Riding the Sooner Range

By TED BEAIRD

Editor's Note: Riding the Range, formerly a regular feature, has not appeared in Sooner Magazine for some time because Major Beaird’s time has been fully occupied with his Army duties. For this special issue, however, he air-mailed the following copy from his post in Spokane. It is in the form of a letter to Dr. M. L. Wardell, 19ha, acting director of the extension division.

XMAS MORNING, 1943
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

Dear M. L.,

Indeed, what queer turns "fate-in-war" records for all of us! As I recall, one year ago at this exact hour, it was the early (very early) hours of Christmas Morning, 1943, I was bedecked with all the trimmings of the Field Officer of the Day-on duty with thousands of officers and men, in one of the largest Army Air Force installations of the Pacific Northwest-namely, Pendleton Army Air Field, Pendleton, Oregon. Then, as now, clue to a day sacred to all of us-

To write many of my friends through you, as requested, after it had reached your town of Vermont, on the rolling plains of Texas, or the inner-most haven of scenic North Carolina, lived the average life of a representative American citizen. Men, who upon reporting to their professional duties daily, displayed the spirit of a democracy by subjecting their families to the traditional teaching of life, liberty, freedom of worship and all that is American.

The contributions in the Armed Forces, of the more than seven thousand men and women of O. U., stands as a significant record of the University's past and its hopes for the future. The contributions of the thousands, plus thousands on the home-front, those giving hourly to the war effort, through work, devotion and loyalty of those leaders-as true representatives of the American College System.

Through my mind flashes a series of events-familiar faces are visualized in strange and abnormal situations brought about by war. Many, many, many long months now for CAPT. CLIFF HINES, '33, CAPT. J. E. "Buck" GARRETT, '32, and LT. COL. VIC COLLIER, '41a, among many other fine O. U. lads,-have already paid the price. Many, many of those fine Americans, represented in the message stack, before me, are twelve, sixteen or eighteen months ago- now, in the throes of war finds himself in a strange, foreign surrounding and becomes homesick to the point where he despairs. They will pass-if and when (God willing), they return physically sound and they reach home firesides in the future to come.

The lark and heart-breaking part of that XMAS MORNING, 1943, mail and message stack is the "three-star files"! Thank God it is small in comparison with the many messages forms, but each word, each line, each sentence in the "star-stack" spells tragedy! There they lay before me as recorded history, spelling the end of the trail, the giving of life in this mammoth game of exerting all for the traditional principles of liberty that others may, in future years, continue to live. "The American Way."

Many, many of those fine Americans, represented in the message stack, before me, were twelve, sixteen or eighteen months ago.

Many, many of those O. U. chaps "deep in the deep South Pacific." Other notes in that "stack" picture homesickness, "fate-in-war" records. Indeed, major "fate-in-war" records, from his post in Spokane. It is in the form of a letter to Dr. M. L. Wardell, 19ha, acting director of the extension division.

Thank God it is small in comparison with the many messages forms, but each word, each line, each sentence in the "star-stack" spells tragedy! There they lay before me as recorded history, spelling the end of the trail, the giving of life in this mammoth game of exerting all for the traditional principles of liberty that others may, in future years, continue to live. "The American Way."

Many, many of those fine Americans, represented in the message stack, before me, were twelve, sixteen or eighteen months ago.

To write many of my friends through you, as requested, after it had reached your home-front, those giving hourly to the war effort, through work, devotion and loyalty of those leaders-as true representatives of the American College System.

Thank God it is small in comparison with the many messages forms, but each word, each line, each sentence in the "star-stack" spells tragedy! There they lay before me as recorded history, spelling the end of the trail, the giving of life in this mammoth game of exerting all for the traditional principles of liberty that others may, in future years, continue to live. "The American Way."

Many, many of those fine Americans, represented in the message stack, before me, were twelve, sixteen or eighteen months ago.

To write many of my friends through you, as requested, after it had reached your home-front, those giving hourly to the war effort, through work, devotion and loyalty of those leaders-as true representatives of the American College System.