

TO RUSSIA AND BACK

(Continued from previous page)

up. They were saturated in fuel oil, of course, and were not a pretty sight. I landed the job of carrying them along to the laundry which was being used as a morgue. You know that I had never seen a dead body before in my life and I was dreading the whole business, but I prayed and received the strength required to carry it out. I was able then to handle them and help put them into their shrouds without feeling the least disturbed.

We lost one of our fellows, one of my cabin mates in the old Rimutaka. Thirty-one officers and men were killed in action. Apart from the tinfish we were hit by a number of projectiles from the destroyer.

At last the great night came and we weighed anchor, and then with an escort of destroyers began the trip home.

Sunk!

As you will know in such high latitudes at this time of the year there is no night. We were in the land of the midnight sun. In expectation of a hot passage we closed up at the second degree of readiness. We left at midnight on the Tuesday and as soon as we got outside we were shadowed by reconnaissance aircraft. All the Wednesday they hung around just out of range. Then about 8 o'clock the fun began. For a while they seemed reluctant to attack—probably wondering where the convoy was. Then they came down—about 35 Junkers 88's and 15 torpedo bombers. We could only use a top speed of 21 knots and our gunnery was without the nerve centre, but even then we held them off. A submarine was sighted on the surface on our starboard quarter, but we were too busy to worry about her. Then about midnight we felt the ship shudder and begin to list to starboard. She kept her speed and we began to hope all might still be well, but it was not to be. The chief bos'n's mate took over the loud speaker and announced that the engines had been stopped and gave orders to keep the pumps working. About ten minutes later came the order "Attention! Attention! Everyone muster on the port side of the quarter deck by divisions." This is the order given nowadays in place of "Abandon ship". I picked up my oilskin and gas-mask and climbed down out of the turret. A heavy pall of smoke hung over the ship, but by the bridge bright tongues of flame were beginning to leap high into the air. Then a loud intermittent cracking noise as the pom-pom ammunition went off.

I gazed across the sea. To the north was a long line of ice floes and there in the distance a sole German 'plane flew slowly up and down. Although 1.0 on the Thursday morning, it was bright daylight. The destroyers came alongside one by one and took us off in large batches.

A couple of torpedoes from one of the destroyers finished the job, and the ship which had been our home for three months, and which we had grown to love and admire was gone, taking with her 98 of our friends and everything we possessed.

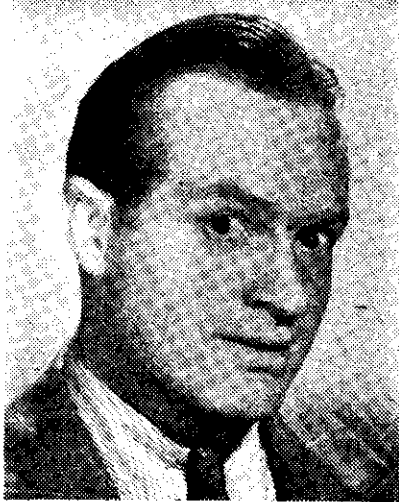
My faith and belief in the supreme things of life have been greatly strengthened. I feel that it was not only my prayers that were answered on those fateful occasions, but also the repeated and sincere prayers of all of you who love me and are concerned with my safety. God bless you all.

"THERE GOES HOPE"

Film Star Describes Visit To Army Outposts in Alaska

THIS interview with the film and radio star Bob Hope is condensed from the American paper "Variety." Hope is one of the compères of "Command Performance, U.S.A.," the radio session for American servicemen away from home, which is heard from the ZB stations

BOB Hope is back in Hollywood and still talking about what he terms the most "unforgettable" weeks he spent giving Army shows in Alaska, with Frances Langford, Jerry Colonna, and Tony Romano. And he wasn't even thinking of, let alone mentioning, one memorable five minutes



BOB HOPE
Hollywood won't be seeing much of him

in the air when the pilot grimly told the awed troupers to get ready to bale out—over a most fearsome, desolate waste of crag and fjord and cranny.

Hope, in a gust of words, was too busy telling of other things he considered more important about this 16,000-mile trip in two and a-half weeks. The fact for instance, that the soldiers were so genuinely enthusiastic; that to Frances Langford went the distinction of being the first white woman ever to reach Cold Bay in the Aleutians; and that four people, bringing with them what they honestly felt to be so pitifully little, could and did manage to generate so much enthusiasm among so many lonely soldiers stationed in this stark outpost on the rim of the world.

"We Felt Like Cheering"

"I wouldn't trade the trip for my last five years in the show business," Hope says, then adds, "My lucky years."

"The boys were so appreciative, they made you feel humble. There they were—guys doing a tough job at 50 dollars a month, standing and cheering four people who, after all, were only giving what they could readily spare, time and talent. By gad, we felt like cheering right back at them.

"For they were guys who came crawling out of fox holes, with mud in their eye and beards on their chins. They

were slogging through their jobs, day after day and week after week, uncomplainingly, and in fact, with high good humour, though they had no way of knowing whether or not civilisation had forgotten them.

"That's our job—emphatically mine—from now on. To point out the necessity and importance of showing our boys in these desolate outposts that they are not forgotten by those at home. I'm going back there in January, and I mean to take everything with me that they think they need.

Unique Experience

"I'll hit Iceland, too, probably as part of an itinerary that takes in Ireland and Scotland. Yes, Hollywood won't see so much of Hope from now on. I've got other plans.

"The Arctic entourage played its biggest show in Uniak, where 4000 soldiers watched the performance outdoors in the rain. The smallest audience was 40, at an auxiliary airport called Northway, where the stage was a huge tree stump. The most memorable part of the jaunt, perhaps, was the visit to Uniak and Cold Bay, since theirs were the first civilian feet yet to reach that part of the Aleutian archipelago. But Watson Lake gave them their most unusual experience.

"There were hundreds of engineers at the place," he says, "and all they know about life, as it's now being lived, is that it has decided they are to spend an awful lot of it building a road through Canada. Also through muck and rain and snow—and muck. When a place like that sees a civilian, it thinks it's having delusions. And when it sees a Hollywood actor, it knows it's having them. Because of crowded communications, you see, the boys seldom had any advance warning. We'd just pop up in front of them, and there would be a lot of hand whispers, quick looks, then they'd dive into huts and tents and come out with more soldiers!"

One such soldier came up to Bob Hope in Nome, offered his hand and said with a grim humour that made the actor smile, "Welcome to Devil's Island." But he remembers more fondly the pale little buck private who sidled up at another spot and said with wistful sincerity: "I just want to thank you for the boys."

"Command Performance"

These are the compères for "Command Performance, U.S.A." on Sunday, January 10, at 9 p.m.:

1ZB, Bob Hope; 2ZB, Betty Grable; 3ZB, Bing Crosby; 4ZB, Linda Darnell; 2ZA, Frances Langford.