

"WINGS OVER BORDEN"

Circulation 1,000 Copies Bi-Monthly

Published at

The Barrie Examiner Ltd.
Barrie, OntarioBy kind permission of
Group Captain R. S. Grandy, O.B.E.

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EDITORIAL

"FOR ALL WE HAVE AND ARE"

"Once more it knits mankind. Once more the nations go
 To meet and break and bind, a crazed and driven foe."

—KIPLING.

It is hard at this particular season of the year, with the Yule Log burning brightly in our hearths, with the gaiety and spontaneity that pervades this festive season, to turn our thoughts to the stark grim realities of war and treachery—but turn we must. The democratic nations of the world are standing together fighting bravely a "crazed and driven foe." The British Empire, the United States, Russia, conjoined with their smaller allies are fighting man against man, ship against ship, plane against plane, tank against tank—the almost overwhelming forces of the renegade Axis powers. We know that ahead there will be dark moments, that we will have a taste of minor defeats. We know that there will be doubts and misgivings, lives will be lost, and sacrifices made. But of one thing we are certain—that ultimately we will win! We have a common task—to defeat Nazism and its puppets, Italy and Japan. We have a common purpose—to preserve the right to live freely, speak freely and worship freely. We have Leadership! Across the ocean on the little island is Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain. His calm, assuring words mark him as a leader of the British Commonwealth. "We shall not flag or fail, we shall go on to the end. We shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be: we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We Shall Never Surrender!" In the United States, thrice-called by his people to be President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt says in the face of the treachery perpetrated on his great nation by Japan: "We are now in the midst of war, not for conquest, not for vengeance, but for a world in which this nation, and all this nation represents will be safe for our children. We are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows—and through the dark days that may be yet to come—we will know that the vast majority of the human race are on our side. For, in representing our cause, we represent theirs as well—our hope and their hope for liberty under God." Again across the ocean, on the Eastern Front of Hitler, is Stalin, leader of the Russian people, who at present are locked in a titanic struggle with Germany. He says: "We shall defend Moscow—street by street, house by house, stone by stone—we shall never give in." And today the Russians under Stalin's leadership are making the Germans pay dearly for every inch they gain and twice dearly for every inch they lose. But leadership alone will not bring ultimate victory. It will mean the iron sacrifice of body, will, and soul. It will take the courage of all of us—the lives of some of us to bring this victory about. But bring it we will! In the words of Kipling:

"There is but one task for all—one life for each to give.
 Who stands if Freedom fall?"

—CPL. TED RORKE.

TAPS



"Greater love hath no man than this,
 That a man lay down his life for his friends."

Before 1941 has passed into history, "Wings Over Borden" wants to pay tribute to the men of Borden, who, with their brother airmen, have sacrificed their young lives in this second Great War. These clear-eyed, strong-limbed, laughing young men, who have given their future in defence of the present, have willed us a legacy of courage, inspiration and determination to finish the task they so willingly commenced and so abruptly quit.

They came to the service from all parts of the Empire and the United States. They came from cities and farms, factories, offices and schools; to Fly for Freedom. They left at home their dear ones and their plans for future security—to secure the future of the democratic world. Some in preliminary training, some in combat fighting, lost their lives. No words of ours can add to their fame nor increase the valour of their deeds—but as long as the flame of gratitude burns in men's hearts, their sacrifices will not be forgotten.

—THE EDITOR.

A Silent Tribute to Our New Allies

(By Squadron Leader J. McCulloch)

The voice on the radio announced: "Ladies and Gentlemen—the National Anthem." The officers rose with one accord and stood silently at attention, eyes lifting slightly to the loudspeaker high on the wall. The playing of the National Anthem took longer than seemed usual, but the officers held their heads high and there was no movement, no shuffling until the last strains had died away. No one knew just why he had been standing there so quietly; none could know what thoughts were passing through the minds of the other officers—each knew only that there was a "something" which brought him to his feet and kept him standing there.

A few moments before, another voice had come from the same loudspeaker, high on the wall—the voice of a great man, the elected leader of his country. He had just ended a speech alive with drama, in which he had asked the elected representatives of his people to declare war on the Empire of Japan. And so it was to the playing of the National Anthem of the United States of America that these officers rose—officers of the Royal Canadian Air Force, listening to the President of the United States—listening to him in their own mess in Canada.

December 7th, 1941—the day when the English-speaking peoples of two great nations became united in the common cause—"to ensure that never again shall such great treachery come upon us—so help us, God."

SEVEN SEAS

(By Flying Officer W. A. Beckett, M.C.)

The Parcel

Out of the gloom of the wintry Arctic skies of the Murmansk coast, to Kandalasksha, thence over the frozen expanse of the White Sea, three reconnaissance planes were flown to Archangel. They glided to the snow-caked earth at Smolny railroad and the pilots made their way to Headquarters for further instructions. Young men in years, they were brave and efficient veterans in the art of shooting their enemies out of the skies. Fifteen months of dauntless gallantry had earned for them the distinctive and arduous task of Arctic flying. Squadron Leader Ronnie Calder could only boast of twenty-five years, but for two years the exhilaration of battle and conquest had been his life, and he thrilled at the prospect of further adventure in Northern Russia.

From his diary it appears that the following day they were provided with a troika, jingling bells complete, drawn by three shaggy, vigorous ponies, and with a Russian guide they sped over the crunching snows to become acquainted with the quaint city of Archangel and its environs. Crossing the river Dvina by the bridge at Solombola, their attention was drawn to a long train of freight cars standing in a siding. Along its length were signs of domesticity; small fires for cooking and warmth lined both sides of the train, whilst from the open sliding doors of the cars peeped the faces of many people, young and old, male and female. They were not happy faces; distress was plainly written on all conditions and countenances—they looked through eyes as from an immeasurable distance behind them.

"What is happening here?" queried Ronnie. The bearded Ivoschik dropped the reins, blew on his numbed fingers through the holes in his mitts, gazed dispassionately over the disconsolate groups, then mumbled: "Refugees from Leningrad. We have no houses for them here, poor devils! so they are allowed to occupy these cars."

This scene of calamity was so strong and dispiriting to Ronnie that he jumped from the troika. "Drive on, you chaps," he said. "Come back for me later; I'm going to have a look-see." With a wave of his hand Ronnie wandered off, impelled by some inward necessity.

In the shelter of the huge snowbanks, as independent caves, that lined each side of the tracks, he passed small family groups busy at their chores; evidently relieved to be from their close confinement in the box cars. An object of great curiosity to them all, he spoke to several and paused at last before a loose box that appeared to be guarded by a tall, gaunt Mongolian whose whole aspect was sinister and defiant. Seated within, in deep and musty straw, he saw two girls, the younger of whom would be about nineteen. Her face, in the hard, sparkling sunlight, showed a pallor and fixity inexpressibly distressing. Dried tear lines were on her cheeks and to her breast she hugged very caressingly a soft brown paper parcel. At her side one could not mistake an elder sister, her beauty was such a surprise to Ronnie that the marvellous fascination of her face, appealing mutely, stirred deep chords within him. He was entirely disarmed by her beauty and her distress. Striding past the Mongolian, he

saluted and asked if there was anything he could do. She averted her eyes with a hopeless gesture. Masha, the younger, blurted out: "We are hungry!" Her lips quivered, and bursting into tears she cried, pointing to her sister: "I'm tired of life, but Tania won't let me die."

"Masha is very unhappy," Tania explained. "Just before we left home Masha's fiance was killed. They were to be married—that parcel she is nursing is her wedding dress."

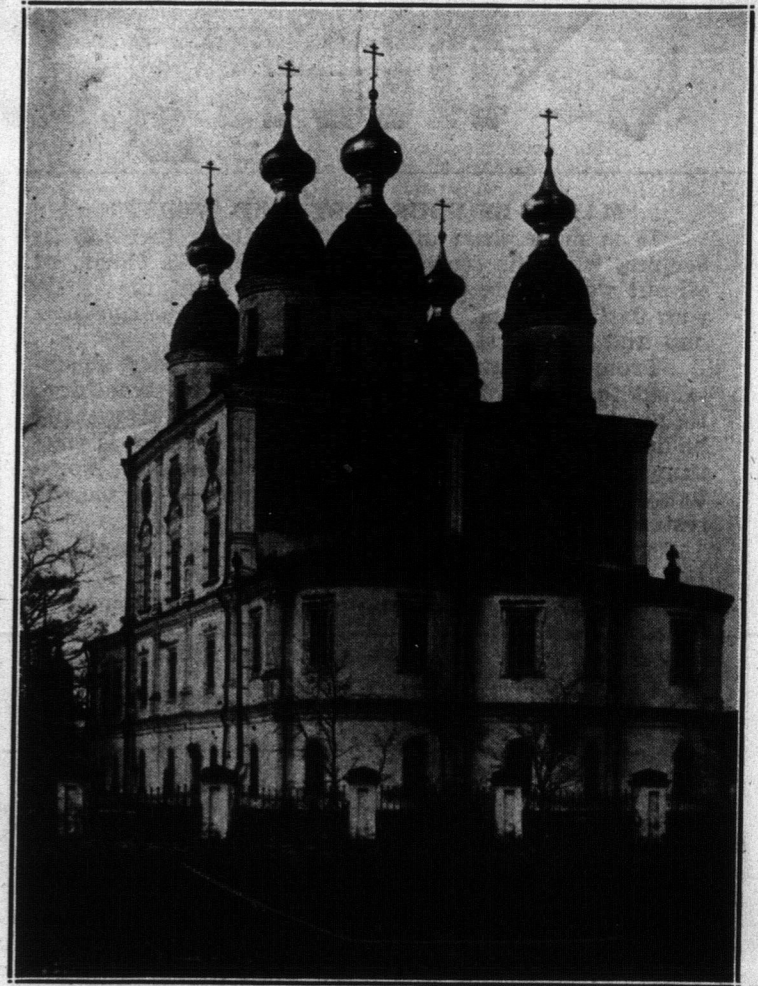
"Mother and Tania and I made it together," Masha whispered sadly, "and now our mother is dead." The tears again rolled slowly down her wan cheeks. The head of the Mongolian poked into the box car and Masha shrank visibly. Ronnie gave both girls a swift searching glance. Tania's eyes showed no fear, only disgust. "Who is this man?" he whispered. "We don't know," replied Masha, "he has been following us since we were allowed to join this train. He wants to take Tania away from me." Tania moved closer to Masha and stroked her hair.

With a singular refinement of hospitable humility Ronnie asked if they would be safe for another five or six hours whilst he went to find out what he could do for them. Tania answered with a grim and doubtful smile: "If only you can do something." With stern resolve he promised to be back. In the distance he spotted the troika and his companions.

At headquarters, with a spurt of really good wangling, he procured for Tania and Masha the use of a fairly decent shack on the outskirts of the town. He drew rations, collected utensils, then drove off furiously in the troika to gather his charges and install them in their new home. The immediate happiness of the girls knew no bounds. Fear, that stalking idiot! left them for a time, and Masha forced a smile of gratitude as she found a place for her precious parcel. They talked far into the night and as the history of the sisters' unfortunate family was unfolded, Ronnie felt that the uncontrollable instinct that had guided him to them could not be explained in other terms than metaphysical. However, on leaving the shack to return to his billet he passed the inscrutable Mongolian standing ominously and patiently at the corner, and his fear for the safety of the girls became a nightmare.

Three months passed by during which Ronnie was able to visit his proteges fairly regularly. Whither the acquaintanceship was leading he did not know, though all seemed simple and natural, as is the way with a man in love. To himself he could not describe Tania other than she was beautiful exceedingly.

One luckless evening he found the girls in tears. The Mongolian had attempted to abduct Tania. That astute dead-pan, Masha, foiled him. Whilst he struggled with Tania, she rushed out of the shack, cut the horses free from the waiting sleigh, and with terrible shrieks and prods of her large knife sent them galloping madly over the snowy waste. The Mongolian fell her with a blow, then ran after the horses, cursing and threatening with the full strength of his lungs! So deeply did this outrageous attack move Ronnie that he abandoned the subtle charm of an impersonal and spiritual relationship and asked Tania to marry



CATHEDRAL AT ARCHANGEL

him. Tania explained that for her love must be only a delicious dream. She could not leave Masha; she must continually force her own awakening for the preservation of all of them. Masha sobbed quietly in a corner of the room; her supple frame shook as she listened to Tania thrusting her own happiness from her.

"But you love him so, Tania," she pleaded. "I know, for I, too, have loved. I can go away—anywhere!"

In this pitiable state the three unhappy young people sat for hours, facing a shoreless eternity; there seemed to be no time—only insurmountable cares.

A cold, clear night followed a day of blinding snowstorms. The virgin snow was like white velvet delicately grained in the moonlight and twinkling with diamonds and spangles. Into this Arctic night Tania took Ronnie. Her face shone with a bright and calm determination. They walked the narrow footboards that lined the centre of the streets. Snow had been cleared on each side of the boardwalk until it reached to the second windows of the houses. Underfoot it crunched and sizzled. In the distance there was a tolling of bells. Christmas was here with its memories, but hearts were too full to show more than the festivity and brave patience that lies in faith. Approaching ever, the sounds striking tunefully to the heavens, Tania led Ronnie through the doors of that strange and wonderful cathedral that sentinels Archangel. Golden domes corruscated under the stars, the beautiful frontal paintings that withstood climate and time looked down inspiringly. Inside, the priests and acolytes droned their incantations. Shadows flickered from the air-blown candles on the altars, and in the cups in

front of the ikons. Quietly, almost stealthily Tania and Ronnie tiptoed to seats in the alcove where was portrayed Tania's patron saint. Obtaining candles, she lit them reverently, and drawing very close to Ronnie, she commenced to pray. Whispering carefully, her low voice suffused with the earnestness and compassion that proclaimed her love, Tania told of the complexity and horrors of her imagination, her anxieties about immortality, the disciplining of her soul against the desires of her body, and her love for Masha. The organ joined its sweet music to the inward charm of her revelations, and Ronnie felt within him an exaltation that hitherto had been beyond his compass. Tania turned slowly towards him, she raised her eyes with a look that did not falter: "From this night, Ronnie, I will be yours," she said. "Before we go pray with me that we will be happy." She prayed again, then, bowing to the ikon, her tear-filled eyes looked deeply into those of the lover she had chosen.

Leaving the cathedral, and the teachings of the ages that frowned over the confused landscape of their lives behind them, they hurried back to tell Masha of their desperate decision. Upon entering the shack they were startled to find that Masha was not present. "Masha! Masha!" Tania called anxiously, and passed quickly to the bedroom. Halting in the doorway Tania turned and beckoned excitedly to Ronnie. There, on the bed, spread out to show all its beauty, was Masha's wedding dress. Resting upon it was a note, scrawled as if in haste, and barely legible were the following lines: "Tania, please wear my dress tonight and be happy with Ronnie. I have gone away with the Mongolian.—Masha."