

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A MEMORABLE MAN

Thanks to Peter Vorkink for that excellent tribute to the life of A. Irving Forbes (winter 2009). If ever a man deserved hyperbole it was he, yet every positive



trait mentioned rang 100 percent true to my memory of Irving. In life I've met only three or four truly memorable persons, and Irving was one of them. Through six years of working at the [Class of 1945] Library, and as a member of the Rockingham Choral Society and the Exeter Players, I saw many sides to his personality. I found them all delightful. In fact, the tribute does not mention that most of the females in the Chorus had a crush on Irving. He was a man of great personal charm. He managed to

draw remarkably good music from a motley group of amateurs and did it with great humor, infinite patience, and again—charm. I can still remember some of the pieces we performed, and he inspired me to join other choral groups in the years following. It was a privilege to have known him.

*Frances Nowak, asst. librarian '68-'74
Lowell, MA*

OFF TO WAR

Your story, "Playing Hooky to Fight Hitler" (winter 2009), brought back many poignant memories for me.

I was an upper middler at that time, having been transplanted from the Stowe School in England because of the war. I remember very clearly when the Laclache brothers ran away from Exeter, and I recall that they were supposed to have absconded with the funds of the French Club (but this may just have been rumor).

In any event, my services had been volunteered to the British army by my father, who was English and serving at that time as

a military attache in the British Embassy in Washington. His boss was Rex Benson, who, it later transpired, headed British military intelligence in the United States. When my turn came, and space was found for me on a Canadian Air Force troopship, I had to leave Exeter during the Christmas vacation.

A friend and I went by train to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to board the troopship, the *Beaverhill*—a converted banana boat. While on the train, in the middle of the night at the Canadian border, our passports were examined by Canadian immigration officials. Because civilians were not allowed to travel between the United States and Canada unless [they] had an approved war-related reason, I was ordered off the train. It was pitch-dark, in the middle of the woods and snowing.

A heavily embossed letter from Rex Benson, which simply stated that I was en route to the United Kingdom to join the army, saved me.

We were at sea for three weeks, locked below decks at 4 p.m. because the authorities were afraid that someone aboard would show a lighted cigarette and alert a German submarine. It was the height of the U-boat war, and many ships were being sunk. I believe the *Beaverhill* was sunk on its next trip.

I served four-and-a-half years with the King's Royal Rifle Corps. I also remember when the crew of the *Surcouf* played its soccer game at Exeter.

I was terribly lucky to get into Exeter and loved the school. Coming from an English public school, I thought the teachers were wonderful and the food unbelievably good.

*Stuart Saunders '43
Wakefield, RI*

EDITOR'S NOTE

In a letter that appeared in the fall 2008 issue of the *Bulletin*, Michael Leigh '48 wrote, "I noted with interest and surprise that two of my '48 classmates, Duane Stranahan and Chauncey Loomis, both became trustees. I would think this is unusual for a single class. Are there other classes in recent history that have had two members subsequently serve as trustees?"

Joe Bain '41; P'69 wrote with the news that three of his classmates have served as term trustees: Henry Dexter Sharpe Jr. (1954-58), Hugh Calkins (1957-62) and Alfred Brittain III (1969-79).

CORRECTION

Due to a printing error in the winter 2009 issue, a portion of text was omitted from the Irving Forbes Memorial Minute, which included the date of his passing. Mr. Forbes died on April 30, 2008 in his home, accompanied by his family. To download a PDF copy of the article with the complete text, please visit www.exeter.edu/bulletinwinter2009.

PEA ARCHIVES

**DON'T FORGET TO
WRITE**

**We want to hear from you. Write to us at
The Exeter Bulletin, Phillips Exeter Academy,
20 Main Street, Exeter, NH 03833. Or
you can email us at bulletin@exeter.edu.**