

TOMMIE

*1st Lieut. A. Thomas Rowe, Jr.
Co. H, 6th Inf., Armored Division*

Killed In Action
N. Africa, April 27, 1943

Dedicated to
The Memory of
"Tommie," Alexander Thomas Rowe, Jr.
and to
His Mother, Ida Byrd Rowe,
Two of earth's noblest

In Memoriam

"Killed in action in North Africa April 27th" — these are the tragic words in the telegram from the War Department received by his father and mother on the evening of May 20, 1943. Their terrific strain all through the Tunisian battle had eased with the word of the victory there, making this news all the more a stunning blow.

Tom's lovely bride upon hearing the news said she would come at once. Only a few days they had had together after their marriage. All the friends also are feeling keenly this loss. This sympathy the sorrowing parents appreciate, and they are leaning hard on God and trying to be brave "as their Tommie was."

He did well the part assigned him to do. It has been a comfort to the parents that Tommie's Distinguished Service Cross was awarded for his *saving* life. They are comforted, too, by his assurance to them on his last visit home of his trust in God.

Some things about Tom as he lived among us come back so vividly now—his gracious manners, his cheery outlook, his fearlessness, his ever ready helpfulness. He could always be counted upon to make a Sunday-school party a success. We remember some of the good talks he gave in Sunday school and church, and especially the solos from his rich bass voice, which is stilled forever for us here, but which we trust is pouring forth in far richer strains to beautify life in his new home."

Mrs. Bessie L. Byrum

NOTE: The above was published in the FELLOWSHIP FORUM, a quarterly magazine published by the Young People's Department of the Park Place Church of God Sunday School, Anderson, Indiana. The writer of this article, Mrs. Bessie L. Byrum, was one of Tommie's teachers.

INTRODUCTION

For almost twenty-six years Tommie and I lived together, played and worked together, prayed together and, in a sense, he and I had a little world of our own—of course, within the world that took in his mother, and still within the bigger world for whose freedom he gave his life in North Africa, April 27, 1943.

Tommie was A. T., Junior; he was to preserve the name; he was to build a strong Christian character and fill a useful place in life, and I could always count on him. I leaned upon him, a sturdy, honest, willing young fellow with boundless energy. No one will ever know how much I loved him. When he left us to enter Indiana University 100 miles away, it seemed like a thousand miles; I knew that was the beginning of his separation from us and I wept—oh, no, nobody saw me do it, for should a big physically strong man weep? But I have seen strong men weep—business men, professional men, financial wizards, religious men, ministers and laymen—I have seen these men weep; they were looked upon as strong men, and I have made no claims to being strong.

After May 20, 1943, when we began to realize the awfulness of the tragedy, I resolved—if I should be able—to put down on paper some of my reactions, this perhaps to give an outlet for my emotions, and possibly give some comfort to our immediate relatives and encouragement to others who might read what I had written.

As in the terrible tragedy that took the life of another gallant soldier, Tommie's cousin, Charlie Young, I lived over and over hundreds of times the minutest details of Tommie's going as I conceived them—the exploding shell, the mortal wound, his fall to the ground, his death struggle, his life blood saturating the ground, his final last breath, his being carried to the rear, the digging of the grave, the wrapping of the body in his blanket, the folding of his hands, laying him in the grave and covering him with the African sand—and on and on day after day,

night after night, re-enacting all of these things in my imagination—and a hundred others.

It would be impossible physically to put it down in writing, and some might say, "Is it necessary to give all of these harrowing details?" Well, the product of this writing is not for sale, is not a commercial item; I am financing it myself; nobody has to read it, and it gives me relief to be able to say in writing some of the things that I feel in my heart, and I also have the hope that some other parents may read this and may gain some comfort from the fact that they have the same feeling, though maybe not expressing it. I stopped writing on this yesterday and said to myself, "I'll try to finish it tomorrow." Well, this is "tomorrow."

They buried Tommie near where he fell, then moved him next day to Tebessa (a Military Cemetery) and erected a white cross. I see him there and when the war is over, if it is at all possible, his mother, Marjorie and I plan to drop our work and visit that grave in Africa. Even though it is more than six months since we received this terrible news, every night I think without exception I have said (sometimes audibly, sometimes only in my mind), "Good night, Tommie."

As I have tried to adjust to the terrible fact that I shall never again see this splendid boy, certain words and thoughts force themselves to the top: "Futility," "Frustration," "I have been cheated," "I will not be reconciled," "I must live," "Not long to wait," "The insanity of war," "Patriotism, what is it?" and many other thoughts, some of them in sharp conflict.

If anyone is interested in reading what I have written, may it help and not hinder!

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BIOGRAPHY

Tommie was born just twenty-six years ago today—Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 29, 1917, just twenty years after the birth of his half brother Clyde, who was born on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 27, 1897.

Tommie was born in Columbia Hospital, Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania (a suburb of Pittsburgh), about 10:30 P.M. on that Thanksgiving Day. Later I took Tommie and his mother home to 79 Lincoln Avenue, Crafton, Pennsylvania (a suburb of Pittsburgh) in a new Olympian Automobile. Thus began the life of the boy who was to give up that life for his country in military action in North Africa, April 27, 1943.

October 1, 1920 we left Pittsburgh with Tommie, making a month's auto tour of the east, visiting Washington, Philadelphia, New York, Niagara Falls and other points, taking up pastoral work about November 1, 1920 at Akron, Indiana, where "Junior," as we called him, made many friends, Mr. Frank Haldeman, now deceased, father of Professor Walter Haldeman, being a particularly good friend.

In June, 1923, we moved to Atlanta, Georgia, to take up church work, purchasing a home at 804 Edgewood Avenue. There Tommie had his first introduction to public school, attending first the Inman Park School and later Moreland Avenue School, and Bass Junior High School.

Almost from infancy Tommie had some heart ailment from which he later recovered completely. He had a number of attacks of pneumonia, and in 1930 was stricken with a severe and prolonged attack of acute nephritis. Later he completely recovered, under the careful direction of Doctor Wood, of Atlanta, and through the prayers of Christian people. He took no medicine whatever, though not as a matter of conscience but because the doctor advised that medicine in his case might hinder rather than help.

In June, 1932, we moved to Anderson, Indiana, where Tommie completed High School and took one year at Anderson College. In June, 1941, he received his B.A. degree from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, and at the same time received his commission as Second Lieutenant in the Army of the United States. He had taken military training in Indiana U. for four years.

July 1, 1941, I took him to Fort Knox, south of Louisville, Kentucky, where he was assigned to Company H, 6th Infantry, Armored Division. He continued at Fort Knox for nine months, including maneuvers in Louisiana and the Southeast. He moved to Fort Dix, New Jersey, in March, 1942, and about the last of May, of that same year, he was shipped to North Ireland; but prior to shipping he was united in marriage May 16, 1942 to Marjorie Ludlow, of Elmira, New York.

He was in the Oran landing raid in North Africa, November 8, 1942, on the H.M.S. "Hartland," one of the fifty overage destroyers which were sold to the British Government. The "Hartland" was riddled and sunk and more than five hundred of the seven hundred on board were killed and most of the others wounded.

He was instantly killed in North Africa near Mateur and within six or seven miles of the famous Hill 609; his body rests in the military cemetery at Tebessa, North Africa. He was in the First Division, Co. H 6th Infantry, Armored Division, Army of the United States.

TOMMIE AND HOME

Tommie had nine different homes while he lived with us, namely Columbia Hospital, Wilksburg, 79 Lincoln Avenue, Crafton, 7916 Tacoma, Pittsburgh, Akron, Indiana (2 different homes), 804 Edgewood Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia, and Anderson, Indiana, at 1105 East Fifth Street, Old People's Home Building, and finally our new home at 1225 East Eleventh Street, Anderson.

We always tried to provide a good home for him with the usual comforts, but it will always be a source of regret that he did not get to spend much time at 1225 East Eleventh Street. Here we built a modern home, where we had seventeen acres of ground, orchard, large lawn, trees and flowers, in a nice quiet spot.

We made a complete second-floor apartment for Tommie, with bedroom, library, and bath, and as we worked on it we said, "This is for Tommie and his bride, if and when he gets a bride." Tommie went with his mother and selected the furniture; but he never got to use it much, and it makes our hearts sad.

Many interesting things could be told of Tommie's early childhood. From his very first words he enunciated clearly. It was "F-a-t-h-e-r," "M-o-t-h-e-r." He at first had trouble with his English. One day he came in saying to his mother, "M-o-t-h-e-r, my trousers am broking," meaning torn. When he came out of the anesthetic from a tonsillectomy he said, "Are I all right?" When assured that he was, he was satisfied.

One cold winter night he called to his mother, "I'm throzen out." These and many other childish sayings keep coming to us.

Tommie was always honest to the last penny. Early we taught him tithing, that he should give one-tenth to the Lord. We had him with us at the Birmingham Camp Meeting in 1923, and he started out giving one-tenth of his money in each offering, and there would be an

average perhaps of two offerings a day, with three on Sunday. He started with something over Two Dollars and got down to seventeen cents. At that point he came to his mother and whispered in her ear (he would never talk aloud in any church service), "Mother, how much is a tenth of seventeen cents?" He was more religious about his tithing at that time than he perhaps was in later life, and maybe more religious in that respect than some of us today, though I do not know.

Tommie had all the usual ills in early life, and in addition to these had a number of attacks of pneumonia; he started out with a "quick" heart and a number of times his companions carried him in off the street unconscious. He completely recovered from that; then he had a very severe attack of nephritis, which kept him in bed on his back for nine months, in which time he completely outgrew all of his clothing. We had nothing to wrap him in to take him to a store to get clothing, and so we had to have suits and shoe brought out to the home until we got a fit.

Tommie was a very close friend of Clarence Rather. Clarence was critically injured in an automobile accident and died a few days later, and at the request of the family Tommie sang. He kept his composure perfectly, but he told us afterwards that was the hardest thing he'd ever done.

We tried to make our Indiana home a haven for boys, and Tommie brought many of them home. In many respects he was just like any boy. He had some weaknesses, no doubt. Now every weakness sinks into insignificance as I think of his outstanding good qualities.

Tommie hated snobbery, show, playing to the galleries, "polishing apples." He lived, he played, he worked, he died with the "common" crowd. The Corporal who was wounded as Tommie died was a farmer. To him Tommie would be a farmer. While with us he would do anything for anybody—old or young, rich or poor, well clothed or ragged—they all looked alike to him.

Bob Beck, in reading the Corporal's letter about Tommie's death where the Corporal said, "He kept all his men," said, "This is the mark

of a good leader. He did not escape from the German trap alone, but he kept all of his men."

Colonel Wells, Tommie's immediate Colonel in charge said, "His men loved him; they would follow him anywhere and carry out his orders without question. He was carried by his men to the rear, where our chaplain and his men laid him to rest. He was one of the finest soldiers that I ever came in contact with and have never seen a commander so loved by his men, which I think is one of the highest tributes that can be paid to any officer."

I am sure that Tommie would never use the Patton method in directing men.

One man who knew him well said, "Tommie lived more in his twenty-six years than some of us will live in seventy years."

Tommie loved home; he liked people. He had the greatest of respect for his mother and me, and he would go far out of his way to save me from hard labor. He and I had an understanding from the earliest of my recollections that if he ever got into trouble of any kind, stuck in the mud with the car or any other difficulty, all he ever had to do to get help was to call me with no apology and I would get there just as quickly as possible. Tommie never abused this understanding.

But there came times when he was in serious trouble and I did not know it, nor could I have helped had I known it. We will never know how often he thought of "Pop" and "Mom" in these times, and whether he called for us. These times are described under "In Combat."

Many a time in his home life in the dead of night we heard that cry "Mom," and her response was instant. He was subject to cramps in his legs, sometimes so severe that he cried out with pain, but "Mom" could always help. Sometimes social and religious problems vexed him, but "Mom" was always able to help him in such times. She was his confidant and he was always open and frank with her, and he was totally unsophisticated in all his contacts with everybody.

“HI, POP!” “HI, MOM!”

I can still hear that salutation, and sometimes it almost seems to me that I see him walking across the lots coming home, and I can hear that salute. Tommie would salute first whichever one of us seemed to be nearer; it was “Hi, Pop!” and “Hi, Mom!” or the other way around, and he did not seem to make any difference between us as to his love for us, but I always suspected that he was a little closer to his mother than he was to me, and I suppose that is true of most children because the mother spends more time with the child from the moment that he is born than the father could possibly spend with him; anyway, Tommie loved us both, and he would always greet us with a kiss, it didn't matter where we met. I don't think it ever embarrassed him to kiss us in public—or, at least he never showed it.

We would gather around the fire and have a good time together and talk over baby times, and school times, and different things of mutual interest, then off to work or to school, and we were always happy when we heard that familiar salute on times that he came back or called on the telephone, “Hi, Pop!” “Hi, Mom!”

I have known parents who would not allow their children to address them except “Father,” “Mother.” From the first Tommie addressed us that way except he could not say the word in full. It was “Fa-e” or “Fa-dy,” and “Mo-dy,” but as he grew older and without any teaching he began to call us “Pop” and “Mom,” and we never do think of that as a term of disrespect. My other son calls me “Dad,” and that's all right with me. I think that these adopted titles carry with them a certain note of affection that does not go with the more formal title of “Father,” “Mother.” Anyway, I would be more than happy today if Tommie could address us by whatever name he chose.

TOMMIE'S RELIGION.

Tommie was naturally religious. He was not of the super-emotional type, but had the genuine, sincere, deep-rooted kind of religion that he applied to his everyday living. He attended public religious services as regularly, perhaps, as circumstances permitted. He disliked affectation, show, acting in religion. He was most affectionate and respectful but not outwardly emotional.

But to go back to the beginning; Tommie was brought up in a religious home and was taught to pray, privately and publicly, in family worship and in saying grace at meals. I remember well his table prayer which he prayed in his earliest childhood, and I believe used after he had grown to manhood, “Dear Lord, we thank thee for thy goodness and for the food. Bless it to our good for Jesus' sake, Amen.”

Also, his usual prayer in family worship. Sometimes he made a slight change in the words, but here was the usual form: “Dear Lord, we thank thee for a good home and for all the good people. Bless father and mother and all the people, and help me to be good for Jesus' sake, Amen.” Sometimes he would make a longer prayer, but he always ended up very rapidly, “For Jesus' sake, Amen,” seeming to indicate that he was glad he had made it that far and was able to finish.

At meals Tommie always took his turn in saying grace. I am not certain, but it is my recollection that the last time he ate with us he said grace. Of course, we had no thought at the time that this would be the last meal he would ever eat with us.

Until Tommie left Anderson for Bloomington he was my regular driving companion in trips all over Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and as far as Kansas City, Missouri. He always joined heartily in the services and his rich bass voice was heard by thousands both in solos and in a male quartet composed of Ruthven, Herbert and Ralph

Neff and Tommie. I enjoyed my trips with these boys and it was always a joy to be with Tommie. He was a clean-cut manly fellow, and he was my boy, named after me, A. T., Jr.

Tommie talked to us many times about his religious experience, and his last time home he assured his mother that he was living a Christian life and that he had kept himself morally clean, which has always been a great comfort to us.

It has been a very great comfort to us to know direct from a soldier who was with him and who was wounded with the same shell that took Tommie's life, that Tommie was in church service Palm Sunday morning, April 18, before he was killed in action April 27, 1943.

I know that Tommie would enter into the service, no matter which religious body was conducting it, and I can almost see myself sitting beside him and the two of us together joining in the singing, his voice of course outstripping mine.

Believing as we do that the soul never dies, that the "gift of God is *eternal* life" and that heaven is the reward of the righteous, we have no difficulty whatever in believing that our boy Tommie has gone to be with the angels, and that he is singing in glory today. What a blessed and comforting thought!

He liked everybody or, at least, I never heard him criticize anyone or anything that people did. I do not mean to indicate here that he never approved or disapproved of people or of what they did, but my impression was that he took the position that he was not required to judge or express his judgment and that he was a learner rather than a critic. I think he felt that he was too young to pose as a critic. I may be guessing but I really think that his attitude was that of a learner rather than a critic.

Tommie was very fond of our Park Place pastors, Doctor and Mrs. E. A. Reardon, and was very closely associated with their son Robert; we call him Bob. Doctor Reardon's kindness, his culture and refinement, and his interest in everybody had a strong appeal to Tommie and he often expressed himself as appreciating him as a minister.

TOMMIE'S EDUCATION

Tommie attended the Inman Park and Moreland Avenue grade schools and Bass Junior High School in Atlanta, Georgia.

He graduated from Anderson, Indiana High School in 1936; attended Anderson College in 1937, and Indiana University at Bloomington, Indiana 1938, 39, 40, 41, receiving his B. A. Degree in June, 1941.

At Indiana U. he majored in Speech and Music. He did some work in radio and in drama, having a rather active part in both, writing scripts, taking parts and this last year doing the announcing for "The University of the Air." He had a very beautiful deep bass voice and was said to have absolute pitch. He was naturally musical, playing the violin well, and he could pick up very quickly any ordinary musical instrument and get some music out of it. He read music very readily at sight.

He was an avid reader and was well informed on current matters. He was an investigator by nature and was not inclined to take things for granted in education, economics, politics, religion or anything else, but was rather inclined to satisfy his own mind on any point before accepting it as his own.

Tommie was both a good and a poor student—good in that he learned easily, with apparently little effort, and obtained a broad view; poor in that he was a "good fellow" to everybody, young and old, and was kept so busy at this that he did not always study as diligently as he should. He depended somewhat on his backlog of general knowledge to carry him through.

But Tommie always had the utmost respect for his teachers and classmates, made friends easily, always espoused the cause of the "underdog," and was never in any sense a "problem student."

Tommie had planned to take additional University work after the

close of the war and fit himself for teaching. He would have been a good teacher.

He worked a good part of his way through Anderson College and Indiana University with some support from us.



MARJORIE

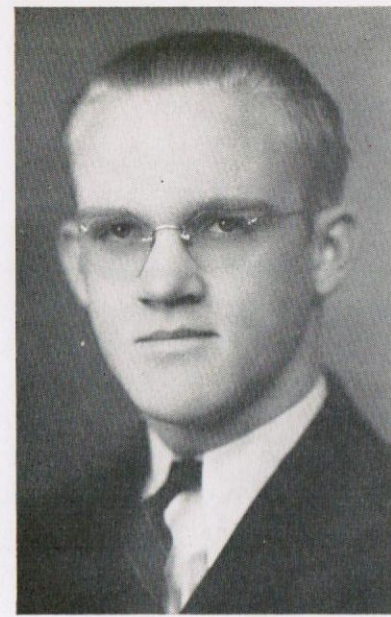
As hereinbefore stated, Tommie was married to Marjorie Ludlow, of Elmira, New York, on May 16, 1942. They had been sweethearts during their attendance together at Indiana University, and they graduated together from that institution. Prior to that time we had never known Marjorie and did not see much of her until after Tommie's death. Now we feel that we know her and we think of her as our own daughter.

We never made even a suggestion to Tommie as to whom he should marry. He became thoroughly convinced that Marjorie was the girl for him, and we always told him that if she suited him, she would suit us; and we find that she does exactly suit us. Marjorie is an educated girl, the matter-of-fact type, the kind of girl who does her own thinking and who reaches her own conclusions, though she is amenable to suggestions and advice and is most reasonable. I can readily see why Tommie became interested in her. They were very much the same type—interested in education, full of life and activity, ambitious to

go places and do things, and in many other things they also had much in common.

This terrible tragedy was an awful shock to Marjorie, and anyone can see why it would be difficult for her to recover from it. She is doing her best, and her best is doing nobly.

The fellowship that we have with this lovely girl is remarkable and beyond mere human comprehension. A girl that we had never known until a few months before her marriage to Tommie, and then only slightly, has now become our very daughter and we think of her as we do of our other daughter, Olive Mong, in Pennsylvania. Marjorie calls me "Pop," just as Tommie did; she goes driving with me, walks over the lawn with me admiring the trees and flowers, and she will take a turn at the lawn mower; she is thoroughly human, sympathetic and kind and very understanding. I shall always look upon Marjorie as my daughter.



MEMORIES

Many fond memories linger around the life of Tommie—his alertness, his amiability, his willingness to put himself out to help the other fellow.

I remember at Kansas City, Missouri Mid-West Ministers' Meeting, Tommie and I and others were staying at the local Y. M. C. A. E. E. Byrum and M. A. Monday had been called the evening before to go out early the next morning to pray for someone. It was miles out and would require a very early start—around 5 o'clock, I think, in the morning. Tommie and I were there in the car and these brethren asked him if he would take them out. He consented very willingly and took them, even though that was an early hour for him; he knew it would be all right with me.

At the camp meeting here one year, I wanted a daylight electric bulb brought from the plant. I called a young man and asked him to go and get it for me, telling him where they were and whom to see,

and soon he reported back that he couldn't find it. I saw Tommie and called him and gave him the very same directions that I had given the other young man and a few minutes later he came back with the bulb; I could depend upon him.

Around the home today I see Tommie in so many things, the flagstone walk that he laid from the street to the back door of our home, the rose that he gave his mother on Mother's Day several years back (it blooms every year from early summer until late fall), the outside light that he put up to light three sides of the lawn, the other electric wiring that he did, the ping-pong table that he and Bob Young built one day as a surprise to me while I was away; I had told them they could build it if they wished and that I would pay for all the material, but I had no idea they would do it so quickly. I had occasion to go somewhere for a half day and when I came back the framework for the table was completely finished; they had not been able to get delivery of the top, but I did later and finished it. When we play on that ping-pong table we think of Tommie.

At first I found myself almost turning to him to point out something that had been done since he had been away, or to tell him something, only to discover that he was not there.

I remember that he was a member of a Bachelors' Club—there were seven of them—and I was out with them one time on a trip, or they with me; and I listened interestedly to their discussions of bachelorhood; they were just young fellows and several of them have married since, but they were having a great time being bachelors. Their names: Donald Hull, Dave Martin, Albert Padgett, Paul Byrum, Bob Sheets, Melvin Thornburg and Tommie.

Fond memories linger, and I suppose always will linger around the life of this boy, but they are only memories.

It is our plan to visit the grave, but we have no thought of bringing his remains back to America. The resurrection will find him there just as well as it would here, and there is nothing to be brought back except the meager remains of a noble young man, so we think we shall let him rest where he fell—in Algeria, North Africa.

TOMMIE'S PHOTO

Here in my office is Tommie's photo in First Lieutenant's uniform. He was promoted from Second Lieutenant to First Lieutenant in February, 1942; but whether First or Second Lieutenant, Captain or Major, he was still Tommie to us and to his intimates—I am sure the promotion never went to his head.

I see this photo every day, several times a day. It looks exactly like I knew him. Perhaps the years may erase from my mind some of the features of this familiar face, but as I look at it now I see the boy who lived with us for twenty-five years and to us that face spells fortitude, conviction, honesty, determination, kindness, gentleness. That picture in my office is framed and hanging on the wall, but it is also framed in my heart and consciousness, and that picture will remain with me during life.

I feel that I have been cheated in losing the companionship and fellowship of Tommie, but it is possible that I shall not have long to wait for the reunion between us. I will soon be seventy and that in itself would say that it cannot be long. These words come to me from the familiar song of one who gave his son in the other war:

*"Just a few more days to be filled with praise
And tell the old, old story;
Then when twilight falls and my Savior calls
I shall go to Him in glory.
I'll exchange my cross for a starry crown
Where the gates swing outward never;
At His feet I'll lay all my burdens down
And with Jesus reign forever."*

IN COMBAT

Tommie was a First Lieutenant, 1st Division Company H, 6th Infantry, Armored Division. This was a combat division, trained specifically for combat rather than defense. We knew this all the time and yet I think the hazards of combat had never completely registered with us until we began to get news of combats in which he was engaged. We were shocked almost to insensibility when the terrible news came the evening of May 20, 1943.

In North Ireland and Scotland Tommie trained as a Commando and he and two other U. S. Lieutenants who palled with Tommie and the balance (700 men in all) British formed a "suicide" squad for a surprise landing to break the boom in Oran Harbor, North Africa. They were told that 95 per cent of them would be sacrificed if they were unlucky; they were; 525 of the 700 were killed and most of the others wounded. Of the three American Lieutenants, one was killed, Lieut. Beasley, one wounded, Lieut. Reeder and Tommie unhurt. He was taken prisoner by the French and held for three days, then released when the French had come over to the Allied side. Tommie's ship, H. M. S. "Hartland," British overage destroyer sold by us to the British, was sunk, simply riddled with bullets. The soldiers' lockers with all their belongings were on a later boat which was sunk.

While Tommie was a prisoner the French robbed him of his personal belongings, watch, etc., and left him a homeless soldier in a strange land with all his possessions gone except the clothes which he wore and in Africa, the very hottest spot of the war up to that time.

Tommie saved three of his Sergeants and a number of other men, and for this act he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. We are told that he was cited for this act of bravery in a public service in Africa. The Cross itself was delivered to me later in a most impressive

public military service at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. The citation was as follows:

"II—AWARDS OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS.

"Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, as amended, a Distinguished Service Cross is awarded to the following named individual.

"A. THOMAS ROWE, (0-411,276), 1st Lieutenant,
..... For extraordinary heroism in action against an
armed enemy, on November 1942, in,
Algeria, Lieutenant Rowe distinguished himself by extraordinary
heroism while conducting the abandonment of his men of their ship.
The ship was brought under heavy fire and set afire. Lieutenant Rowe,
with complete disregard for his own welfare, went into the hold
where men were wounded and overcome by ammonia gas; carried these
men to the deck; put life preservers on them; and put them into the
water. During this time the deck was raked by heavy machine gun
fire. The leadership, bravery and concern only for the men under his
command displayed by Lieutenant Rowe reflects the highest traditions
of the Armed Forces.

"By command of General EISENHOWER"

* * *

The U. S. Lieutenant who was wounded in this mission said: "250 French 5th Columnists were to have assisted in the cutter's landing, but everything had gone wrong; the enemy had been tipped off, and instead of the 5th Columnists appearing there were six enemy ships—two subs, two destroyers, and two others—waiting for us. There were 1,000 French Marines in one of these destroyers. It is a miracle that even *one* was saved. Tommy and the other two of us Lieutenants swam for shore; one was killed, I was wounded, and Tommy alone escaped unhurt."

This Lieutenant also said, "Mrs. Rowe, your son Tommie is the finest person I've ever known; we've had some wonderful times together."

All this conversation with the wounded Lieutenant was had when he

had returned to the United States and before Tommie had gone into further combat, while he was still alive.

This Lieutenant gave some description of the Commando training. He said that it was terrible. "We swam with 100-pound packs on our backs, walked 172 miles in a week, sprawled through ditches with warm blood being splattered in our faces, swam in bloody water, and had many harrowing experiences simulating actual conditions that we would meet in an invasion."

He said, "There were three U. S. A. Lieutenants—....., Tommie, and myself—chosen with British Commandos and their outfit of 700 men to form a suicide squad for a surprise landing at Oran. We were lost to our outfits, hidden in Scotland for a few weeks and not allowed to leave post for a moment. We took on the trip only musette bags, our guns and munitions with 1,000 pounds of T.N.T. Our lockers with all our belongings were on a later boat which got itself torpedoed." One of the three American Lieutenants was killed and the Lieutenant who told us the story said, "Tommie and I swam to shore together; my wound felt like a cigarette burn in the excitement. I got a shrapnel wound in the knee, was taken to a hospital and Tommie to prison. Tommie got out of prison Wednesday P.M. (went in Sunday A.M.)." This wounded Lieutenant stayed in the hospital until December 20 and Tommie was the last of the outfit that he saw. He says that Tommie visited him the day they started him home.

TOMMIE'S LAST BATTLE

We had hoped after Tommie's miraculous escape at Oran that he might come through and come back home, but away back in my thinking, without any feeling of premonition, I kept wondering how it could be possible inasmuch as his was a combat division, highly trained to go out and attack, attack. I kept hoping and praying, but it was not to be. We were never to see him again. He was killed instantly April 27, 1943, southwest of Mateur, about seven miles from the famous Hill 609. A recent radio commentator made this statement to the effect that the breaking of Hill 609 by the Allied soldiers was the turning point, the beginning of the collapse of the entire German-Italian Army in North Africa. One of Tommie's closest friends who was at his funeral says, "He was the best friend I had in the Army, and I miss him. He and I were the only two in the Regiment out of the Indiana University Class of '41. I attended funeral services (with several other officers and men from his company) for him the day after he was killed southwest of Mateur. There are several others buried in the same spot. I had a white cross made and placed over his grave with the necessary data."

The Colonel who was directly over Tommie and who had come back to the States wrote us:

"I received your letter this morning. I am very sorry that I missed you by phone. I tried to recall you, but was unable to contact you.

"I was Tommie's immediate commander and a very good friend. At the time he was killed he was operating on a mountain range about seven miles from the famous 'Hill 609.' Our mission was to clear the mountain of enemy troops so our tanks could get in the rear of the enemy. We had been fighting over the mountain some nine or ten days, pushing the enemy back slowly. Each hill was a fight. Tommie had the mission of taking a small hill, one of the few left. After taking the hill

with a small group of men, and while radioing the news back to me, he was caught in an enemy Mortar Barrage and was killed instantly. The enemy followed with a counterattack but could not retake the hill, which shows the grand respect his men had for him. They would follow him anywhere and carry out his orders without question.

"He was carried by his men, to the rear where our Chaplain and his men laid him to rest. He was one of the finest soldiers I have ever come in contact with and have never seen a commander so loved by his men which, I think, is one of the highest tributes that can be paid to any officer.

"I am very sorry but I am returning to Texas on August 16. Naturally, I don't know where I will be sent from Texas. If I am ever near you or if we can ever get together, I would be more than glad to meet and talk with you.

"Tommie was laid to rest in a small battlefield cemetery near Mateur. Later the body was moved to a National Cemetery at Tebessa, which is about 75 miles from Mateur.

"Give my regards to your wife.

"Sincerely yours,

William L. Wells

Lt. Col., Arm'd Inf."

To date we have received no detailed information from the War Department, but the above letters, and finally the following letter from a Corporal who was with Tommie the last minute that he lived and who had been with him for months before his death gives us almost a complete picture of his war experiences and his tragic death: (We prize these letters.)

"Dear Mrs. Rowe:

"Received your letter a few days ago and was indeed surprised and glad to hear from you.

"The Post Office here opened the letter to see who the name could be, and to whom it really belonged. So I got it O. K.—after they checked up on the broadcast, I presume.

"Yes, I knew Lieutenant Rowe very well. He was my platoon leader for five months in Ireland and till after the invasion.

"We saw the 'Hartland' go down under enemy fire from the shore or docks as prisoners of the French. He with the rest of what was left of the Battalion was a prisoner of war by the French for about three days when the city of Oran was taken over by the Allies; then taken to a French Legion Camp outside the city to wait until our other units came to be attached (until our replacements came in).

"We were in Oran a good week until we were attached to another infantry unit. We were bivouaced some distance from about a week. Then I was transferred to Allied Force Headquarters from about the 20th of November, 1942 until the last week of January. During that period I did not see Lieutenant Rowe, but I presume he was busy helping get the Company H organized again and waiting on replacements.

"By February 1st we were ready for combat again. From then on until he met instant death the 28th of April by the same shell that hit me, we were in and out of the field of battle starting with the retaking of Sened, Kasserine Pass, where we were trapped and made a dramatic escape. After it was over he had a platoon minus the vehicles which the Germans captured, but he kept almost all his men. And at Maknassey Pass, Faid Pass we had short engagements with the Germans.

"In between times when we weren't in action, Lieutenant Rowe attended classes on Artillery and Booby traps of the enemy. In this line he was well educated, and was a great help to the Company in combat because of his knowledge on these, on such things. Then after these battles we were in a rest camp for about a week.

"Palm Sunday we had our church services which he attended. That afternoon we moved out and into our last and final battle; it was to drive the Germans out of what little ground they held in Northern Africa. We were cleaning up the Germans at the right of Hill 609, who were in a sort of pocket surrounded by Allied troops. We had been battling here for several days when on April 28th Company H had captured a hill from the Germans. (At this last and final Drive Lieu-

tenant Rowe was Acting Commanding Officer of Company H.) Lieutenant Rowe told me to bring the radio to the top of the captured hill and set up a Command Post here, that he would be up later after he had the Company position set up. He joined me later and was talking over the radio, directing our Artillery on a hill next to us so that I Company could move in and take their objective. This hill also had an outpost for a German 210 m. m. mortar (so he called it). The outfit was in touch with their mortar crew, which I'd say was back further about a mile. We could see the Germans and they could see us, and we were trying to direct our artillery on them and they were trying to get their mortar on us. We had not been at this very long when a mortar shell fell right by my feet and exploded. I was lying down on my stomach when I heard it coming but he didn't have time to turn any more or hit the ground and died almost instantly from the fragmentation of the exploded shell, ending the career of a brave and fearless leader.

"I hope this will cover what you'd like to know. And if I can help you any further, I would be only too glad to do so, as far as I'm allowed to do and tell."

We also had an interview in our home in November, 1943, with Gene Lambour, who was wounded in battle close to where Tommie was killed and he gave us considerable information on war conditions in that area. Tommie had been his instructor in mine laying, booby traps, etc. He had been badly wounded and taken to the hospital before April 27, the date of Tommie's tragic death.

KILLED IN ACTION

On the evening of May 20, 1943 while a family group, including Byrum Byrd a brother of Tommie's mother, for 28 years a member of the standing Army of the United States, were having a nice visit in our home, Steele C. Smith, one of our very best friends, came to the door and motioned to Mrs. Rowe and me to come to the kitchen. I did not see the motion and did not go. In a few minutes I heard Mrs. Rowe saying, "No, no, no, no," and at first I thought Steele was springing some trick on us, for he and his wife and the two of us were always kidding, but Mrs. Rowe's cries continued and I rushed in to find her crumpled on the floor holding a yellow envelope, which she handed to me and opening it here is what I read:

"THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES THAT I TENDER HIS DEEP SYMPATHY TO YOU IN THE LOSS OF YOUR SON FIRST LIEUTENANT A. THOMAS ROWE REPORT JUST RECEIVED STATES THAT HE WAS KILLED IN ACTION ON APRIL TWENTY SEVEN IN NORTH AFRICAN AREA LETTER FOLLOWS. ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL."

The Manager of the Telegraph Office here in Anderson was a very special friend of mine, a fellow Rotarian, and asked Steel Smith if he would deliver the message since he knew that Steele was a good friend of ours. I know it was a hard task for Steele, but somebody had to bring us the news.

Words cannot describe the shock. It was instant and continuous. There must have been a dozen people in the house at that moment, but the shock of that one moment seemed to have blotted everything from my memory, and to this day I cannot say from memory exactly who were there.

"Killed in action" wiped out all hope. It had happened almost a month ago—this was May 20, 1943 and Tommie had been killed

April 27, two days after Easter. We had watched all papers, listened to radio newscasts, feared he was in some of these fierce battles, but hoped he was not. As the days lengthened we kept saying, "No news is good news," but this experience disproved that theory. Here Tommie was dead and had been lying in his lonely grave in Africa for almost a month and we had received no news—until now, when the very worst had come, "Killed in Action." It did not seem possible, but it was possible—it was all over, no hope—not "missing," but "killed."

We did a great deal of praying while Tommie was away; we always remembered him, of course, but I do not recall any prayer that we made that did not include other boys as well as Tommie. We never prayed that God should return him and leave the impression that it didn't matter about others. We asked the Lord if it was his will to return Tommie and the other boys safely. The big thing that concerned us about him and the other boys in our praying was that they be true Christian men, and that if they must die they would die honorably, though we never did fully realize what death was going to mean when it came. Some people have talked about the advisability of preparing in advance for such a thing; I don't think that can be done; I don't care how much we prepare, the shock of a death like this will be almost more than the normal individual can bear, and I do not see how those parents and other kin who know not God can bear it at all.

We have been told, or it has been suggested to us by a few well-thinking friends that we should just try to forget it. We do not want to forget it. The passing of time will dim our recollections, but the day will never come when we shall have forgotten the tragic story, his birth, his young life, his student life, his enlistment, his combats, his death and burial. I think that this experience has had a mellowing effect upon us and that we are more sympathetic toward others who are bereft—if such a thing is possible. There are many boys in combat who went from this immediate locality, and we try to keep in touch with all of them and with their parents. Just recently one of these boys, Dale Crist, was killed in a collision of two army planes over the English Channel and his body has not been identified.

I know that the immediate effect of this tragedy was to throw me into confusion as to how to adjust, but as the days go by I can see a larger field of operation for me and that I must do my best to bless the world in my remaining years and must try to do in a way some of the things that I think Tommie would have done had he lived.

AWARDS

Tommie was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in Africa for acts of bravery in the landing at Oran, but the cross itself was not delivered to him in person. On August 24, 1943 at the request of the military authorities, I went to Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, with Tommie's mother, his wife, and several carloads of our employees and relatives, and received the cross. It was a most impressive service. With Captain Harris I marched across the field to a spot in front of the reviewing stand, marching between columns of soldiers. The National Anthem was played, salutes were fired, and when we stopped in front of the reviewing stand an officer came forward and read the citation in a loud voice, after which Lieutenant-Colonel William B. Weston came forward and pinned the cross on my lapel. We then stood in line—the officers, Tommie's mother and wife and I—in front of the crowd in the stand and facing the field, while 1800 soldiers by Companies or Platoons marched by in front of us, facing toward us as they passed. When they had all passed this ended the ceremonies.

While the Cross was a small thing in return for the life of our boy, it was all that a government could do. This cross is the second highest military award—the Congressional Medal being the highest.

PURPLE HEART

In July, 1943 we had received the purple heart by mail, which is awarded to all soldiers who are wounded in action and, of course, posthumously to all who are killed in action.

All of these honors are much appreciated; they do not in any sense take the place of our boy, nor are they intended to do so; but it does make us appreciate a government that takes note of every boy that falls in action. Not every government does this.

HE DIED FOR OTHERS

Tommie did not die for himself. If he had lived to come back home, the sacrifices that he made would have benefited him; but, as it was, he gave all that he had which meant even his life, with no benefit to himself; so it is only proper to say that he died for others.

I do not know that any finer tribute could be paid to men than to be able to say of them, "They lived and died for others." I have no doubt that Tommie often thought of home, of parents, of wife, of friends—in fact, in many of his letters he spoke of the different conflicts in which he was being engaged as "one step nearer home." He always spoke of the fact that he was doing his best and was interested in his work, but that he would be still more interested in home.

But he died without ever reaching his earthly home. The reports say he died instantly; one report said "almost instantly." We wonder if he knew that he was mortally wounded and that he was going on. I am sure he would not realize that he was giving his life for the greatest boon that mankind could ever have—freedom.

We do not know how long or short any of our lives may be, but as long as I live I shall always think of Tommie as having died for others.

My father, John W. Rowe, was wounded twice in the Civil War. He was in Company B, 61st Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers Infantry. He received a small pension, very small, the first amount being \$2.00 per month; I remember well. My other son, Clyde, enlisted in World War I, and I registered though I was never called. Tommie followed in these footsteps and chose infantry, and he died as he would have wished to die—in defense of his country.

TOMMIE'S LAST LETTERS

As everybody realizes, it was difficult for the boy in combat to write letters. The last letter that we received from Tommie was dated from North Africa, February 9, 1943, and was to be circulated to fifteen different people. He placed his mother and me at the top of the list. Here are some extracts from that letter: (The deletions represent purely personal matters.)

"Dear Family:

"Here goes a long one for the whole family; I don't have enough opportunity to send individual letters. Here's how we do it here—each one initials and sends it on." (Here he gives the fifteen names of people who are to receive it.)

"My outfit is still in North Africa; that takes care of the war news. The only news we get is by short wave from London and the States, so you probably hear more complete news than we do. By the way, Ma, the information you had about Oran is straight. I couldn't write anything about it, but the papers had it straight. I never was much at swimming, you know. I got a copy of "Fellowship Forum" with that writeup. * * * * * I was lucky. Tell Bessie Byrum I got her Christmas card and note. It helps when you know there are people at home thinking of you, and don't think we don't think of the friends and our families at home, even though communication is interrupted at times. Also got a box from Mrs. Earl Martin, which I appreciated very much. One thing I think we've all learned over here is to share whatever we have. As long as one member of the group has anything, no one goes without. We get along in fine style. Uncle Sam is on the ball as far as rations are concerned. Whenever we do miss a meal it's because of time and not from lack of chow. Skeeter, [Loren Owen] it's a sad tale and I shouldn't tell you (and I appreciated them very much), but those Christmas cards arrived December 27th. The Arabs enjoyed them,

and I also sent some to the other Officers in the Company. Am I forgiven? These Arabs are funny critters. They wear long robes of assorted colors, and it's amazing how much they can carry under the robes. Here's what one might have—a dozen eggs, a chicken (alive), a bottle of wine, a few onions, and assorted underclothing. How they carry it all I don't know.

"Some of them speak Arabic, French, Spanish, and rarely Italian. What with my diligent studying in College, especially French, I am able to converse with the French people as long as they don't use more than fifteen or twenty words. That's the extent of my vocabulary. Are you ashamed of me, Birdie? [Esther Sample Byrd]. I have a lot of fun with my French, just the same.

"I've received several packages so far; one from Mimi [Mabel Brumbaugh] and one from Marge. How do you like my choice now, Pop? I hear she wields a mean power mower. She's quite a gal. I'm sorry you couldn't all get a look at her, but when I get home, we'll make the circuit. We'll have to eat somehow, won't we? Can't think of a better way than off the relatives, can you? Seriously, though, either Marge and I will make the rounds, or you'll all have to come to the mountain, that is after a month or so. She and I have a honeymoon to take when I get back. * * *

"Pop, I got your long letter. I don't know if I'll come right home or not. I don't mind pigs, cats, garden, rabbits, birds (assorted), but if I get home and have to milk the cows, that's where the line is drawn; I've only tried it once and was a howling failure, so never again!

"There's nothing like a family like I have at home. I got 27 letters the other day, 10 from Marge [Tommie's wife] and seventeen from you all. Aside from chow call, mail call is the high spot of a soldier's life now. Mail only comes once in a while, so when it does get in, it makes new men of old. * * *

"Got a card and note from Grandmammy and Granddaddy the other day. It was an agreeable surprise. That makes some word from the whole family. * * *

"Anchors Aweigh, Unk [Cecil Byrd]. What a business, the navy

(notice I even spell it with a small 'n'). Maybe the Army didn't have anything to offer. I know it wasn't vice versa; you're just what we need. It'll take most of us before this job is done; and from what I know and have heard, you couldn't do better than the Navy.

"Do any of you have any pictures (snaps)? I lost my billfold with all its pictures. I have another billfold. I got the pictures of Bob, Charlie, Grandmammy, Granddaddy, Loma and Lula. Thanks a lot.

"Guess this is all for now. Wish I could write more, but there are about a hundred letters waiting to be censored. I love you all.

"Wendell, that picture you sent me while I was in Ireland makes me think you're leading a hard life out there. You keep 'em going on the Pacific side, and I'll keep an eye on the Atlantic side.

Love to all of you,

Tom."

Many of Tommie's letters must have been lost, but here is the very last one received in the United States from him. It was dated April 16, 1943—just eleven days before his death—and reached the United States, May 26. It was written to Mr. William Bowser, one of Tommie's Sunday-school teachers when he was in the Park Place Church of God Sunday School, Anderson. Mr. Bowser is now Vice-President of the Gospel Trumpet Company.

"Dear Bill:

"This seems to be mail night. Just got through censoring a big batch of mail. It's only infrequently that the men are able to write, so when those times come, I and the other officers are almost snowed under. Thanks a lot, Bill, for those letters. It warms me all the way down whenever I hear from someone at home, because it always brings back such pleasant associations. Tell young Bill I wish him all the luck in the world, next time you write to him. Hope he likes the service as much as I do. It seems a far cry from a Scout Troop, but since I took command of a Company, I recall that group at home more and more. I have a fine bunch of men with me, Bill, and we're slowly but surely fighting our way home.

"I haven't seen Ronald Hauck, though I have a good idea where he is. Missed him by about two hours when I found we were on the same post in the States last April. We'll probably meet yet.

"I've been lucky on mail. Marge keeps a steady stream of letters coming this way, and I've received letters from many friends. Must confess that most of the letters from this end are directed toward Mrs. A. T. Jr. Last letter I had from the folks, Dad sounded like a stockman from way back. Keep an eye on him for me, Bill.

"I'll see you all when this job is done here.

Sincerely,

Tom."

ALL THAT CAME BACK

On January 7, 1944, we received from the War Department the following list of Tommie's personal effects which had been shipped from Africa:

- 1 Wallet
- 1 Diary
- 2 Fountain Pens
- 1 Steel Mirror with Case
- 1 Metal Stamp with Pad
- 2 Finger Rings
- 4 Keys
- 1 Insignia
- 1 Photograph of Marjorie
- 1 Sweater, Sleeveless
- 1 Belt, Sam Brown, with Saber Chain
- 1 Tablecloth
- 1 Pr. Eyeglasses, Case Empty
- 1 Val-o-pak Bag
- 2 Shirts O D W
- 1 Pr. Trousers, Khaki
- 1 Cap, Garrison Khaki
- 1 Slide Rule with Case
- 1 Coat Hanger
- 1 Pr. Glasses with Case
- 2 Letters written to Marjorie April 16

The same day we received the box—a carton about 2x3 feet, 10 inches deep. When this package was brought to my office and laid down across the arms of one of my office chairs, as I looked at it a feeling of terrible depression came over me, and the words in the heading of this page came to me, "That is all that came back of Tommie." The box

made me think of a casket, and then the whole terrible picture came back again of his struggles, his suffering, his death and burial, and the decay of his body in that grave in Africa.

This is war; it takes your son, or husband, or brother, or father—a live wide-awake, energetic young man—it uses him for cannon fodder, tears his body to shreds, and all that it sends back to you is a box of personal belongings, trivial in their very nature, but tenderly received and cared for, and some of them recognized as the clothing that he wore and things that he had when you last knew him. But the boy that you sent didn't come back, and never will come back. What a terrible thing is war!

WHEN JOHNNIE COMES MARCHING HOME

When "Johnnie" comes marching home, won't that be a happy time for parents and relatives, and, I hope, for the nation. Parents will be at the disembarking points to receive their boys, wives will be there and babies (if there are any), and that one event will be the high-ranking event of their entire lives up to that time, when "Johnnie" comes marching home, marching down the gangplank, setting foot again on his native soil, America! I have heard of returning soldiers lying down prone and actually kissing the earth on landing in America.

We are glad for all of these folks who can have that pleasure when "Johnnie" comes marching home; but Tommie will not come marching home. We had great plans in the making—nothing crystallized or clear, but we had planned to meet the boat that brought him home, to have his wife with us, to have a happy reunion there as he came off the boat, to go out and get a good American dinner, to bring them home to our place in Anderson, to turn over the house to them for months while we would go off and leave them to themselves to get acquainted, then we would get back together and talk over everything; Tommie would plan to work some more on his education; Marjorie would probably get work in the same town where Tommie went to school and she would work while he went to school, and the two of them together would set up in something—business or education; and, anyway, they would set up a home. We planned either to give them the home that we have and build or purchase another or help them to secure a home, maybe furnish it for them, or maybe help them sufficiently to get a good start on the purchase. We had great dreams and air castles—and they proved to be air castles, for none of them can ever be realized.

Notwithstanding our grief which continues, it seems to me, unabated up to this day, we are praying for others whose boys will not come marching home, and we are praying for all those fathers and mothers whose boys will come marching home.

TWO WORLDS

Wendell Willkie spoke of one world, speaking internationally, which I think is the pattern for world peace at the close of this war; but I am thinking from a different basis entirely that I am living in two worlds—a world of realism and another world of emotionalism. In the world of realism I know beyond a shadow of doubt that Tommie is dead and that I shall never see him again in the flesh. History says that he is dead; it is confirmed by a number of witnesses, and we know what it means to be dead; we know in realism.

But I am living also in another world—the world of emotionalism. My emotions have not yet caught up with reality. It is hard for me to believe emotionally that this terrible thing is true. I imagine I see Tommie alive, I imagine I see him come down the lane or across the lots home. In realism, I know that is not true, but in my emotions it is true.

So I am having the problem of living in these two worlds. I must live in both of them; I must face reality, but I cannot escape from the other world—my emotions. So I live on day after day, realizing the terrible fact of what war has done to us and then wrestling with my emotions.

But nobody can do it for me. Everybody has been good and kind and sympathetic. I never knew until this time how much sympathy people had. Nobody that I know could have done any more than was done, but with all of this sometimes our emotions get the better of us. I try hard to conceal it from the public—maybe I shouldn't; sometimes I've not been successful in doing it; but in my daily inner living, when my mind is not fully occupied with business or other matters, I am constantly finding myself living in these two worlds.

Some people have found themselves unable to live in these two

worlds and they become unbalanced either on the side of realism or emotionalism. My strong support in this struggle is God and his Word, and He will not fail. I have been doing my best for fifty years to serve Him; I know that my best has not been very good, but I am depending upon God and His great mercy to see me through.

And when I finally come to that eternal world, the last stop, I am sure that everything there will be real, a great world of peace and happiness with no temptations, no struggles. I do not know what my reactions will be there, but speaking now I have no thought of asking about the number of stars in my crown or even about the crown; why should I care? I hope that my last landing place will be heaven, and heaven will be good enough for me. I understand thoroughly that there is no way in which I could earn heaven; it must be the great gift of a loving God.

I WILL NOT BE RECONCILED

This very title may be contradictory on the face of it with some other things, but it is not contradictory. I have no quarrel with God or his religion; I am reconciled to God. I cannot conceive of anything that should destroy my belief in God, though, of course, I am only human and I am taught in the Scriptures, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," and I am not making any claims of strength in myself; but in this critical time I am also thinking of that statement of the Apostle Paul, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38, 39.

But I am not reconciled, and I will not be reconciled to war; it is contrary to every right principle; it is inane, absurd; it would be just as reasonable for two individuals who do not agree to get their guns and start shooting—that is the way we used to settle things before we became civilized.

I remember well when we had World War I, when my other son, Clyde, was in the service; he took R. O. T. C. training. The war ended before he could get across, but he was in the war just the same, and I remember how we saw the headlines, A WAR TO END WARS, MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY, IT MUST NOT HAPPEN AGAIN, and other similar slogans. At the very time that Clyde was enlisted and training for military service, Tommie was born. We were so happy that Clyde came back and that he is filling a useful place in the world today with lofty principles of right, and truth, and justice; and we thanked God at that time that Clyde was spared, and in the same breath we thanked God that Tommie would never have to go to war. As we carried that baby around with us, as we nurtured

him and watched over him and educated him, we said to ourselves, "We fought one war to end wars, we made the world safe for democracy, and Tommie—this baby—will never have to go to war."

But he did have to go and he never came back. We did not make the world safe for democracy after the close of the other war; we did not dethrone greed and power politics, revenge and injustice; we kept on in the same old way that we had been going and did the same things that led to the other war, and that had led to all wars. We failed to take God into our counsel; we let one outlaw, an international outlaw, start this terrible conflagration that has plunged the world into something that goes far beyond anything that was ever dreamed of in World War I.

I absolutely refuse to be reconciled to the thought that war is a remedy for anything; it is not, and it never will be. There was no need that these millions of boys should have given up their homes, and thousands of them their lives on the altar of war.

But I want to state so that no one can misunderstand me that while I am definitely opposed to a war of aggression, I do not favor the idea that when war is forced upon us we shall adopt the philosophy, "I will not fight." It seems to me there is nothing to do but fight. We should approach the matter of ending wars from the standpoint of creating good will and love and brotherhood throughout the world so that there shall never come a time when we have to fight. I am only expressing my own feeling, which I have a right to do and no one has to accept my philosophy.

FUTILITY

When Charles B. Young, flying cadet, son of Mrs. Lulu Young, of Winchester, Kentucky, sister of Mrs. Rowe, was killed in a military plane crash in South Carolina more than a year ago, his mother was in our home and I will always remember one of her expressions, "What waste!"

Lulu was not thinking primarily of the waste of money, though it had cost her thousands of dollars to educate this boy and she had lived in hope all through his years that he would make his mark in the world, which he bade fair to do; he received his B.A. degree from Anderson College and went on to complete and receive his Master's degree in Indiana University, and then immediately went into military service.

Lulu was thinking of the waste of manpower, of talent, of opportunity, the waste of human life, the futility of all that she had done through those twenty-five years to develop in Charlie the character that had been developed and now to see it all shattered and gone in one crash that required only a few seconds. He and his flying companion were killed instantly and their plane burned.

So this word "futility" must loom large in the minds of thousands of parents whose boys have been taken by the god of war. War reached out and picked up eleven million of our boys, took them away from their homes, their vocations, their friends, and planted them in an entirely new environment to train them for war. Many of them will come back, but many will not; and those who do come back will be changed—maybe for the better and maybe for the worse.

But it is not futile. No honest effort to do good is ever completely lost, and that is true of Tommie. We tried to bring him up for a life of usefulness, but war stepped in and placed a period in front of him

and that ended his human existence; but he will live on; his influence goes on, and there is some compensation for our effort in the thought that we did our best and that what happened to him was entirely beyond our control. Nothing is futile that is directed to a good purpose.

WERE YOU THERE?

In a service in Park Place Church of God a few months back, the choir under the direction of Milton Buettner sang, "Were You There?" and when they sang the stanza, "Were you there when they laid him in the tomb," my heart moved away across the Atlantic Ocean to Tebessa, North Africa. I have the spot marked on the map. I know that the hymn referred to Jesus; I am making no comparison between his sacrifice and Tommie's sacrifice. Jesus was the Savior of the world and died for all men of all ages, and no one can ever be compared to Him. But the words, apart from their elementary meaning, struck right home to my heart, "Were you there when they laid Tommie in the tomb?" No, I was not there in the flesh; I have been there many times since in spirit. I have often wondered if he called for me. If I had been there I would have laid my hand on his brow, I would have wiped away all trace of blood, I would have wrapped him in his blanket, I would have laid him gently in the tomb, I would have crossed his hands—not as I have seen many hands crossed in caskets—but I would have laid him on his right side with his hands, palms together under his face as I have seen him sleep many a time in childhood, and I would have said, "Good-by, Tommie, till we meet again."

Sentimentalism! you say. Well, let it be what it may; I'm trying to put some of my feelings on paper, which I have a right to do. This great tragedy that has come to us has surpassed anything in all of our lives before, and nothing that I can say—no matter how I say it—can appear as more than mere words to the casual reader; but to the one who has suffered grief like ours, I think you will realize some of the anguish back of the words.

TO TOMMIE

Dear Tommie:

This is a letter that should have reached you before April 27, 1943 so that you could have read it; it's too late now, but I must write it. We always loved and appreciated you for your uprightness, your honesty, and frankness, your fearlessness, your industry. We tried to tell you so, but I'm afraid we failed because we did not make it sufficiently emphatic. We always counted on you and you never let us down, I'm sure if you had lived to go on and carve out a career you would never have let us down.

I'm proud of you, if "proud" is the word to use, because you did your part as an American citizen and as a world citizen, and you paid the full price—all that any person could pay for freedom for the rest of us. Your brother Clyde paid you a tribute in the first letter he wrote us after your death when he said that you had done what none of the rest of us would ever be able to do, you had given your life for your country. That is the way we all feel about it. I would have loved you even if you had elected not to go to war because in this country of ours where we have freedom a man has a right to choose whether he will take arms or not; he can be a conscientious objector. I appreciate our country for giving us that freedom. At the same time, I am glad that you voluntarily elected to take your part in the defense of our country. If I had been of proper age, I would have done the same thing.

We keep your photo and Marjorie's in our living room where I see them every day. I also have your photo in my office, and when I come up here in the mornings before I hold my prayer session I feel like saying, and many times do say, "Good morning, Tommie." I feel that I can better start the day by having first saluted you, my son.

Tommie, I'm glad that you were religious—not fanatically so, but practically so. You had the right kind of religion. I believe in immor-

tality, life after death. I have no way to prove it from experience, but all through the Bible I am taught this great truth, and I find no way to disprove it; therefore, I believe that you and I shall meet again; whether we know each other or not does not matter; whether I understand or not why you had to be thus taken does not matter; all that does matter is that God knows best and that God will take care of us. I believe that so thoroughly that I cannot conceive of anything that would shake my belief, and so I believe that we shall meet again where there will be no more wars, no more pain, no sorrow or sighing.

Good-by, I'll be seeing you.

Lovingly,
"Pop"

FRUSTRATION

I had known for years that "frustration" was a word in the dictionary; I knew the dictionary definition of it; I had heard people talk and I had talked of and to individuals who had a feeling of "frustration," but I never really knew until May 20, 1943, and the days that followed, what the word really meant—to have everything cut off and blocked in front of you, with no escape, with no possibility of ever correcting the situation or changing it one iota—a complete block, a permanent block concerning that particular individual involved.

At one time in my life I had lost everything that I had accumulated in years; in addition to this loss I owed several thousand dollars and was working on a meager salary with a family to keep. At that time the situation looked hopeless; it looked as if I could never pull out—but things like that are not hopeless; I could pull out, I did pull out. I was young, and strong, and willing, and everything that had been lost in the crash, I charged it off as loss and forgot it; I tabulated all that I owed and began paying on it; I finally paid it all out, living very economically, denying ourselves many things, but paying out. There was a way out and we found that way. I found myself blocked in my desire to get an education; I could have quit (many did quit), but I found a solution to the problem—at least a partial solution, because there was a solution, there was a way out and I found that way. I went to what is called Select School, or summer school after the winter term had ended; I wore my winter clothes, my winter boots, a pair of overalls, my winter cap—very shabby clothes, and soon qualified as a teacher in the public schools of Pennsylvania, which enabled me later to go to college—there was a way out; I did not recognize such a thing as "frustration" then because I could see an opening; it seemed a long way off, but I could see it.

But here in this terrible tragedy there is a different story; there was

no way out. I couldn't see a way out because there was none—Tommie was dead. We had brought him up for twenty-six years, we had high hopes, ambitious plans for him to be a factor in the world in which he was to live; but his life is gone, he is lying in a grave in Africa; every day would see more and more decay of what was once a sturdy young man around whom we had builded a house. There was no way to bring him back—the complete end had come; there was nothing that we could do, no use to wish or hope or pray for a way out so far as Tommie was concerned because there was no way—complete frustration.

These thoughts almost completely overwhelmed me, but there kept coming to me first faintly and then pounding at my consciousness, "I must live, *I must live*. Tommie cannot live here again, but I must live." So, while it is complete frustration so far as Tommie is concerned, we must find a way and we will find a way out for ourselves. That way is to go on, and on, and on doing our utmost to bless the world until Jesus himself says, "It is enough." Then, may we go in peace to that other home where we shall meet again.