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BRINGING THE WAR HOME

THE PATRIOTIC IMAGINATION IN SASKATOON, 1939–1942

BRENDAN KELLY

In *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War*, noted historian Gerald D. Nash argued that the war, more than any other event in the West's history, completely altered that region.¹ There is as yet no equivalent of Nash's fine study for the Great Plains north of the forty-ninth parallel, or what Canadians call the "prairies."² This gap notwithstanding, historians of western Canada have begun to explore at least one key aspect of Nash's research: the war's impact on cities. Since 1995 there have been three

histories of urban centers in wartime: Red Deer (Alberta), Lethbridge (Alberta), and Regina (Saskatchewan).³ However, these previous studies pay insufficient attention to the impact of "patriotism," a curious omission given how frequently both government officials and ordinary citizens used their love of country as a rallying cry. In this article I focus on Saskatoon, whose 43,027 inhabitants made it Saskatchewan's second-largest city, and examine the way in which patriotism was nourished in the collective mind by several war-related events in the city.⁴ Through what may be called the patriotic imagination, the war was made intense and immediate to prairie dwellers far removed from its conflict zones.⁵

Key Words: Blitz, Britain, Nazi, newspapers, Prairies, Star-Phoenix

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Unlike a London or a Leningrad, North American cities like Saskatoon never experienced bombardment. For patriotism to flourish in such locales, the war overseas had to be imagined—and, to a degree, vicariously experienced—at home. In *The American West Transformed*, Nash devoted two chapters to the metamorphosis—cultural, economic, and demographic—of wartime cities. While a study of this transformation is rewarding, it should not completely eclipse other features

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of the urban home front. This caveat applies especially to the Canadian prairies, where the changes wrought by the war were far less profound than the ones on the Great Plains. Put simply, an analysis of how the patriotic imagination mobilized Saskatoon to support the war is useful in understanding its wider impact on western Canadian cities as a whole. I have concentrated on the pre-1943 war years, a period when Canadian casualties were relatively low. The popular imagination, subdued during the Great Depression, took flight during this time. In what follows, I consider several ways in which the patriotic imagination was nourished in the city: through empathy with war-torn Britain, through the fear that the European conflict might move to the Canadian prairies, and through Saskatonians' awareness of their soldiers, both at home and abroad.

The mock invasions of September 1941 and October 1942 constitute a paradigm of how the patriotic imagination in Saskatoon was nourished. On the night of September 24, 1941, the first attack occurred. The next day, in what could have been mistaken for a dispatch from Europe on the *Wehrmacht's* destruction of Warsaw or Rotterdam, the city's daily newspaper, the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, provided its readers with an alarming communiqué:

The city plunged into darkness, columns of military trucks and jeeps loaded with soldiers armed with rifles and machine-guns roared in from concentration points outside the city. Motor trucks carrying the invaders sped through the downtown streets while the sound of rifle fire and explosive charges filled the air. The atmosphere was acrid with smoke.

Citizens on the street were stopped by the "enemy" and asked to show their registration cards.⁶ At the Canadian National Railway station a "fifth columnist" opened a nondescript trunk and pulled out a machine gun.⁷ On October 19, 1942, Saskatoon was the scene of an even larger "invasion." Massed formations of airplanes roared overhead, paratroopers

dropped from the sky, and black-garbed enemy soldiers from outside the city, some of them with swastikas and rising suns chalked on their uniforms, advanced on such strategic points as City Hall, the police station, and the newspaper plant. Local radio station CFQC, also seized by the raiders, broadcast propaganda over its airwaves. Its mayor and civic officials taken prisoner, Saskatoon was deprived of leadership in its darkest hour.⁸ In the end the mock invasions inspired Saskatoon's patriotic imagination on the three levels that are central to this argument: through sympathy with Britain's actual experience of being bombed by the enemy; through the dramatization of Saskatonians' own fears that they might be tested by a German invasion; and, finally, through the experience of seeing Canadian soldiers acting out in war games those skills that they would use in earnest when in combat overseas.

BRITAIN IN PERIL: SASKATOON HEARS THE DRUMS OF DRAKE

Even before the *Luftwaffe's* bombing of England, most Saskatonians seemed disposed to support the mother country.⁹ This loyalty was not altogether surprising in a city where census records show that 70 percent of the population traced its ancestry to the British Isles.¹⁰ During the royal tour in the summer of 1939 by King George VI and his consort, Queen Elizabeth, the first such visit to Canada by a reigning monarch, this allegiance to the Crown was patently clear. When the royal couple passed through the city on June 3, 1939, Saskatoon was ablaze with red, white, and blue; flags were draped over buildings, miles of bunting lined the streets, and pictures of their majesties were everywhere.¹¹ Saskatoon's population of about 40,000 swelled to an estimated 150,000, as all of central Saskatchewan seemed to converge on the city for a glimpse of the monarchs.¹² The most distinctive feature of the city's two-hour celebration was its "singing" Union Jack flag, composed of no fewer than 700 school girls who performed "Land of Hope and

Glory” for the illustrious guests.¹³ “No longer are kings and queens known only by hearsay, through the printed word, or, at best, by photographs or via radio,” declared the *Star-Phoenix’s* correspondent. The welcome received by the royal couple in the city, continued the journalist, was the best possible answer to “the old libel that Canada, particularly the new parts and those populated by folk of alien origin, are falling away from the British Crown.”¹⁴

With war looming on the European horizon, the timing of the royal tour was opportune. While the royal couple’s trip across the country in the summer of 1939 received more coverage by Canadian newspapers than did the worsening situation in Europe, the visit was nonetheless fraught with symbolism for the coming conflict. For one thing, this tour suggested that the world’s democracies stood together in the face of growing totalitarian aggression.¹⁵ Even more telling was the way in which the king and queen departed from formal arrangements by plunging into the midst of the cheering crowds, a warm and spontaneous gesture that was in stark contrast to Hitler’s rigid and stationary watch over Nazi troops who marched before him with cold precision during the Nuremberg rallies.¹⁶ At the Saskatoon train station, the king ordered the police lines to relax, allowing thousands access to a reserved enclosure where they were able to steal one final look at the royal couple.¹⁷

The royal tour provided a moment of uplift for the people of Saskatoon who had suffered greatly for ten years during the Depression. This effect was not lost on the *Star-Phoenix*. A reporter for the paper observed that the procession weaved through streets that “wear evidence of the hard times which have struck Saskatchewan but which also are emblematic of the faith of the citizens.” This same “faith” prompted Saskatonians to line the city route with tractors, combines, threshing machines, and, of course, golden wheat.¹⁸ Rather than lamenting those “ten lost years,” the prairie center responded to the royal couple’s visit with a display of hope. The presence of King George VI and his charming wife had clearly stirred

Saskatoon’s imagination and strengthened the bond it felt to the British Empire. The *Star-Phoenix’s* assertion that June 3, 1939, was “the greatest day in Saskatoon’s history” was not altogether hyperbolic.¹⁹

Geographical distance could not weaken the bond that Saskatonians felt to the mother country. Ninety-eight percent of the men who enlisted in Saskatoon during the first days of the war were of British descent.²⁰ For them and their families, the idea of fighting for the “old flag” still resonated. More evidence of this sentiment was a remarkable military parade during the 1940 Saskatoon Exhibition featuring over eighty Saskatchewan veterans from the Victorian era. City librarian J. S. Wood, the keynote speaker for the event, observed that these men adorned with medals represented “a long page in British history.” Indeed, two of the eighty veterans assembled had actually fought as far back as the Zulu wars of 1878, while others had served in such imperial hot spots as India, Burma, China, Egypt, and South Africa.²¹ The *Star-Phoenix’s* prediction that the whole affair would “stir” the patriotism of the crowd proved an understatement: 7,000 Saskatonians not only packed the exhibition grandstand, but they also leaped to their feet and wildly cheered the veterans who marched past them three abreast to the music of “Soldiers of the Queen.”²² The parade was essentially a celebration of Canada’s service to the empire. The frequent occurrence of such commemorative events during World War II attested to more than just nostalgia. Celebrating the relief of the siege of Ladysmith or the battle of Paardeberg, as Saskatoon veterans did in February 1942, vividly brought these events home once more; more obliquely, the ceremonies gave a sense of continuity to the idea of sacrifice in the name of the empire. The only difference was that the Nazis, not the Boers, were now the enemy.²³

Saskatoon’s pride in the empire was not confined solely to its citizens reliving Great Britain’s golden imperial past through contact with the veterans of long-ago battles. Mother England’s present crisis was also made immediate in various other ways. Parishioners in



FIG. 1. *The Drums of Drake* (Source: Saskatoon Star-Phoenix).

Saskatoon's churches, for example, listened to some clergymen preach on "The Bible, the British Empire, and Hitler" and heard other ministers ask, "Will There Always Be an England?" (a question that one could safely assume was rhetorical).²⁴ On a national scale, too, pride in Britain was sweeping the country. Eager to capitalize on this popular feeling, one

federal Victory Bond advertisement in the *Star-Phoenix* read, "The Drums of Drake are Calling," a reference to the English legend that when Britain is in peril the drum's sound may be heard (Fig. 1).²⁵

Throughout the turbulent war years the newspaper's Saturday "Letter Box" became a platform for the promotion of British stoicism.

In the aftermath of the Dunkirk evacuation, for example, one contributor with a keen historical sense quoted Napoleon's famous tribute to British resiliency: "The British lost every battle, but the last; they accept reverses with fortitude."²⁶ To refute the notion that Germany could conquer Britain, another Saskatonian used a battery of striking tropes:

The Nazis' bombs smashed the sturdy old body of London, but its heart they did not touch. The British heart is older and stouter than the walls that perished. The dust that is stirring in this flame of war is more than just the dust of ages, for age has no merit in itself. This is age made imperishable. A thousand years have seen no abatement of Britain's glory.²⁷

Few Saskatonians, at this stage of the war at least, would have remained impervious to such Churchillian rhetoric. Nor did the *Star-Phoenix* limit its attempts to foster imperial sentiment within the city to the missives of its readers. In early August 1940, when the Battle of Britain was in its first phase, one enterprising journalist interviewed Frank Sunderland, a ninety-two-year-old Briton living in the city. Asked by the reporter whether England could be brought to its knees, Mr. Sunderland retorted, "Nobody but a crazy fool would think that Hitler is going to conquer England." He added even more loyally, "England is on top today and . . . will always be on top."²⁸

Parades celebrating Britain's imperial past, patriotic letters to the *Star-Phoenix*, and inspiring interviews with the likes of Frank Sunderland all helped Saskatonians to imagine the war. Equally powerful in communicating the Battle of Britain were the twenty-five "guest children" who arrived in the prairie city in late August 1940. Evacuated to escape the Blitz and a possible German invasion, these youngsters, ranging in age from five to fifteen, were palpable evidence of the horrors of the cataclysm. Prairie dwellers who had had to make do with secondhand accounts of the war could see it, as it were, for themselves. It



FIG. 2. Guest child Raymond Maddison (Source: *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*).

was no coincidence that when the first guest child, Raymond Maddison of Birmingham, reached the city in June 1940, he was pictured in the *Star-Phoenix* wearing his gas mask (Fig. 2).²⁹ Even greater excitement was generated in late August 1940 when twenty-five other guest children arrived (Fig. 3). The *Star-Phoenix* observed that the children's coming marked "The end of a 5,000-mile trail, leading from the bomb-splattered towns and cities of England to the quiet of northern Saskatchewan." The youths' parents were praised for having remained behind "to watch the ramparts." The newspaper was not alone in celebrating British heroism. Three thousand Saskatonians, many of them weeping, packed the front of the railway station to greet the young pilgrims.³⁰ "They cheered and cheered as if they were glad to have us," remarked a young British girl.³¹ Yet not everyone



FIG. 3. Guest child having his ears washed (Source: *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*).

was pleased with the attention showered on the guest children.³² As one irritated local anglophile complained to the *Star-Phoenix*, "It would almost seem that these children are a lot of ignorant, uneducated, little savages from the darkest depths of primitive Africa instead of healthy, intelligent children from the most civilized country in the world." The writer's charge that Saskatoon's reception of the guest children was "exhibitionist and sensationalist" missed the point.³³ Saskatonians did not respond to the visitors as they did simply to put on a show; rather, through their interactions with these youths, prairie civilians were vicariously experiencing England's war.

So fascinated were Saskatonians by the Battle of Britain that even inanimate objects captured their imagination. The coming to the city of the "Iron Duke," a tea wagon which for six months had seen active service in London and East Anglia, was a case in point. A *Star-Phoenix* editorial spoke without irony of the wagon's "triumphant tour" through Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba (Fig. 4).³⁴ Named after

the Duke of Wellington, the famous British field marshal best remembered for his victory over Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, the Iron Duke had led a charmed existence: frequently fired upon by Stuka dive-bombers, the tea wagon had never been knocked out of commission. Its "bomb-scarred" and "flame-scorched" surface attested to the horrors of modern warfare.³⁵ Its indestructible nature, noted the *Star-Phoenix*, provided "striking evidence of how London can take it."³⁶

Like Saskatoon's guest children, the spectacle of the Iron Duke gave prairie dwellers a taste of what war was like. That 5,000 people packed Kiwanis Park to see the tea wagon suggests their eagerness for such vicarious thrills. To heighten the excitement of the event, a mock air raid preceded the Iron Duke's arrival. As sirens from the local fire station wailed, the sound of enemy planes and of exploding bombs filled the park. Illuminated by flares and searchlights, stretcher-bearers scurried back and forth carrying the "wounded" to safety while firefighters with ladders plunged into a "burning" building to rescue those trapped inside. Even the decontamination squad of the Royal Canadian Engineers was on hand, outfitted in their special suits and gas masks.³⁷ Having weathered this air attack, beleaguered Saskatonians hailed the entry of the Iron Duke into the "bombed" park. The imagination of the crowd was further stirred by a ceremony stressing the close bond between Canada and the mother country. One of the British hostesses accompanying the tea wagon presented the city with a phial containing rubble from London's destroyed buildings. In return the president of the Saskatoon Board of Trade presented her with two phials, one containing oil from Lloydminster's gas and oil field and the other hard wheat from the city's immediate vicinity. The gifts were symbolic, in the words of the *Star-Phoenix*, of "northern Saskatchewan's contribution to the arsenal of democracy."³⁸ With this display of loyalty complete, tea was served to Saskatoon officials from the Iron Duke itself in mugs that had been used by soldiers overseas.³⁹



FIG. 4. Tea, courtesy of the Iron Duke (Source: *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*).

HITLER COVETS THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES: FEAR OF A GERMAN INVASION

The second major source of the patriotic imagination was the fear that Saskatoon could suffer London's anguish more directly. Having symbols of British resistance in their midst inevitably made many Saskatonians cognizant of the need to stand on guard against a German attack on their own soil. Some prominent citizens believed that Hitler might cast his bellicose eye on the Canadian prairies. One article in the *Star-Phoenix*, for example, warned westerners that the distance from the nearest German flying fields to possible bases in Hudson Bay, itself within easy flight of the prairies, was no greater than the

distance from Southampton to Montreal.⁴⁰ The secretary of the Canadian Legion in Saskatoon added the inflammatory remark that a fifth column composed of a measly fifty men could conquer any city in western Canada. The Germans were only waiting for the right moment to strike: "This command will be given when Great Britain is under terrific attack and when the announcement that the three Prairie Provinces have revolted to Hitler will be most demoralizing."⁴¹ C. P. Seeley, the principal of the Normal School in Saskatoon, boldly asserted that Hitler actually had Canada in his sights. Speaking to a large crowd at the Vimy Memorial in Kiwanis Park in May 1941, he stressed the enormous value to *der Fuehrer* of such a trans-Atlantic conquest:

—Photo by Len Hillyard
AT the close of the simulated air attack on Kiwanis Park Friday night, the "Iron Duke," tea wagon from the battle front in Britain, served tea to Saskatoon officials and members of the committee in charge of the show from mugs which had actually been used by fighting men. The large crowd donated \$275.27 to the Queen's Canadian Fund for Air Raid Victims. There were no deductions of any kind for

Let us remind ourselves that Canada is a pearl of great price today. Jealous eyes have for long years been cast across our broad acres. Our limited population, our vast natural resources, our magnificent location, where the world's greatest sea lanes meet, offer a tempting bait to the vultures from Mars. From the east and west they'd pounce upon us and tear us limb from limb if given half a chance.⁴²

What made Seeley's address so provocative was that, in depicting Canada as a "pearl of great price" in German eyes, he gave an alarming new twist to the idea of Nazi expansionism. How could Canada's "broad acres," "limited population," and "vast natural resources" not attract the attention of Hitler, who constantly spoke of acquiring *Lebensraum* for his more populous and mineral-deficient *Reich*? Seeley's address was a warning to Saskatonians that although Canada was not specifically mentioned in *Mein Kampf*—eastern Europe was after all the primary target of German expansion—the country still possessed many of the assets coveted by its fanatical author.

It is symptomatic of the times that even the *Star-Phoenix's* editorial cartoons took as their subject the danger of indifference to a possible attack on home soil. In one November 1941 drawing, for example, a Canadian man is pictured lounging in an easy chair with his feet propped up. Behind him and out of his view stands a Nazi (portrayed as a monkey), dressed in full military garb with a visible swastika (Fig. 5).⁴³ "Would you kindly oblige me mit a match?" the German soldier asks the seated man. Little does the unsuspecting Canadian in the cartoon know that the Nazi is gripping a fuse attached to a gigantic bomb strategically placed underneath his easy chair. The irony is palpable when one sees that the soon-to-be liquidated Canadian is reading a newspaper with the headline "U-Boats Operating Off Newfoundland." The words "Easy Living" are inscribed in capital letters on the footstool, and the single word "Complacency" on the plump man's easy chair.⁴⁴ In another editorial cartoon,

a civilian is once again pictured seated comfortably reading the newspaper. This time the headline reads "More Executions in Occupied Countries," prompting the man to exclaim, "That man [Hitler] is a fiend! Thank heaven we live in Canada!" But the real warning of the cartoon is found in its upper half: the man's reading lamp, on which the word "Freedom" is inscribed, is about to have its power severed by a giant pair of scissors branded with the Nazi emblem. "Let us not blind ourselves to facts! Buy more and more war savings certificates," exhorts the cartoon (Fig. 6).⁴⁵ Both editorial cartoons make clear that the gentlemen pictured (and other equally obtuse Canadians) fail to grasp the very real Nazi military threat to the home front.

So seriously did many Saskatonians consider the Nazi danger to North America that in April 1941 they met to discuss the establishment of air raid protection squads. The immediate cause of the preventive measure seems to have been an unconfirmed report that month that the Germans had gained a foothold in the sparsely populated arctic island of Greenland, thereby providing the *Wehrmacht* with a springboard from which to launch attacks against the Western Hemisphere.⁴⁶ While we know today that Nazi motives in Greenland were far less sinister—weather stations and cryolite, a mineral used for the manufacture of aluminum, drew them there—Germany's bold foray into the Arctic led to fears that North America was next.⁴⁷ As well, a widely publicized speech in May 1941 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, which proclaimed an "unlimited national emergency," dispelled any lingering doubts that the Nazis were content simply with Europe. Never one to mince words, Roosevelt announced that Hitler would stop at nothing to "strangle the United States of America and the Dominion of Canada."⁴⁸

The disturbing news of Nazi incursions into the Arctic and the grim prognostications of America's commander-in-chief were enough to prompt Saskatonians to prepare for the possibility of a *Luftwaffe* bombing run on their city. Ominous comments by local Royal Canadian



FIG. 5. *Nazi on home soil* (Source: *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*).

Air Force (RCAF) personnel during the mock blackouts that the prairie center would be a “pushover” in the event of a real blitz no doubt stirred the popular imagination. The crook of the river, the railway tracks that shone in the moonlight, and the usually cloudless atmosphere were all cited by military figures as factors that made Saskatoon especially vulner-

able to an air attack.⁴⁹ As a result, in January 1942 R. W. Stayner, a distinguished veteran of the Great War, was placed in charge of air raid defense in the city. Concerned Saskatonians were encouraged to train for their community’s defense. Not everyone, however, felt that war on prairie soil was imminent. Several officials in Saskatoon insisted, for example, that the



FIG. 6. *Freedom about to be extinguished* (Source: *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*).

prospect of an air attack on the city was still remote. Nevertheless, 1,132 local men and women were engaged in first aid, fire, and police drills in November 1942, striking evidence that the threat from the *Luftwaffe* seemed real enough to justify such precautions.⁵⁰

The *Star-Phoenix* played a key role in whipping up this war fever. Its special two-page

"Nazi" edition of the newspaper (October 19, 1942) was a case in point. The premise behind the whole idea—that Nazis had conquered Canada, had Saskatoon in their grip, and had seized the *Star-Phoenix*—would have outraged every patriot in that urban center. Renaming the newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung fuer Saskatoon*, the editors set about filling the two pages with

stories of Nazi hubris. A jubilant Hitler greeted his new subjects on the very front page:

The entire German people rejoice with me in the glorious victory of German arms in overcoming the last resistance of decadent democracy in Saskatchewan. . . . The rich farm lands of what the British were pleased to call the breadbasket of their former empire will fit magnificently into our plans for a New Order.

The conquest of Saskatoon seemed irreversible.

The amalgam of stories in the *Star-Phoenix's* Nazi edition were clearly designed to shock different sectors of Saskatoon's diverse population out of their complacency. Local church leaders, for example, could not have missed the upsetting announcement of the new *Reichbishop* appointed by the Nazis for the Canadian *Gau* (the German word for province) and the burning of old prayer books that promoted "unscientific Christianity." Farmers in the rural areas around Saskatoon would have been startled to read about Nazi plans to ship every ounce of butter they produced back to Germany and to confiscate all livestock, with anyone who resisted being shot on sight. And those in the prairie city with a medical background would have stared with disbelief at the *Star-Phoenix's* health section, a part of the paper that was now dedicated to Nazi teachings on biology and physiology. Even more hair-raising was a grim warning that anyone who opposed the new regime was to be sent to the "concentration camp" at Dundurn. These local stories were intermixed with national ones. It was reported, for instance, that a small Ontario city that during the Great War had changed its name from Berlin to Kitchener had been leveled punitively to the ground. In Winnipeg 250 people, including the mayor and the entire city council, had allegedly been executed by firing squad. Lastly, in Ottawa a group of women and children were shot point blank for stealing from a food depot, along with fifteen Boy Scouts who were found guilty of membership in a banned movement. Other stories in *Deutsche Zeitung*

fuer Saskatoon were deliberately left blank—marked only with the word "censored" and the swastika emblem—giving the impression that the "German World Plan" was far too sinister to print.⁵¹ Readers of the *Star-Phoenix's* "Nazi" edition doubtless got the point: life in the "true north strong and free" was worth defending.

THE GAME OF WAR: SASKATOON'S IMAGE OF THE SOLDIER

The third and perhaps most significant way in which life on the battlefield was brought home to Saskatoon was through the daily interactions between civilians and the soldiers who were training in and around the city. This positive image of the serviceman did not crystallize immediately with the outbreak of war. Scattered handclapping but no cheering greeted the Saskatoon Light Infantry in its first parade on October 7, 1939, perhaps because the previous war's bloody legacy still loomed forbiddingly in the minds of spectators.⁵² With the fall of France in June 1940, however, Saskatoon's initial wariness was swept away by emotional appeals that stressed the danger now confronting "Mother England" and even the city itself. Soldiers stationed in the prairie city benefited greatly from the renewed zeal of the civilian population. The painful memory of those who had died or been maimed at Ypres, the Somme, and Vimy Ridge was soon dimmed in Saskatoon's collective imagination by rhetoric that portrayed the soldier of the day as the savior of the British Empire and the defender of democracy worldwide.

Crucial to this burnishing of the soldier's image in wartime Saskatoon was the omnipresence of the military. Between 1939 and 1945 the Canadian forces dominated the life of the city far more than during the Great War.⁵³ In the *Star-Phoenix's* accounts of local military exercises, one senses a deliberate attempt by both the army and the newspaper to make war appear as exhilarating as possible. During "Army Day" on June 28, 1941, which was held at the nearby military camp in Dundurn, for example, civilians were invited to witness

soldiers “at grim work and happy play.” Prairie inhabitants responded enthusiastically, converging on the camp in cars, special buses, trains, as well as on horse-drawn vehicles and bicycles; many even came on foot. Local interest was so great that the highways leading to the camp were congested with heavy traffic. Those who braved the crowds were not disappointed:

The ground activities were climaxed by a thrilling driving display. . . . Heavy motor vehicles hurtled through the air. Men rode motorcycles at breakneck speed over the rough terrain in battle formations which constantly changed. Light armored “blitzkrieg” units engaged in sham battles. Dispatch riders on speedy motorcycles carried important messages through fogs of gas to headquarters. Specialists dissipated gas attacks and long convoys of armored vehicles roared to attack against the “enemy.”⁵⁴

The *Star-Phoenix*'s colorful account of Army Day is evidence of the way in which the military had stirred Saskatoon's popular imagination. Language describing how vehicles “hurtled through the air,” drove at “breakneck speed,” and “roared” against an imaginary foe was symptomatic of this excitement. Aware of its hold over the collective mind, the army performed drills sure to elicit an emotional response from the civilian crowd. At bayonet training, for example, crowds cheered when an effigy of Hitler was set up for soldiers to impale. A photo of this one-sided confrontation appeared in the *Star-Phoenix* under the caption “Hitler Gets Cold Steel in the Vitals.”⁵⁵ The climax of Army Day occurred at six in the evening, when air raid sirens suddenly wailed and bomber planes were sighted in the distance. Instead of the enemy *Luftwaffe*, however, RCAF bombers, to the delight of the civilian crowds, unloaded their bombs in targeted areas.⁵⁶ Much like the mock air raids, the local activities of the army may have given Saskatonians the impression that war was more thrilling spectacle than grim undertaking. Of course, martial drills far

from a theater of war never capture what it is truly like to be in the thick of battle, or what Shakespeare in *Henry VI* termed the “feast of death,” but it still brought events seen only in newsreels much closer to home.⁵⁷

Like the Dundurn military camp, the two air bases in Saskatoon also fed the city's patriotic imagination. Initially symbols of wartime prosperity and of the end of the Depression,⁵⁸ the flight schools now attested to the city's contribution to the war effort. As well, there was something romantic about aviation facilities that united recruits from across the British Commonwealth (chiefly Canada, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand) and trained them on home soil. Long captivated by accounts of the Battle of Britain, Saskatonians now had before their very eyes pilots who soon would duel with the *Luftwaffe*. “Hitler and his Nazi gang have sown the wind,” declared Churchill to the Canadian parliament in December 1941, “Let them reap the whirlwind.”⁵⁹ The roar of engines in the sky, both during the day and at night, created a continuous ambience of war. The keen interest prairie inhabitants took in their aviation facilities was shown on September 21, 1940, when Mayor Carl Niderost organized an open house at the airport's new Service Flying Training School. In an interesting twist, Saskatoon veterans attacked Niderost for failing to take into account the possibility of sabotage on the part of fifth columnists, accusing the civic leader of promoting the war effort like a “high powered salesman.”⁶⁰ In the end, however, the open house took place as scheduled, with no reports of sabotage. Niderost's “salesman” tactics clearly worked, as an estimated 30,000 people visited the base in one day.⁶¹ To the crowd's delight, six single-engine Harvard planes and six twin-engine Avro Ansons gave a demonstration of aerobatics and of formation flying. “Saskatoon will become the air hub of the West, the same as it is now the railway hub,” predicted Archie McNab, Saskatchewan's lieutenant governor.⁶²

If the roar of Harvards and of Avro Ansons provided Saskatonians with thrilling evidence of what it was like to be at war, the proximity of

civilians to air facilities sometimes caused too much excitement. For instance, one farmer west of Saskatoon had to duck in fear when he was “strafed” by a mischievous pilot.⁶³ In another case, when RCAF trainees released parachute flares over the airport in early January 1941, the office of the *Star-Phoenix* was flooded with calls from nervous citizens who thought that a plane had crashed and burst into flames. To assuage these fears, the newspaper grounded its explanation in (rather dull) scientific terms: “These flares floating slowly to the ground, burn magnesium. They throw an exceedingly bright light, which can be seen for miles. . . . The magnesium burns slowly with a white light and will continue to burn for some time, even after landing.”⁶⁴ The obsession of prairie inhabitants with all things military surfaced two months later during the local flight school’s first war-time fatality. In the early afternoon of March 12, 1941, two young pilots, one from Toronto and the other from the British Honduras, collided in midair. The wreckage from the grisly accident was strewn about in a one-mile radius just two hundred feet outside the city limits. A father and his three-year-old son sitting in a truck were lucky to escape unharmed, since pieces from the fuselage and from the engines of one of the planes landed only two feet from their vehicle.⁶⁵ Crowds quickly converged on the crash; some civilians even tore pieces from the downed planes to keep for themselves. This theft infuriated one city councilor who was at the scene. “I told one woman, who had her arms full with souvenirs, I couldn’t imagine what particular pleasure she could get from possessing pieces from planes in which our own boys were killed,” fumed Alderman Bushe. “You would have thought those were enemy planes, the way people swarmed over them, and helped themselves.”⁶⁶ Clearly Saskatoon’s fascination with the cult of the military occasionally made its citizens act irrationally.

Disturbing as was the crowd’s scavenging for souvenirs of the crash, it is also an extreme example of the kind of detachment from the horrors of war that many civilians on the home front shared. In a curious way, even the reports

from Saskatchewan men overseas nurtured this strangely ludic attitude. Having watched airmen train in the skies above them for six months, Saskatonians in April 1941 heard firsthand of the exploits of Ernest McNab, the squadron leader of the Canadian pilots during the Battle of Britain. McNab was not only one of the foremost Canadian heroes during the early years of the war—he had returned from England where he had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross—but he was also a Saskatoon hero, for he had attended both high school and university in the city. Addressing a boisterous crowd of 600 that had assembled in his honor at the Bessborough Hotel, McNab regaled his audience with stories from the Battle of Britain: “We fought habitually at high altitudes, usually far above the clouds in a world of our own—a world of freezing cold, of limitless space and traced with white-plumed trails,” the airman told eager listeners.⁶⁷ McNab was of course describing “real war,” but his account, which significantly failed to mention Canadian casualties, revealed an almost lyrical sense of the delights of air battle.⁶⁸

The sense conveyed by McNab’s description of war as a glorious adventure was able to be maintained on the Saskatoon home front because there were relatively few Canadian casualties during the early years of the conflict. Before the Italian campaign in 1943, Canada had suffered significant losses in only two battles, against the Japanese at Hong Kong in December 1941 and against the Germans at Dieppe in August 1942. The second battle had the potential to be especially disturbing for citizens of Saskatoon since the number of Canadian deaths was much higher, and also since one of the units involved was the South Saskatchewan Regiment, centered in the province’s capital, Regina. Of the 523 men from this regiment at Dieppe, 84 died, 167 were wounded, and 89 were taken prisoner.⁶⁹ We are aware now that reports of the Dieppe raid by newspapers were heavily censored by military authorities who wished the media to emphasize the heroic nature of the debacle.⁷⁰ Thus, an editorial in the August 22, 1942, *Star-Phoenix*

revealed nothing of the horrors that eventually came to light about Dieppe. Calling the attack “thrilling” and “successful,” the piece lauded the “excellent staff work” that had preceded the undertaking. Not surprisingly, reports of Canadian losses were largely glossed over in the mainly triumphant account: “Canadian hearts are filled with sympathy for the families of those who fell in action or are missing, but there is undoubtedly a mounting pride in the country over a job well done and a satisfaction that apparently all of the details which go to make success were thoroughly attended to in advance.”⁷¹ It is telling that even when the *Star-Phoenix* referred to the August 1942 raid after D-day, it was to emphasize how the “lessons of Dieppe”—a clear euphemism—had been crucial to the success of the landings at Normandy.⁷² As Canadian military historians Jack Granatstein and Desmond Morton have argued, the lessons learned from the raid on Dieppe involved the recognition that fatal ineptitude, and not “excellent staff work,” was responsible for the fiasco. By circulating romantic notions of what occurred at Dieppe, the *Star-Phoenix* ensured that it would be a long time before its readers understood the “ten hours of unadulterated hell” Canadian soldiers there endured.⁷³

Before 1943 it was not Canada’s humiliating defeats at Hong Kong and at Dieppe that provided the dominant image of the Canadian soldier overseas, but rather the reports in the *Star-Phoenix* on the regiment that carried the city’s name: the Saskatoon Light Infantry. A picture sent back to the prairie city showing a group of relaxed and smiling members of the light infantry, complete with the caption “The Saskatoon Spirit in England,” was almost surreal in the way that it glossed over the nightmare these boys would soon face (Fig. 7). Similarly, a letter to the *Star-Phoenix* from a light infantryman bragging excitedly of how the regiment had made “monkeys” of the famed Toronto Scottish in a machine gun competition gave Saskatonians the impression that war was more play than pain. Indeed, the Saskatoon Light Infantry’s training overseas

was in a sense much like the war games that prairie dwellers had witnessed on home soil.⁷⁴ Although there had been six casualties in training accidents before 1943, it was not until the light infantry participated in the invasion of Sicily in July of that year that Saskatonians learned of the regiment’s first death in action, that of Private A. Sabblut on July 15, 1943.⁷⁵

In 1939 soldiers training in Saskatoon were inspired by a song that captured perfectly the city’s mood during the early war years. Set to swing music, civilian Cliff Hubbs’s snappy composition “We’ve got a party in Berlin” was chosen as the official marching song of the Saskatoon Light Infantry and briefly achieved international fame. The lyrics to the refrain were infectious:

We’ve gotta shout hooray and then be on
our way;
We’ve got a party in Berlin.
We wanna shout hooray, we might as well
be gay;
We’ve got a party in Berlin.
We’ll carry all heads high, not a foot will
we drag.
We’re gonna stuff old Adolf right into the
bag.
We’ve gotta shout hooray and everyone
will say[:]
We’ve got a party in Berlin.⁷⁶

The tone of this piece was more than just patriotic, it bordered on jingoistic. Needless to say, the tune’s sanguine lyrics were exposed as hollow in the years that followed. The struggle that culminated in the taking of Berlin was anything but a party, nor could the fateful division of that city during the Cold War be termed a celebration (the Soviet Union, too, was eager to have a “party” in Berlin). Still, Cliff Hubbs’s song is a fitting symbol of Saskatoon’s experience of World War II, at least in the early years. Far from being a grim experience, that conflict at times took on a ludic aspect in the prairie city. The popular imagination, long stifled by the Depression, was granted free rein, leading to a remarkable transformation of Saskatoon’s

The Saskatoon Spirit in England



FIG. 7. Smiling members of the Saskatoon Light Infantry (Source: *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*).

character. Though this emancipation cannot be quantified like the demographic and economic changes to the cities of the American West examined by Gerald D. Nash, the effect was strikingly similar in both cases. The “exhilarating, bubbling, optimistic outlook”⁷⁷ that Nash argues defined the western United States because of the war was also the dominant mood in Saskatoon between 1939 and 1942. In this Canadian prairie city, life acquired a sense of excitement and purpose, qualities conspicuously absent during the Great Depression. By imagining what it was like to be at war, Saskatonians were one in spirit with Canadian soldiers overseas. To be sure, people sometimes overreacted: the idea of an air invasion on the city strikes us now as absurd, as does the tendency of civilians to idealize the military. Still, despite its excesses,

the collective imagination was crucial in nurturing the patriotism of Saskatoon’s citizens. The war in Europe had to be, and was, transplanted to the Canadian prairies, at least until the battle fatigue of later years began to exercise an influence that was not so ebullient.

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NOTES

1. Gerald D. Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), vii. World War II, Nash writes, "transformed an area with a self-image that emphasized colonialism into one boasting self-sufficiency and innovation."

2. As late as 1995 Canadians even lacked a definitive national account of the home front during World War II. "There is as yet no good published study of life in wartime Canada," wrote Desmond Morton and Jack Granatstein, the country's two leading military historians. Desmond Morton and Jack Granatstein, *Victory 1945: Canadians From War to Peace* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1995), 255. Since 1995 the national home front has received greater scrutiny, most recently from University of Ottawa historian Jeffrey Keshen. See Jeffrey Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

3. See Michael Dawe, "Community in Transition: Red Deer in the Second World War," in *For King and Country: Alberta in the Second World War*, ed. Ken Tingley, 119-38 (Edmonton: Reidmore Books, 1995); Aimée Viel, *Lethbridge on the Homefront, 1939-1945* (Lethbridge: Lethbridge Historical Society, 1998); Kathryn Vera Buriyank, "The 'Home Front' in Regina during World War II" (Master's thesis, University of Regina, 2003). Although not of a prairie city, one of the best accounts of an urban center during the war is Serge Marc Durlinger's study of Verdun, Quebec. See Serge Marc Durlinger, *Fighting from Home: The Second World War in Verdun, Quebec* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).

4. "Population by mother tongue and racial origin for cities of 30,000 and over," *Census of Canada 1941*. In addition to its status as an important western Canadian city, Saskatoon merits study because its experience of World War II has largely been ignored by scholars. The city's official history by local historians Don Kerr and Stan Hanson concludes in 1932 with the early stages of the Great Depression. See Don Kerr and Stan Hanson, *Saskatoon: The First Half-Century* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1982). A special tenth-anniversary issue of the *Saskatoon History Review* commemorating the two world wars in the city contains only brief articles on war brides, war memorials, local naval barracks, and the University of Saskatchewan. See *Saskatoon History Review*, no. 10 (1994). In another essay, Kerr and Hanson deal with the persecution of three pacifists at the University of Saskatchewan between 1938 and 1944. See Don Kerr and Stan Hanson, "Pacifism, Dissent, and the University of Saskatchewan, 1938-1944," *Saskatchewan History* 45,

no. 2 (Fall 1993): 3-14. Finally, a recent pictorial history of Saskatoon contains photos from the city over the last century but, understandably, offers little analysis, the period of World War II being encapsulated in five pages. See Jeff O'Brien, Ruth W. Millar, and William P. Delainey, *Saskatoon: A History in Photographs* (Regina: Coteau Books, 2006).

5. This study draws extensively on Saskatoon's daily newspaper, the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*. No other published material rivals its treatment of everyday life in the prairie city. Although the *Star-Phoenix* is not the only source on wartime Saskatoon (whenever possible, other sources were consulted to verify the accuracy of the newspaper's accounts), it is nonetheless unique in providing a continuous sense of life in the city. From Victory Loan drives to military parades, all war-related activity in the prairie center was meticulously recorded by its journalists. In order to provide as faithful a picture of the Saskatoon home front as possible, every issue of the newspaper between 1939 and 1945 has been examined. Of course, it should not be forgotten that the *Star-Phoenix* had its own perspective on the war: owned by the Siftons, a family with historic roots in the federal Liberal party, the newspaper zealously supported the government's war effort. In fact, in 1944 the *Star-Phoenix's* editor, Jeremiah Sylvester Woodward, was selected by the Canadian Wartime Information Board and the British Ministry of Information to conduct a speaking tour of Britain, telling people there of Canada's war effort.

6. "Saskatoon Taken in Mock Battle Wednesday Night," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 25, 1941.

7. "Sidelights on 'Invasion,'" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 25, 1941.

8. "Nazis' Driven from City by Hard-Hitting Defenders After Making Brief Gains," "City Hall Defended," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 20, 1942. In the *Star-Phoenix's* account of the two "invasions" of the city one senses a certain delight in playing at war. This sense of war as festivity, however, did not sit well with at least one Saskatonian. Mrs. Winnifred Guild charged that adults, much like their children, saw in the mock blitzes nothing more than a "great show." A former air raid warden in England who had lost two of her children to Nazi bombs, Mrs. Guild was eminently qualified to make such an accusation. "Blackouts Not Funny," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 22, 1941.

9. The concept of a "British Empire" seems outdated today, but as journalist Tom MacDonnell argues, monarchy and the idea of an imperial connection still exerted a powerful hold on many Canadians in 1939. Tom MacDonnell, *Daylight upon Magic: The Royal Tour of Canada 1939* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1989), 274.

10. "Population by mother tongue and racial origin for cities of 30,000 and over," *Census of Canada 1941*.

11. "Saskatoon Ready," editorial, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 2, 1939.

12. "Citizens and Visitors Alike Acclaim Ruler of Empire and His Lovely Queen, Elizabeth," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 5, 1939.

13. "Hub City Ready to Welcome Their Majesties," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 2, 1939.

14. "Exhibition of Loyalty," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 5, 1939.

15. The Foreign Office cable to the king on May 25, 1939, read: "A German has been shot by a Pole in Danzig. Alliance with Russia about to be concluded. Japanese warning that it will mean Japan definitely siding with Germany and Italy. I am not without hope that this visit may help to let the peoples of Europe see how firmly the democracies are standing together." MacDonnell, *Daylight upon Magic*, 128.

16. *Ibid.*, 90.

17. "Citizens and Visitors Alike Acclaim Ruler of Empire and His Lovely Queen, Elizabeth," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 5, 1939.

18. "Influx from North Settlements Began Friday Afternoon," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 3, 1939.

19. *Ibid.*

20. "Most Recruits of British Descent, McKerron States," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 11, 1939. The September 27, 1939, edition of the *Star-Phoenix* reported that of the 400 men who had enlisted in the Saskatoon Light Infantry, four out of every five were of British origin, a drop from the original 98 percent but still a significant number. "400 Join City Unit," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 27, 1939.

21. "80 Victorian Veterans Receive Fair's Acclaim," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, July 24, 1940.

22. *Ibid.*

23. "Army, Navy Vets in Celebration," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, February 28, 1942. Today, of course, such imperial demonstrations would be unthinkable, given, as historian Philip Buckner has argued, the self-induced amnesia of Canadians and their preference to "gloss over" the military role they played in helping color large parts of the map of the world red. Philip Buckner, ed., introduction to *Canada and the End of Empire* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 3.

24. "Come to Church," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, November 2, 1940, November 23, 1940.

25. "The Drums of Drake Are Calling . . .," advertisement, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 17, 1942. The legend of Drake's Drum is most famously expressed in an 1897 sea-ballad by the English poet Sir Henry Newbolt, an excerpt of which reads: "Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore, / Strike et when your powder's running low; / If the

Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven, / An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago." Henry Newbolt, "Drake's Drum," in *Modern British Poetry: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Louis Untermeyer (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932), 279-80.

26. "Away With Defeatism," letter, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 15, 1940.

27. "False Banners," letter, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, July 4, 1942.

28. "Nobody But a Fool Would Think England Beatable," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, August 2, 1940.

29. "Vaccy' and His Gas Mask," photo, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 13, 1940.

30. "Thousands Greet Children at End of Long Voyage," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, August 24, 1940.

31. "Sidelights on Evacuees," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, August 26, 1940.

32. As historian Geoffrey Bilson remarked in his study of the guest children, Canadian youngsters were sometimes jealous of the attention that the British newcomers commanded. A case in point was a young Saskatoon girl who locked herself in the family bathroom for hours at a time to practice her British accent. Geoffrey Bilson, *The Guest Children: The Story of the British Child Evacuees Sent to Canada during World War II* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1988), 107.

33. "Sees It as Exhibitionism," letter, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, August 31, 1940.

34. "The Iron Duke," editorial, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 15, 1941.

35. "Scarred by Blitz, Tea Wagon to Be Shown Here Friday," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 14, 1941.

36. "The Iron Duke," editorial, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 15, 1941.

37. "Iron Duke Welcomed by 5,000," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 18, 1941.

38. "Will Leave Gift of Blitz Rubble," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 17, 1941.

39. "'Iron Duke' Serves at Mock Blitz," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 18, 1941.

40. "Need Gas Masks?" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 6, 1939.

41. "Fifty Armed Men Could Seize Any Western Centres," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 4, 1940.

42. "Impressive Torch Day Ceremony Witnessed by Vast City Throng," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, May 29, 1941.

43. The choice of a monkey in representing the Nazi in this cartoon was not accidental. As social psychologist Sam Keen argues, the enemy as animal is one of the many archetypes used by wartime societies to dehumanize their foe. As a product of nature "red in tooth and claw," the animal represents unrestrained violence and thus must be tamed by any

means necessary. Sam Keen, *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 134-36.

44. "Buy More and More War Savings Certificates," cartoon, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, November 18, 1941.

45. "Let Us Not Blind Ourselves to Facts! Buy More and More War Savings Certificates," cartoon, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, November 12, 1941. It is significant that the arm holding the scissors in this cartoon is abnormally hairy, another creative touch designed to stress the brute nature of the Nazis.

46. "A.R.P. Squads May Be Organized in This City," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, April 28, 1941.

47. Malcolm Francis Willoughby, *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1957), 95.

48. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, *Roosevelt's Foreign Policy 1933-1941: Franklin D. Roosevelt's Unedited Speeches and Messages* (New York: Wilfred Funk Publishers, 1942), 397.

49. "Train for Air Raids," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, December 16, 1941.

50. "This Week's City News for Men in Services," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, November 21, 1942.

51. *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, special edition, October 19, 1942.

52. "Big Crowd for Parade," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 10, 1939. In a letter to the *Star-Phoenix* one Saskatonian angrily condemned his fellow citizens for their lack of enthusiasm: "Not to my hearing was there one cheer along the route for the brave boys. . . . I noticed a few ladies clapping. These were probably relatives of some of the boys in khaki, but that was all the demonstration I saw or heard. Where were the lusty voices that are all too evident on other less worthy and unimportant occasions? Surely it is not too much to expect that there should have been ringing cheers all along the line of route for these men who have given their all in the Empire's, including Canada's, need." "Where Were the Cheers?," letter, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 28, 1939. The city's tepid initial response to the outbreak of war in 1939 was in stark contrast to its reaction to the same news in 1914. Patriotic demonstrations in Saskatoon, including singing in the streets, lasted a week. Kerr and Hanson, *Saskatoon: The First Half-Century*, 147.

53. In the fall of 1940, Saskatoon's airport became home to a Service Flying Training School for the newly established British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), which aimed to instruct recruits from across the empire in schools operated by the Royal Canadian Air Force. In 1941 Saskatoon received a second BCATP base when No. 7 Initial Training School opened on the present-day site of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). Not to be outdone, the army

used Bedford Road Collegiate as a training center, as well as the exhibition grounds, including the stadium and grandstand. The Royal Canadian Naval Reserve was also entrenched in the city, occupying land across from the City Hall from 1943 on. Not even the Saskatoon Badminton Club, whose premises were leased to the Department of National Defence, escaped the growing militarization of the prairie center. And if all this militia were not enough, only a twenty-five-minute drive to the south separated Saskatoon from the military camp in Dundurn.

54. "Soldiers Display New War Tactics to Large Crowds," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 30, 1941.

55. "Hitler Gets Cold Steel in the Vitals," photo, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 30, 1941.

56. "Soldiers Display New War Tactics to Large Crowds," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 30, 1941.

57. William Shakespeare, *1 Henry VI*, 4.5.7. See G. Blakemore Evans et al., eds., *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 619.

58. The construction of training facilities in Saskatoon, a community freshly liberated from the Depression, promised an influx of men, money, and markets. For this reason, Saskatoon's mayor, Carl Niderost, aggressively promoted the city to federal authorities as an ideal site for the bases. He argued that the prairie, whose climate was generally fog-free and whose every pasture and field was a potential runway, offered ideal conditions for the BCATP. The mayor's persistence eventually paid off and Saskatoon was given two air-training facilities. In an editorial on the construction of the first of these, the *Star-Phoenix* observed, "All this involves an immense amount of work," adding that "It will require the labor of hundreds of men during the spring and summer, workers of all types." "Saskatoon's Air Training School," editorial, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, February 29, 1940. The newspaper's words could have applied equally to the building of No. 7 Initial Training School in 1941. More than 200 worked in double shifts to complete this facility, with the evening resembling a "carnival" as floodlights illuminated the entire area. "200 Work on Site of New School," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 1, 1941. But it was a letter writer to the *Star-Phoenix* who captured most poignantly what the BCATP meant to Saskatoon: "This is encouragement for us boys who have been doing nothing but sucking our thumbs for years back." "Encouraging," letter, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, March 9, 1940.

59. *The Ever-Widening War, 1941*, ed. Martin Gilbert, vol. 3 of *The Churchill War Papers* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 1711.

60. "Niderost Still Under Corps' Fire," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 12, 1940.

61. "Possibly 30,000 People Saw Air School Opening," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 23, 1940.

62. "Thousands Watch Initial Ceremony at Flying School," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, September 23, 1940.

63. Roy S. Young, "Strafing in Saskatchewan," *Folklore* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 17.

64. "Use of Flares at School Here Causes Excitement," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, January 10, 1941.

65. "Machines Collide in Practice Turn Near City Limits," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, March 13, 1941.

66. "Crowd's Actions at Plane Crash Scene Condemned," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, March 14, 1941.

67. "Hundreds Attend Dinner to Hear Wg. Cmdr. McNab," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, April 1, 1941.

68. The total number of Canadian fighter pilots killed during the Battle of Britain was twenty. David L. Bashow, *All the Fine Young Eagles: In the Cockpit with Canada's Second World War Fighter Pilots* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1996), 59-60.

69. Robin Neillands, *The Dieppe Raid: The Story of the Disastrous 1942 Expedition* (London: Aurum Press, 2005), 205.

70. For a study of this censorship see Timothy Balzer, "'In Case the Raid Is Unsuccessful . . .': Selling Dieppe to Canadians," *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (September 2006): 409-30.

71. "Excellent Staff Work," editorial, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, August 22, 1942.

72. "The Lessons of Dieppe," editorial, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, June 10, 1944.

73. J. L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *Canada and the Two World Wars* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2003), 207.

74. This sense of the joy of the war games in England dominates in two diaries of Saskatoon Light Infantry soldiers. See W. F. Cozens, *Saskatoon Light Infantry: '39-'43* ([Canada]: n.p., 1989); Howard Mitchell, "My War" with the Saskatoon Light Infantry (M.G.), 1939-1945 ([Canada]: Rosetown Publishing Company, [1980?]).

75. For a complete list of those killed and wounded in the Saskatoon Light Infantry, see the "Honour Roll" appended to Lt.-Col. D. E. Walker, *A Resume of the Story of 1st Battalion, the Saskatoon Light Infantry (MG), Canadian Army, Overseas* (Saskatoon: General Printing and Bookbinding Ltd., [1950?]).

76. "Light Infantry Acquires a Song to Win the War," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 4, 1939.

77. Nash, *American West Transformed*, 201.