

I Was An - Hungered

"AFTER DUNKIRK"

By Ena Browne, Liverpool, Eng.

The war seemed very far away in the softly falling dusk of the summer evening as the first faint stars were twinkling in the deepening blue of the sky. I stood at the door of the cottage watching the tranquil cows cropping their way across the dewy meadow opposite, and higher up the hillside Steve and Stevess, the horses, tossing their impatient heads and swishing away the teasing flies which settled on their smooth flanks.

The first strange sound to break the evening stillness was the drag of weary feet coming up the lane. I looked up with surprise—those were not just ordinary tired feet, they were feet that sounded as though they were weary past all feeling.

Then the feet came into view round the bend in the lane, bearing their owners, worn out, drooping, exhausted.

"The French!" I whispered, "poor souls!" Slowly they began to pass, in ragged, uneven lines, some dropping out to rest on the grass by the roadside and ease their shoulders of their heavy packs; others had no packs, no caps: some stopped to ask for a drink.

Then came cars, lorries, private cars, motor bicycles, all carrying three or four times their normal load; men standing on the running boards, hanging on the roof and the wings. The cars passed, turned, and re-passed going to the camp up the road, picking up the hindmost first.

And so it went on until nearly a thousand men had gone by. Then for a time the only sounds borne on the clear air were those of cars turning and men calling, until there came again the sound of feet returning—more slowly still.

A little group stopped at my gate, one of them lifted the latch and came up the little path. He saluted me as I went to meet him.

"Madame, est-ce que vous avez de place pour nous?"—the camp, it is full

The Son of Man had no place to lay His head.....

"I have only the garage. How many of you are there?" I asked.

"Douze, madame,—twelve."

I opened the doors. "But you cannot all sleep in there," I said.

"Mais, oui, madame. We can sleep anywhere, we are so tired. Hola!" he called his companions.

"I am a priest," he said. "I am their leader. They are so tired, les pauvres. They have not slept for three days. And hungry—avez-vous du pain, madame?"

I went into the cottage and called my daughter Elizabeth. We pushed back the furniture in the two little rooms; we collected rugs, blankets, cushions; we cut plates of bread, every scrap we had, and went out to them. They were already falling asleep in their greatcoats on the floor of the garage.

"Now," I said, "five of you in here, four of you in the front room, two of you in the back. And you, monsieur?" I turned to the priest.

"If you could spare a bed for me, madame?" he said.

I turned the sleeping Anne out of her bed. "There, monsieur. Your supper will be ready in a few minutes if you can all wait."

"Wait? Pour le souper? Mais, oui, madame—we are hungry!"

And so in broken English, and halting French we talked of "Dunquerque," the days of waiting; of bombs that sank their transports; of aeroplanes that shot them as they struggled in the water; of the miracle of the sea that had become like a mill-pond, enabling the tiny boats to reach them until they, some of the last to leave, had been safely taken off; of "Dunquerque" in flames; and of the hunger, and the tiredness—the tears of one, Pierre, fell on his clasped hands.....

We shopped and cooked next morning before they woke, and we gave them a breakfast of eggs straight from the farm, hot scones and marmalade, bread and margarine—we had no butter—and coffee in bed-room pitchers. They sat in the middle of the little lawn in the morning sunshine, and laughed and talked like giants refreshed.

Then the business of shaving, washing, of polishing buttons and cleaning rifles. Afterwards they lay in the sunshine and played cards and talked.

"Have you un basin, madame? Pierre, his feet....."

After luncheon I searched for the little priest. His quiet voice came to me from the lounge where he sat with his breviary. He told me of his father, who was also a priest in a little village in northern France; of the France he loved that would rise again from the ashes.

Then I bid him "au revoir." I had to go to my canteen, but I should be back for their tea.

"Madame, you have been more than kind. La chaleur de votre hospitalite sera toujours un souvenir memorable de l'amitee de nos allies—les Anglais."

My last view of them as I closed the garden gate was of the little priest at the window; and Pierre in the middle of the lawn, with his feet in my washing-up bowl.

When I returned they had gone—suddenly—to resume their journey, my only souvenir a note: "Madame, je vous remercie pour tous. Nous sommes alles a la guerre. Le Bon Dieu vous benisse."

My dear French soldiers! They were so grateful, so helpful, in the little we could do. How little they knew! They did not know that in a few days France was to fall, or that they would not live to fight for the France they loved. Their train was destroyed by the enemy at a French port

—RCAF—

HARDLY COMFORTING

Mr. Brown looked at the letter on his desk.

"We are very surprised," it read, "that the money we demanded so often has not arrived."

Turning to his secretary he dictated this reply:

"Dear Sirs—You need not be surprised. I have not sent you the money."

An Open Letter To Our Aircrew

—RCAF—

No. 1, S.F.T.S.,
Camp Borden,
3-7-42.

Dear Fellows:

I wonder how many of you, during your stay at No. 1 S.F.T.S. have been able to completely sell yourself on the idea that this is your station—that it exists solely for you—and indeed that but for you there would be no need of its existence? While you are here you hold the rank of Leading Aircraftman—not the lowest rank in the Air Force, but pretty close to it. You are kept under a certain discipline, which is only as hard as you yourselves make it. Your comings and goings are ordered, and your whole time is programmed for you. How then, you wonder, can it be said that this is your station?

The purpose of this station is to produce pilots worthy of wearing the Flying Badge and of proceeding to flying duties on His Majesty's Service at home or abroad. The entire set up of this Station is to train you—to whom all credit is due for having determined to enter this service.

Your stay here is brief—you come from a variety of elementary schools, you pass on to a variety of duties. While you have been here we have tried to give you all we have—there have been deficiencies, and omissions, and mistakes, but not of our seeking. We are doing all we can to iron out the wrinkles but you can help—remember, this is still your station.

How can you help? While you are here you can do your damndest to make things go as they should—attention to little things like cleanliness, promptness, discipline and a whole host of detail which make it infinitely easier for us. When you leave, you can view your training here in the light of your experiences and write and tell us what you think. Probably every pupil who graduated from this Unit, promised to write to his Instructor, or Flight Commander, or someone—but very few ever seem to get around to it. Keep it in mind, won't you, and let us hear from you. Write to the Editor of "Wings Over Borden," if you will, and your observations will be passed to the proper people. One thing, please let your criticisms be constructive and use your good common sense in what you tell us of your doings.

Lastly, wherever you go, remember that No. 1 S.F.T.S. is still your station and do all in your power to keep the honour and prestige of this grand old place right on top. We are looking to you—don't let us down.

Yours truly,

Squadron Leader J. McCulloch.

—RCAF—

THE SECOND CASE

Two magistrates were summoned for exceeding the speed limit. When they arrived at court there were no other magistrates present, so they decided to try each other. Number one went on to the bench and the case proceeded.

"You are charged with exceeding the speed limit. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?" "Guilty."

"You will be fined five shillings."

They then changed places and again the plea was "guilty."

"H'm," was the response. "These cases are becoming far too common. This is the second we have had this morning. You will be fined thirty shillings."

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

The following names of former graduates of Number One Service Flying Training School have been extracted from Royal Air Force Casualty lists numbers 103—124 inclusive, published between January 13th and March 31st, 1942.

We were privileged to know these men at this Unit; we were proud with them when they graduated; we honour them in their greater glory.

Killed In Action or On Active Service

Can. P/O T. K. Coupland	Course 11 A.T.P.	Aus. Sgt. J. W. Turner	Course 36 A.T.P.
Can. Sgt. S. D. Fassino	Course 30 A.T.P.	Can. Sgt. D. W. Bennett	Course 14 A.T.P.
Can. P/O R. F. Patterson	Course 1 A.T.P.	Can. Sgt. J. R. Pierce	Course 34 A.T.P.
Aus. F/L S. Thompson	Course 18 A.T.P.	Can. Sgt. B. H. Cassidy	Course 32 A.T.P.
Can. Sgt. D. R. Richardson	Course 22 A.T.P.	Can. F/L D. G. Morris	Course 3
Can. Sgt. S. S. Lang	Course 11 A.T.P.		(P/O (P) Course)
Can. Sgt. W. W. Tripp	Course 7 A.T.P.	Can. F/L K. M. Ogilvie	Course 3
Can. Sgt. E. T. Conry	Course 11 A.T.P.		(P/O (P) Course)
Can. Sgt. H. J. Payne	Course 30 A.T.P.	Can. Sgt. A. V. Roffey	Course 34 A.T.P.
Aus. P/O W. D. Eccleton	Course 14 A.T.P.	Can. Sgt. I. J. Eady	Course 30 A.T.P.
Aus. P/O W. D. Willis	Course 14 A.T.P.	Can. F/Sgt. J. W. Archibald	Course 14 A.T.P.
Aus. P/O D. E. Lewis	Course 14 A.T.P.	Can. F/Sgt. J. H. Oliver	Course 34 A.T.P.
Aus. Sgt. N. W. R. Wood	Course 14 A.T.P.	Can. F/Sgt. J. J. McIntyre	Course 1 A.T.P.
Can. Sgt. W. E. G. Taylor	Course 32 A.T.P.	Can. P/O H. L. Myers	Course 20 A.T.P.
Aus. Sgt. J. A. Cormack	Course 14 A.T.P.	Can. P/O W. E. Madden	Course 30 A.T.P.

Missing

Can. Sgt. N. G. Hettrick	Course 11 A.T.P.	Can. P/O H. G. Anderson	Course 28 A.T.P.
Aus. Sgt. E. G. Enwright	Course 26 A.T.P.	Can. P/O G. J. Davis	Course 11 A.T.P.
Aus. Sgt. R. A. Knappett	Course 14 A.T.P.	Can. S/L W. A. Anderson	Course 2 P/O (P)
Aus. Sgt. T. K. Robinson	Course 26 A.T.P.	Aus. Sgt. P. C. Voller	Course 16 A.T.P.
Aus. Sgt. E. H. Schrader	Course 14 A.T.P.	Can. Sgt. R. J. Jackson	Course 28 A.T.P.
Can. Sgt. W. R. Gates	Course 24 A.T.P.	Aus. P/O J. W. Roche	Course 14 A.T.P.

Otherwise Reported

Aus. P/O A. P. Stephenson	Course 14 A.T.P. Wounded
Aus. Sgt. C. Leagh-Murray	Course 26 A.T.P. Wounded
Can. Sgt. R. Mendizabal	Course 20 Wounded
Can. P/O J. G. Hoar	Course 30 A.T.P. Died on Active Service

ROYAL AIR FORCE AWARDS

The following graduates of this Unit have featured in the Royal Air Force Awards during period, January 13 to March 21, 1942.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Can. F/O R. C. Fumerton	Course 4 P/O (P)	Can. P/O R. L. G. Hosea	Course 3 A.T.P.
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DISTINGUISHED FLYING MEDAL

Aus. Sgt. D. W. Spooner	Course 14 A.T.P.	R.C.A.F. Sgt. P. G. Morin
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