

GRENADIER ARRIVES—ON LAST TRAIN

Hour Wait Seemed Year to Wife

By JAMES C. ANDERSON

Pte. S. E. Varcoe, fourth Grenadier from Winnipeg to return home, arrived in the city Tuesday evening, but I didn't have the heart to interview him.

When he said, "No, please, not now," I could not press and ask about the horrors of Oeynma camp where he had been a prisoner.

That was because his wife, Sgt. Stella Varcoe, C.W.A.C., was standing there in the C.N.R. rotunda with her arm through his—tight.

There was quite a light on the face of this trim, dark-haired little girl—the kind of girl you'd call a "good fellow."

She was happy now. A few minutes before she had been unhappy. She had just finished a trying hour that seemed "more like years."

We were all down at the station at 6.30 p.m.—Stella, relatives, friends, officials, reporters and photographers.

Pte. Varcoe was scheduled to arrive at 6.45 from Vancouver. But he didn't.

Stella took that on the chin thought it set her back on her heels. The look on her face told you that.

Then a friend suggested: "Look, maybe we've got the wrong train. Maybe he came C.P.R. Let's go."

We made the C.P.R. depot in seconds flat. There was a hunt through the crowd, a check with the rail transport officer, a short wait until the 7.05 pulled in.

But there was no Pte. Varcoe.

A friend said: "Maybe he'll make the 7.45 at the C.N."

The party returned to the C.N. depot. Another check was made. No one had heard. Maybe Pte. Varcoe was coming—maybe not.

Everyone looked glum, all but Stella. She was a little angry with herself. She said: "I shouldn't have waited for a discharge. I should have just got leave. I should be at Vancouver now. I wouldn't have missed him then."

She went over to the telegraph desk. She wrote a telegram. She tore it up, wrote a night letter.

It was for Pte. Varcoe's dad, now living in Vancouver, though Pte. Varcoe didn't know it.

She came over beside me, leaned against a pillar. She talked—off-handed small talk. About her husband. How he had lived in New York, had returned immediately to Canada to join the Grenadiers when war was declared. How he left for Hong Kong, and how, a month after it fell, she joined the C.W.A.C.

"I was with the first group of C.W.A.C.'s at Shilo. It was fun. We worked hard. I didn't have too much time to think. It helped."

Mrs. John Norris, president of the Grenadiers' Ladies Auxillary, came over. Her husband is Capt. John A. Norris of the Grenadiers.

There was small talk. Then it was time to go up to the platform again, and wait, and hope, with Sgt. Stella as she watched the coaches pass by until the train stopped.

People stepped down in seemingly endless streams. But there was no Pte. Varcoe. Members of the party

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with Stella spread out, taking stands at both exits so as not to miss Pte. Varcoe if he was aboard.

Then Pte. Varcoe and Sgt. Varcoe were in each other's arms. It brought a little catch to your throat.

Then they were down in the rotunda, and stopped, and posed for a picture. And Sgt. Varcoe was so happy she made no objection to posing at all, though for the last hour she had been evading the photographers and saying she "didn't like her picture in the paper."

Then I was asking him a question as he stood there with his arms still around Sgt. Varcoe.

"Please," he said, not now. Look,

I haven't anything new to say, just the same as what the other fellows are saying. Please."

So he was asked no more questions. I just turned and watched as Pte. Varcoe and his wife, arm in arm, and she just topping the Winnipeg Grenadier flash on his shoulder, walk out of the station. And I felt very happy for them both.
