

Riding the Sooner Range

By TED BEAIRD

TWO MONTHS ago today, from the office windows in the Oklahoma Memorial Union Building on the campus of the University of Oklahoma, one could glance out at the passing "assembly" and see Sooner soldiers passing by. Yes, Sooner soldiers, sailors, and marines, representing all branches of service being scattered to the four corners of the world. As these notes are being written, a period of intensive officer training work for your hired hand is drawing to a close and in a few minutes we will be reported out on our way to the Pan-American airport, Miami Beach, Florida, heading by way of Tampa, Jacksonville, Tallahassee, New Orleans, Houston, Dallas, and then back on good old Sooner soil at the airport in Oklahoma City. But not for long will we be privileged to kick up the dust on the Oklahoma plains—long enough we hope, to gather the family together, crank up the flivver, and head to the West Coast to our new post of duty, temporary though it may be!

Yes, this is the Pan-American airport on this Florida soil. A seething mass of humanity, ninety-nine per cent men in uniform—ninety-nine per cent moving out under restricted and sealed orders. But there is Major ALBERT CLINKSCALES, '17ba, who is not moving out, but merely over to make a survey of the situation. What a marvelous job he has done as director of academic training for the thousands of officers on this beach which is now war entwined. Other Sooners? Yes, Officer candidate FRANK SPENCE, '41journ, and how that red hair of Frank's shines up above that khaki uniform. Yes, and Second Lt. GEORGE CHAPPELL, '27-'28, and his very charming wife who has just arrived from their home in St. Louis are ready to move out to his new assignment deep in the heart of Texas. Thus the Army Air Corps in these trying hours move in, train, harden, equip themselves, and move out even faster. That indeed is a University passing in review—a review that none of us ever dreamed would be in vogue for these O. U.-ites. Captain LUTHER BOHANON, '27law, Lt. CY ELLINGER, '26ba, and many many more have just "soldiered by." Soon these two will be shipping to new ports, new fields, new posts of duty. That is a small portion of the Sooners' contribution, but it is being made world-wide. It is midnight in Jacksonville, Florida. This airport is a war airport also, but no Sooners have appeared during this twenty minute stop. It would take only a brief few minutes however, to find another branch of the armed service and a leading Sooner doing his bit, Lt. Com. JAP HASKELL, '22geol, of the United States Navy who is here somewhere among the thousands.

Now we are in Pensacola and of course Sooners are in vogue here. But it is the zero hour in mid-morning, so why disrupt them (if perchance they are having any sleep tonight). They too, long before the break of day, will be up going through their rigid routine. Lt. (jg) HAROLD TACKER, '40fa, O. U. staff photographer is out there somewhere, and of course Ensign D. C. MATTHEWS, '38ba, '42law, one of the hired hands at the Oklahoma Memorial Union back when, is in this swim at this seaport.

And here it is, 5:20 in the morning. What a night! Soldiers, sailors, and marines, practically no civilian travel on the airlines today. And now off for a brief hour or two of sleep and then to visit at the Eighth Corps Naval Headquarters here in New Orleans with Lt. FRANK MORRIS, '26bs, '30eng, the O. U. architect who has been headquartering out of

this Naval section for the past year, and then of course, a hurried hello to BETTY TEMPLE HOWELL, '36, wife of Navy Lt. WELDON U. HOWELL, who are far removed today in their new duties of war, from their surroundings in their Dallas, Texas home.

New Orleans is to the back of us and here we come to another war city, Houston, Texas. How often have we landed at this airport in the past on missions other than war missions. How often have we landed at this airport to greet the many hundred Sooners who were in the days of peace, pursuing their various occupations and callings in this city of the South. But tonight, it is a hurry-up exchange of conversation related to Army problems and war problems with W. DOW HAMM, '22ba, KENDALL BAKER, '34ba, '41law, and JOE DICKERSON, '21law.

And here we are, back at this midnight on the fly toward Oklahoma City at the home of the Cotton Bowl, Dallas, Texas. In just a few days, the Sooners will be making their trek this way to meet the mighty Longhorns. I wonder as I muse through the many incidents in connection with this famous football game covering a series of years, how it will fare in these hours of war crisis.

Yes, and this is the Oklahoma City airport at last. And now, after all of these weeks in the tropical climes under Army regulations, to feel the dust of Oklahoma under the heel of a shoe. Sure, there are Sooners to be seen in hurrying and passing, on many items of business before the departure West. Among them is the familiar smile of BOB KERR, '16, who everybody tells me is to be the next governor, and his very gracious brother, AUBREY, '28law, who is still settling many of the problems of state; Dr. TOM LOWRY, '14ma, '16med, in a hurry to be away to Enid to make his contribution to the war effort as a special member of the appeal board; CHARLEY STEELE, '15ba, of the state capitol, the man who can tell you more about hundreds of acres of school land than any other individual in the state; Judge EARL FOSTER, '12ba, '13law; Corporation Commissioner BILL ARMSTRONG, '14ba, '16law; and many others appear on the scene.

And now those few brief hours are over. We have been privileged to have TOM BENEDUM, '28law, settle many business problems for us. In a like manner we have been privileged to have BEP HUTTO, '10ba, come to our rescue and help finance this plan of sending us West, and we have watched ROSCOE CATE, '26ba, who took over all the grieving and raps for the hired hand when he left for this man's army, performing his services like a veteran over the separate corporation and managing the Oklahoma Memorial Union. We felt the remorse and the sting and the unrest on the campus at America's leading state university—the University of Oklahoma at Norman. We know that their problems must be great and their worries must be deep. They too, as the hours roll by, must adjust their program in cultural education—in training young men and young women in the various professions and businesses—to that of an all-out war effort until we get this job done.

So here we go—beating down a path to the West Coast. But what a pleasant jaunt this is going to be to your hired hand who is out on the range. This time, after weeks of separation, the wife and the daughter are to accompany me in the family flivver and at least we will get to visit for a few days until I land at my next post of duty! Well gang, that's sumpin' in this Riding of the Sooner Range. ♣

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