

Riding the Sooner Range

By TED BEAIRD

Ed's Note: Back into the fold is a former regular department of the magazine handled by your Alumni Secretary Ted Beaird who is now back at his desk in the Alumni Office after serving more than two years in the Air Corps.

This pickin' up the trail after 2½ years traveling other avenues is a reborn experience in Ridin' the Sooner Range! The Madame Editor, Edith Walker, '41journ, plus the female staff in the Alumni publication division have long since given up hope that the Range Rider will be reformed and learn to get his material in on schedule before *that* deadline! Little does the Madame Editor realize that as we have picked up the Riding of the Sooner Range again, we have a notebook chuck full and overflowing dealing with a very, very interesting group of Sooners who have "passed in review" in recent weeks. So, here goes for a gallop!

It was 1430 (2:30 p. m. Pacific War Time) on 6 September, 1944, when the tour of active Army duty was surrendered to superior officers in the Area Headquarters of the Spokane Air Service Command. In hand were the War Department orders sending the Range Rider on a trek to the Separation Center, Fort Sam Houston—to the Center for processing, on to Terminal Leave, on to honorable discharge in the immediate future weeks to come. The application for voluntary retirement from active duty to return to the old stomping ground and to cope with Sooner problems on the old home front had been channeled through. So between the dates of 1430 6 September (upon leaving a very pleasant tour of duty in the Air Corps of this man's army) and this present hour 0800 (8 a. m. Central War Time) 22 October—well, semi-old-time duties have come into play, and the pleasure of making many Sooner contacts has become a reality.

En route from the far, far Pacific Northwest to the Separation Center at Fort Sam Houston, deep in the heart of Texas, the first "quasi-Sooner" bloomed up! The young returning veteran from the European theater standing on the threshold of Old Faithful Inn at Yellowstone National Park as we passed through on that highway, was none other than First Lt. Guy Lackey, Jr., of Stillwater, Oklahoma—typical chip off the old block, Guy, Sr., '18ba, professor at the A. and M. College, Stillwater, and the 28-years-ago-associate of the Range Rider in janitorial duties at the Administration Building on the campus of the University of Oklahoma. Yes, the years make changes!

Physical examination processing, pending Terminal Leave from the armed forces, was made much more pleasant upon arrival at Brooks Hospital, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, when it was found that Lt. Col. Lee K. Emenhiser, '31med, is now, and has been for the past four years, directing officer of the eye, ear, nose and throat clinic of that institution. His able assistant, Maj. Edward D. McKay, '35med, almost made the top rounds of this clinic "Soonerized" 100 percent. And boy, how these G.I. specs do fit after those two Sooners proceeded to work on the "40 odd plus" Range Rider's eyes.

Reporting to duty at the old stomping ground at 0800 1 October after a series of conferences with "Prexy" Tom Benedum, '28law, plus more conferences with Roscoe Cate, '26ba, R. W. "Bep" Hutto, '10ba, Neil Johnson, '17law, Ed Meacham,

'14ba, Guy Y. Williams, '06ba, '10ma, and numerous others, makes the beginning of old responsibilities and duties *more than realistic*. The hasty meeting with the "feminine staff," Sue Starr, '43ba, Edith Walker, Mrs. Mary Turnbull, Elaine Larecy, '42journ, Sarah Gephardt, '45, Charles Turnbull, '42bus, Mrs. Lola Lomax, Bill Owen, as well as the manager and chief down through these many years—"Chief" in the art of "Sweetbreads and French Fries," Mrs. Mary Scott of the Union kitchen forces, readily makes one who has toured with G.I.s for months on months realize that he is back in the swim of civilian preparation.

The steady stream of old cronies and old associates who, over a span of years plus years on this University campus, coming and going and meeting, makes the picture complete as old times and old duties begin to unfold.

Exchange of telephone conversations by and with Attorney Hicks Epton, '32law, Wewoka, who, incidentally, was processed out as another G.I. Joe from the United States Army seven days prior to my arrival on the old home stomping grounds—with Superintendent George Hann, '36 m.ed, the old Ardmore City School Prexy, O. F. "Fish" Muldrow, '22, with numerous other Sooners via L.D. in the Sooner state, soon put the old grinder in top shape for the rolling of equipment on short order!

An influx of mail from foreign theaters of operation—Col. Lee Thompson, '32law, in a most interesting V-mail letter, J. F. "Maj" Malone, '37ba, from his new position down New Guinea way, Capt. Boyd Gunning, '37law, deep in the Pacific Southwest—and the terse brief note from Capt. Frank Haxel, '32, that after these 29 months he would, in the course of a few hours, be headed back to the States and bid India plus Burma goodbye (at least temporarily)—all these, plus dozens of other Sooner notes from graduates and former students either "at sea" headed to their foreign assignments or "at sea" wondering if and when replacements would be sent, after their long tours of duty in the various theaters of operation, makes one quite aware that the old trail is different (and will be) until these lads too are headed home!

An interesting evening spent with Capt. C. O. Hunt, '40law, en route from the Convalescent Center, Denver, Colorado, back to his old outfit in Virginia caused a rehashing of events covering the period of the last three years of active Army duties.

With J. C., '38ba, and Mrs. Mayfield plus Margaret Ann Gessner Twyman, the O. U. Placement expert now back in the middle of the swim with her O. U. cronies, the visit to the Borden General Army Hospital, Chickasha, was most interesting and stimulating. Among the highlights was a pleasant visit with Lt. William "Bus" Monroe, '35law, who was recently flown in from the European theater for patchwork which, incidentally, will cover a series of months for the Army medical specialists to complete. It is believed that all of us should endeavor to catch the spirit of these men "so flown." It is recommended that those of us who may be back on the civilian home front—when the going gets rough, when it seems that the barriers cannot be removed at a rapidly changing pace, go to some convalescent center or general armed forces hospital and catch the optimism, gather the cheer and the hope that the returning veterans, being sent in from every theater of war, will soon inoculate into your system. That indeed is the old Sooner spirit amplified three-fold.

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