it to Chamberlain. Afterwards I took her back to the station in my car.

This evening at Margaret Ells' home on Tower Road. Marion Gilroy there, & a Mrs. Parket and Madge Maskie, one of the most attractive girls I've met; and clever, stuttering, humorous Fred Hawes; & Dalhousie professors Nelson & Adshhead dropped in, & out again.

FRIDAY, MAY 5/44 Archives all day. Andrew Merkel arrived there in the afternoon with galley proofs of his epis of old Port Royal, now being printed by Imperial Publishing Co.; got me to check over the Miqmac place names. I spent this evening with Mother & Hilda. Carl Conrad came in with some whiskey & we sat & talked together till midnight.

SATURDAY, MAY 6/44 Drove to the Shipyards at 8 AM. & picked up Carl (he is employed there as a welder). Noticed the cableship

"Lord Kelvin" at the Shipyard dock - like a ghost from my own seafaring days. Drove to L'pool. Picked up Harry Rempton on the road, one of my corporals in the West Noras, now in the Air Force, & on leave, thumbing a ride home. Lunch in a Chinese cafe in Bridgewater. Home about 2 p.m. Painters have finished, a slap-dash job that cost over \$50. The painter charged 90¢ an hour for himself and 80¢ an hour for his helper - a half-caste negro boy of 17 - and he pointed out that this was his usual wage at Thompson's, not the overtime rate. There still remains some carpenter work on the windows, & the laying of floor tiles in the bathroom.

(I found it impossible to procure any small bathroom fixtures like soap dishes, towel racks, etc., & must make the old ones do.)

War: all this week the heavy bombing of Europe went on, the Germans giving out all sorts of speculation on the Allied invasion on the west. The Russian front is quiet. So is the Italian front. In India it now seems clear that the Jap attack on Manipur neatly upset the careful British & Chinese plans for the advance into Burma.

TUESDAY, MAY 9/44 Lovely warm day (-so was Monday). I have six days in which to make final revisions in the M.S. of "Roger Sudden", part of which I asked Doubleday Doran to send back to me; I rashly promised to mail it by the 15th. Too hot to work in my den this afternoon; so I took off all the storm windows, stowed them on their racks overhead in the garage, washed the winter grime from the inner windows with the garden hose, took off storm doors,

put on screen door, dumped ashes, old paint cans etc. from the cellar, raked the lawn, driveway & the street in front of my house, chopped an old poplar stump out of the back lawn, went over the lawn with the roller, & hoed part of the garden plot. A big afternoon.

War: fighting has flared up again at Sebastopol, where the Russians are closing in. "Severe fighting at Inkerman" which sounds like our own Crimean War. In Italy the Germans have withdrawn 9 miles on the central front - apparently forestalling a "set piece" drive of ours. The day & night bombing of Europe continues. The Luftwaffe still avoiding combat on a large scale. In London the dominion prime ministers are holding the first Empire conference of the war. In Canada the Sixth Victory Loan is well on towards its goal.

I sent in my income tax statement for 1943. My tax was . . . The post office ran out of forms & as a result I had to postpone filing papers until after my return from Hfs. Result, an extra 5% tax penalty.

WEDNESDAY, May 10/44 - Legion meeting tonight. Routine business. Parker reports that our proposed Veterans' Hall would cost at least \$30,000 & labour & materials will not be available until after the war. At the close of business I was presented with a document, signed by the vice-president & secretary on behalf of the branch, congratulating me on receiving the Governor-General's award.

War: Sebastopol fell last night. The great German-Romanian army of 300,000 which the Russians claimed to have cut off in that

corner of the Crimea, turned out to be a rearguard of 25,000.

FRIDAY, MAY 12/44 Still glorious weather; foggy & cold at night. Working in the vegetable patch each afternoon, screening the earth (cubic content runs about half stones) etc, as a relief from writing, at which I slog hard, morning & night. A bush fire on Cemetery Hill this afternoon; the new fire siren is weird & powerful & can be heard in Milton.

Was: Our forces are attacking the Germans heavily in Italy - apparently the drive foreseen by the Hun before May 9th. Officially announced that during April our merchant ship losses were actually less than the sinkings of U-boats; one R.N. frigate bagged 2 submarines within a few hours. Terrific air bombing of Europe continues. MacKenzie King yesterday addressed both houses of Parliament in London & received a great ovation.

SATURDAY, MAY 13/44 Another fine day. Forsythia bushes in full bloom. Finished screening the earth for the vegetable bed, levelled it off and applied lime & chemical fertilizers. Broke up a pile of old sods for growing squash & cucumbers. Mowed the lawn (first mowing of the season) & applied lime. Tommy much excited over forest fires at White Point & Port Joli. Frances went on a hike to Hill's Grove this afternoon with the Brownie troops, lugging a quart bottle of orangeade & an old green sewing bag of Edith's full of sandwiches, etc.

Canada's 6th Victory Loan is over its objective of 1 billion 200 million dollars. Commander J. H. S. MacDonald is now ashore here as the port S.N.O., says he hopes to get back to sea.

War: Terrific air raids over Europe from bases in Britain & Italy, ranging as far as the Baltic & synthetic oil plants in Czechoslovakia. Heavy fighting in Italy, where ~~our~~ troops have made some progress. Japs are making one of their periodical marches towards Chungking. Chinese officials make the usual fantastic claims, but an American observer recently home from Chungking affirms that Chiang-Kai-Shek's government is bankrupt, has no power or influence outside its military sphere, and the Chinese army is worthless.

SUNDAY, MAY 14/44 A thunderstorm wandered over south Queens all night & kept us awake with its intermittent uproar. Another fine hot day. All trees & shrubs are breaking their buds. The fire at Port Joli is under control after a hard fight. It came right to the settlement & burned 6 square miles. This afternoon I called for the Freemans & Aunt Marie & took them for a shore drive through Brooklyn, Dupper Creek, Beach Meadows, Eagle Head & Port Medway. Tea on our lawn. A pair of swallows nesting in the box over the garage. Saw a pine grosbeak in my birch tree, unusual at this time of year. Red maples are in blossom.

War: King George has reviewed the home fleet & bade them Godspeed before the battle. Our battle in the Italian hills has yielded small results so far. It is announced that a new trans-Atlantic air record has been made by 2 Mosquito bombers (presumably made in Canada) which flew from

Goose Airport, Labrador, to an airport in Britain in about seven hours — a distance of 2200 miles.

TUESDAY, May 16/44 Overcast Finished planting my small garden — beets, carrots, chard, lettuce, squash, cucumbers — all but the beans & tomatoes. Fishing (netting, rather) minnows in the Deep Brook flowage at Rapid Falls this afternoon, hoping to get bait for this week's fishing trip with Parker, Russell & Bain. No luck; too much wind & not enough sun. Tommy enjoyed it.

Tonight I got a supply of worms the easy way — working over the lawn after dark with a flashlight; all the big worms are on top, exploring and copulating, but you have to be as quick as a robin for they disappear like lightning a moment after the light touches them. Joe Pushie tells me that the long-expected merger of the two local Reserve Army units has been announced to the men — C Company, P.R.F. (formerly West Nova) disappears & the men are transferred (whether they like it or not) to Mowbray Jones' 26th. Lidd Co'y (Reserve) R.C.E.

WEDNESDAY, May 17/44 Left home by car with Irving Bain, Austin Parker, Maurice Russell, on the annual fishing trip to Shelburne River, (I missed it last year, laid up with pneumonia), at 6 P.M. The Mersey Co'y. keeps a gate & watchman on the west side of the Kejumkujik River bridge, to keep unauthorised people out of their private road system beyond. These roads are narrow but well bedded & maintained, so that one can drive

in a car to Pescawess Lake, Sobatic Lake or Seventh (Adusta) Lake. We reached the familiar Camp One, a mile or so east of the mouth of Shelburne River, at about 8:30. Had a yarn & smoke with Harold Whitman, the manager of Camp 1, also Ralph LeLong, the logging boss, & Harold Verge, who is Mersey's Woods Superintendent. Verge is paid at so much per cord of wood del'd, & during the 1930's when labour was plentiful & cheap he enjoyed an income of \$10,000 a year on very little personal effort. Now he has to work harder. He is a tall, heavy, black-browed man with small light-grey eyes, rather shifty despite a bluff manner. Makes money in all sorts of ways apart from his Mersey income. Last year he built a \$30,000 talkie theatre in New Germany, his home town. He practically owns the Lake William Sport Club, which used to sponsor the annual Guides' Meet & reap a harvest. When he went to work for Mersey in 1929 he hadn't a cent.

THURSDAY, May 18/44. Heavy rain in showers all morning, the first in many days. Parker & I took a canoe up to the tow bridge at the foot of Sand Lake this morning, leaving Bain & Russell to fish Pollard's Falls. No luck. Before we had been at the tow bridge pool 5 minutes a canoe came down river - a doctor from Hfx with a guide named Vic Gaudlett - & they had the ill manners to barge



right into the pool & sit, fishing, practically over our lines.

We went on back to camp for dinner in the mess hall.

The Mersey Co. has had to improve its camp food greatly in the effort to keep men. Gone are the stringy Plate beef, the bread-and-molasses, etc. of other days. Now every lumberjack is faced with fresh beef of the very best cuts (preserved in hot weather in the camp ice house, & brought in regularly by truck from Baledonia) sausages, bologna, fresh eggs, preserved fruits, cheese, tea biscuits, jam, cup cakes, doughnuts, two kinds of cake (brown, with plums — white, with icing) three kinds of pie (apple, raisin, custard) not to mention the good old standby, baked beans, etc. This is really better than I get at home, where sugar & butter are rationed, jam rarely obtainable, eggs & sausage & good cuts of meat hard to get, & so on.

Wages have been raised to  $\$7$  and  $\$4.50$  per day for common labour (with no deduction for board) and still it is hard to get men. We found the crew at Camp 1 consisting of old men & boys — amongst the latter several who had come into the woods in order to get deferment from military service; one of them, a handsome boy named Wilfred Greek, a graduate of Rumenburg Academy, a player on the Academy hockey team, perfect physical & mental specimen, ~~he~~ was working as a petty clerk in the camp office.

This afternoon we went to fish the lower part of Rescaues Brook, found it jammed with logs, but Rain

✓ Parker took 9 beauties out of the pool under the bridge.

This evening we drove to the old Mersey camp at Pescawess, walked 2 miles to Pescawess Dam. Found the big pool below the dam full of fish but diffident about feeding. Russell got 3 or 4 big trout under the flume. My day's catch, 3 fish.

Evening yarning with Whitman & playing cards.

Whitman says the Avro Anson training planes from the Yarmouth air station frequently landed on the ice of Lake Rossignol last winter & sometimes the crews would have lunch in the camp. De Long & others went up for flights with them.

FRIDAY, May 19/44. Heavy frost last night & a bitter N.W. gale all day. We came prepared for heat & blackflies, not this. Russell & I fished at Pescawess Dam this morning, Bain & Parker at Pescawess bridge. Found the brook a torrent, the gate hoisted by log-drivers; - Russell & I braved the wrath of the drivers by dropping the gate for an hour towards noon, but the fish bit no better, & we had the devil's own job to pry up the gate again before we left. Got back to camp very late for dinner, afterwards went over to call on Chester Grey, the chief warden of Tobatic Park, in his cabin overlooking Pollard's Falls. A dark, keen-faced, roman-nosed, quiet, competent man of 35 or so; he has been a warden here for 11 years. His home is at Remptville, in the woods behind Yarmouth, & frequently he walks

through the woods from here - a distance of 35 miles. He promises to take us up Tokeatic Lake in his motor boat if we start tomorrow before the wind blows hard.

Russell was intrigued by the old fire-watching tower above Grey's camp - an elderly structure of spruce poles & nails & ladders & guy wires, 60 feet high. He climbed to the top for a view, came down reporting "the thing needs a little repair on the ladders", was astounded when Grey told him the tower was condemned, was unfit to climb, had not been used in 5 years. Grey & his assistant went out with peavies and broke down the lower end of the ladder in case some other foolhardy stranger tried it.

This evening Bain & I went to Kempton's Falls at the mouth of Shelburne River in a Murray motor boat from Camp One, piloted by De Long. Astonished to find that the unusually high water in Lake Rossignol has flooded Kempton Falls (we went through the old log sluice in the motor boat) & practically reached the big stillwater at the foot of Pollard's Falls. The cold N.W. gale still blowing furiously, although the sun shone brightly all <sup>day</sup> it was lovely weather to be in the woods. My day's catch - 1 trout! The others did better but not much.

SATURDAY, May 20/44 Up at 6 a.m. & after a stout breakfast drove over to the ranger's shack & picked up Grey. A drive of 2 or 3 miles took us to the cove inside Burnt Point

on Tobatic Lake. Again the cold N.W. wind, increasing as we voyaged southwestward down the <sup>Lake</sup> ~~river~~; we were glad to put on our rubber coats over the light jackets we had brought. But again clear sunshine & blue sky. Grey detests it — bad weather for forest fires. This lake is a most barren spectacle; the west shore was burned to the rock in a bad forest fire about 1923 or 1924 — now a wilderness of granite boulders, ghostly grey pine snags; the east & south shores were logged clean by the Murray Co. a few years ago. "Clean" is not the word, however, for they left all their old slash as a sort of token of destruction, a horrible tangle of dead branches, a fire-trap of the worst kind. We saw a quaint & rather sinister procession moving along the east shore not far from our boat — a cow moose, a calf moose, & a bear, all about 200 yds apart. The bear climbed up on a big boulder on the shore & gave us a long stare.

Reached the ranger's cabin at the foot of Tobatic about 9 a.m. Grey showed us the marks of bears who broke into this cabin last year & got at some molasses he had left in a cupboard. But the worst damage was done by a porcupine who got in somehow & couldn't find his way out; when Grey came along the porcupine had been in there for days & had tackled all the window frames in turn, gnawing them almost through, in places. There is a

logging dam here, at the foot of Tobatic Brook, the usual thing — a barrier of logs ~~at~~ set on ends at an angle of  $45^\circ$ , well braced & ballasted with cribwork & rock behind, & the watery end covered with a footing of gravel dug out of the hillside. There are two ~~or~~ oak gates with stout slats for prying them up & a crude & heavy hardwood maul for knocking them down, & a log-sluice extending perhaps 50 feet downstream. In the race below these sluices the trout lie thick. They would not take a fly or a worm but gobbled our minnows. Unfortunately the minnows had been dead 4 days & were rotten, so that they did not stay on the hook well & we soon exhausted what was left of our supply & had to fall back on cutting artificial "minnows" from the backs of the trout we had caught. I caught no trout here & was pretty disgusted but after we paddled a canoe up the flowage to the first run on <sup>Little</sup> Tobatic Brook I began catching fish. Gray, Parker & I went right up to Little Tobatic, & found our best fishing below the log-dam there. I took 6 nice fish out of a hole at the end of the log sluice & believe I could have had 20 or 30 had I possessed some fresh minnows. As it was I had a lot of fun, although I lost 3 fish for every one I caught. (The others had the same experience). Dinner was crackers & cheese & beer at the first log dam on the brook. We quit at 5 pm., out of patience at last; it was maddening to see swarms of fat trout feeding at each run and to

have no bait they wanted. But I had 15 nice fish & was satisfied. Had to wait till dusk for the gale to subside — this in the third day it has blown like this. Warm in the woods but the high wind & frosty nights seem to have stupefied the black-flies. Back to Camp One & a late supper in the mess hall; we were ravenous after our long day. Stowed our fish on the ice in the camp ice-house, burrowing under the sawdust. Turned in early. Bain very tired.

Sunday, May 21/44. Another cold night but the gale has subsided at last & the day was hot & the blackflies emerged from hiding. This morning Bain & Russel decided to fish at the tow bridge & Pollard's Falls, so Parker & I took the lighter canoe, a narrow & cranky thing, & paddled up Shelburne River to Sand Lake, turned into Sand Brook & I carried the canoe over the portage, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, to Supper Lake. Paddled across Supper Lake & fished all morning at Tobatic dam with no luck. Trout everywhere & no minnows for bait. Lovely hot day. I did some hunting about the old tenting place there for Indian arrowheads etc, but found no trace of Indian work. Carried off an old ox-shoe for a souvenir. Returned across the lake & fished at Supper Lake dam, no luck. Put the canoe in Sand Brook & had a lively trip down, a steep, shallow, winding stream with rocks bobbing up in unexpected places, & logs across the brook in one tricky spot (we had jump out on the logs & pull the

canoe over) nearly upset the canoe twice. Found Bain & Russell fishing by the old sawmill at the head of Pollard's Falls; they had no luck. We learned that our unsportsmanlike sportsman of Thursday, with Gaudet his guide, capsized their canoe on Pollard's Falls that day & got a ducking. Wish we'd been there to enjoy the fun. Dinner at camp. Goh shaved & cleaned up. Paid the obliging cook \$2.00 for his extra trouble. Left about 3 p.m., stopped at Pescaewe Brook for an hour or more so that Bain could have a final go at those finicky trout. No luck. However we had 76 trout amongst 4 of us which is plenty. At the Kijumkuzik river crossing we found 8 or 10 cars parked - the owners had brought canoes in on the car tops & gone up-stream to fish at Black Rattle. Very hot this afternoon & flies bad. Arriving in Milton at 6 p.m. we found the river valley full of smoke from a forest fire on the west side of the river close against the Liverpool-Milton road. Heard that the fire-fighters had a struggle to save the new housing development above the railway bridge in the high wind yesterday. Men & boys still busy with Vagax pumps along the roadside, & M. Jones had turned out his engineers (part of them, anyhow) to dig sump-pits in the nearly-dry brooks for the fire pumps.

Monday, May 22/44

Steady rain all day. The bush fire up-river seems out at last. A letter from Tom Costain of Doubleday-

Sorani; says he has conferred with the heads of McClelland & Stewart & they are all anxious for me to start another novel at once, for publication in 1945. Doubleday are prepared to advance me \$250 a month as they did while I was writing "Roger Sudden".

I am not keen to start another so soon. "Roger" nearly killed me, especially April 13th. I wrote Gortain & said I wanted some months to write short stories before tackling another book.

War: The allied offensive in Italy seems to have broken the Germans' "Gustav" line & our own 8th Army took the hard nut of Cassino last week. So far, 6000 prisoners. The Hun is now back on his "Hitler" line, still fighting shrewdly & fiercely to prevent our main forces from linking up with the stranded force at Anzio. Still terrific air bombing of Germany & northern France. It is revealed that in April a large number of R.A.F. men broke out of a prison camp in Germany & the Huns shot 47 of them "while attempting to escape". Murder, of course. I hope our authorities will treat German "escapees" the same; they are always breaking out of the camps in Canada & the U.S., & our authorities round them up with great trouble, & everybody grins & there is no punishment.

TUESDAY, MAY 23/44 Lobster chowder at the Legion rooms, 6 p.m. Tickets, 75¢. A very popular event. In my small garden some of the lettuce is up. Planted bush beans today after soaking them 8 or 10 hours. Helped Tommy put up a new swallow-house.



on the rear gable of the garage. Movies last night; Eleanor Powell, to me the most attractive woman on the screen.

Our theatre is a rowdy place, very different from the decent & quiet atmosphere of peace time. Full of sailors & tarts, & noisy urchins from Whynot Town (who seem to have money to burn, just like their elders) & niggers, & French-Canadian workmen from the housing project by Cowie's old place.

Some of the Frenchmen have their young wives & babies here, & we have grown accustomed to the jabber in the streets, but not in the theatre - for they can't understand English much, & get bored with the picture, & talk amongst themselves.

I feel like laying about me with a club sometimes.

War: Premier King is back, full of cheer from his visit to England. Bitter fighting in the Italian hills. In Burma the confused fighting goes on - Japs behind our lines, our parachutists behind their lines, each side hitting at the other's bases, & the monsoon rains just beginning. Our air-borne troops have taken Myitkina there.

Germans estimate that Eisenhower has 3½ million British & U.S. troops in England ready for the great invasion.



