

# Sergeant Harvey

## Writes of War-

## Time England

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Describes Conditions in the British Isles as Seen by an American Soldier with the 8th Air Force

Headquarters of Eighth Army Air Force Service Command in England. —On all battle fronts of the globe today, the American soldier is participating in the greatest of conflicts, and, at the same time, welding a bond of good-will and friendship, between the freedom-loving nations, fighting side by side.

One of these overseas "Yanks," helping to "re-discover" the world, is Staff Sergeant Willoughby Harvey, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mose Harvey of Route Two, Newton.

Assigned to a supply depot of the Eighth Air Force Service Command, Sergeant Harvey has shared the thrill of most G. I's, who have travelled throughout the island, and visited London.

During his tour of the capital city, Sergeant Harvey noted his observations of the average Britisher's life, and has sent these personal impressions to the Press, which publishes them, so that the citizens of Newton, can gain, from one of its native sons, a first-hand picture of England at war.

### Impressions of London

"Recently I have visited London and after much deep thinking have decided to pass my impression of the city at night, and some of the sacrifices the people of England have made to you folks back home. I say 'folks,' because during such times as these, it seems to me that everybody is naturally drawn so close to each other that they seem almost like relatives.

"London, at night, is a city lost to recollection so far as the eye is concerned. A city without light; a city on guard; a city cautious; a city on the alert; a city in darkness. Above the city, no doubt beyond our vision, a few young men are flying planes high, high in the night sky—watching and listening for a 'Jerry' to come over. All about the city there are soft-spoken figures passing in the night with whispered greetings—the air-raid wardens, awake and alert to any eventuality.

"To all appearances the city sleeps. Perhaps it should be—but London hasn't soundly slept in more than three long years. There are monuments to its insomonia—monuments of broken things that a people loved and cherished; Venerable skeletons of old buildings beaten by bombs and fire-brands, their paneless windows gaping like dried wounds, cauterized by a faith that will not perish. And there are places, too, where nothing stands—places where, one time, people danced or laughed or carried on a trade, or worshipped God according to their will.

## Difference of Time

“There are six hours difference between the time here and the time back home. Time is a wonderful thing, though; the six hours between England and you folks back home is really the difference between what has happened here and what has not

(Continued on Page Eight)

# Sergeant Harvey Writes of War- Time England

(Continued from Page One)

happened there. We Americans can be grateful for those six hours. Night after night we can be grateful for them. Where we, speaking personally, at home at this moment, we would probably be drowsily watching the day pass into eventide as we made conversation with our neighbors; instead, though people here are subconsciously listening for the possible approach of 'Jerries' overhead. The six hours make a whale of a lot of difference.

"London is not glum about her blackout. Behinds the darkened doors, which natives seem to locate with a sixth sense, the pubs are still pretty well filled with folks who enjoy their bitter, even those who used to drink nothing but Scotch. Imagine a shortage of Scotch in England. Bitter is a form of light beer and, by the way, the brewed beverages—of which there are several types, such as lager, stout, mild and strong ale, and others—seem to be the main choice of most Britons. And these are treated as a friendly beverage and not swilled in great quantities. The streets at night are like avenues of dancing fireflies. Everyone carries a shield flashlight—or torch—to guide their footsteps, and it must never be pointed upward.

## **These Noble Sacrifices**

"The English countryside is beautiful, even at this season of the year, and new crops are coming in the fields. There are some very large farms in England, planted some in this, and some in that, remind one of a giant multi-colored patch-work quilt that will cover and warm the heart of the re-strengthened British lion. Not much of the produce of this vast agricultural development will find its eventual way to British tables, however. It will go to the armed forces in the main, for the British people are diligent in—not just resigned to—their sacrifices at home.

"You may get an idea of how great these noble sacrifices are when we tell you that the average household is rationed to about twenty-five cents worth (one shilling, two pennies) of meat per person per week—something less than a pound in weight. There are few eggs, except in powdered form. There is very little cream produced, and milk for adults is limited to two pints per week (and at home, we drank two quarts a day).

"We all know that tea is considered the national beverage of Britain. Imagine here in England, tea being rationed to two ounces per person per week. There is a shortage of real coffee that would appal most Americans. It is served sparingly, with hot thin milk, often made from the powdered type. Sugar is limited in restaurants—the usual amount served with a pot of tea or coffee being about one-quarter of the customary American lump—just one cube one-half an inch square.

## Laudry a Problem

“And if you think that you have laundry problems at home, let me tell you that it takes about a month to get the washing done and fishished over here, and it is desired that one furnish his own soap. As for dry cleaning, one exercises care not to have it done, but if it is necessary it may require about six weeks from the time a person leaves a suit until he may pick it up. A person learns fast to wash his own clothes of an evening, and hopes to find a kindly chambermaid who will, for a shilling or two, get the ironing done.

“The transportation problem is solved by ample buses, subways—called tubes over here—and the Britisher's propensity for walking. Taxi-

cabs, about as big as 'kiddie cars' and just about as comfortable, 'snort' around with breath-taking agility, squeezing by one another, on narrow little lanes at amazing speeds, and all the time making funny little honk noises with their bulb horns. But people walk most places. One asks how far it is from one point to another and the answer is always about seven minutes, or fifteen minutes walk just up around the corner and 'you simply can't miss it.'

"But night is the most amazing time. We of America really know nothing of blackouts. In London, the blackout is literal, and many people in this man's town sport badly bashed noses from colliding with lamp-posts.

### **Tobacco Is High**

"Tobacco is very high, too, but most men smoke pipes and take great pride in blending their own mixtures, which are fragrant and provoke a relaxing atmosphere. English cigarettes taste much like something that would make a good hooked rug instead of being smoked; and imagine, for a pack of twenty of these cigarettes, a person pays the equivalent of 48 cents (2 shillings, four pennies). Matches? That is the scarcest article we have found.

"Everybody works. There are no loiterers. The women drive spans of great dray-horses, till the fields, are bus conductors, run the motor barges, carry the mail, and tend the bar. It is impressive and inspiring, and with it all, is the matter of fact spirit of the English people—taking everything in that long, rangly stride that seems to be their gait—mentally and physically. War is a way of living to them; hardship is custom; adversity the very core of an existence. It makes a lump of sympathy and humble pride leap to the throat of a kinsman who has not lived like this before, but who is proud to know his relatives who do."