

Wed. April 9-45

Dear Folks:

Yesterday was V-E day to come and a day that has been fought and waited for for nearly 6 years, and I hope a day that some people can look back on as a great day. To me and hundreds of others its a day well never forget if we live to be 100 and we'll shudder at the thought of it. Never before and I hope never again, that I'll ever see anything as sinful and horrible as what I, and a great many others, have been through for the last 24 hours.

You have likely heard it over the radio and will have seen it in the papers by the time you get this but no one can ever tell you by radio or in writing what the City of Halifax was like last night, April 8 - V-E day. Little did I know when I was talking to you Tues. Morning that the day would end up like it did. I worked from 0730 on Tues. till about 0400 last night and I would have gone on longer if I had had the strength. I think that the only people in Halifax who have been sober for the past 24 or 48 hours are the medical branches, naval, army and air force and civilians and the same in the police line.

When you have about 100,000 people on a minimum all so drunk that they are worse then wild beasts you have what we have had down here. I Hope you'll forgive the writing but my hand and whole body are still tired and trembling.) I will do my best to give you a mild story of what took place.

At 3.30 in the afternoon we were notified at R.C.N.H. that the crowd was out of control and to prepare for emergencies and we set up an emergency ward. The first case came in at 4.00 and there was no let up all night. The three liquor commissions were broken into and the entire contents released to the use of the people. I want you to know that I have a clear conscience as far as any part of this goings on is concerned. We were short-staffed to begin with and we all worked like pack horses. They had all the ambulances they could get and that was far to few. At 7.00 or 1900 I got an army ambulance that the driver had been beaten over the head and he went down to do what we could. I had two seamen assistants who were nearly sober. I wish I could bring you to see or picture what I saw when we got down town. Every store on Barrington street, the main street was almost demolished. There wasn't a window left and the contents were either looted or thrown out on the street. There was a good foot of glass over the whole of the street and it nearly cut the tires off our big army ambulance wheel. There were shoes, boots, chesterfields, clothes, cash registers, pots, pans and nearly everything you could imagine on the street and the truck labored to get through. That alone would have been enough but on top of that there was a slush of beer etc and a smell enough to nearly make you drunk and lying all over the place were civilians, soldiers sailors and airmen. The first fellow I got to was out cold and someone had taken the jagged end of a broken bottle and just slashed his face to pieces. We got him in the ambulance and went for the next one. Just then a soldier who was sober came over and said "Can I help you fellows". I asked him if he could drive the ambulance and he could so we took him on. We took three that trip and the next two patients were just about as bad. One had his arm cut at an artery and was nearly gone and if I hadn't stopped bleeding then couldn't have lasted much longer. The third was a cut hand but wasn't too bad and only needed a few stiches which were done at R.C.N.H. We wasted no time at all and from 1900 to 0200 that was what I was doing. Trip after trip picking up sailors and merchant marines and those who needed attention most. I got one fellow who had had a broken bottles shoved in his back

and twisted till it made a hole. Folks, there were things that I could hardly look at but had to. The seamen and soldier were were'nt as used to that sort of thing had a hard job taking it but did well. There were first aid stations set up at various spots as the police station. the sick bays ~~and~~ at Stad and Dock Yard and a couple of other places. The bad ones were taken to R.C.V.H. and the others to the first aid station. The X-ray staff and operating room staff were doing 3 times the work they could handle. At about 2230 another S.B.A. joined me from R.C.V.H and we just went down the street and piled them in our car and when we got to R.C.V.H we had to wait in line to get them taken out. Folks you just cant imagine it, the city was mad and it wasnt safe for man or beast. I saw 10 year old kids drunk and things like that. Several women killed and one 6 year old child that I saw. After I saw two middle aged men ( civilians) do to that child what they did I prayed to be forgiven for being a Canadian. I thought the Germans were beasts but now I wonder. At about 2200 fires started and they had the whole fire dept out trying to control it and the smoke was so heavy that our driver could hardly see and there were still injured lying around. We must have picked up 100 people and there were about 15 ambulances out. We took a lot of them to the police station to be fixed up and some to Sick Bays but the larger part of the ones need hospital and surgical attention. The ones that were out cold werent so bad to handle but so many of them objected to being looked after it was an awful fight. When I finally had time to feel my own pain and look at my face from the wallops I got, I wondered why I was doing anything for them at all. Its the most thankless job I've ever done. The Shore patrol had big trucks out picking up the ones that were drunk and not hurt. Admiral Murray was there and he read the Riot act and Martial Law was enforced. The civilians were far more to blame that were the service men and they were the ones who were doing the looting. Take it from me as I spent nearly 8 hours down there and I know. At 0200 we made a general sweep of the city and picked up all we saw. There was a Navy Padre out there doing his best to talk the boys and civies into going home but it did no good. It nearly made me cry to see what he was going through. By 0230 the streets were nearly ~~clear~~ cleared and we saw no more wounded. I handled broken bones, cuts, gashes, concussions and nearly everything imaginable. Admiral Murray called me over to his car after I had put a chap in the ambulance and spoke to me for a minute or so. However I consider no honour in it. I'm ashamed that I'M in the services and that I'M a Canadian and I don't mind telling you. A book could be written on what we saw last night and it all started because they let them break into the liquor store and it was as many civilians as service personal who are to blame. They have ~~C.B.~~ C.B'd all barracks and it started again down town this A.M. and was all civies who were looting. Running off with 4 and 5 suits of clothes and all sorts of jewelry. There is an estimated \$2,000,000 in destruction done and the place looks like all hell broke loose. I doubt if it could be worse.

Jack Akers and I finished up last night about 0400 and we came down to the block here to go to bed but we would only have had 2 hours sleep so we went back to R.C.V.H. and slept on the floor on mattresses in one of cabins.

I just read the papers and the Navy is taking the blunt of it - because this is a Navy Town. I will admit that they are a good deal to blame and I'm too ashamed of the service to stick up for them. However it doesnt matter much what I say. Please believe me when I say, that very few S B A's had a hand in it.

I think I've said enough now but I'll tell you the whole story from start to finish the next time I'm home cause I'll never forget it. Not as long as I live and I just pray that nothing like that went on in Belleville as it will take months to build the town up again - and riots are started by a few and grow and this time grew to over 100,000 strong.

I sent the wire last night to put your mind at ease - and I'll look quite the same the next time you see me. I can't help but wonder what the men overseas will think of this display of the work of masses of maniacs.

I must go now but will write when I get a chance again. I haven't had any mail for 3 days so hope to get some soon.

Cheerio for now  
Love to all  
Don

P.S.

I'll send you a paper as soon as I can but I'm going to try to get drafted out of here as soon as possible. It won't be safe to walk down the streets as the people are all out for the sailors.

~~Had a letter from you at 6 o'clock. The one written on Sunday.~~  
It sure was swell

Cheerio.

I'll put this in Betts letter as I have only one stamp

OK ??