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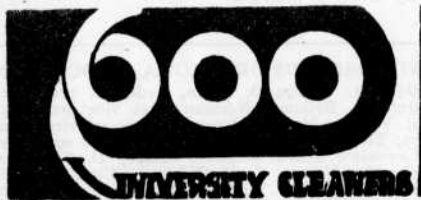
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# Riding the Sooner Range

By TED BEAIRD

Again—it is repeated—the ups and downs, the "toughs and tumbles"—the novel experiences afforded many, many multiplied thousands of O.U. boys in this World War make peculiar riding on their ranges!

It is 20 July 1945, the usual routine at the alumni headquarters offices is being carried out in mid-afternoon. Programs are being set into motion via air mail, Western Union, and by the facilities of long distance for the appearance of PRESIDENT GEORGE CROSS before the O.U. alumni in Denver, Colorado, in the immediate days to follow; set-ups are being perfected for the appearance of DEAN GLENN COUCH, '37ms, before the Tulsa County alumni in the city of Tulsa early in August; last minute details are being completed by long distance by and between your Range Rider and KENNETH ABERNATHY, '31law, the Shawnee-Sooner-alumni-barrister recently returned as Major Abernathy from the United States Army—when over the desk, via the facilities of Uncle Sam's air mail, out of Germany breaks the prize soldier's letter out of the multiplied thousands that have come in in recent weeks.

The writer? Why, it's old BILL TUCKER, '43geol. Yes, indeed, today it is Corporal Bill C. Tucker, 38469004, Headquarters Company of the 220th Armored Engineers (Section No. 4, to be exact, of those Engineers). The letter was pushed off his typewriter out of Chieming, Germany, at 1700, 3 July 1945.

Yes—today it's Corporal Bill of the United States Army, but let's look back in retrospect for a moment before reading his outstanding and most interesting message to all Sooner alumni. As of January 14, 1943, old Bill Curtis Tucker was just No. 21912 in the alumni files of the University of Oklahoma. That alumni file number reveals that this chap had just received a B. S. degree in Geology from O.U. that January. It likewise lists, in the background, that he entered the University of Oklahoma on September 16, 1939, with 32 advanced hours credit from the Oklahoma A. and M. College at Stillwater. It shows also that he had made his debut (as a future budding corporal of the U.S. Army) on January 15, 1921. Then, following that alumnus' "number" and graduation in January, 1943, it shows that only a few months later he was called from his profession as a geophysicist into "Uncle Sam's Circle."

His training? Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 7-43; Harvard University, Cambridge, 8-43; Kingston, Rhode Island, 10-43; Camp Santa Anita, Arcadia, California, 4-44; Ordnance Depot, Pomona, California, 9-44; then over the pond!! under A.P.O. 444, c/o Postmaster, New York. That is the biographical run, in chronological order, of yesterday's Buck Private Bill Curtis Tucker (even as late as 8-43) and today's U.S. Army Corporal Bill Curtis Tucker, an O.U. Sooner Son. What does he say? Here 'tuz:

Chieming, Germany  
July 3, 1945

Dear Ted:

Thanks for your little note, and though our outfit was in combat for only a little over a month it was a month that none of us could ever forget. In the closing days of the war there occurred an incident that might be of general interest.

We of the 20th Armored had been scooting across Germany at the rate of 100 to 200 miles a day, and as I was a member of a small Engineer Reconnaissance party I was often out

ahead of the rest of our outfit. Before we knew it we had crossed the border and we were in Salzburg, Austria. Here the Seventh Army stopped as the Allies were negotiating with the German Commander of Austria and Northern Italy. We soon ascertained that General Kesselring himself was not far out of Salzburg and that he was expected to surrender at any moment. What prompted our "Recon Party" to make its next move I shall never know, anyhow we decided to move on beyond Salzburg until we contacted surrendering forces or resistance. Just outside of Salzburg I saw white flags flying from our own American tanks. They were waiting for Jerry to come in. They informed us that General Kesselring had sent in a note saying that if his troops were fired upon the fire would be returned. With this precaution in mind we left the last outpost of the Seventh Army and headed straight into enemy territory. After about two miles we saw directly ahead a German sentry with a rifle in hand watching us approach. When we reached him and stopped, he immediately walked over, handed us his rifle, and asked where to go to surrender. We asked him how far it was to the German armies. He said about five kilometers. We told him to proceed to Salzburg.

Another mile passed by and to our immediate left front there appeared a German army camp. We drove into this camp. Therein was one of the strangest episodes of my life. There we were, three American soldiers in a German army camp with at least 300 men who had not yet surrendered. While there, the danger of the situation never occurred to me. We demanded the commander of the camp. We were directed to his office. He was not there. After a 30-minute search we decided that the commander had skipped. By this time it was chow-time and the Krauts were lining up outside of the mess hall. They were very indifferent to us. We gathered them together outside of the mess hall and ordered them to proceed to Salzburg immediately and surrender. We told them that we would be back the next day and we did not want to find a single one of them there.

With that we decided that we had done enough for one day so we returned to Salzburg. The next day we did go back to our camp and only a few old people were around. So that is the story of how Recon Section Number Four of the Engineers of the 20th Armored took over a Flak Company camp. The following evening the order to cease firing was given in the Seventh Army.

Now we are sweating out return to the States and then C.B.I.

Sincerely yours,  
BILL TUCKER.

Do you visualize what a RANGE this chap has ridden in World War II, and what a tour (after his sweatin' out is completed) and he participates in C.B.I. this Sooner will experience? Oh, yes, these Sooner sons do a lot of fancy *Riding of the Sooner Range!*

FLASH—These 28 days later (August 18, 1945) as we go to press, Corporal Bill's (and all others') trail has changed on the Range! Who knows—maybe Bill, thanks to the Japs' yelling, on August 15, 1945, "Had enough—can't take it—wanta quit!!"—well maybe old Bill's POINTS will work—maybe now, thanks to God, there is again WORLD PEACE, maybe a lot of Sooner Bills will never see and serve in C.B.I.—we hope, we hope!!