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# Clearing the Desk

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DOWN IN the Southwest Pacific the words "Oklahoma Sooner" are beginning to be pretty well known. The two words, painted in big yellow letters, form the name of a big U. S. war plane that has been earning a reputation for itself and its crew. The pilot is a young man who was going to school at O. U. only a few years ago, but we won't use his name because of security reasons.

SOONERS FREQUENTLY write to tell us how surprised they are to run into other O. U. men in the far corners of the world. Jim Flinchum, '39, former editor of the *Oklahoma Daily*, and Ernie Hoberecht, '41journ, who wrote for or edited practically every publication on the campus while he was a student, ran into each other in Honolulu, Hawaii. They sent, as evidence of their meeting, a picture of the two on a sandy beach. We considered publishing the picture, but decided against it for fear that the polka dotted bathing trunks worn by Jim would make his friends think that the tropical climate had made the former conservative editor go native.

ANOTHER OF THOSE casual meetings is reported by Capt. E. G. Schoggen, Jr., '39, a pilot somewhere in the Pacific area, who walked into a flight operations office and ran into Lt. Ralph Bollinger, '37-'41.

INSTALMENT PAYMENTS on life memberships keep coming in at an amazing rate, considering how scattered alumni are, and how busy they are at various war tasks. Within the last few weeks, payments on life memberships have come in from such far-off places as North Africa, West Indies, Hawaii, and those unnamed islands in the Southwest Pacific where many Sooners are battling the Japs. One Sooner, in the Medical Corps in North Africa, sent a \$60 check for payment in full for a life membership. Another alumnus, who is on leave of absence from the University staff, sent a \$10 bill as payment on his life membership from the Pacific fighting area. "I didn't make any payment for a while because my life expectancy looked too poor, but now we are temporarily out of Japs so I will send another instalment," he wrote.

LT. SAILOR McDERMITT, '42eng, whose real name is George and who is in the Army instead of the Navy (president of the Class of '42), was walking down a road in North Africa when someone yelled "Hey, Mac!" It was Capt. Jack Lucas, '41 eng, who looked somewhat different from his school days because of a new mustache, but the two Sooners were glad to see each other. McDermitt also reports running into Lt. Joe Crenshaw, '42eng, and Lt. Elliott Carter, '40.

YEOMAN 2/c BILL VAN DYKE, '38, who used to write sport stories for the *Norman Transcript* about basketball star Hugh Ford, '41journ, recently visited friend Hugh, now a lieutenant in the Army, at Pearl Harbor. Bill found he could swim out from Pearl Harbor beach, ride the waves down the beach, and arrive within easy walking distance of the camp where Hugh was stationed. Thinking all the time, no doubt, about how different from the dusty South Canadian.

WE SIMPLY can't work up quite so much sympathy for Bill Van Dyke as for another O. U. alumnus now stationed at one of the hot spots (figuratively speaking) in Alaska. This alumnus feels that living conditions for the armed forces in Alaska aren't quite as bad as some people think but he deplors no end the fact that they have a couple of hundred good phonograph records, a juke box, and no white women to dance with!

AMATEURS ALWAYS are at a disadvantage when they first compete with experienced professionals, Lt. Quentin T. Brooks, '42bs, comments in a letter published in the *Okmulgee Daily Times* and forwarded to us by the lieutenant's father. Lieutenant Brooks wrote to refute a statement he had seen which criticized the sending of "ill-trained" American men against veteran German troops in Africa. "Their training was as complete as planning and hard work could make it," Lieutenant Brooks argues. "They had reached the point where training could do no more and they needed only the final test of actual battle. There they were up against the thing that every amateur encounters when he meets a professional, the fact that we were amateurs at war and they were the professionals. Sure we lost men, and it will be the same every time a new division meets a veteran division of the enemy, but the men who survive will then and then only become real soldiers. The same applies to officers." We think the lieutenant has a point. We also think that the swell record of achievement made by U. S. forces in North Africa in the last month proves that no apologies are necessary.

DEALING WITH civilian problems seems pretty unimportant as compared with the job being done by the men fighting in the mud and blood of Tunisia, with their lives at stake every minute. Still, those men grimly working at the job of exterminating the Axis forces have a right to expect that the people back home will do the things necessary to hold together the frame work upon which the future of the United States will be built.

—R. C.

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