

House To House Fighting At Ortona "Sure Was Hell" Toronto Casualty Declares

Canadians Didn't Have Clothes Off For Three or Four Weeks, Says Pte. O. Bowman

Ortona, a name that Canadians should never forget, where the boys from the Dominion drove out the Hun in some of the most bitter fighting in the Italian campaign, was pictured by a young Toronto soldier who was there.

The Canucks battled the Nazi suicide brigade house by house and street by street for four long weeks before the city was taken. Amid the deafening din of artillery fire, the crash of falling buildings and the bursts of machine-guns and rifles, the Canadians fought with inspired fury until the enemy was driven out.

Twenty-one-year-old Private Orville Bowman, 332 Dufferin street, a black-haired, round-faced lad of the Seaforth Highlanders, told the story of Ortona upon his arrival in the city over the week-end. He was one of 200-odd Canadians who returned home from the British Isles and the Mediterranean war theatre.

"It sure was hell," Orville told newsmen. "You had to be there to believe it. Nazi snipers were behind every house and every corner and we fired at everything that moved. We didn't have our clothes off for three weeks, or maybe it was four—I can't remember. Nearly every building in the city was smashed and the windows were blown out of the houses that still stood."

"Did you kill any Nazis yourself?" asked a reporter.

NAZIS KEPT COMING

"I didn't go into the street to look. You could see them fall but it was hard to say who hit them. You've got to give those Nazis credit, they kept coming at us all the time.

"On Christmas Day they pulled us out of the fighting, a company at a time, and took us back a few hundred yards to an old church. The padre conducted service and we sang Christmas carols while the shells and mortar bombs fell all around us. For Christmas dinner we had roast beef (I don't know where it came from), Christmas pudding, a bottle of beer and a package of cigarettes.

"It was worse at night than any other time. We took turns doing guard duty and, believe me, it was pretty grim. You never knew when you were going to be hit by a Nazi sniper and we fired at everything—even the shadows. On New Year's Eve a mortar shell burst near me and I was knocked flat on my face. I don't know what time it was. I can't remember. When I came to, I was amazed that I wasn't wounded, but I was almost stone deaf.

STILL PRETTY DEAF

"I was taken to the commanding officer and he ordered me sent back to hospital. Eventually I was flown out from Bari to North Africa. I'm still pretty deaf and I don't know whether I'm going to be discharged or not."

Orville is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bowman. He has two brothers in the services, Melville with the Army Service Corps in England and Wilbert in the RCAF, now stationed in Toronto.

Major S. J. Deery of the RCOG landed with the first assault troops both in Sicily and in Italy, and is an authority on what the Ordnance men are accomplishing in the field.

Major Deery was with Headquarters of the 1st Canadian Division, and his first words were not about what Ordnance people are doing, but about the men of the Canadian forces in the war zone.

"The men are wonderful," he said, "and the artillery is doing a great job."

He said that it was not unusual for 25-pounders to fire 30,000 a day in Italy, and, he pointed out, "That is some shooting."

ORDNANCE WORKSHOPS

With regard to Ordnance workshops, he told The Telegram that they did their work tight up with advanced troops, dragging out vehicles and repairing them on the spot. The greatest difficulty they had was to get spare parts in a hurry. Major Deery is back in Canada for a staff course at Kingston.

Apart from being the senior warrant officer of the Canadian army in Britain, Conductor Jack Dutton, a member of the permanent force for 24 years, is a select member of a famous dart-throwing group in Britain, the "News of the World Treble 20 Guild," which is really something.

To become a member of the guild you have to throw three darts in the 20 circle in succession, and it must be in competition. He did this, and proudly carries a medal and a citation to prove it. He considers he is one of the most travelled soldiers in Britain, having toured the country conducting troops, and on a thousand-and-one other jobs.

On the journey from England, both on train and ship, he was the chief disciplinarian. But the boys behaved and he did not find the task irksome. He was stationed in Toronto for some time before the war.

IN SICILY CAMPAIGN

"We smashed our way right across Sicily," said Trooper D. F. Bright, 24-year-old son of Mrs. S. Bright of Guelph. He was with the 11th Canadian Tank Regiment, attached to Montgomery's Eighth Army, which

landed with the second wave at Amber Beach. There was little or no opposition from the enemy.

Bright explained in detail the reason why this near casualty-less landing was possible—the British commandoes and others taking part in the first wave had stuck such a heavy blow, such an unexpected blow that the Nazi and Fascist troops had scurried into flight.

"There was nothing spectacular about our advance," he replied to a question. "Just more or less general warfare. We landed . . . we had a little trouble with land mines . . . and at times were in close contact with the enemy. There wasn't much to it."

Tpr. J. P. Manitowada, 28-year-old Chippawa Indian, of Toronto and Parry Sound, said that he had only been overseas six months with the Canadian Armored Corps

and had much to talk about. He gave as his reason for coming home a gashed leg received in a motorcycle accident in London during a black-out.

FIGHTING FAMILY

"Both my father, Joseph, who lives at Sault Ste. Marie, and my grandfather, Peter Manitowada, served in the last war," he said. A friend of his, Gnr. W. Cameron, of Southampton, Ont., who was standing nearby smiled in agreement when someone mentioned "a race of warriors." The young Indian also smiled. It was good to be home.

Mrs. William Boyd, of 1050 Yonge st., was at the reception room to welcome home her cousin, Pte. John MacDiarmid. He has been overseas four years, most of the time stationed on the south coast of England.

As MacDiarmid seemed slightly embarrassed at the prospect of having his name in the paper, Mrs. Boyd supplied most of the story of her cousin's activities overseas, including the fact that he got married to a young English girl.

Turning to the red-faced soldier, The Telegram asked: "Is that right?"

"Yes," he replied. "I married in December, 1940. Her name is, or rather was, Constance Kate Green. She lives at present in West Hampstead, London, but I expect her to come to Toronto within a month."

Mrs. Boyd's husband, Squadron Leader William Boyd, RCAF, is stationed at Winnipeg. Both he and his wife served with the RAF in the first Great War. A son, W.A. Victor Boyd, RCAF, was killed in action in May, 1943, at Malta, while engaged with the enemy.

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