“That’s why we tell stories – to draw threads from the past into the present.”
--Mike Perry.

“To the technical restraints on news coverage must also be added the economic.”

“Street Photographers are a breed apart from other photographers. They have almost no time to make a decision and they must be prepared to snap the picture as soon as the subject comes into focus and the brain signals ‘NOW’. A fine instinct for the perfect moment is never enough. The eye and the hand and the brain must coordinate perfectly and without hesitation. The rest is good street photography.--From a bio about Vivian Cherry, which applies to Bert Hardy too, who began his street photography before Ms. Cherry, when famed Dorothea Lange came into her own.

Cover Photo Credits:
1st US Marines Land on seawall at Inchon, Korea, 9-15-50 (Photo by Bert Hardy/ Getty Images); Bert Hardy w/ his dogs Lizzie & Kim, Surrey, UK, ca. 11-25-81 (Photo by DvJM/BritNatPrttrGallery, NPGx126230); Mrs. Bert (Sheila) Hardy & BH Darkroom Mgr. Charles Keeble, London, ca. 2007 (Photo by Martin Reed); John H. Whale, DvJM’s London Sunday Times Editor, ca. 1995 (Ctsy Church Times); Blackpool Showgirls on Railings, 1951 (PhotoByBert Hardy4GettyImages); Bert Hardy & James Cameron-R, Picture Post, Skorea, 1950 (Ctsy Getty Images).
Introduction: This book recounts the story behind the realization of photographic ideas by the Cockney Eye, Bert Hardy, who grew up in the rough and tumble world of Neo-Dickensian London's Elephant & Castle District, and who went on to earn many awards and distinctions as lead-photographer for 'Picture Post' Magazine, the British equivalent to 'Life' Magazine from 1938-1957. He also, by dint of imagination, talent, brains, and hard work, made a decent living for himself and his family.

Bert Hardy covered eight or nine wars, including WWII and Korea, superbly and with great courage. His working partner in Korea, James Cameron, praised Hardy for keeping his head in there, like great photographers do, because a writer can disappear from a scene when the danger heats up, and write something later; the photographer has to generally be there live, to record the event with his/her camera.

From 'Fire-Fighters!' (which earned Bert the first photographer-credit in 'Picture Post' history) and 'The East End at War,' to the Royal Wedding of 1947, to the slums of the Gorbals, Liverpool, Cardiff, and Elephant & Castle, to Marlene Dietrich wowing journalists at the Savoy, to ground-breaking coverages in Pusan and Inchon during the Korean War, and on to the re-election campaign of President Eisenhower, Bert Hardy was there, doing great things with people and his cameras.

Earning several Encyclopaedia Britannica/Missouri Picture-Sequence Awards, and seeing three of his photos included in Edward Steichen's famous 'Family of Man' Exhibition (1955) at New York's MoMA, Bert's work is well-known in Britain and beyond. Even after his death in 1995, exhibitions and publications of his work still continued, as his Birth Centennial approached (May 19, 1913-May 19, 2013). His two sons, Michael and Terry, have gone on to very respectable careers of their own, including in photography.

Your interview/photographed Bert Hardy at his Surrey farm in Nov. 1981, and my best photo-portrait of Bert and dogs is in the Photos Collection of UK Nat. Portrait Gallery (NPGx126230). It helped I was with the Missouri-London Reporting Program as a Sunday Times intern under Editor John H. Whale; Hardy and Camer- was working in the Missouri/Encyclopaedia Britannica Pictures of the Year Award in the Korean War Category in early 1951 for their 7 Oct. 1950 Picture Post photo-essay 'Inchon.' I also reported on 50 IRA relatives in tense London meeting with Cdr. Basil Hume (plus interviewed Maurice McLullen, brother of Jackie, ex-mate of deceased hunger-striker Bobby Sands in Northern Ireland's Maze Prison; the IRA had assassinated Royal relative Lord Mountbatten in 1979 in County Sligo, Ireland; Mr. Hardy was Mountbatten's personal photographer end of WWII); artists; a nursery I photographed daily a month; a (spina bifida) paralympic champion; minorities and immigrants; medicine, etc.

Thank you all for reading and, whenever possible, safely storing copies of this, my biography of Bert Hardy, 'The Cockney Eye,' 3rd Edition.


Chapter 1:

Stefan Lorant, who was generally a very shrewd judge of photographic talent, and who was the first truly great editor/idea-man for pictorial magazines at the outset of their golden age, once told this author that Bert Hardy - lead-photographer for Britain's 'Picture Post' Magazine (1938-1957) - was not one of the greatest cameramen working in those days. Instead, Lorant said Mr. Hardy - who died in 1995 at age 82 - was in the 'second rank' of photographers from that period.(1) Now, I doubt Mr. Lorant was being totally fair to Mr. Hardy, and the same can be said of the former head of the Photojournalism Sequence at the Missouri School of Journalism, Angus McDougall, who told me in late 1981, that Bert Hardy was not an A-class photographer. When I wrote the first draft of this book, in 1997, few experts outside of Britain were singing the praises of Mr. Hardy. In more recent years, though, many experts have been doing that, and have even given his populist approach to picture-taking credit for being the cornerstone of 'The Picture Post Aesthetic'.

Stefan Lorant was the founding genius of 'Picture Post,' and when he first discussed his credentials and ideas with soon-to-be-boss/magazine-owner Edward Hulton (later knighted), there must have been a gleam in the eyes of both those great capitalists (albeit Lorant also liked some socialism, too), Lorant had worked on leading picture magazines in Hungary, Germany, and then in Britain (where he began 'Lilliput' and the 'Weekly Illustrated'), before founding 'Picture Post'. And the pioneering editor did as much for the conceptualization and layout of that publication as any man or woman ever did. For his part, Hulton must have seen a great opportunity in front of him, for he pounced on his chance and didn't let go of it - until 1957, that is, when he gave up the battle with television, tabloids, etc., for popular support.

However, it was Bert Hardy's inimitable personality and pictures that helped bring 'Picture Post' out of the pre-World War II years, through the war itself, and then well into the post-war era. Lorant, an 'irreverent' Hungarian with some Jewish ancestry had been a prisoner of Hitler's for six months in 1933, and had, soon after, written the million-selling book 'I Was Hitler's Prisoner'. He decided to flee to America in 1940, where he made his home until his death in 1997. Although Bert Hardy's work had been published in 'Picture Post' from its fourth issue until its final issue, Lorant and Hardy apparently didn't know each other well while Lorant edited the magazine, if at all. Hardy's work first came into the magazine via a picture agency he was working for then, and he wasn't credited for his work in that magazine, until the February 1, 1941 issue, in which he received the first photographer-credit in that magazine's history. And yet, Lorant - who actually executed the layout of virtually every issue for the 20+ months he was 'Picture Post' editor - must have worked with Hardy's pictures sufficiently to have asked, once or twice, who took the pictures? Lorant had been training his successor as editor, in Tom Hopkinson (later knighted), who took over the editorship as soon as Lorant left for his new home in Massachusetts.(2)

Hopkinson was thrilled to have Bert Hardy sign on as full-time freelancer for the magazine, soon after Lorant left. The new editor wrote in his autobiography, 'Of This Our Time': In addition [besides Honor Ballard, Macdonald Hastings, Maurice Edelman, AL Lloyd, and Anne Scott-James, the writers the new editor added to his staff when he took over], to my great excitement, we found a remarkable new photographer. Bert Hardy was a young Cockney, the eldest of seven children, who had left school at fourteen. He left a Friday afternoon and started work on Saturday morning in a printing and developing works at ten shillings a week with sixpence an hour overtime.... When Bert Hardy came in to see me he was in his twenties and already an experienced cameraman.(3)

Bert Hardy's first commission from 'Picture Post' was to photograph an air-raid shelter in 1940. Hardy was pressed for light, and ended up developing his film nearly four hours, after which the images that appeared 'were Rembrandts,' showing mothers with their anxious children. Next, sent out to cover fires-fighters during the Nazi Blitz over London in January 1941, he risked his life several times one night and got his first great picture-story - which included the first photographer-credit in that magazine's history. That picture-story begins with a photo of roof fire-fighters, pointing into the distance. After a build-up in which the declaration 'The Fight Is On' figures prominently, the final two-page spread evolves especially great admiration and empathy. Two full-page photos stand side-by-side as dramatic images of fires-fighters in perilous situations. The caption to the picture at left reads: 'THE HEIGHT OF THE BLAZE: Eighty Feet up in the Air a Fireman Strikes at the Heart of the Fire - Stark and grim is the climax of the fire fight. Blazing walls are crumbling. The fire is bursting through. Overhead, guided by the flames, the German bombers are circling. One after another they release their load of death. Unmoved, unflinching, the firemen run out their ladder. One man mounts, higher and higher, till he is alone above the flames. There, eighty feet up, he strikes at the very source of the fire.'(4)

Just as the overall image photographed from down below is gripping, too is the close-up on the right-hand page, a lone fire-fighter, up-high. In that still, a figure looms, looking the mad clown. His hand dangles over the edge of a burning building, while in the background, en-flamed rafters appear to slant like falling skyscrapers.
Is he alive or dead? No one seems to know. But the caption beneath that photo summarizes and highlights the mission of all the fire-fighters (and the photographer too) seen in this essay: “THE MAN ON THE LADDER In Clouds of Smoke and Steam He Faces the Fire Alone – All night long they have fought the fire. They have fought it in the streets streaming with water. They have fought it within buildings blazing like a furnace. On to the flames they have poured a hundred thousand gallons of water, concentrated at colossal pressure. And still the fight goes on. From our rule of anonymity we except these pictures. They were taken by A.[Albert] Hardy, one of our own cameramen.(5)

To Stefan Lorant's credit, just before Tom Hopkinson's tenure had begun, the founding editor had been adamant about not using photographer-names in the magazine, mainly because two of the cameramen he had brought with him to work in Britain from the Continent – Felix Man(n) and Kurt Hulton (formerly, Hans Bauman and Kurt Hubschmann) – were German nationals, and they needed protection for themselves and for the relatives they left behind, protection engineered by their sympathetic friend and boss, Stefan Lorant. Despite Hopkinson's also being aware of their needs during his own tenure, he decided to occasionally give name credits with stories and photos during the war, especially while Man and Hulton were interned on the Isle of Man as 'protected aliens'. After the war, there was much more freedom to use contributor-names with the works in 'Picture Post', and Man and Hulton eventually enjoyed a bit of their own celebrity status in its pages, too.(6)

Bert Hardy went on to cover many other stories of World War II, as well as any Allied photographer ever did. He was there for the crossing at Normandy; the liberation of Paris; the crossing of the Rhine; a notable fire-escape in Osnabruck, Germany; the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, also in Germany; war-crimes trials in the Far East; and the end of the World War II. He served as a sergeant in the British Army's Film Unit during those years (1942–46); and he performed so well that 'Picture Post' continued to use his work whenever the Army made it available to that magazine. After Hardy's return to Britain in 1946, Hopkinson offered him full-time employment once again for the magazine, and the ambitious, 33-year-old photographer returned to work there. Soon he was off to India to cover the formation of the first constituent assembly, after that nation declared its independence from Britain. That coverage went well, and Hardy continued to travel for 'Picture Post'. He went to Egypt and other parts of Africa, to cover coup and civil wars. And he went to Yugoslavia to take the first postwar pictures of Marshal Tito by a Westerner, once the latter had officially assumed power. Also, he was in Spain and France for coverages as often as any other foreign country.

Back in Britain too, Hardy worked extensively. Touching base whenever he could, the photographer made sure his family was being properly tended to by his first wife, Dora. He took many superb pictures while he was in Britain. He photographed a memorable shop-girl in Birmingham; the slum-dwellers of Glasgow (which yielded his favorite photo – of two youngurchins on a park bench); and the end of the War in Europe. He covered the formation of the first constituent assembly, after that nation declared its independence from Britain. That coverage went well, and Hardy continued to travel for 'Picture Post'. He went to Egypt and other parts of Africa, to cover coup and civil wars. And he went to Yugoslavia to take the first postwar pictures of Marshal Tito by a Westerner, once the latter had officially assumed power. Also, he was in Spain and France for coverages as often as any other foreign country.

However, as much as Bert Hardy's reputation rests with everyday folk, the 'Cockney Cassius Clay' as he was called once, also garnered a reputation in Britain for his pictures of celebrities. His favorite distance for taking pictures was six feet, and he captured many great personages on 35 film from that distance. These included; Queen Elizabeth II; Prince Philip; Sir Winston Churchill; Marlene Dietrich; Frank Sinatra; Ava Gardner; Ingrid Bergman; Audrey Hepburn; Johnny Ray; Jimmy Durante; Sugar Ray Robinson; George Formby; JB Priestley; Danny Kaye; Diana Dors; the aforementioned Tito; Generals Eisenower, Montgomery, Zhukov; and Pandit Nehru, just to name a few of the personalities he had covered. And the religious were not slighted either, as he photographed top Catholic and Anglican hierarch; plus Jewish, Buddhist, and Muslim clergy.(9)

The work of Bert Hardy is one thing, monumental in all the facets of life it touched and revealed; the man was another – warm, friendly, even affable, but always cognizant of where his next pictures had to come from, where his bread (spiritually, physically, and economically) was to be buttered, so to speak. To show the depth of the man, three other events need mentioning here. The first occurred in Osnabruck, Germany, when Sgt. Hardy and his jeep driver came upon a smoke-filled basement. The sergeant sent his driver back for more help, while he himself put down his camera and risked his life to save more than a dozen Russian slave women. (German police had set the fire, and left the women there to burn alive.) Hardy pulled several women out; and when his driver returned with more help, Bert began taking pictures. He recorded the scenes for posterity. Bert Hardy was a genuine hero, even if he didn't plan on being one then.(10)

Another place Bert Hardy showed his courage was in 1950 Korea. James Cameron, the distinguished British writer, and he were sent to cover US President Truman's 'police action', after another 'Picture Post' journalist (Stefan Schimschnig) was killed in an explosion, flying between Korea and Japan. In Pusan in early September of that year, Hardy and Cameron reported on 700 (by Cameron's count) South Korean political prisoners being herded onto trucks by UN troops, probably to be taken out and killed. Cameron's text being pirated away by the 'Daily Worker' and published on November 1, 1950, along with the report of Hopkinson's demise.(11) But before the presses were stopped in late October, Hardy and Cameron's coverage of the Battle of Inchon ran in 'Picture Post'. Hopkinson had called Hardy's pictures the best he'd ever worked with and laid them out himself. This coverage has been written about extensively, even to a degree in American books and articles. And Hardy's picture-sequence won him the Encyclopaedia Britannica/Missouri Photo Award in Spring 1951.(12) The reason for all the attention their Korean War coverages have drawn, including from America, is due to the tremendous physical courage and journalistic instincts Hardy and Cameron displayed with both picture-stories. Noted war photographer David Douglas Duncan even wrote to this book's author (me, DvJ) in July 1990 that 'Bert Hardy and others at "Picture Post" earned everybody's respect, and not just for (their) Inchon shots.'(13)

Hardy held onto his job with 'Picture Post' despite the atrocities report, but Cameron soon resigned, after he got fed up with Hulton's views. Also, during the Battle of Inchon, the most pivotal battle of the Korean War, both men acquitted themselves well – with the press boat preceding the US 1st Marine Division, which has properly been credited in military history for its courageous attack on that port just west of Seoul.(14) Cameron, who was brave enough, too, at Inchon, later wrote that he generally had the luxury of being able to contemplate his story and type it up at his leisure, while his partner had to get his pictures then and there. In fact, Bert Hardy was the only Allied photographer to retrieve dramatic pictures from that landing on September 15, because he used his trusty '35-er', not the large-format cameras the rest of the press had with them. Also, while the bombs burst frenetically overhead, Hardy went over the famed sea-wall first, before the rest of the press corps and before the Marines, because he had to get pictures with what little light was left by fast-approaching night.(15)

This author owns two Bert Hardy Korean War prints I am particularly glad to hold, at present, for my son and heirs (among approximately 35 Hardy prints I've collected) – one from the atrocities portfolio and the other from the US Marine landing at Inchon. They have both been published previously by me and by many others, and will be published again. I wish I also owned an image or two from Bert Hardy's Osnabruck rescue coverage, but I have seen some of those images in his autobiography, and they are real enough to me.

Bert Hardy took as many notable images as any other photojournalist based in an Allied nation during the middle portion of the 20th century. I used to think Mr. Hardy deserved more credit beyond Britain, but today, in 2011, his work is being included on many websites and in many books and journalistic outlets, too. Regardless of a failed first marriage (though it gave him two good sons, Michael and Terry), and a career that contained thousands of nights sleeping away from home, he also
demonstrated the quality of mercy in his pictures.

One writer has cited an interview with Mr. Hardy in which that photographer used the term 'guinea-pigs' to describe his subjects. Look at the best Hardy photos, though, and you'll see that Bert Hardy saw something different than guinea-pigs through his lens generally. Yes, he did some early 'silly' stories like 'A Fish Goes to Hospital', but he also honed his craft with tougher picture-stories. Generally, he saw the complexity of Human Life. Everywhere he looked for that and sought to evoke responses from his subjects that still stand the test of time, because they just seem more authentic than most photographers' do. Perhaps that's why he convinced Edward Steichen to include three of his photos in the "Family of Man" exhibit that went round the world in the 1950s. Bert Hardy only had ten minutes with the great Steichen at a London airport, but in those ten minutes, Steichen must have perceived many of the qualities that impressed this author in 1981, when I visited the Hardys at their home in the Surrey countryside. Bert Hardy was, like Steichen, a man with his eye on the world, a man in Bert's case with a fair amount of Cockney wit, intelligence, and charm. (16)

Bert Hardy's life and work should be studied more thoroughly everywhere for two reasons above all else. First, he displayed more courage than most other war photographers, with the exception of photographers like Robert Capa, killed in wars by landmines, snipers' bullets, bombs, bayonets, and other weapons of destruction and terror. Hardy put his head "in there" so many times when it could have been shot, lopped, bombed, or beaten off, and yet he triumphed. He came out smelling like a rose, or at least a close facsimile. (Take a look at his famous photo of Pandit Nehru smelling a rose, and you'll see Bert's keen abilities at seeing and living fully.) Second, Bert Hardy expressed the quality of mercy as few photographers in war or peace have done. His pictures of everyday people are masterful, and his empathy with them is crucial, which is why he did well with celebrities too. In this biography, we take a closer look at the aesthetic displayed in Bert Hardy's photos -- what made them stand out in Britain, and, hopefully, why they can help others, too, learn more about themselves and others, worldwide.

Stuart Hall has written tellingly about the 'Picture Post Aesthetic.' He states Stefan Lorant's vision there was new, because he took British people seriously enough. Hall points out: 'Lorang, like many a foreigner, seemed to find it easier than native journalists to break through [the] crust of ignorance and prejudice. He was convinced that the British public could and would read a serious, popular presentation of news...'(17) Bert Hardy felt similarly, fairly early on, and a personal aesthetic was born, i.e., a populist one. As a result, his career would turn out to be reminiscent of the Neo-Dickensian world he'd been raised in -- a world as fraught with photo-journalistic, as with social documentary, details, dangers, tragi-comedies, and positively useful meanings.


2-'Bert Hardy: My Life,' by Bert Hardy (with Brian Dowling). London: Gordon Fraser, 1985, pp.32-33.

3-'Of This Our Time,' pp. 174-175.

4-'Fire-Fighters!' 'Picture Post,' February 1, 1941, p. 14.

5-Ibid., p. 15.

6-From this author's ca. 1995 phone-talk with Stefan Lorant; 'Man With Camera: Photographs from Seven Decades,' by Felix Man(n). London: Secker & Warburg, 1983.


10-'Bert Hardy: My Life,' pp. 71-73.

11-'Of This Our Time'; 'Bert Hardy: My Life'; 'Point of Departure: Experiment in Biography,' by James Cameron. London: Barker, 1967; 'Picture Post Editor Is Sacked,' by Malcolm MacEwen. 'Daily Worker,' November 1, 1950, pp. 1 & 3.

12-'Bert Hardy: My Life'; Angus McDougall gave this author official historic data plus personal commentary about Bert Hardy's Missouri Award and about his overall 'ranking' in photojournalism, ca. December 1981.

13-From a letter to this author of July 3, 1990, from David Douglas Duncan.


15-'Bert Hardy: My Life'; 'Point of Departure'; 'Of This Our Time.'

16-'Photography,' p. 187.


Chapter 2:

Bert Hardy came into this world on May 19, 1913 -- born in the Priory Buildings, near Blackfriars, in a district Shakespeare mentioned in "Twelfth Night" (Act III, sc. iii), when Antonio says to Sebastian: "In the south suburbs of the Elephant is best to lodge." That area was then part of rural Surrey. His father was a medical apparatus-maker (Albert 'Seagull' Hardy) and Albert's wife (Blanche) was Bert's mother, who was employed as a charwoman. From an early age, Bert -- the eldest of seven children -- had a good eye. At the start of 'Bert Hardy: My Life,' he recalled an event planted very early in his instinctual mind. He wrote: 'My earliest memory... is of lying in my cot, high up in the Buildings. I must have been two or three at the time... and my mum and dad had gone out to the pub for the evening. I was lying with my head back, looking up out of the window behind me at the moon with clouds racing past it. I could see a face in the moon, and I was lying in my cot making faces at it, when all of a sudden it pulled a face back at me. I was terrified. I threw the covers over my head and waited in fear for my parents to come home. I never pulled faces at the moon again.' (1)

That event is key, for it was a harbinger of things to come for the photographer. For one thing, that early fear of the moon (or people) 'making faces' at him caused him to seek shelter behind the camera -- where he could capture those faces on film without great fear of being 'discovered.' That first moon must have seemed godlike to Bert Hardy, for he eventually recorded the faces of people as if they were themselves miniature gods, not guinea-pigs, with their ever-adaptable faces of interest. To be sure, Bert Hardy put himself in the line of fire throughout his life with the camera, but he became 'less afraid' of what his subjects might do to him as time passed -- despite a healthy understanding still of what those moon-like veneers might do, if they ever decided to turn on him -- and more awareness of what they could do FOR him, in pictures. The examples of what he would do in 'Fire-Fighters!': Osnabruck, Pusan, and Inchon represent the best of his heroic efforts in this regard, working under the twin-yoke of this remembered-fear-mixed-with-curiosity -- a twin-yoke that drove Mr. Hardy's eye, all the days of his life.

A Japanese poet once wrote, 'When you look into the mirror, it is not you that sees your reflection; your reflection sees you.' (2) This aesthetic also drove Mr. Hardy's
eye. That is, when he looked into those moon-like human faces, he felt, too, the power of his own reflected sight in people's countenances. He had the power to evoke 'faces' and the power to reflect his own expressions and visions through them. In other words, Mr. Hardy could get the 'moon in each person' to 'make a face back at him' that his own 'inner face' could empathize with -- thereby came his great power of character-revelation, as well as the power of his mirror-like lens; the camera lens was an extension, for him, of that first memory on his cot.

It's no secret Mr. Hardy demonstrated not only great physical courage throughout his life, but also, when needed, the 'ability to marshal people into position for his photographs.'(3) The two capacities could go hand-in-hand. Perhaps the latter capacity to give directions, even sometimes off-handedly, also stemmed from his childhood, when he had to do so many things for his younger siblings. Eventually, he even had to leave school, to help his parents ensure the family's livelihood, and did so without hesitation. He went from school on a Friday afternoon at age 14, as Tom Hopkinson related earlier, to work the next day, as a full-time assistant in a chemist's shop, which developed and printed pictures. How was that initial fear of the moon making faces at him, though, channeled into his capacity to give direction? The answer derives from the way his family depended on him, and we need to know a bit more about young Bert's growing sense of the interdependence of the world, to see this more clearly.

From an early age, Bert Hardy's family and community roles were made clear to him. As he wrote in 'My Life': 'Because the family was so hard up most of the time, I started doing little jobs for money very early on. On Saturday mornings I helped my Uncle Fred on his greengrocer's horse-and-cart. We set out at about seven o'clock in the morning, and it took us about an hour to get to the Herne Hill and Crystal Palace area where he worked each day. I used to go to the door of each house and take the order, then run back to the cart where my uncle would weigh it out. Then I carried the order to the door, and collected the money... I was allowed to keep a penny or two out of the sixpence I earned [each day], and I used the money to buy sweets. I loved sweets, but I had to learn to ration myself to make them last, so I hid them in a drawer in our flat at Priory Buildings and took them out one at a time. My mother found out where I kept them, and pinched them to give to my sister; or perhaps my sister took them herself; in any case they slowly disappeared. It was a terrible job to keep anything for yourself, because we were all so much on top of each other.'(4)

Bert loved sweets and had to protect them from family theft. By hiding them, his wits became sharp. After a while of added theft, perhaps he even decided to buy them only when he most needed them. Sharp wits got even sharper. Bert watched his money as a result, too. He may have not gotten much of his earnings, because his family needed most of them, but eventually he came to survive as the third breadwinner, even if he and his family were 'on top of each other'.

When Bert was 11 or 12, he took his first photo, though he never saw the results from that venture. He didn't have to marshal people into position yet, but he did have to deal with his fear. One of his teachers took Bert and his classical on an educational field trip to Trafalgar Square. He described the scene in 'My Life': 'We were wandering round looking at Nelson's Column and the famous lions, when the teacher was suddenly seized by the desire to go somewhere. Obviously he must have thought I was the most trustworthy boy, because he gave me his Box Brownie to hold while he went off; although he perhaps had his doubts, because he took the precaution of jamming a piece of cardboard underneath the lever so that I couldn't accidentally release the shutter. As soon as the teacher was out of sight, one of my mates dared me to take a picture of him in front of the fountains. That was enough for me: I pulled the cardboard out, got my mate in the viewfinder, and clicked the shutter. When the teacher came back, I handed him back his camera apologetically: "Sorry Sir," I said, "but the bit of cardboard fell out and the shutter accidentally clicked." '(5) All Bert needed was a dare. He did what came naturally, and took the photo. It was not the last dare he took up on a Box Brownie.

Another time, Bert's role as 'director' came more squarely into play when one of his closest friends was injured. Bert narrated in 'My Life': '... I remember at one time my friend Bobby Messenger and I also used to go scrounging across Blackfriars Bridge as soon as we came out of school. We'd hang around the Riverside, seeing what wood we could find, or breaking in and out of warehouses, or persuading blokes to give us old crates.'(6) Our usual means of transport was jumping on the backs of carts. You had to grab hold of the tailboard of any cart or lorry which was going slowly enough, and the next minute your feet would be flying through the air. The art for the more advanced was then to keep hold of the tailboard, and get your feet on the ground running fast enough to vault up and over it into the back of the lorry. Once when Bobby and I were doing this, I managed all right, but Bobby's hands gave way and he fell with sickness force on his chin on the road. I had to leap quickly out of the lorry and help him from the road. There was blood everywhere, and Bobby had a great big gash under his chin which must have taken some explaining to his parents. I took him to St Thomas's Hospital where he was given a record number of stitches.'(6) The incident shows that Bert was loyal to his friend, and had a good head on his shoulders. He said he did not have a particularly highly developed moral sense at the time, and that everything was 'a question of survival'; but he did know enough to take care of important details.

Bert had his 'closest ever brush with the law' with the same Bobby Messenger as a young teen. It seems they'd heard from a friend who was a night watchman that the road was being dug up in Piccadilly. In those days, road surfaces were made of wooden blocks soaked in tar which were laid down and fitted close together. When roads were dug up, some old tarred blocks were usually thrown out, and they were good for putting on the fire at home. Now, young Bert and Bobby took a cart they had built and went to pick up the old blocks their watchman friend usually put out for them. They picked up some blocks they thought he'd left for them, and then, to get back to Blackfriars, they went to cross the Hungerford Railway and pedestrian bridge. A policeman there regularly gave them a hand as they came up the steps to the bridge, but that night there was a different policeman on duty. He questioned the boys when they approached him for help, and they told about their night watchman friend. The policeman took them back to find their friend, and, afraid he wouldn't be in his usual spot, the boys panicked and ran for it. The officer caught up with them and took them to Bow Street Police Station. The youngsters emptied their pockets and then were put in jail. Their fathers soon arrived and the night watchman was found. As it turned out, the blocks left out were newer ones not meant for them, and the boys were charged with theft.

Shortly thereafter, Bert and Bobby were in magistrates' court in Soho. Bert concluded that story in this way: 'There was me and my father and Bobby Messenger and his father. My father was shaking like a leaf. Bobby's dad, who had been gassed in the First World War and had a tendency to pass out under strain, keeled over and crashed without hesitation. He went from school on a Friday afternoon at age 14, as Tom Hopkinson related earlier, to work the next day, as a full-time assistant in a chemist's shop, which developed and printed pictures. How was that initial fear of the moon making faces at him, though, channeled into his capacity to give direction? The answer derives from the way his family depended on him, and we need to know a bit more about young Bert's growing sense of the interdependence of the world, to see this more clearly.

Bert's ability to marshal people into position for pictures, which is perhaps pressed in his ability to obtain the right references for his court appearance, or perhaps he learned about proper references from his father and teachers then and began intuiting how to combine and compose people for pictures as a result, would eventually come more into play because he had an instinctual capacity to deal with people -- all sorts of people -- early on. While still in school, young Bert once held a job at Hammond's grocery shop. His schedule was hectic, and one can imagine how well he had to deal with people there, reading his account in 'My Life'. After he helped open the shop from 7:30 until 9 a.m., he went to school 'like any other child, until lunchtime.' His story continues: 'Then I went back to Hammond's to help out with the lunchtime rush. Lots of people who worked in the shop came into the shop to buy ham, bread and biscuits for their lunch... If I had time, I went across the road for ten minutes and had my own lunch. Then it was back to school until 4.30, when I went home, had my dinner, and then went back to Hammond's from 5.30 until towards midnight.' The shop only closed when they had to finish up and there were always more customers -- people coming home late from work and so on. Usually we closed at about ten o'clock. Then we had a variety of other jobs to do; cleaning up; weighing sugar and putting it in bags; and unpacking eggs.'(8)

Bert Hardy always seemed to know his way around people. Hammond's was busy and Bert was busy. People of all sorts came by, his wits grew sharper, and Bert got to know these people, their various wants and needs. If he knew nothing else later, when he was on his side of the camera, it was that people are worth knowing better and their work, play, expressions and gestures can help tell their story. In other words, he came to realize in places like Hammond's that -- people were where his bread was to be buttered. When Bert Hardy was still fairly young, he also discovered something else -- he discovered he liked to build things. In 'My Life', he wrote: 'I was always quite
good at making things. When we lived in the other part of Priory Buildings, we were over Jack's barber shop. My brothers and I used to go and have our hair cut there. Even though it was so close, we still had to sit around waiting for ages, listening to people talking about racing.

‘Then Jack got himself a radio. It was the very early days of radio, and he had one that really boomed out. When the shop shut at night, he and his family used to listen to dance music, and I used to lie on my bed upstairs enjoying the music too as it came through the floor.’ ‘My dad hated it: he used to come stumbling home late at night [after the pubs closed] and curse those bastards downstairs with their bloody noise. But I really liked it.’ ‘At last I decided that we ought to have a radio. I had already built a cat’s whisker set, but now I got a kit. There were valves and bits and pieces and a little chart to help you put it together. I made it up and bought a wooden cabinet to put it in, and to my joy, when I connected it to the batteries, it worked.’(9)

As a photographer, Bert Hardy had to improvise often with his equipment, and he was never at a loss as to how to get it to work properly. His early self-training with radios and other devices helped him later in controlling the technical side of his chosen medium. The ‘New York Times’ called him a ‘master technician, especially in his use of available light’. (10) Bert Hardy often spoke fondly of his parents and siblings. He didn’t fault any of them severely for how they treated him when he was young. He called his mother ‘mum’ throughout his life, and his father was thought of with equal affection. ‘My Life’ contains two or three photos of each Hardy parent, some taken by young Bert.

There are Hardy photos existing of Bert’s siblings, too: Alice (Lally), Sid, Lily, Charlie, Harry (Ginger), and Dolly. An especially nice photo-portrait taken by Bert, of Dolly reading by a window, was published in ‘My Life.’ (11) Also, there are several photos of Sid there. They were avid cyclists, and Bert and Sid joined the rugged cycling club Norwood Paragon in their teens. This was during Bert’s years of employment with the Central Photographic Service, where he went to work at age 14. (12) Bert had decided, with his family, to quit school and find proper work at that age, so he could better help them meet expenses. He’d gone home one day feeling sorry for himself after not being hired by Elephant Motors (because he couldn’t multiply 13X13), when his Aunt Maud, a charwoman, let him know about a job she’d seen advertised on Craven Street (an ironic name, given Bert’s demonstrations of real courage in future). The next morning, he went along to that place (Central) and got the job. He still worked a bit for Hammond’s grocery, but his main income came from Central. His task there was to pick up from, and deliver films to, chemist shops. In between rounds, a female lab technician taught him how to develop and print, ‘and also some other interesting activities you can get up to in the darkroom.’ As he put it, ‘I was a quick learner.’ (13)

There was humor and romance in Bert’s life, then, and that’s one reason he was able to endure so much as a youth. Once he related a dicey story about a surgeon’s naughty pictures. The surgeon always took a technically perfect set of female nudes, complete with a closer of himself, also nude. Apparently, the man never thought someone might blackmail him with these. Instead, Central’s staff charged the surgeon double and printed copies for themselves. Bert usually carried a batch of the nude stills in an old envelope, which he showed friends (one being a chemist who shared stories with Bert of his own amorous exploits, even as the youngster pinched bottles of perfume from him at they talked). But once, young Hardy couldn’t find the stills. The story continues in ‘My Life’; ‘My first thought was that they must have fallen out of my pocket at home, in which case my mum would have found them, and I would be in terrible trouble. I leapt on my bike (I was using a cycle to go round by that stage) and raced straight home to Priory Buildings. My mum looked at me oddly when I got home. Breathlessly, I said: ‘Mum! I’m going to be in terrible trouble – I had a packet of pictures to deliver to the Law Courts in the Strand this morning. There’s some sort of case on there. I don’t know what was in the pictures, but I’ve lost them, and now I’m [in] for it.’

‘She looked slightly relieved: ‘Are you sure you didn’t know what was in them?’ she asked. “No”, I said. “No idea.” “Promise you won’t look at them.” “I promise.” ‘And she took them out from inside her blouse where she had hidden them for safe keeping, and gave them back to me, as she thought, to deliver.’(14) Fear can result in humorous responses as well as courageous ones. Often-enough, the two types of responses were combined in the life of Bert Hardy—an often witty, Neo-Dickensian, risk-taking realist of the first order.

Chapter 3:

Bert Hardy began at Central Photographic Service earning ten shillings (half a pound) a week. Almost immediately, he decided to process a few shops’ work himself, on the side. He printed that work at home, and made a little extra money. Because he’d heard Fleet Street photographers could earn five pounds a week, he soon thought to take a few of his own pictures, as well. He told that story in ‘My Life: ‘Each evening when I was walking home from CPS, I passed a pawn shop on the corner of the Cut, opposite the Old Vic Theatre. There were always a lot of old plate cameras on display in the window, and my first camera was one of these. I bought it for ten shillings. ‘I hadn’t a clue how to take pictures, not a clue. I didn’t know what a stop was; I worked out speeds and apertures by common sense; focusing was straightforward – you simply had to adjust the lens and look at the image on a sheet of ground glass at the back of the camera. I bought a lot of out-of-date plates from a shop in Holborn where you could get a dozen for 6d, and began working by trial and error.’ (1)

Young Bert took pictures around home first. The family was living in two rooms in the Priory Buildings and things were cramped. He took a good picture of one of his sisters and his brother Harry, being bathed by their mother in a small tub. He said he was embarrassed in those days to learn his mother was pregnant (with Dolly, the youngest), embarrassed because he himself was ‘knocking around with girls at the time.’ (2) Hardy’s first commercially successful picture was one of King George V and
Queen Mary riding along Blackfriars Road in an open carriage. The photographer wrote: 'It was a beautiful day and the streets were lined with people. I stood beside a sand-bin, using my sister Lally's head as a tripod, and focused on the tram-lines in the middle of the road to get the right distance. Just as the royal carriage was passing, the King caught sight of the camera, and turned in my direction. When I had developed and printed it, I sold about two hundred postcard-sized copies of the photograph to friends and neighbours.'(3) Bert soon began working pub outings on the side, known as 'beans'. He'd take a group portrait of everyone before they started off by coach (bus) each Sunday for a day of picnicking and pub-crawling, and then sell postcard-sized prints to those who had been there, later in the week.

At this time, young Hardy's family was still poor enough so every little bit he could earn, or save, helped. Bert used to go to the cinema on Sundays. He got his suit from the pawn shop every Saturday for this, and then on Monday mornings, his mother regularly returned it there. He didn't mention the films he and his friends saw then, in his autobiography, but he did recall feelingcorduroy with girls at the movies, and throwing peanut shells from the edge of the gallery into the pit. He wrote, 'In the end, the hail of monkey-nut shells became such a problem that the management fitted a wire-mesh screen over the pit to protect patrons.'(4)

Bert also took classes, during the week, and woodworking turned out to be a hobby of his all his life. The family struggled on, but when he was 16, they moved into a 'proper house', close-by on Lancaster Street. They lived on three floors there, with a lavatory in the back that the Hardys didn't have to share with any other family. On the first floor was the Hardy parents' bedroom, plus a room Bert had to himself. It was useful for his developing and printing business,' as he wrote, 'because my girlfriend Dora [who'd become the first Mrs. Bert Hardy] preferred watching me at work in my darkened room to sitting in the brightly-lit parlour. I was very grateful.'(5) Bert pointed out later that he had a lot to do with the family's getting that house, because he 'ran the family quite a bit'. He also indicated his father knew the young photographer was becoming a bit full of himself, because once, when a rent collector came round, Bert and his father were standing in the doorway, talking. When the rent collector asked, 'Who's in charge here? You or him?', Albert Sr. quickly piped up, 'No, he's not in charge. I'm in charge,' and shoved Bert back indoors.(6)

Another key discovery Bert made then was a need to bike a for CPS work, and his first one cost ten shillings. In 'My Life,' he remembered regularly cycling past the policeman who'd arrested him when he was 14. He noted, 'I used to yell out, "Watch, Jackson," and poke my tongue out at him.' Young Bert wasn't afraid to take risks, as long as he wasn't physically caught breaking the law. After six months with that first bike, Bert decided to take up cycling as a sport. He looked in 'Cycling' Magazine, found the toughest all-male cycling club, and joined Norwood Paragon. Soon, Bert bought a new bike and began going out with club members on their regular Sunday runs. Bert wrote: 'When we stopped to eat our sandwiches by the roadside, I used to entertain the other chaps by doing somersaults and handsprings. And I began taking photographs for the club with my old plate camera – group photographs, like the "beano" pictures.' To my delight, when I sent some of these photographs to a new cycling magazine called "The Bicycle," they used them.(7) Bert began his great photographic life-adventure then. He liked freelancing for that publication, gaining status and payments, and eventually he covered the club's races, too.

Before long, he had the chance to meet George Moore, staff photographer for 'The Bicycle'. Hardy later recalled: 'George was a quiet, methodical chap of about my age. In the early days of the magazine, as a promotional gimmick, they started to give away 15"x12" enlargements of photographs of well-known racing cyclists. George was responsible for making these enlargements, and being such a careful, patient sort of man, he was doing them very carefully, one at a time, and it was taking him all week to produce a batch of fifty, which would be given away just like that.'(8) When he heard that I worked in the developing and printing business, he asked me if I would help.(8)

Bert's experience of making enlargements of George Moore print's was his fine detail. He wrote: 'In those days race roads started almost before it got light on a Sunday morning, so it didn't interfere with the traffic; and in addition, cyclists' clothing was supposed to be inconspicuous, so they usually wore black tights and a black alpaca jacket, all of which made taking pictures at the start of Road Races very difficult. But in George's pictures there was a tremendous amount of detail: you could even see the difference between the rim of a wheel and the tyre, which was just a blur in mine. So I asked him, "How do you do it George? What do you take them on?" and he showed me his camera. It was a 35mm camera, a Leica.' Saving every farthing he could, young Hardy finally bought a second-hand Leica from Constantine and Jackson's, on Chancery Lane, and as Bert Hardy told this author in a 1981 interview, 'After that, I never looked back.'(10)

Bert later related how he used his Leica for cycling coverage, 'Swinging the camera with the movement and using it in general as an extension of my eyes came naturally to me.' He also discovered, by experimenting, that it was possible to take pictures in practically any light – even candle light; and because he couldn't afford to buy made-up developers, he mixed his own 'super-g' soup from paraphenylenediamine, metol, glycine and sodium sulphite. This enabled him to 'force development,' so even when films were very under-exposed, he could still get pictures from them. Before long, he was 'almost doing poor old George Moore out of a job.'(11)

By then, it was summertime and the Herne Hill race track was in full swing on Saturday afternoons. Covering not only the races there, but also some lengthy time-trials, like the Bath Road Hundred, young Hardy made thirty shillings a job. As he put it in 'My Life'; for those trials, after cycling with a partner overnight to the starting point, near Newbury: 'Jock [Wadley] and I would cycle to convenient spots, usually turning points, and photograph the race [which started at 5 a.m., and], which finished at about eleven in the morning. We then cycled about sixty miles back to Doughty Street [in London] where again I processed the film and made prints. By this time Bill Mills, the editor of "The Bicycle", was making up the paper ready for next day's publication.' His time on 'The Bicycle' freelance staff also provided Bert with the chance for an overseas assignment, and he turned in the world cycling championships in Copenhagen, as a result.(12) All during his time at CPS [nine years], Bert Hardy made the most of his new training. He taught himself whatever he didn't learn from others, and he made himself into a first-rate 35mm camera and lab technician. His name became synonymous with quality photo-work, and soon he was stretching even further, inventing his own synchronized flash system. He also discovered other clever techniques including the 'join-up,' which he would use so well in 'Picture Post'.

Young Bert experimented with young women at the time, too. Then, when he was twenty-three, he got back together with his old girlfriend, Dora, and they decided to get married. His boss at CPS, a Mr. Duke, was embarrassed by the small salary he was then paying a married man, and unable to pay him more, he fired Bert. Just before he left CPS, though, Bert went round asking his friends with Fleet Street contacts if they knew of any work there. One man, a certain Mr. Sheed, told him about the General Photographic Agency, and as a practical joke, Sheed told Hardy that GPA was looking for a miniature-camera photographer, though William Davis, the director there, 'never touched anything smaller than a half-plate camera in his life.'(13)

Following his introduction to Mr. Davis, Bert explained he was applying for the 'miniature-camera job.' Mr. Davis was stunned, but he showed Bert some of his large-format photos, which weren't bad, if a bit static, and then asked to see some of Hardy's work. Bert showed him some cycling and landscape shots, and Davis was impressed. He asked what camera Hardy had taken his pictures with, and when the potential new staff-photographer answered that he used a 35mm Leica, Davis asked for proof. Hardy said he had the negatives and Davis gave him a trial assignment.

William Davis arranged a photo-call for Hardy with the London's Hungarian comic actor Szakall, who had just arrived in London and was staying at the Mayfair Hotel. Hardy told the rest of that story in this way: 'At six that evening I was already outside the Mayfair Hotel for my seven oclock appointment, carrying my camera and equipment in a little cardboard attache case. I prowled up and down for an hour, while the commissionaire in gold braid and epaulettes glared at me suspiciously. At last it was
seven, and I summoned up my courage and went in. 'To my surprise I was allowed to go up to Szakall's room. Following Davis's suggestion, I got Szakall to ring down for cream cakes while I set up my photo-flood lamps. I worked away for an hour or so while the tiny room became hotter and hotter, and Szakall sweated more and more, and finally began to look quite ill.

'When I had finished, I rushed home to Blackfriars and developed the films. The next day I took them to Davis, and he liked them. That very same day he managed to sell a sequence of four of the pictures to the "Daily Mirror," so he signed me up. My contract was a good example of Davis's financial cunning; I was guaranteed one job a week for 30/-; if I did a second job, he'd pay me 1 [pound]; and if I did a third job I'd get 10/-. for each further job I would also get ten shillings. But he added a clause to the effect that, however many jobs I did, "under no circumstances" would I be paid more than five pounds a week. Meanwhile, Dora, who'd promised she would not give up her job in a clothing factory if they got married, quit her job anyway. Thus, Bert had to support both of them on his GPA salary.(14)

Because of the speed with which plate camera prints could be made then – in the space of a few minutes, versus the longer 35mm lab time Bert's Leica required – Bert could not help Davis much with spot news photos. He shot mainly feature stories, the subjects for which Davis and his salesman scoured the media. Bert photographed a singing mouse; a shepherdsness called Mary Lamb; a man in Suffolk who put stones in flower pots and watered them daily; and a man who hypnotized alligators. A natural quick-study, Bert soon discovered he could easily match his boss and the GPA salesman, Bertram Collins, for silly fabrications. One story of his was 'Britain's Only Bird Surgeon,' which was published in Stefan Lorant's 'Weekly Illustrated,' showing a budgerigar tied with elastic bands to a piece of wood, supposedly about to undergo surgery; and there was the even more ridiculous 'A Fish Goes to Hospital,' a four-page spread in an early issue of 'Picture Post.' Hardy later noted he was seeking to 'increase the range of my photography,' in ways his GPA work was not doing.

Technically, though, Hardy was bettering himself with GPA. He fooled around with a soldering iron once, and after a few experiments, rigged up a Leica flash unit that allowed him to take flash pictures at 1/1000th of a second. Previously the flash speed was the bulb speed of 1/60th of a second. Also, Hardy was improving his list of credits. His first pictures for 'Picture Post' were of a girl who wore billowing skirts and turned cartwheels on stage, 'the Human pinwheel.'(15) In 1937, Dora and Bert moved from their two-roomed flat in Kennington, to the ground floor of a house in Brixton, where their first son, Michael, was born. Once, Bert took some photos of Dora tossing Michael and catching him, and Davis wrote an appealing semi-fictional caption to go along with the photos:

'BRITAIN'S FINEST BABY?

'Doctors despaired of the life of this baby when born a year ago, but today he is claimed to be the best developed child in Britain, due to special physical exercises developed by his mother, Mrs. Hardy of Brixton.'

Mr. Hardy later confided that snappy captions were key with Davis, the truth less so, and the story duly appeared in the 'Daily Sketch.' Other Hardy-GPA pictures related to a scruffy kid at an Arsenal football game; a story about a baby gorilla at the Regent's Park Zoo (which appeared in the fourth issue of 'Picture Post,' along with Bert's human pinwheel pictures); a scoop-still of a penguin stepping on Princess Margaret's foot at the same zoo; a 'Sunday Graphic' series, 'Anne and the Chimp'; and a series with Michael Hardy and a panda, 'Peter and the Panda.'(16)

But tensions were mounting between Hardy and Davis in August 1937, when Bert was on his way home from a shoot, with no pictures. Outside Woolworths, he noticed a crowd of people and went up to investigate. A newspaper seller had been stabbed, so Hardy took a picture. Then the police came along with the suspect in tow, and Hardy took another series of pictures, walking backwards in front of the group, all the way to Bow Street Police Station. Hardy debated to whom to sell his pictures and decided on the 'Sunday Express.' That paper used those pictures on a full back-page spread and Bert was paid five pounds. When Davis found out how much Hardy received, he went round to the paper to collect more money; and his photographer determined he was getting 'a Fleet Street education.'(17) Then, after Hardy saw his pictures of a day-trip to Calais used on seven pages by 'Picture Post' in 'Channel Crossing,' just two weeks before the start of World War II, Davis paid him 30 shillings. Bert learned Davis had received 26 pounds for those pictures. Bert had it out with Davis and a new pay agreement was made. Pictures followed of the war build-up, and one of these, showing people receiving gas-masks, was used on a full page by both the 'Illustrated London News' and 'Life' Magazine.

When war was declared on September 3, 1939, Bert evacuated his pregnant wife and Michael. The now tested professional hoped to join the RAF, but was rejected for bad eyesight – a ridiculous diagnosis. Terry Hardy was born in January 1940, and Bert visited the newborn and his mother in Melksham. Meanwhile, Davis had evacuated to Rottingdean, leaving Hardy and Collins in charge. When he returned in April, he decided the pair were making too much money (with Bert at 20 pounds a week). Davis fired them both, and the rest is history.(18)
Chapter 4:

From 1936 until just after the start of World War II, Bert Hardy worked for William Davis at the General Photographic Agency. During that time, Hardy's work appeared in all the leading British picture publications of that era, including: the “Daily Mirror;” “Sunday Graphic;” “Weekly Illustrated;” “Daily Sketch;” ‘Picture Post;” “Sunday Express;” ‘Sphere;’ ‘Illustrated London News;’ and even ‘Life’ Magazine in America. All the while, Hardy was establishing his reputation with those and other publishers. When Davis sacked Hardy and Collins then, in April 1940, the pair were prepared to make it on their own. Immediately, they formed a new freelance agency, Criterion Press. In typical Hardy fashion, he and his partner went from GFA on a Thursday, to Criterion’s little office at 172 Fleet Street (complete with a darkroom, all for 10 shillings a week) the next Monday. The Hardy family helped them set up shop, and by Wednesday the first pictures supplied by Criterion Press were used in the Evening News.(1)

But not everything was genuinely documented during that period. For instance, once when Hardy and Collins had only 30 shillings between them and Hardy had to sell his car, Collins arranged for more set-up or staged shots. As Hardy related later: Collins used his contacts, and we carried on doing the usual laid-on stories. There was a growing feeling among the Japanese and the import of Japanese goods, and Collins arranged for a woman to go into the branch of Woolworths at the Angel and scream anti-Japanese slogans just while I happened to be there with my camera. I took a few pictures and we left quickly. We had a drink with her afterwards in a pub.(2) “Cheap shots” perhaps, but Hardy was still learning. However, not all Hardy’s picture-stories were ‘laid-on,’ and because his name at last became known as the photographer whose taken all the GFA photos used in ‘Picture Post’ (Hardy’s photos had been published over Davis’s name in many publications), Assistant Editor Tom Hopkinson gave the 35mm cameraman his first commission for that magazine in early 1940, right after Criterion Press opened. (Previously, Hardy had been working for ‘Picture Post’ and other publications mainly ‘on speculation.’ That is, he and Collins would come up with feature ideas, and once shot, then submit them to those publications — to be used, or not used, as editors saw fit.)

Hardy was asked to take pictures of air-raid shelters in Newcastle; he went there and finally found ‘a shelter in a culvert where nervous people sometimes went at night.’ The photographer had no flash with him and very little light. He took some pictures by the little light there was, and added a few extra stills from a group of workers in a subway, by the light of their acetylene lamps, just in case.(3) When he returned to the Criterion darkroom, Hardy knew he’d have to use his ‘super-soup’ film development to get any results at all. As he told this author in 1981, ‘I waited fifteen minutes,’ the usual development time; there was nothing. Another fifteen minutes: still nothing. After an hour, he began to wonder. ‘There were just the tiniest points of light,’ he said.

Hardy turned off his green safe-light, and decided to give his film a lot more time. He crossed Blackfriar’s Bridge to his mother’s house for some tea and company. When he returned about four hours later, images had emerged. ‘They were Rembrandts,’ Hardy told me, referring to the first commissioned photos of his used in ‘Picture Post,’ ‘The contrast is what made them — the great darks and lights.’ And some of Hardy’s pictures, e.g., of mothers with their frightened or sleeping children, do resemble some of the Dutch master’s work.(4)

More ‘Picture Post’ assignments followed; and those stories were not ‘laid-on’ generally. Hardy photographed several stories with the writer Bert Lloyd, a likable Communist, who had come from poor origins, like Hardy; worked hard all his life, and had a big heart. Their first coverage together was ‘The East End at War.’ Hardy displayed an improved, more improvisational attitude toward his work and subjects: ‘Our technique was just to wander around talking to people and taking pictures of anything which caught our eyes.’ ‘The spirit of the people was tremendous, and there was a strong determination to carry on as if nothing had happened. After having taken so many “laid-on” pictures, I almost hesitated to photograph scenes like the girl in the clothing workshop still at work on her sewing machine, in case it didn’t look “real” enough. ‘...’ / Bert Lloyd and I visited an old music hall called the “People’s Palace” which had been turned into a reception centre for homeless people; and I took a photograph of an elderly man and woman, one sitting on a chair and one standing, outside what I took [to be] the ruins of their home. ‘/ After I had taken the picture, the old woman looked at the man and asked me ‘Who’s he?’ Still, at least they looked like a lovely old couple.’(5) Indeed, unlike the ‘fictions’ that characterized so much of the popular press picture of his day, Hardy’s new work was genuine-enough, to others and to himself; the new picture-stories had both heart and teeth, and the photographer liked the feel of working with the new team, ‘Picture Post’ Magazine.(6)

In October 1940, Bert Hardy’s family was evacuated to Greenfield, near Manchester. Tom Hopkinson, the new ‘Picture Post’ editor, tried to give his fast-rising star as many commissions in that area as possible. Hardy noted, ‘This sort of concern was typical of him.’(7) During this period, the darkrooms of ‘Picture Post’ were damaged by German bombing, and Hardy allowed Edith Kaye’s lab technicians to use the Criterion Press facilities. Hopkinson, then, was doubly pleased with Hardy’s contributions to the magazine. Kaye had come over from Germany before the war and was hired by Lorant after he’d been impressed by Kaye’s printing, not the subjects, in some Tim Gidal photographs. (Gidal worked for the magazine for several months before leaving for Israel, where he had a successful career himself.) Hardy’s printer-partner of later years, Gerry Grove, received his training under the astute Kaye. She headed the ‘Picture Post’ darkroom staff until the magazine’s demise, in 1957.

Other picture-stories by Hardy then included: ‘The East End Parson,’ which he photographed with writer Bert Lloyd, about the Rev. French, Rural Dean of Stepney, whom all the kids loved and chased after, in the streets; a picture-story from the War Office with writer Macdonald Hastings, some pictures of which had to be retouched so as not to give anything away to the enemy, and which contained a mood-still of a charlady scrubbing a floor as officers walked by in a dark hallway; ‘A Gun is Fired,’ about a special field gun; and ‘Training a Rear-Turret Gunner,’ with at least one set-up photo used, and retouched. All the work for ‘Picture Post’ made the role of Criterion’s salesman, Collins, seem more expendable. Thus, Hardy began to think of forming ‘a more direct link with “Picture Post.”’(8)

Meanwhile, Hardy was also receiving lessons in advanced honesty and good manners. He and Anne Scott-James (the legendary reporter, who was as much a lady as any female, and who was in charge of getting readers to knit on behalf of the troops) were sent to Harwich to present the crew of a ship with knitted goods. The story continues in Hardy’s autobiography: ‘The sailors were very touched, and as a gesture in return, gave us each a pack of 200 cigarettes. I didn’t know [Scott-James] smoked, and carefully packed both lots of cigarettes in my bag. Later, the two of us rode back together in the train. We were alone in the compartment, and I was rearranging my bag when I suddenly heard a woman’s voice saying; “You dirty rotten thieving bastard!” At first I thought it must be someone in the next compartment – I couldn’t believe that such an elegant lady could let go with such a mouthful. But it was Anne Scott-James all right. I gave her back her cigarettes very quickly.’(9)

When Davis sacked Hardy and Collins then, in April 1940, the pair were prepared to make it on their own. Immediately, they formed a new freelance agency, Criterion Press. The final assignment he’d do while still working at Criterion Press was a historic coverage for ‘Picture Post’ of the German Blitz. Hardy hung out with fire-fighters near Lambeth Bridge in London for several nights, while there was a lull in the bombing. Then, on the night of January 11, 1941, heavy raids began once again. After seeing his mother into an Elephant & Castle shelter (he’d been staying at her house to be close to the action), Hardy went to work. He began along the riverside, south of Blackfriars Bridge, in a warehouse fire. Trapped by the fire in a basement at one point, Hardy looked around desperately for a way out. A fireman was with him, and they eventually found a hole in the ceiling and escaped. Hardy later wrote: ‘Afterward, we moved north of the river to the city. I must have gone up onto the roof of one of the buildings to get pictures of firemen fighting the fire from the tops of ladders, but I can’t remember anything.

After some hours, I ran out of film, so I asked [my] driver to give me a lift back to Lancaster Street [and my mother’s house] where I kept some spare rolls. There I found my sister Lily rushing about with buckets of water doing her best to put out fires started by incendiary bombs. The driver had to go back to [fire-]headquarters to replace the car tyres, because his had all been destroyed by shrapnel, so I stayed and helped Lily for a while until he came back. By dawn the raid had stopped and I went to see my mum at Elephant & Castle tube station so she knew I was all right. My suit was burnt and my camera was damaged, but Picture Post paid me the cost of replac-
ing both of them.'(11) The pictures of firemen on ladders that Hardy took from rooftops, included that close-up mentioned in Chapter 1, which helped earn him the first photographer-credit in 'Picture Post' history. It was a hair-raising night, but Bert Hardy came back from it well-supplied with pictures for the magazine, for the February 1, 1941 cover-story, 'Fire-Fighters!' – one of the most dramatic picture-stories in the magazine's 19 years of operation.

Hardy and Collins had a falling out over money next, and parted company. Hardy left the office and all its equipment in Collins's hands. On March 3, 1941, then, the newly-famous photographer joined 'Picture Post' as 'a staff photographer on a freelance basis,' which meant he was a full-time staffer now. The monetary arrangements, as well as the journalistic situation, were very much to Hardy's liking. He was to start at the rate of 8 pounds for a single page, 6 pounds for the second page, 4 pounds for the third, 2 pounds for the fourth, and 2 pounds for every additional page. At a minimum, Hardy was to receive 8 pounds a week – but he always made more than that, as a full-timer there.

Bert Hardy felt right at home with the magazine's journalists. He recounted how they affected one another in his life-story: 'As a staff photographer, I used to join the journalists every morning when ideas for new stories were kicked around, and just about everything else. And when I was in town, I went along with a group of journalists to lunch at the Little Acropolis Restaurant in Charlotte Street. Having finished my education at fourteen, I found their conversations full of interest. I expect they learnt a few things from me as well.'

What Hardy wrote next in 'My Life' is crucial: 'Tom Hopkinson was my boss now, and also my critic. I had tremendous respect for his opinions; everyone did.'(12) Bert Hardy respected Hopkinson-the-editor and Hopkinson-the-man. Perhaps that's because Hopkinson also respected him. Hardy was known for his expense-account on 'Picture Post'; he had huge expenses at times there, and his editor bent over backwards to cover them, because he knew his new photographer was making significant profits for 'Picture Post'.

Bert Hardy was not Bert Lloyd; Hardy was a bit more of a capitalist, albeit with a heart as big as the Communist Lloyd's. If he sympathized to a reasonable degree with Hopkinson's brand of socialism – and Hopkinson was a socialist – it was because the latter based his theories on the value of a dollar-well-spent. Neither man believed in worker ownership of the magazine; and both knew the value of a Hulton. But Hopkinson found more journalistic value in Hardy's work than even Hulton did, because he knew Hardy truly was a tested-and-true professional. Moreover, Hardy's brand of liberalism – and he was a liberal, like Lorant – depended on men like Hopkinson, who still believed in trade unionism and the welfare state.

Hardy's aesthetic was affected by all this. For the first time in his life, he took photography seriously as a means of political and social expression, not just as a way of making a living, though that too, was key. Hardy wasn't a 'twenty-dollar' philosopher, but he was a working man's thinker; he had come to know how to make his pictures – not an intellectual medium, by and large – work toward a 'philosophic' end. Thus, he felt comfortable sharing his ideas with the rest of the 'Picture Post' staff, too. Certainly, the tested-and-true technician in him could set up photos with the best of them; but now he saw the value more in true-to-life images. He did, of course, feel good about the status he was acquiring; but he also felt good working for this particular magazine, 'Picture Post', contributing to the British war effort as a photojournalist – both facts made his struggle 'from rags to riches', and from that first frightening encounter with the faces in the moon to professional "heaven", all worthwhile.

When Hardy and Lloyd were granted access to a big reception given by Russian Ambassador Maisky, then, it seemed natural the photographer would not only take Churchill's picture there, but also extract a pithy comment from the latter, as he frowned to Anthony Eden and said: 'Who's that man? I've seen him somewhere before.' Later, Maisky agreed to have Hardy take a key picture of Churchill and him. At one point during their lunch, Maisky touched glasses with Churchill and Hardy snapped his best shot of that event; then Maisky gave a prearranged signal and the photographer departed.

Another great personage Hardy photographed was JB Priestley. It's been said the great radio and literary personality was second only to Churchill in influence in wartime Britain. His status, though, must be understood in the context of Royal involvement with the war effort. The King and Queen led, too, with words and example, as the Queen insisted on staying at Buckingham Palace, despite the bombings there. Regarding the great Priestley, though, who did project a lot of wartime influence, Hardy found him somewhat difficult to work with. Priestley liked to be led away by locals during his public outings, and since the photographer who traveled with him most was Hardy, Bert was often pressed for time amid his other work, and needed at least one picture of Priestley each week, to accompany the writer's 'Picture Postscript' series.

By late October 1941, Hardy was working flat out, seven days a week, for the magazine. The last week of that month had him going to Edinburgh on Sunday; Leith on Monday; Wales from Tuesday-Thursday; Neath on Friday; and back to London on Saturday. The film he shot at a horseless fox-hunt in the Welsh mountains was mis-processed, and the next week he had to return there to re-shoot the event, right after he went to Brighton with Anne Scott-James the next Tuesday; Regent's Park Zoo on Wednesday; and Hassocks in Sussex on Thursday.

In early 1942, Hardy and Lloyd paired up again, on a picture-story about trawlers fishing in the North Sea, since they worked well together and Lloyd had had experience on whaling ships. They spent ten days on the same trawler, and though the picture-story was good-enough, Hardy was disconcerted by the high seas, multitudinous rats, and drunken sailors. Because one picture for the coverage was used on the magazine's cover, Hardy received an extra 5 pounds, as per an agreement with Hopkinson.

For his next picture-story, Hardy went to sea for a photo-call on the aircraft carrier 'Illustrious.' The photo-call lasted five days after a storm blew up, and the press corps was allowed to buy their underclothes from the quartermaster's stores. Hardy noted, 'There was such a feeling of luxury in buying and putting on all this top quality American underwear, that it almost seemed worth spending all that time at sea in a storm.' Hardy followed that escapade with picture-stories from a battle school and a seance party in London, where he captured the great Priestley in his best shot of that event; then Maisky gave a prearranged signal and the photographer departed.

One of the last stories Hardy photographed for 'Picture Post' before being called into military service, was 'Wartime Terminus.' For that picture-story, Hardy took many evocative images, some of them including Anne Scott-James as model, 'to add a bit of dignity.' Hardy later noted that he took three shots to compose a join-up used over two pages, of a view from overhead of the station interior. His views of troops saying their good-byes to loved ones are poignant reminders of what World War II meant to America's best ally; and many of those troops never saw their loved ones again. But one picture was especially a Bert Hardy original: his view of a little girl, parental leash on her shoulder, looking up at a seated engineer in his train-engine in the shadows.

Finally on June 18, 1942, Hardy himself departed for military training. He left with his favorite green pipe in his luggage, and 200 cigarettes given to him by a girl who saw him off. Tom Hopkinson had arranged to pay 5 pounds a week into his bank account while Hardy was in the service. Thus did the Hardy family keep its new house at Eltham. Bert was slated to do 18 weeks' basic training at the Newark Army Camp with the Royal Engineers. The British Army Film and Photographic Unit was in need of capable young men, and Bert Hardy fit the bill precisely.'(13)

1- 'Bert Hardy; My Life;' by Bert Hardy. London: Gordon Fraser, 1985, pp. 30-39.
2-Ibid., p. 36.
3-Ibid., pp. 36-39.
4-From one of two personal interviews this author conducted with Bert and Sheila Hardy in November 1981 at their home in the Surrey, England countryside.
The word ‘fictions’ here means picture-stories using real people and staged events to make their points, as in Hardy's more laid-on stories; your author doesn't mean what Prof. Hanno Hardt signified by that word in his essay for the 'Journal of Communication Inquiry', Winter 1989, V. 13, No. 1, pp. 6-29. There, Hardt used ‘fictions’ to describe those picture-stories that use storytelling techniques as their underpinning.

Chapter 5:

The very influential, if often jingoistic/imperialistic turn-of-the-century author and poet Rudyard Kipling wrote very poignantly about the source and end of British cultural power in his poem 'Ressianal': "The tumult and the shouting dies--/The captains and the kings depart--/Still stands Thine ancient Sacrifice./ An humble and a contrite heart./Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet./Lest we forget -- lest we forget!'(1)

The British people, with troops and trooper-journalists like Bert Hardy helping to lead the way, found many vehicles of inspiration during World War II. 'Lest we forget' is a phrase British youngsters know well. Those words were used by British orators during that conflict of conflicts, and it should be added that Kipling refited his poem two years after the Queen's Jubilee, to cover American imperialism during and after the Spanish-American War. Given the history that preceded WWII, for good and bad, as Americans we may never want to forget what the British did for us during WWII; and the British may never want to forget what Americans did for them then, as well.

British culture is one of the richest and most vital of all the 'old' cultures; and the people who have grown up with it coursing through their veins don't readily back down from a fight, once pushed. Sir Winston Churchill knew as much when he wrote in his memoirs, 'The reader will realise that all this clatter and storm was but an accompaniment to the cool processes by which our war effort was maintained and our policy and diplomacy conducted.' To be sure, his fiery exclamation – 'We shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.' – didn't hurt the British war effort generally either.(2) The latter sentence may have even been the inspiration for the captions that accompanied the two final Bert Hardy photos in 'Fire-Fighters!' (See Chapter 1.)

Culled to the Admiralty on September 3, 1939 – a few hours after Britain had declared war on Germany, following the latter nation's invasion of Poland – Churchill let go with some of the most inspirational rhetoric any national orator has ever spoken, possibly better even than Franklin Roosevelt's, superb as his was, too. 'The British Bulldog' was so convincing that the British King, soon enough, asked him to head a new National Government; and the man whose 'greatest moment of... life has still to come [as 'Picture Post' declared in early 1939]' – came to power on May 10, 1940.(3) On Whit Monday, May 13, the coalition Prime Minister faced a predominantly pro-Chamberlain House of Commons made more hostile by the Conservative belief that Chamberlain had been sacrificed for Churchill's defects. In a speech that later became famous, Churchill said he had nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat – and that his only policy was to wage war, his only aim to achieve victory.

As Churchill spoke, the first German tanks had crossed the river Meuse, and within a few days had torn such a gap in the supposedly impregnable Allied line, they threatened to cut off the British and French armies in northern France. The British commander, Lord Gort, was no great general, but he had enough sense to stand and fight long enough to ensure the safe evacuation of the Allied troops after their retreat to the small Channel port of Dunkirk. There, on the open beaches, more than 300,000 British and French troops were evacuated by sea through the inspired improvisation of the Royal Navy in a week-long operation that ended on June 4, 1940. What could have been the final blow to Allied chances early on, became instead a propaganda victory and morale booster on the British Homefront.(4)

'Picture Post', meanwhile, was doing everything it could to pump up Allied morale. While not being jingoistic in the narrow sense, it did see real possibilities for the Allies, if they continued to pull decently together. Thus then, in 1940 'Picture Post' published a special edition entitled 'The United States.' Stefan Lorant had been responsible for putting it together, and he did so during and just after his visit to America at Christmas-time 1939. (By the close of 1940, Lorant was safely ensconced in his new home in Massachusetts.) The purpose of that issue was to promote the idea of American involvement with the Allied cause. No doubt, other projects of that type helped the Allies then, too; but it was the Japanese who removed any lingering doubts from American minds, with their surprise attack on Pearl Harbor – in the Hawaiian Islands – of December 7, 1941.(5)

On January 1, 1942, the 26 members of what President Roosevelt had optimistically termed the 'United Nations' joined in a solemn declaration that they would wage war together and not make a separate peace. The declaration was intended primarily as a gesture to Russia, believed to be still suspicious that the capitalist powers would seize any chance to join Germany in an anti-Communist crusade. Stalin wanted a Second Front in the war, but there was no sign of one coming, only a botched Canadian raid on Dieppe, with the loss of half those Allied troops. Churchill did persuade a reluctant Roosevelt to join up in an Anglo-American landing in French North Africa, but that offensive effectively ended any prospect of a Cross-Channel invasion for the next year.

The invasion was put under the command of the then-generally-unknown, but tactful General Dwight D. Eisenhower, whose diplomacy, it was thought, would be useful not only in reconciling Anglo-American differences, but also in soothing the susceptibilities of a number of European prima donna premiers and generals of varying political opinions. Toward the end of 1942, then, a harassed Chief of Imperial General Staff confided to his diary: 'We're going to have great difficulties in getting out of Stalin's promise to Stalin, namely, the establishment of a Western Front in 1943. Stalin seems to be banking on it, and Clark Kerr (British Ambassador to Moscow) fears a possible peace between Hitler and Stalin if we disappoint the latter.' The CIGS had, however, a happy compromise up his sleeve – an Anglo-American invasion of Italy, which would be almost as good as a Second Front, and which Churchill, never able to resist a phrase, was shortly describing as a blow at 'the soft underbelly of the Axis.'

'Picture Post' continued to do its part in telling the story of World War II in 1942. Its ears were not directly trimmed, then, by government censorship, and the British Government claimed censorship had to be a 'voluntary' matter. Some criticism was allowed, but there were powerful indirect forces at work within British society and
Government to damp down criticisms – when they became troublesome. For one thing, the British Government could cut off its subsidy to newspapers and magazines – as it did with 'Picture Post'. When the magazine – despite Ministry of Information warnings – continued to criticize Government policy, particularly the quality of military material in North Africa, the Ministry cracked down. Its aim was to stop that magazine's being read by troops in North Africa and the Middle East. The Government's method was to cut off the subsidy paid – not to the magazine, but to the export firms handling distribution. 'Picture Post' alone was excluded in this way.

Tom Hopkinson wrote an article in the January 31, 1942, issue of the magazine that he signed, a practice he did not do much of during the war. He said he signed it because 'those who criticise should give their names.' He concluded the article (which included layouts from other relevant 'Picture Post' war reports): ‘...we intend to continue our policy exactly as before, to criticise when there is need for it, to applaud when it is deserved. Criticism is not pleasure – for one thing it involves four times the work of bland approval or a simple record. We think that that is the course we ought to follow, the one most likely to help in winning a war we are all determined must be won. What do you think? We should like to know.'

‘Picture Post’ covered other aspects of the war by soliciting reports from its staff serving in the military, and by utilizing the staff it had left on the Home-front effectually. For instance, it told the story of the gallant efforts of other British media to inform America about the perils that threatened the Western Alliance (as Lorant had earlier advised it should do). In a July 25, 1942, essay entitled 'The B.C.C. Talks to N. America,’ readers learned that the BBC Radio employed 53 announcers then; that it offered many specifically 'North American programmes’; that the programme that came to America started at 11:15 p.m., each night, and ran for 7-1/2 hours of non-stop service (including news, talks, features, and variety shows); and that 'John Londoner’ was very interested in the war and in America at the time. The essay's points were well-taken. Other war-time salvos were fired on behalf of His Majesty's Government in stories like 'A New Way to Choose Our Army Officers' (September 19, 1942). The introduction reads: 'An entirely new system for the appointment of our Army Officers is being tried out. It is one of the most progressive moves that have been made since war began. If successful it will put an end to all talk of “class-favouritism,” and should lead to a high increase of efficiency. (6)

By early 1942, Hitler had turned his planes off Britain and the Blitz was virtually ended. But that did not end the British war effort -- if anything, Brits became more determined to defeat the maniac who had bombed them so brutally. And women were playing their part, and questioning it, as well as the men. It was written: 'There was still a discussion going on about whether women should wear trousers, although the war machine was being “manned” by women. Femininity underwent some fundamental, though not necessarily permanent, changes during the war. Those who wanted to remain “traditional” had to contend with clothes rationing and “make do and mend.” Magazines like Picture Post regularly ran features on how to make fashionable clothes out of old dusters.’(7) British (and American) women kept their Home-front(s) jumping. Factories were producing an incredible amount of military hardware for ‘the boys in uniform’; and Allied women were just as proud of their effort versus the Axis nations as their men were.

During the early years of WWII, Bert Hardy saw how that war was being fought, at home and abroad. His and Bert Lloyd's 'The East End at War’ is a tribute to everyday people sacrificing much, yet preparing for ultimate triumph. Hardy's photos later on were just as dramatic. And in photo after photo, and essay after essay, of dramatic resolve, the entire staff of 'Picture Post' told the Allied story. For his part, Hardy most often showed everyday Brits (and then troops) on the Home-front (until Bert left for Normandy), doing everything they could to defeat the Axis menace. These were Hardy's and the magazine's heroes and heroines; and when that photographer crossed the English Channel to Normandy on July 1, 1944, he was prepared to do even more to inspire the readers of 'Picture Post.' These people were 'tremendous,' as he had already said. They were allied to a righteous cause, and their troops would bring them home the fruits of victory; with a big boost from the Americans and other Allies. Something happened to Bert Hardy, then, just before and during the time he himself went to war. He'd been a third breadwinner in his family as a youngster, the only breadwinner in his 'second' family, and now, his photography was called on for even higher purposes – as was the writing, editing, and photography of all Allied journalists.

It should be remembered that World War II was a 'popular war,' as wars go. The Allies had their Home-fronts, where victory was so assiduously hoped, prayed, and prepared for – as a result, their guys and gals fought up a storm in all theaters of war. Allied journalists needed to do something equal to the task; and the staff of 'Picture Post' did that and more. Yes, Bert Hardy was changed by World War II; so too, in key ways, was the British response to that war changed by the likes of Bert Hardy. And yet, Hardy's Army career didn't start well in June 1942. He wasn't used to being treated as a 'rookie,' and he was gun-shy around sergeants. (Later, he became one.) Gratefully, his basic training only lasted three weeks, and then he was posted to the Army Film and Photographic Unit. He was knocking around with girls again, of the Army canteen variety; but once past basic training, he also tried to get back to Eltham to see Dora and his children whenever possible. Subtly, Hardy was also learning to take advantage of what he could from Army opportunities. One of the interviewers when he went to AFPU headquarters in Curzon Street, Mayfair, was Harry Dever-son, who'd take over Bill Pearson's job as picture editor of 'Picture Post' after the war. Hardy was slated for movie cameraman training, but when Deverson and the other interviewers read his credentials and saw who he was, it was decided still photography was more in his line.

Next, Hardy had to attend a six-week training course, 'where it was felt I should be told all about how to take a photograph.' The school was run by a Captain Houghton, formerly of 'The Times,' who was assisted by a Lieutenant Malandine, a staff photographer on 'Illustrated.' Hardy did not get along with the Lieutenant, though they had done similar types of work in London, and their animosity toward each other helped make the Army an obstacle course for Hardy, at times. Still he mined some golden opportunities during WWII, and even Lieutenant Malandine couldn't stand in the way of all of them. The photographic training course included 'anyone who had sold films across a chemist shop's counter,' according to Hardy. Early on in the Army, the recent 'Picture Post' photographer used his Leica, but when it was damaged, he had to use the government-issued Super Ikonta, a German-made folding camera he said was 'horrid.' Hardy wrote that, next – ‘After we learned all about our cameras, we were given projects. I did one story on a park in wartime, and another on an ATS girl. For one of these projects I was using my own tripod when Captain Houghton came up to me and asked me what I thought I was doing. I explained that the army one was so wobbly that I could get a better picture if I used my own. He was not impressed: “We can't have that, Hardy, that's cheating!”'(8)

At the end of the course, Bert Hardy was the top graduate among 30 photographers – with Bill Wooldridge, formerly of Reuters, and Ron Holloway, from a Midlands newspaper, finishing just behind him. The three young photographers had been 'palled up' from the start, and continued as friends until one of them was killed. Hardy and his two buddies were posted immediately to Army Public Relations in Cadogan Gardens, and all three were given their sergeant stripes. They were put on a rotation system for assignments, and Bert went first with an essay on a cadet for 'Cadet' Magazine.

Next came Ron, and he was told to pack up and depart for a long trip. Hardy later wrote: 'Bill's job came up next, and then I was sent on another; I went down to the coast with an officer I shall call Captain Smith to photograph wounded commandos returning from the Dieppe raids. If he hadn't stopped at a club for three hours on the way down, while I sat outside in the jeep, we might have been in time to get some pictures. Luckily Captain Houghton knew me well enough not to blame me. 'When I got back from this pointless jaunt, I was told that Ron had taken part in the raid, and had been killed. He was the first casualty from the AFPU. No other dangerous jobs came up, though, and life in Cadogan Gardens settled into a lazy routine.'(9)

Sgt. Hardy continued to get on well with the girls – ‘too well,’ in fact, with at least one who was married, he wrote later. Then, one night, he and Wooldridge came out stumbling drunk from a Sloane Square tube station, when the second dared the first to scale a war monument in the middle of the square. Hardy managed to do so, but two police officers came along and began to take them in to Sloane Street Police Station. Hardy wrote: ‘We fully expected them to charge us with being drunk and disorderly, but the funny thing was that by the time we got to the Police Station we were getting on so well with them that they didn’t bother. In fact we got on so well that after that evening they often used to join us on our nights out when they were off-duty.'(10)

In those days, Hardy said he worked harder for ‘Picture Post’ (when he was off-duty) than he did on his Army assignments. By Autumn 1943, the semi-bored sergeant
decided to take Mac Hastings up on his offer of an assignment for the magazine. Hastings was headed for a stag hunt in Scotland, and Hardy skipped off for a weekend to photograph it with him. Hardy said he got on well with the ‘right honourables and lords’ staying in the same baronial hall, because they were ‘the real upper classes. [who, like the real lower classes, are] people who have no “side to them”’. The stag hunting was a more difficult business, but eventually they got their picture-story. Next, Hardy and Hastings relaxed, meaning fishing. Hardy had little experience with the sport, but ended up catching the only fish of the day, a 7-pound salmon. He learned a lesson from fishing: ‘The river looked so beautiful, with rocks and leaping fish. As I cast my line I began to see the attraction of the sport for all those other fishermen, thoughtful and intense, and Mac with his up-to-date tackle.’(11)

Needless to say, the war – and memories via Rudyard Kipling – must have seemed a million miles away from the weekend in Scotland; but things would soon change for the Royal Army’s Cockeye Eye.

Chapter 6:

Before the key change in Bert Hardy’s war experiences, though, he was transferred to Salisbury, where he was the only NCO in the Army Public Relations Office. He called his time there semi-boring, too, but now at least, he was getting into London more often. Still, by January 1944, Hardy noted, ‘I had had more than enough of Army Public Relations.’ Sgt. Hardy, too, had been transferred this time, back to the APFU – because D-Day was coming soon – and when his transfer came through, the first thing he had to do was go to a toughening-up course at the Irish Guards’ barracks at Lingfield. He saw Bill Wooldridge when he got there, and the pair agreed that they were unfit for stiffer work as they were, so they shook hands and pledged that they would not dodge or complain about anything, however tough it got. And it was tough: there were assault courses, cross-country runs and survival tests. Hardy and Wooldridge did not complain of their blisters, even as their officers failed to take part in any of the physical tests. (Again, Hardy displayed his skill as a marksman.) At the end of the course, Hardy and Wooldridge were in superb shape; Hardy, in fact, got in the habit of running everywhere he went. D-Day was fast-approaching, and he was ready at last for it.(1)

The British general Sir Frederick Morgan had earlier been slated for directing the actual planning of the invasion of Normandy, code-named ‘Overlord,’ and the British CIGS, Sir Alan Brooke, who as a corps commander had been chased out of France in 1940, had been promised command of the operation by Churchill. In any case, command went to the American general Dwight D. Eisenhower, with an American in Morgan’s place as Chief of Staff. This demonstrated clearly that, regarding numbers and weight of equipment, the United States was now the senior partner in the Western Alliance.

In Asia, the ‘Forgotten’ Fourteenth Army, under perhaps the most able British commander of the war, Field Marshal Sir WJ Slim, first halted the Japanese at Imphal and Kohima, and then began the long, tortuous slog forward through the Burmese jungle towards the river Chindwin. In Russia, Marshal Zhukov reconquered the Ukraine. In Britain, south coast harbors filled with landing craft, Hampshire lanes held fleets of camouflaged tanks and lorries, and the air was heavy with the roar of bombers en route to pound the German Atlantic Wall. D-Day was scheduled for dawn on June 5, but a storm blew up in the Channel, and Eisenhower postponed the invasion 24 hours. At 4 a.m., on June 5, at the end of a 15-minute conference, he gave the order for the next day: ‘Okay, let’s go.’ The enormous machine began to roll: 500 warships; 4,300 landing craft; and 10,000 planes, one type of which – the Mosquito – was a war-winner.

At 6:30 a.m. on June 6, the assault went in, and by midnight, 75,000 British and 57,000 Americans were ashore in Normandy. By July’s end, 36 Allied divisions, more than 1.5 million men, were there, and for the first time since the invasion of Russia, the Germans were forced to divert substantial forces from the Russian Front.(2) Sgt. Hardy had to wait about three weeks before he crossed the Channel. He wrote later; ‘I went down to Gosport [on the 6th] to photograph the arrival back in England of the first of the wounded. I had seen plenty of people injured and killed in the Blitz, but now I began to get a sense of what it meant to be involved in the fighting. Hardy’s work again appeared in ‘Picture Post’ during the weeks around D-Day. One of his better photos then – of a winged trooper toasting someone with a cup of coffee from the open window of a train back from Normandy – made that magazine’s cover.(3)

For the first couple weeks after D-Day, Hardy spent some time waiting in army camps, before he went to a concentration area at Leytonstone, east of London. Though he was about to go across any time, he was allowed some freedom. He was even able to see his mum at Blackfriars, where he saw a ‘doodletog’ for the first time. He noted, ‘Everybody used to watch them very carefully, hoping the engines wouldn’t cut out over their house.’(4) Sgt. Hardy finally landed in Normandy on July 1, 1944, from Tilbury. He remembered grabbing a pebble from the quayside to keep as a reminder of England, ‘and as the ship sailed down the estuary of the Thames I watched Shooters Hill near my house in Eltham going past, with a sick feeling in my stomach. In my diary, it says; “Cheerio London, for now.”’(5)

The Germans were struggling to hold Caen. Hardy went in a regimental jeep with a medical officer, two stretcher-bearers, and a driver. They were headed along a scarred, cratered road in the Lebeze Woods, overlooking Caen, when they were stopped by a felled tree on the road. Bumping through the branches, they got going again,
when the Germans opened up with a huge mortar barrage of 'moaning minnies.' Hardy wrote: 'Suddenly, we began to feel very scared. Shells were falling all around us, so we leapt from the jeep, and found what cover we could. I spread myself flat on the ground just in front of the jeep, and scrabbled desperately at the earth with my fingers, trying to dig myself in.' As I dug, my fingers uncovered something smooth and metallic. Something told me to stop digging. At last, the bombardment died down, and we were able to come out of our hiding places. Luckily, nobody had been hurt. Now I had a chance to see what I had been scrabbling at. It was a Teller mine. If the jeep had gone another foot, we would have been blown up.(6)

Hardy ended up walking that day, but found plenty of picture material. He accompanied one wounded soldier back to the field hospital, where there was plenty of blood, and then he went to the beach, which the Dakotas were using as an airstrip to fly back the wounded. Hardy continued in 'My Life': 'When I got back to Headquarters, I went to find Robbo and tell him about my close scrape. Somebody told me: Robbo was killed on the job. He was the second AFPU casualty, and the second friend of mine to be killed on duty.'

All this time, Hardy was keeping very busy. He'd decided that, along with his Army work, he'd try to do one picture-story a week for 'Picture Post' and one for 'Illustrated.' Later in July, then, he photographed a maternity hospital that had been set up in a cellar on the outskirts of Caen. Oil lamps were used for lighting, and Hardy was 'tremendously impressed by the calm and gentle way the nurses managed to cope with conditions which were really very poor.' After Caen fell, Hardy did a story on homeless people living in the Cathedral there. British bombers had destroyed most of the city, but the great Cathedral had been left intact. Hardy later noted that he didn't have as much freedom as he would have liked, to 'freelance'; but he also said, shrewdly, he would then have taken more and bigger risks, and might not have been around to tell his tale.

Along the way, Hardy was assigned to photograph the popular entertainer George Formby. Wherever Formby went, though, some officer or other would ask him to have a drink in the Officer's Mess, causing Hardy to miss 'a golden opportunity to take good pictures.' Still, Hardy's best picture of the entertainer and his wife, Beryl – playing and singing in front of enlisted men – was published in 'My Life,' as well as in 'VE Day: The Album.' Later, Hardy met George Silk of 'Life' and Robert Capa. They both knew him and said they liked his work. The pair invited Hardy to have a drink with them in the Officer's Mess, but the NCO couldn't – the Mess was for commissioned officers and war correspondents only.(7)

After putting up a fierce fight for Caen, the first airfield to be taken, the German resistance suddenly collapsed there and ran for it. The Allied troops had them bottled up at Falaise, but since Paris was also about to fall, a section of AFPU men was sent to record that historic event. The British Army photographers entered Paris on August 25, after the Free French soldiers and the Americans. Hardy wrote about the tremendous adulation shown the Allied liberators. He couldn't get over the warm reception that met them everywhere in the city. It seemed; perhaps Hardy had in the back of his mind the historic reality that British troops had not often been welcome in the French capital. Hardy and his group went down a side street, and a smartly dressed woman and beautiful young girl came up to him with an enormous bouquet of flowers. 'These are for your mother,' the woman said. Then the girl showed her gratitude by a barrage of hugs and kisses. Hardy wrote to his mother about what had happened. Apparently, it touched her deeply, because she carried the letter in her handbag until the end of her life.

The next day, General de Gaulle arrived in Paris, and walked all the way from the Arc de Triomphe along the Champs Elysees to Notre Dame. Hardy took pictures of his buddies displaying, from their jeep as part of de Gaulle's procession, a Union Jack that Hardy had commandeered from a French woman. He wrote in 'My Life': 'Then, when we came in sight of Notre Dame, there was a sudden flurry in the crowds of people. It took me a little time to understand what was happening; there were German snipers firing at de Gaulle from the roof of the Cathedral. The whole mood changed. People were diving for cover, or desperately trying to run away. For a while, there was confusion; I was able to take a series of pictures of what happened until, after about ten minutes, the snipers were rounded up.' Hardy noted that the sniper fire was the only serious reminder of the war in Paris for him. The French women showed their gratitude to him and the rest of their liberators, time and again, and Hardy grew very grateful to them. He also cashed in on the French people's need for cigarettes, which went for a high price on the black market.(8)

After four days, Hardy and Ernie Water, his new movie cameraman partner, went to Brussels and Antwerp for Liberations there. Hardy photographed a story on the entry of British troops into Antwerp. While he was still in the latter city, 'Picture Post' sent out Jennie Nicholson, and they did a picture-story on Belgian collaborators. The Belgian resistance had rounded the latter up and put them in lions' cages at the zoo. (The lions had been removed.) Hardy wrote: 'Ernie Water and I went along to have a look. There were all these terribly well-dressed men behind bars, and I said to Ernie: "Look at the lovely watches they're all wearing." A member of the resistance standing next to us happened to overhear what I said. "You can have their watches if you like," he said. So he gave orders for all their watches to be taken away and handed over to Ernie and me.'

The AFPU men were headquartered in Brussels the next few months, where films were being dispatched back to London for censorship review by the Ministry of Information. Working with men who included a Captain Boltier, who later became famous with his brother as a film producer, Hardy recorded the fall of Calais as well as the Gestapo torture chamber at Charleroi. One man in Brussels had been so happy to see the British photographers that he offered to buy them a drink. Hardy went home with him later and discovered the man was a war materialer, but were now living together again due to the war. Hardy wrote, 'I saw a lot of her in the next month.' Then, Mac Hastings [modern historian Max's dad] came over as a war correspondent for 'Picture Post' – to work with Hardy. Bert lamented that he could never discuss stories in a relaxed way with Hastings then, because he couldn't accompany the latter into the Officers' Mess. But the pair did come up with a picture-story idea about an attractive girl's view of the liberation of Brussels. Her name was Yvonne, and long after she and Hardy had stopped meeting to discuss the English language in cafes over coffee and they had gone their separate ways, he still thought of her often.

For a short time, the AFPU men were headquartered in Holland, but in the final push into Germany, Hardy was there. He entered that country on November 18, 1944, crossing the border near Beauchamps. Mac Hastings and Harry Flower, their driver, followed the advance across the fields on foot, being careful to avoid mines by walking on tank tracks. There was smoke everywhere, and the smell of cordite (a smokeless explosive made of nitroglycerin), and every now and then a German soldier would loom up with his hands on his head, surrendering. The Allied troops just took their weapons and told them to move to the rear. In Beauchamps, the fighting was still going on; but the biggest news for Hardy was that Hastings had struck a deal for a Mauser and its holster with a German prisoner. 'What a catch,' Hardy wrote, 'better than a seven-pound salmon. [Hastings would] certainly be able to impress the boys in Fleet Street with it.'

Before Hastings returned to London, he and Hardy did a picture-story about an English soldier enjoying his leave in Brussels. Hardy later wrote that he showed the soldier having a hot bath, enjoying a meal, and taking a girl out for the evening. The last picture was apparently more difficult than the rest, because Brussels was still blacked out at night. Improvising, Hardy used his Contax (he was at last allowed to use some of his own equipment) with an f1.4 lens (a lens for low light situations, that was being used with a very large lens-aperture, to let more light in). He photographed the couple silhouetted against the slit headlights of a car. Hardy wrote: 'The picture(s) went back to London for developing and printing, and censoring by the Ministry of Information, and then back to the AFPU office. It just happened that I was in the next room when Major Stewart and Lieutenant Malandine were going through them, and I could hear them saying: "How does he do it? How on earth does he do it?"'(9)

After Christmas, Hardy did a picture-story on the evacuation of Dutch children to England. He obtained a nine-day pass and went home to Eltham, where he celebrated Dora's birthday and built Michael a toy yacht. He also managed to have lunch with Tom Hopkinson, 'who told me that from now on he was going to put 100 [pounds] in my bank account every time 'Picture Post' used a picture-story of mine, whether it was commissioned or not.' When Hardy returned to Germany, he was rejoined by Hastings, this time in Strachen. They learned a huge smoke screen was going to be used for the crossing of the Rhine River, to make it difficult for the Germans to see what the Allies were up to. After their first day's work, Hardy ran into Malandine at the office, and the photographer played down his pictures when the Lieutenant asked about them. 'Just some pictures of the smoke screen,' Hardy replied off-handedly. 'I don't suppose there was much in it, was there?' Malandine proposed. 'No, nothing at
all. Just smoke,' Hardy bluffed. The smoky pictures were then sent back to the Ministry of Information. A message quickly came back to the AFPU that the pictures were 'good' (they were superb) and the Ministry was holding them until another AFPU man had tried his luck, too. (Hardy was on specific assignment for 'Picture Post,' and the Army didn't want that magazine publishing Hardy's pictures first.) Once the Ministry decided Hardy's pictures were better, it allowed 'Picture Post' to publish them, simultaneous with the Army's release of a couple of his photos to the general press.

The crossing of the Rhine occurred March 24, 1945, and Hardy documented it well. The night before, he'd taken many tripod-aided pictures of tracer-fire, with the moon providing an eerie glow. Hardy risked his life throughout the night, but stuck with his camera long enough to get those pictures – beautifully timed, lighted, and composed reminders of the terrible awesomeness of war.

The next day, General Dempsey spotted Hardy as the sergeant was taking pictures of the largest Bailey Bridge being built. An impressive number of troops were crossing, and the general ordered Hardy to photograph him specifically, in honor of the occasion. Sgt. Hardy photographed General Dempsey in his landing craft, as he became the first Allied General to invade across that famous river. Those photos involved more than an average degree of danger for Hardy, because mortar fire was hitting all around their vessel; but Hardy had no choice; he was under direct orders, though at one point the General apparently warned Hardy to get down. Bert responded, 'As soon as I take this picture, Sir.'

It went well; the sergeant's best picture was used as a cover-photo for 'Picture Post.' Hardy and the general were both very pleased, then, on that memorable day – especially because the general personally approved the sergeant's pictures for release – and more history was made.(10)

3- 'Bert Hardy: My Life,' p. 63.
4- Ibid., p. 63.
5- Ibid., p. 63.
6- Ibid., pp. 63-64.
9- Ibid., pp. 66-69.
10- Ibid., pp. 69-71 & pp. 80-81.

Chapter 7:

The re-invasion of Europe by the Allies – D-Day – had begun on June 6, 1944. While the Allies swept through France, fighting hard all the way and greeted as liberators, sighs of relief could be heard in Britain. Five days later, the flying bombs ('Bert Hardy's doodlebugs'), Hitler's secret weapon, began to fall on London, and the evacuation began again. But on the south and east coasts, people were allowed back on the beaches, which had been the front line of defense, to relax. It was nearly another year before Germany surrendered, but the main theatre of war was now in Europe.(1)

Only one hope remained to Adolf Hitler at the start of 1945 – a split between his enemies; but unity held just long enough. Early in February, the three puissant old gentlemen, as Evelyn Waugh called them, carried on at Yalta with their plans for the future. One of them, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, had up his sleeve a weapon (the atom bomb) of such magnitude that it would immediately shift the world into a new dimension; but the Allied triumvirate's plans continued to be in pre-war terms of territory and spheres of influence. Roosevelt sided with Stalin against Churchill, and Stalin openly voiced his suspicions of the West. After the conference, Joseph Goebbels – German Minister for Propaganda and Enlightenment – prophesied an iron curtain's falling on a Europe divided between East and West after Germany's defeat.

One by one, the war leaders began to take leave of this world. Roosevelt went first, on April 12. Mussolini followed a fortnight later, executed by Italian partisans, his body with its face kicked in and hung up by the heels in the public square of Milan. On April 30, Hitler shot himself in his Berlin bunker. Goebbels straightaway tried to make a separate peace with Russia, Admiral Donitz with the West. Both offers were rejected. On May 7-8, Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies, still known as the 'United Nations.'(2)

Prior to VE Day, not to mention VJ Day, 'Picture Post' was humming along, trumpeting the Allied cause as never before, and looking ahead to the peace as an arbiter of things to come. Plans had been published in that magazine's way of doing business, but Hardy refused to give in. Early in February, the three puissant old gentlemen, as Evelyn Waugh called them, carried on at Yalta with their plans for the future. One of them, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, had up his sleeve a weapon (the atom bomb) of such magnitude that it would immediately shift the world into a new dimension; but the Allied triumvirate's plans continued to be in pre-war terms of territory and spheres of influence. Roosevelt sided with Stalin against Churchill, and Stalin openly voiced his suspicions of the West. After the conference, Joseph Goebbels – German Minister for Propaganda and Enlightenment – prophesied an iron curtain's falling on a Europe divided between East and West after Germany's defeat.

1- Bert Hardy: My Life, p. 63.
police had been allowed to continue their duties. The police had ordered the Russians to leave, but were quickly told where to go. Unable to assert their authority in any other way, the police had set fire to strips of paper and thrown them into the basement to smoke out the looters. Before the group had realized what was happening, a full-scale fire ensued. The policemen cleared off then. Hardy said the Russians were lucky he and Flower had come along when they did. Although about 20 people were taken to hospital, Hardy and Flower had saved the lives of most of them. The photographer recorded the incident in his diary.

But the slave laborers at Osnabruck and the Gestapo torture chambers at Charleroi were just a foretaste of what was to come. On April 19, 1945 – the day after Allied troops liberated Bergen-Belsen concentration camp – Hardy went there to record his impressions on film. He noted in ‘My Life’: ‘I have seen some terrible things in my life, but this was the worst by far. Parties of photographers and correspondents, and various military personnel who had heard about the place and had to see for themselves, were wandering about staring in disbelief. There were emaciated dead bodies everywhere: some piled in mounds where little children born in the camp played without realising the significance of what they were playing on. Others had been thrown higgledy-piggledy into pits the size of tennis courts by their comrades, whose turn would have come in a day or two.’ He continued: ‘Although I do not usually like taking pictures of corpses, I controlled my feelings of rage for long enough to take some; without such evidence, no one would believe that anything like this had ever happened.’

But the dead could be buried, the living could not. Hardy wrote: ‘The fate of the survivors was hardly better. Many were too weak to move: they grovelled on the floor with outstretched hands, begging for food. But you knew you couldn’t give them anything, because the shock of the sudden intake of food into their systems might kill them. Most of them would probably die anyway. All I could do was feel terribly sad, and try to take a few photographs.’ The survivors were dressed in rags and infested with vermin, and they stank from living in filthy huts without any form of sanitation. Allied troops gave some of the survivors candy bars, to ingest as slowly as possible. One woman with her child sat off to the side; apparently, they’d just arrived, because they looked neat and clean to Hardy. Then, the photographer entered a hut where German guards were being held. As he was standing there, some orderlies came in with trays of food for the Germans. The sight was too much for Hardy; he picked up a plate of food and threw it into the face of one of the German guards. No one reacted to Hardy’s outraged action, though, not even the Allied officers present.

Harley reflected later on the part played by most Germans in concentration camp horrors like those at Bergen-Belsen: ‘I still maintain that the average German did not know what was going on in places like Belsen. I made a point of carrying a contact print of one of the most horrifying of my photographs around with me to show to Germans who didn’t believe that such things had really happened. The authorities even posted up pictures of the atrocities in public places in German cities; but quite often the Germans still didn’t believe it; they just thought the pictures were Allied propaganda.’(5) Hardy’s pictures of the gruesome scenes there are horrifying; and yet some critics still seem to think his feelings of rage weren’t genuine. This author once read a review of ‘My Life’ in ‘Journalism Quarterly’, if I’m not mistaken, and the reviewer criticized Mr. Hardy’s motives and pictures for not being real enough. That dual-fisted criticism seems prejudiced and uninformed. VE Day came May 8, 1945. The AFPU office was now in Luneberg, and Hardy took pictures of the townspeople reading the proclamation of peace; then he settled down to enjoy himself a bit.

One day, Hardy celebrated the Allied victory with some high-ranking British officers and many Russians, having lunch at Parchim, in the Russian sector. Hardy wrote: ‘We sat down at one o’clock and the toasts began immediately: we started with Stalin and Churchill, and worked our way down until we were toasting each other, our wives, and our dogs and cats. With each toast, we tossed back our glass of vodka with one gulp (the only way to drink the stuff) and it was instantly refilled by buxom serving wenches. In this way, a considerable amount of vodka was got through.’ When Hardy emerged, drunk, at 5 p.m., Harry Flower was himself inebriated and asleep in their jeep. Next thing the pair knew, they were in the American sector and had someone’s firewood in their jeep. The firewood apparently belonged to two pretty girls, but Hardy didn’t recall the rest of that story. Maybe Bert thanked FDR in his way, next day.

Meanwhile, in Britain the Coalition Government began to break up. Clement Attlee and Ernest Bevin favoured continuation of the war-time administration until after the defeat of Japan, but Herbert Morrison – who had cherished hopes of replacing Attlee as Deputy Prime Minister – pressed for an early election. The election occurred July 5, 1945, though the result, because of votes from servicemen overseas, was not known until three weeks later. Labour had fought largely with a program of nationalizing the Bank of England, fuel, transport, civil aviation and steel. The Conservatives were led by Churchill and his ‘evil genius’, the publishing magnate Lord Beaverbrook. The latter claimed to detect in the mild commuter from Stanmore who had led the Labour Party, a person likely to introduce the Gestapo and concentration camps to Britain. When this ploy failed to work, the Conservative pair discovered that behind Attlee stood the equally sinister figure of Professor Harold Laski, chairman that year for the Labour Party.

Like many before him and since, Laski had tried to establish control by the party conference and executive over the parliamentary Labour Party, in which attempt he got small change from Attlee. He had also written, some years before, a book that laid him open to the accusation he advocated violent revolution. The ‘Daily Express’ and some hecklers at Laski’s meetings had an enjoyable time, and Laski brought a libel action, which he lost. Neither nationalization nor Professor Laski were popular with voters, particularly those in British Armed Services. They voted for Beveridge and the better life, and gave their votes to the party they thought more likely to provide it. To Attlee’s surprise, and Churchill’s disappointment, Labour was returned to power with a majority of nearly 150 – the first majority Labour Government in British history.

The Labour Party had fought the election under the banner ‘Let Us Face the Future’; and their members faced it with a Government consisting mainly of stalwarts from the war-time coalition, with an average age of more than 60 years. One of the newcomers, Emanuel Shinwell, Minister of Fuel and Power, was forced to complain that the party had been talking about nationalizing the mines more than half a century, but had failed to prepare plans for actually doing so. Neville Chamberlain had sacrificed abstractions like honor and morality for the sake of peace, and when war came, he’d tried to fight it so economically he laid himself open to the criticism of seeming primarily concerned to ensure that Britain could pay the indemnity after losing. For his part, Churchill – with the tacit consent of the British people – had thrown everything into the fray: overseas investment, export trade, merchant navy, and borrowings of almost three billion pounds.

Soon after the new Government took office, the economist Lord Maynard Keynes warned that Britain faced ‘a financial Dunkirk’ without substantial US aid. Lend-Lease (or Lease-Lend, as it was known in Britain) was quickly terminated with the defeat of Japan, and Keynes went to Washington to negotiate a substantial loan. There was a strong isolationist tide flowing in the United States, and many Americans were less than anxious to help a potential business competitor, particularly a Socialist one; but a loan of US $3.75 billion was eventually granted, on condition sterling would be convertible. When the British House of Commons debated the loan, 71 Conservatives and 23 Labour MP’s thought to do without it. The rest voted for the loan, and many were loud in their complaints of British subservience to the US policy that followed. It was in these circumstances that the Labour Government set out on its task of providing the better life demanded by the electorate. For its part, ‘Picture Post’ was busy in 1945 working to put fast-developing events into perspective. The war effort still came first, of course. ‘A Battle with the Rhine’ in the March 3, 1945, issue emphasized the way British and Canadian troops were fighting back against the Germans, who were trying to maroon the Allies by flooding the
flanks of the British position east of Nijmegen. Then came Hardy's cover-essay on the Rhine-Crossing in early April, followed by the 'Picture Post' essay 'Bertrand Russell on the Problems of Peace', in the April 21 issue. The legendary philosopher suggested three steps to world security – the superiority over wars of give-and-take agreements between parties in disputes; the folly of mutual suspicions between Russia and the Western Powers; and a 'genuine and effective League against aggression', to be formed by the Great powers, 'to settle disputes by peaceful means, and to resist aggression even when perpetrated by a Great power.'

By the June 9 issue of the magazine, its editors were very interested in the Labour Party. 'Labour Makes Its Plans for Power' reveals the ideas of the top-guns of the party that would try to win the peace, in a 17-photo essay photographed by Kurt Hutton and written by Maurice Edelman. This picture-story resembles some of the best laid-out essays by Stefan Lorant, especially during his German days. Writing later in a 'Hindsight' essay in 'Picture Post 1938-50', Edelman noted: ...by 1950 when most of its [futuristic] manifesto had been translated into Acts, the [Labour] party had begun to run out of steam.... Though it won the following election with a small majority, the Labour Party was already in the wilderness, led by old, tired and dying men.'(7)

In July 1945, though, war-hero Sgt. Bert Hardy was thinking to enjoy himself at home, even as he planned for his next military assignment. 'I had a month in London,' he wrote. 'I got inoculated against yellow fever, took Dora, Michael and Terry to the cinema a couple of times, and lost some money at Catford Dog Stadium. Everybody else's war was over, but mine wasn't.' Hardy was sensing how excellent freedom would feel, as soon as the last Axis Power, Japan, was knocked out of the war. Soon after it was, on August 17, 1945, Hardy took off from Mayfield Airport in an Army Dakota, headed for yet another true war-adventure – this time, one to be realized quite a bit farther east of Britain than Germany.(8)

Chapter 8:

Sgt. Hardy's flight to Karachi, in what was then northern India, took four days. It was a horrible start to his journey, because there was nothing comfortable to sit on in the airplane, and he constantly lay on the floor and longed for the ride to be over. At Karachi, he transferred to a train to make the trip to the Army's Far East Headquarters at Kandy in Ceylon; the rest of his journey took nearly three weeks. That jaunt also would have been horrible, if Hardy hadn't been able to arrange first class accommodations for himself and his NCO mates. There was additional compensation in Singapore's having fallen to the British on the day the group set out from Mayfield. Also, the Atom Bombs had been dropped on Japan, so Hardy noted, 'We hoped we would not have to risk our necks in combat conditions.'

Kandy was Lord Mountbatten's Headquarters when Hardy's group arrived. The man in charge of the AFPU Far East Command was Col. Derek Knight. The place needed to be reorganized, Hardy related, so – '[Knight] asked me if I would lick the place into shape, and get it running, if possible, on Fleet Street lines. As well as developing and processing all the films taken by army photographers in the Far East, supplying them with captions, and syndicating them all over the world, we also had to cope with the job of printing endless copies of Mountbatten's portrait photograph, which he signed and presented to every officer who served under him.' Knight offered Hardy a promotion to Captain. The Sergeant-photographer knew if he accepted it, he'd be in the Army another year, so he agreed to sign for it, if it came through quickly. Hardy wanted to be home soon.(1)

Hardy directed the packing of equipment and its transport to the new Headquarters, in Singapore. There, his group occupied the floor beneath Mountbatten in the 12-story Cathay Building. Then came the business of directing the photo office and lab. Hardy noted: 'It was not all that easy to get the place running as efficiently as Colonel Knight would have liked me to. For a start, there were technical difficulties; the high temperature and humidity played havoc with the films and the chemicals used to develop them; we had to use refrigerators to cool down the developing fluid. Also, we had no plate cameras, so it was difficult to achieve the kind of speed in getting photographs to newspapers that was possible in Fleet Street. On one occasion, when Mountbatten gave the salute to a fly-past of the Royal Air Force, I had motor-bike messengers standing by to rush the film from my Super Ikonta back to the Cathay Building, where they were developed and printed wet, destroying the negatives in the process, so they could be rushed to the offices of the 'Straits Times' in time to go to press.'

There were also staff dilemmas. Few of the photographers had seen any action yet. In November, Hardy went up to Surabaya in Java with a team of photographers, to cover some final mapping up of Japanese resistance. A couple team-members were not anxious to take pictures of the street fighting up-close. Without being in there up-close, Hardy knew his team wouldn't get worthwhile pictures. A certain Major Evans – whom Hardy characterized as 'a tough but fair man' – wanted to court-martial those who would not buck up to the challenge. Hardy talked him out of that. Meanwhile, Hardy's promotional paperwork had got lost in the move from Kandy to Singapore. Fed up with waiting, he began wearing his 'Captain's pips' whenever it came handy. That same month, he decided to do a picture-story on the Great 'World and New World Amusement Parks, and the red-light districts of Singapore. Out of bounds to the men due to all the venereal disease in the latter, Hardy thought he and some officers would be okay roving those districts, because he was an 'officer' doing an essay. Hardy was wrong: military police, or 'redcaps', rounded him and his buddies up, and if it had not been for the friendship of one of his pals with a Brigadier, they might have been in real trouble – especially because it was learned then Hardy was impersonating an officer.(2)

There were other 'risky moments' for Hardy. Hairy flying was the rule rather than exception in the Far East, he said. Once, he accompanied a heavy load of rice in a Sunderland Flying-boat up to Kuantan in Malaya. Attempting to land in a short space, the plane's belly split open and the rice came toppling out. Hardy noted that his group had to wait on the wings of the downed aircraft until villagers rescued them in dugout canoes. The rice was lost. Risky plane rides were a frequent occurrence in Singapore, and Hardy tried to get used to them. By then, fighting in the Far East had more or less ended. In January 1946, Hardy went to Bangkok to photograph Mountbatten signing a peace agreement with the King of Siam, which had been forced into the war on the Japanese side. Post-ceremony, three British war correspondents were to be presented briefly to Mountbatten, and they all wanted a photo of the event to send back to their newspapers. Hardy explained that his Super Ikonta could not rewind fast enough to get pictures of all three, so the trio flipped a coin to decide who should be the lucky one.

While he was in Bangkok, Hardy also got to know many true princes and princesses, because the King had many wives. One princess ran a shop, as it turned out; and one prince showed Hardy how to bet on six winners in a row at the horse races. Hardy wanted to make the most of his time in the Far East, so he then decided to go to Bali, after brief time in Java, took a week's leave, and packed his own cameras. He noted: 'Bali was the nearest place to paradise I have ever been to. It was closed because it was just too pleasant; anybody who went there was sure to want to stay. Luckily, as I had a pass giving me the right to go anywhere, I set off in March of 1946.'(3)
British photographer met a Belgian artist there, Monsieur Le Mayeurs, who had gone to Bali on holiday, but had stayed to live there and married a Bali woman. Hardy was struck by Madame Le Mayeurs' good looks, as well as her charming, generous, and friendly manner. He soon arranged with her husband to photograph her bathing with servant. Hardy wrote: 'The next day I returned with my equipment and photographed two lovely women together in a lily pond. They were happy and quite un-self-conscious [about their nudity], but they seemed somehow uneasy. I later discovered that the pool we had used was locally held to be sacred.' Other nude stills appear in Hardy's autobiography, because the women of Bali were used to wearing sarongs with no covering over their breasts. Hardy was happy these women and their babies made 'wonderful subjects.'

Back in Singapore, nearly four months after he'd signed the papers for his commission, Hardy learned from Knight that it had finally come through. The former Sergeant was not happy about it, due to its tardiness, but when the Colonel informed Hardy his commission had been back-dated to the day of signing, Hardy cheered up. 'I think I'll keep the pipes after all,' he said. Capt. Hardy moved into the officers' billet at Orange Grove Road, where he and Ernie Water could sit and talk freely again, with-out rank coming between them. Hardy had put up his Bali nudes around his bed, and he felt right at home. During his time in Singapore, Hardy made some beautiful pictures of Mountbatten. Two of these are published in 'My Life': a close-up of Mountbatten addressing some Australian troops, and Mountbatten at a military inspection with the King of Siam.(3)

Although the war was over, the Allies hadn't finished with the Japanese yet. Trials of Japanese soldiers went on, particularly of those who overseen Allied prison-ers-of-war. Some were sentenced to death, and Hardy had to go to Changi jail, where many Allied troops had been kept next to starvation, to photograph the hanging of these war criminals on a specially constructed triple gallows. Hardy wrote: 'The executions were unemotional occasions, which made the physical awkwardness of the business more apparent. Because the ankles of the condemned men were tied together to stop them kicking or running away, it was difficult for them to stand properly and keep their balance; and because their wrists were tied together behind their backs, they couldn't use their hands to stop themselves from falling. So, right up until the last minute on the trap door, they had to be held upright.' Capt. Hardy also photographed the execution of a Japanese General, who was shot after being allowed to shout three times, 'Long live the Emperor!' Hardy noted that at least the man died a loyal imperial subject, and did not require a revoler shot to the head, which he would have, if the firing squad had missed his heart.

By mid-1946, the Allied presence in the Far East was being reduced, and power was being handed back to civilian authorities. Hardy noted, 'There was less and less for me to do in my official capacity.' There were plenty of parties, though, and Hardy enjoyed these. He wrote in 'My Life,' 'I began to feel very unfit.' So, one morning he got up early, jumped into his shorts, and set off on a run. He was only gone about 15 minutes; it was a very humid day, and he felt terribly ill. The rest of the morning all he did was lie in bed, sweating profusely. In May, he photographed the installation of Malcolm MacDonald as the new Governor-General of Singapore. In June he took pictures of Mountbatten's farewell party at Flagstaff House; and in August the AFSU (South-East Asian Command) closed down its operations in Singapore. Capt. Hardy prepared to head home.

Bert Hardy carried a fair amount of booty with him, as he boarded the 'Monarch of Bermuda'. He had with him all kinds of heavy teak furniture, packed in the heavy teak packing cases he'd specially constructed. (Lessons he'd learned in his old woodworking class served him well.) But he noted: 'I had already exported many pieces of furniture, some jewelry, yards of material and much else. One item I didn't trust to the porters was a lamp standard with an elaborately carved dragon's head. As I marched proudly up the gangway with my dragon over my shoulder, a cheer went up from the troops hanging over the side of the ship.'

Capt. Hardy arrived back in England at Liverpool Sept. 8, 1946, where he paid 2 pounds/3s/4d customs duty on his teak furniture. He then travelled through the night to Number 77 Military Demobilisation Unit, Guildford, where a further 2-pound ‘mess fee’ was extracted from him 'and from every tired officer who couldn't wait to get home.' Hardy recalled later: 'By nine o'clock that morning, fleeced, I was a citizen again, plain Bert Hardy. Later that day, I was standing on the platform of Eltham Station, with all my packing cases, and my dragon lamp standard, ready to tackle the first problem of my new civilian life: how to carry all that stuff two miles from the station to my house?'

During his year-long stay in the Far East, Bert Hardy did little work for 'Picture Post.' The magazine was keeping busy, though, with all sorts of political news. For in-stance, after the surrender of Japan to the Allies, it reported on Winston Churchill's 'Iron Curtain' speech in Fulton, Missouri – where the former Prime Minister intoned the onset of the 'Cold War.' On the cover of its June 22, 1946, "Victory Special" issue, 'Picture Post' ran a dramatic photo of 'Leaders in War and Peace' – Prime Minister Clement Attlee seated next to former Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Both men were decked out with medals on their chests. Churchill also sported top-hat and cane; but both leaders seemed pleased with the event (perhaps Attlee's installation the previous year?).

In the July 13, 1946, issue, 'Life in a Holiday Camp' was investigated by Hilde Marchant, writer, and Charles 'Slim' Hewitt and Kurt Hutton, photographers. In the same issue, 'The Happy Elephant,' photographed by Werner Bischof, put readers in mind of the John Heartfield montage (of two flying elephants) published in a 1938 issue of the magazine that suggested then-PM Chamberlain's peace with Hitler would not last. In Bischof's photo, though, an elephant is lying down in a fast-moving stream, and there's mention of his holiday, which he will use, apparently, to have a lamp standard with an elaborately carved dragon's head. As I

The elephant's fate related to Bert Hardy and his photography. Hardy had been away from his own family long periods during the war, with few holidays. And he came from and made his reputation photographing 'elephants' – in more ways than one. He photographed the place where he grew up – the old Elephant & Castle District of London – and he photographed 'the ordinary mass of simple human beings' who were 'having a pretty thin time lately.' Nothing has gone at all as he hoped, and everything only too much as he expected. The war, he hears, is ended – but it's quite uncertain if and when there will be any peace. The war ended in a loud bang; and the main concern of everyone since has been as to when and where the next bang will go off. Proposals for stopping the bangs altogether have so far proved to be only the occasion for fresh arguments and threats. The elephant loves a quiet life, and so far he's had to work harder than ever in his life before – or just as hard. But he refuses to despair, perhaps things will turn out better than they look like doing;
talent wouldn't be gainsaid. That dual-fact, added to the reality that 'the paper was at its greatest', made for a potent combination. Bert Hardy was back, and how good that felt to him and to 'Picture Post'.(5)

Leslie Shaw wrote in a 1980 issue of the 'British Journal of Photography': 'Think of Picture Post and you are almost certain to think of Bert Hardy; conversely, think of Bert Hardy and you think of Picture Post. The two are practically synonymous – it might also be said that Bert Hardy was Picture Post...'(6) Yes, 'Picture Post' wouldn't have been nearly as great without Bert Hardy; and, perhaps Bert Hardy would have been only a minor British miracle-worker if there had been no Picture Post. Together, they were unbeatable for many years, though he'd done stellar work in other publications, too.

But Hardy was so closely identified with 'Picture Post' not only because he was a great photographer, but also because he was an 'ordinary' (in the sense of "everyday"). i.e., putting in his work superbly every day during war-time) Brit whod made good. In Britain, people truly know one of 'their own', and Bert Hardy was exactly that. He came from the Elephant & Castle, and he made his mark at the Elephant, among many places, because he was expert at two things – with his camera, he could size up picture possibilities very quickly, either by setting them up and/or recognizing their creative parameters, and he could snap his photos at just the right moment. When it was 'time' for the first photographer-credit in 'Picture Post' history, then, it had been no accident Bert Hardy took his 'Fire-Fighters!' pictures – the pictures that won him that credit. But in 1946, it was time to take more, equally dramatic pictures for the magazine and for his fellow Brits.

Bert was always off on adventures, like a character or two in Dickens. But now he was doing it as a genuine, well-known hero. Before, his personality may have made people sit up and take notice – now his record, as well, could do that. The legend was growing, in Britain at least; and today, perhaps it grows even farther – in America and beyond, wherever photojournalists believe enough in themselves and their artfulness, to do the work of greatness – spiritually, emotionally, physically, economically, and, in many cases, professionally.

1-'Bert Hardy: My Life,' by Bert Hardy. London: Gordon Fraser, 1985, p. 82.
2-Ibid., pp. 82-83.
4-Ibid., pp. 85-86.
6-'Bert Hardy,' by Leslie Shaw, from a 1980 issue of the 'British Journal of Photography,' p. 25.

Chapter 9:

Back at 'Picture Post', Bert Hardy wasted no time in making his presence felt again. As he'd write: 'I kicked off with a story on Sid Field the comedian, which took me to his town of Birmingham, and I went down to photograph the Bouling Brothers, whom I had last seen at the fall of Dunkirk. Then, after I had spent not much more than a month in this country, Tom [Hopkinson] decided that I had been at home too long, and sent me off to India for the opening of the first Constituent Assembly.' Hardy went to cover that nation's new independence with Sidney Jacobson (later, Lord Jacobson, but then just 'Jacq'). Jacobson knew India well, particularly Delhi, from his time there as a correspondent for 'The Times of India'.(1)

Before the Assembly's opening, Prime Minister Nehru granted the pair a ten-minute interview. Sir Harold Evans quoted Hardy's explanation of how he obtained his greatest solo picture of Nehru in 'Pictures on a Page'. The section is titled 'The Only Chance' – 'I got the journalist [Jacobson] to talk to him, and to tell the truth the interview was rather dull and it was nearly finished and I was a bit worried I'd got nothing striking out of it. Then by chance Nehru, while talking, leaned to pick a rose and smell it... In that moment I had my picture. It has been used all over the world. It is a picture that looks as if it had the whole of India's history behind it away back to the Mogul emperors.'(2) That little jaunt to India resulted in one of the most memorable covers in the history of 'Picture Post'. Above the cover title 'We Visit India', for the February 8, 1947, issue is Hardy's photo-portrait of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru smelling that rose. But Hardy wrote: 'What struck me most about India was the enormous contrast between the rich and the poor. At a party I saw a rich Indian take offence at the way a waiter had served him with a drink, and slap him hard across the face. I felt like giving him a taste of his own medicine.'

Hardy noted that his early impressions, though, could hardly match the extreme wealth he saw later that trip in Baroda, at the Maharajah's birthday celebration. For one thing, there were two small cannon in front of the main entrance – one of solid gold, the other of solid silver. He wrote that the climax of the event was, notably, an elephant fight: 'The fight took place in a huge stone-built arena. There were no easily portable long-focus lenses in those days, and I realised that to get any worthwhile pictures I would have to get as close as possible to the action. There were two stone islands in the middle of the arena, about three feet high and twenty feet across, with a small tree in the centre. I decided that I would have to stand on one of these. Jaco grudgingly agreed to come with me./' The savage elephants were led out into the arena and unshackled by their mahouts, who then ran as fast as they could for little openings around the edge,... Jaco and I stood on our island and watched with interest as the elephants began sparring with each other. Everything looked set for a good clean fight until one of them suddenly caught sight of us, and decided he could use a bit of trouble-practice before the main bout. He lumbered over towards us, and began to reach us with his trunk. Suddenly, it wasn't so funny. There was nowhere to retreat to: Jaco and I both backed up until we stood back-to-back on either side of the tree in the middle of the island... The crowd roared their appreciation of the extra entertainment. But then [the elephant] seemed to decide that if we were going to play hard to get he couldn't be bothered with us, and moved off to pick on someone else's own size. To our great relief, he forgot all about us, and continued with the main event.' Hardy was relieved, but still lamented he had to spend his first Christmas as a re-initiated civilian, in Delhi.(3)

Back in England, Hardy was sent with Patrick Campbell to interview JW Robertson Scott – a vigorous, white-haired 80-year-old with a bushy beard, retiring as editor of 'The Countryman'. His job was being taken over by Sir Stafford Cripps. (Hardy noticed Robertson Scott's nose, because he wrote that his own nose, too, which compared favorably with WC Fields' bulbous affair, made him look like a worse drinker than he was.) That day, Robertson Scott first offered the pair some ginger beer, and when the journalists started shuffling their feet, Scott leaned over to Campbell and whispered loudly, 'He looks like a man who likes his drink.' Hardy later owned up that he was something of a wine-drinker, but one beer could still make him tipsy. Hardy blamed his taste for wine on Bert Lloyd, a wine-connoisseur. In May 1947, Lloyd and Hardy were sent on one of their periodic trips to France, to cover the gypsy festival of the Black Virgin in the Camargue. Everything looked set for a good clean fight until one of them suddenly caught sight of us, and decided he could do with a bit of trampling practice before the main bout. He lumbered over towards us, and began to reach us with his trunk. Suddenly, it wasn't so funny. There was nowhere to retreat to: Jaco and I both backed up until we stood back-to-back on either side of the tree in the middle of the island... The crowd roared their appreciation of the extra entertainment. But then [the elephant] seemed to decide that if we were going to play hard to get he couldn't be bothered with us, and moved off to pick on someone else's own size. To our great relief, he forgot all about us, and continued with the main event.' Hardy was relieved, but still lamented he had to spend his first Christmas as a re-initiated civilian, in Delhi.(3)
Bert Hardy's aesthetics were subtly changing; he was becoming even more comfortable in intimate gatherings than ever, and he was portraying his subjects in the du-

cigars, he crossed his legs and exposed his bright red socks! From there, Hardy and Wyatt went to Singapore to do a picture-story on Malcolm MacDonald, with whom

and he was in the water. He decided his life was more important than his cameras and heaved himself up back onto the raft. Luckily, neither he nor his cameras were

shared a Chinese meal or two. There was a civil war in Burma in 1949, and Hardy finally went up to the front lines for pictures. There wasn't much going on there, so he

-- 'He could and would argue about anything. We were lying on our beds in our hotel room in Singapore one evening, and he was rattling on, attempting to persuade me

and the movements of the bridesmaids around her, like a ballet. I had now come to use the expressive value of movement in pictures. Later, when I worked in advertising,

He wrote: 'But when the Princess and her bridesmaids arrived, I immediately had an advantage over my colleagues; with my small camera [the rest had plate

cameras], I was able to lean over the edge of our perch, and take a quick picture as they adjusted her train. Conditions were very difficult; it was dark, and there was a lot

movement. Using my Contax with an f/4 lens at speeds of about one-tenth of a second, I was able to bring out the softness and fluency of the Princess's wedding dress,

and the movements of the bridesmaids around her, continued, like a ballet. I had now come to use the expressive value of movement in pictures. Later, when I worked in advertising,

I took it much further.'(4) Hardy's photo of the Princess and her bridesmaids was published not only in 'Picture Post', but also in "Life" Magazine. The 'expressive value of movement' was widely prized.

After Hardy did a picture-story on the Irish elections with Bert Lloyd in April 1948, he was off with Maurice Richardson to cover the Greek Civil War. They started in

Athens, photographing some 'important people,' but Hardy knew this alone wouldn't make a picture-story. They went to Thessalonika, too, where a huge Court Martial

was underway. Allowed to photograph only the Court Martial and not the subsequent executions, Hardy and his partner became desperate, but then Richardson got permission for them to go to Drama, where they would cover the 25th Infantry Brigade. The pair were not very welcome in Drama, but the commanding officer did finally allow them to go into the mountains, where they would see some action. Unwelcome there, too, Hardy told the troops the 'Picture Post' duo were staying until they got their pictures. He wrote: 'The next morning there was a flurry of excitement; two prisoners had been taken. The enemy at last! I hurried to take some pictures of them, since we had been told that the forces we were with didn't take prisoners. I expect that was why the prisoners were so terrified that they were going to be shot when I photographed them.' Hardy then laid on some pictures of soldiers crawling forward through the grass on their stomachs. Afterward, he and Richardson took the train back to Salonika. After a trip to Lamia to photograph the King and Queen of Greece, their visit ended. Hardy noted, 'The driving of the lorry driver on the torturous mountain road back from Lamia was far more frightening than any threat from the Communists, and we were pleased to get back to Athens to catch our plane home.' On that plane, Hardy and Richardson wondered why they were receiving VIP treatment. It turned out the crew thought Richardson was Randolph Churchill.

Hardy's next picture-story was with Harry Deversion, covering a young English honeymoon couple at a hotel in Interlaken, Switzerland. On their last night, the group

had been drinking, but Hardy and Deversion stayed up even later than the couple, to get drunk. After everyone else was in bed, Hardy decided the couple were up to no good, so he got out on the hotel's window ledge and inched his way to their window to shout 'Boo!' He then inched back to his room and went to bed. Next morning, he checked the ledge again and found it was only nine inches wide and five floors up.

In summer 1948, Hardy sold his old Austin 7, which he'd rented to Mac Hastings during the war, and bought a Ford Prefect. He and Bert Lloyd soon drove his new car to the Continent for a picture-story on the wine harvest at Mont, near Orleans, France. They took the scenic route, and went to Paris first. There, they had trouble finding a room, and had to spend one night with an Italian dishwasher, with whom Lloyd ended up sharing a bed after he lost a coin toss. At Mont, Hardy took pictures of the grape-picking in progress. Each day afterwards, the 'Picture Post' pair retreated with the grape-pickers to the cellar, to taste non-mature wine. Hardy said he didn't like its taste at first, but grew to appreciate it more. Also, the farmer who owned the vineyard used to tell them stories, which they enjoyed, and Hardy got some good pictures of

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al-light of visual curiosity and flexible interest. His subjects were getting used to him being around as never before, and Hardy thrived on this. If the 'moon was making faces back at him, he was now more comfortable with his own responses to those faces. He may even have seen a guinea-pig or two through his lens, but if so, they were characters of fun and purpose. Hardy's 'inner face' was maturing, and his outer disposition was showing new maturity too, as a result. Bert-the-photographer was becoming Bert-the-notable-middle-aged-veteran. Still, Bert Hardy was about to undergo more risky experiences soon-enough to prove the reasons for his fame yet again.

1-'Bert Hardy: My Life,' by Bert Hardy. London; Gordon Fraser, 1985, p. 90.
3-'Bert Hardy: My Life,' pp. 90-91.
4-Ibid., pp. 91-94.
5-Ibid., pp. 94-97.

Chapter 10:

The British withdrawal from empire after WWII – which Bert Hardy's pictures helped document in India – seemed to go more smoothly than that of the French, fighting a costly war to hold Vietnam and Laos, or of the Dutch, with their brutal 'police action' in what became Indonesia. But there were Churchillian thunderings about 'scuttle' and 'surrender,' which added to the mess of discontent spread by increasing austerity and a rising cost of living at home. For one thing, the nationalization of the British coal mining industry meant the 'new' boss was not much better than the 'old' one; perhaps the Labour Government was even worse than the strongly capitalist Conservatives had been. Also, huge snow drifts during winter 1946-47 had paralyzed industry in Britain. Inadequate stocks of coal for power plants were nearly gone; and early in February, industry in the south, the midlands and the northwest had its electricity cut off altogether. Unemployment rose temporarily to more than 2.5 million. Exports fell to a minimum.

The Big Freeze lasted until mid-March, followed by floods that devastated arable land and drowned thousands of cattle. Over the previous year, inflation had led to a substantial rise in US prices, and by June 1947 only 250 million pounds remained of the US 3.75 billion American loan from 1946, and 125 million pounds of a later dollar loan from Canada. In July, under the terms of the American loan agreement, sterling had to become a convertible currency. In February 1947, as the probable development of events became apparent, Britain had warned America that she could no longer continue the economic aid she was expending on Greece and Turkey, without which it was feared they'd collapse into the Communist camp. On March 12, US President Harry S Truman appeared before Congress to announce the Truman Doctrine, of American aid not only for Greece and Turkey, but for any free people 'who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.' Three months later, US Secretary of State Gen. George C. Marshall offered aid to any Government willing to assist in the task of recovery. The Marshall Plan was eagerly accepted by Western Europe, and rejected by the Soviet Union and its East European allies.

Amid these various problems, there was also the issue for all Europeans of war refugees. Millions of people displaced by war were still milling about the Continent. They were collecting into huge camps, from which they would slowly be returned home or resettled elsewhere. Britain wasn't quite so overwhelmed by them as other European nations; but there were still thousands of refugees and other immigrants arriving there as well, and with the other stresses on the British economy, these were too many to handle easily. But at least, at year's end, the British received some much-needed reassurance their world had not altered totally. Six reigning monarchs, and many ex-monarchs and princes-lingos too, assembled in London for the wedding of the heir to the Throne, Princess Elizabeth, to Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten RN. It was one of the largest gatherings of royalty in the 20th century, and a distinguished foreign guest told the world, 'A country which can throw such a party as that will never go under.' Indeed, it was a great party.

Abroad again, PM Attlee sped up the pace of disengagement in Asia by setting a time-limit for quarreling Indian leaders to reach agreement about partition. On August 15, King George VI yielded his imperial Indian crown, and power passed to the self-governing dominions of India and Pakistan. Massacres broke out, in which almost half a million people died, but war had hardened men's minds to death, and the massacres passed almost unnoticed in the west, as a regrettable necessity. Burma and Ceylon followed India and Pakistan to independence, and Burma formally withdrew from the Commonwealth. In Palestine, a UN Special Committee – to which Britain had passed the contentious issue – recommended an end to the British mandate as soon as possible, plus the partition of Arab and Jewish states, which would be politically independent, though economically interdependent. The Arab countries showed what they thought of this optimistic solution by preparing to sweep the Jews into the sea as soon as Britain withdrew. The Jews made their own preparations, which proved more than sufficient to their defense.(1)

For its part, 'Picture Post' was also busy with the scope of change in and relating to Britain. Hardy and Jacobson's India coverage early in 1947 was only the first of many successes editorially. But selling the magazine did not itself solve Britain's profound problems, though the magazine did suggest plausible, useful solutions to those problems. On March 22, 1947, a stand-alone photo symbolized Britain's biggest emergency. Its title was 'After the Thaw, the Problem Remains,' and shows a steam-roller standing idle in a snow drift. Its caption reads: 'A Symbol of British Industry Today? Steam-roller on a Coal-Site after one of Winter's Many Snowstorms.' Below, the text was telling: 'Only in July of last year [1946] was the American loan approved. By February 24 of this year, with a large part of British industry at a standstill, well over a quarter of the total amount of 937,500,000 [pounds] had already been spent.... Meantime, the machinery of British industry – battered and bombed, over-worked and under-tended during six years of war – was being called upon to produce as never before....'(2) A picture-story about a war-deserter (only 857 of 20,000 British war-deserters had given themselves up by then) followed, in the April 12, 1947, issue. The essay asked, 'Is this [Fred Madigan's 18-month sentence] supposed to encourage the others?' Yes, perhaps the British courts should have been reasonably lenient in their sentencings of deserters, but there may have been many incriminating circumstances.

In the July 12, 1947, issue, something entirely new is tried – a roundtable discussion on Palestine. It is notable Martin Buber, Professor of Sociology at Jerusalem University, joined two Labour MPs and an Arab official based in London for that discussion. Felix Man photographed the men, and the picture-essay is a progressive attempt by 'Picture Post' to help resolve the problem of the Holy Land. But fashion was not forgotten. In the September 27 issue, we come upon a five-page, 17-photo essay photographed by Savitry and Geiger, and written by Marjorie Beckett, entitled 'Paris Forgets This Is 1947.' What followed were some very stylish pictures of models graphed the report and Fyfe Robertson was the writer; the photo-essay shows, among other things, many youngsters recovering from the illness (polio) that had afflicted FDR. There's hope delivered for those who take proper precautions, or if infected, do what is required of them. And Dr. Jonas Salk would discover his vaccine, and the world would largely be rid of this difficult disease, before too much longer.

Brits, including parliamentarians, were paying attention to 'Picture Post' in 1947, especially after the magazine discovered a member of the new East German diplomatic representation destined for London was an admirer of Hitler, whose treatment of the Jews, he said, would be brought 'into perspective in fifty years.' The man did not
visit, after all. And ‘Picture Post’ was on the mark with more of its coverages, too. In May 1947, it published a picture of crowds two years before, celebrating VE Day in London, with caption, ‘The day we thought our troubles were over!’ It continued: ‘What has gone wrong?’ Economic troubles were causing the Labour Government no end of pain by mid-1947, and ‘Picture Post’ saw those troubles for what they were – the products of a mismanaged administration and some unwise Labour policies.

It had gradually become apparent in the period of ‘Picture Post’ consolidation soon after the war that the magazine’s proprietor, Edward Hulton, was drifting away from the path much of the rest of his staff so successfully was taking. Mostly this was apparent only behind the scenes, where Hulton, a devotee of London clubs (he belonged to six), was opposing the progressive slant of his magazine, complaining to Hopkinson about the tone of some of the articles. These ‘disturbing’ articles included the Hardy-Jacobson photo-essay on Poland, where, despite Communist domination, the pair found a praiseworthy spirit of reconstruction. Obtaining the help of a Polish newspaper, which placed a jeep at their disposal in a country with few cars, Hardy, in particular, found the situation at least tolerable. Gratefully, the Royal Wedding followed the report from Poland, and Hulton and Brits generally felt a little more comfortable, for the time being.

During all these British and ‘Picture Post’ tensions, Editor Tom Hopkinson remained strong. Robert Keee, in ‘The Picture Post Album,’ summed up the feel of that editor’s contributions to the magazine in 1947: ‘Hopkinson’s principle that captions must enhance the picture and not just describe it had always been an essential part of Picture Post’s character. The touch did not have to be intrusive. The caption to an agency picture of some happy Easter chicks in April 1947 ran: ‘The Easter symbol of hope after Europe’s worst winter since the Middle Ages.’ Another undemanding agency picture carried the simple narrative: ‘The first course in a chaise-longue’s breakfast and the last second in a grasshopper’s life.’ Regular coverage of the arts, especially plays, films, and operas, emphasised a sense of balance. Above all the paper had that supreme journalistic asset: the character of an old friend whose behaviour was nevertheless unpredictable. (3)

To many, it seemed Tom Hopkinson was doing a superb job of keeping to the character of Hulton’s magazine. Of course, he always believed his staff and readers were equal partners in the successes enjoyed by ‘Picture Post’; his principles resembled Stefan Lorant’s, in this regard. Although Lorant never delegated authority well, except to his photographers, the shrewd Hungarian knew how to keep his staff happy-enough – mainly by producing a first-rate magazine. Many differences of opinion can be forgiven when the product everyone is working to create, is successful. Hopkinson ruled with authority, too, but he also knew when to trust his colleagues. Bert Hardy was his primary ‘go-to-man’ after the war, and Hardy didn’t disappoint him. Everyone on the staff felt good, when Tom was happy.

But Edward Hulton also had to be kept happy, and that was Hopkinson’s job, too. Back in August 1945, Hulton had praised Ernest Bevin, Labour’s Foreign Secretary, for refusing ‘to dub every Pole a Fascist,’ but 18 months later, following an article he felt was unduly sympathetic to the transitional Government in Poland, he wrote Hopkinson a long, explosive memo. It read, in part: ‘I am totally at a loss to know why “Picture Post” should become more Soviet than the Soviets themselves... I must ask you in future to submit all political matters to me. I cannot permit editors of my newspapers to become organs of Communist propaganda. Still less to make the great newspaper which I have built up a laughing-stock.’ (4)

By 1948, as the situation between East and West grew tenser, Hopkinson found the pressure from Hulton mounting. He later wrote: ‘[M]y employer’s concern over what he felt was imminent war with Russia increased and I received numerous memoranda accusing me of “apaceemps”, of “reiterating Soviet propaganda” and publishing “weak and foolish” articles which did not make the national peril sufficiently clear to our readers.’ Hopkinson wrote that Hulton’s concern worried him because ‘...I had lately lost the only person on the management side with whom I had been able to talk freely and whom I felt I could count on for support. For in 1948 WJ Dickenson had relinquished, or had been persuaded to relinquish, his charge of the company’s finances, though he continued to hold the title of director.’

Dickenson was apparently that rare type of executive Hopkinson could deal with. Sir Tom noted: ‘Despite our hardly having an idea in common and never meeting outside office hours, a relationship of affection had grown up between us. This was based on my side in an appreciation of the strength of character and warmth of feeling which unerringly judged all situations to the full. In a sense, this unerringness was a measure of his devotion to the family he served and not to his own interests. When I wrote to tell him what I felt about his leaving, he ended his reply with the words, “I have been in the Hulton family thirty-six years now and perhaps I’m a bit possessive, so to relax may be a good thing.” He had named the house in Leatherhead where he and his family lived “Hulton Way”.

Hulton’s own earlier radical tendencies – he had at once advocated an income limit for the rich – dwindled in the context of the Cold War, which, he felt, should become the principal concern of ‘Picture Post’. He may have been one in which political attitudes were not too assertive. Indeed, just because of this, when Hulton himself wrote an article in the summer of 1948 titled, ‘Why I Am Not Supporting Labour’, it may have seemed merely out of keeping with the magazine’s character. (However, analysts of ‘Picture Post’ may see more left-leaning tendencies in the magazine’s content than right-leaning, especially before 1951, and pushing for Government policies like national healthcare in end-of-war Britain was a strongly asserted political attitude.) (5)

Hopkinson later wrote that just a little earlier than the appearance of Hulton’s article: ‘[I]n March 1948, [Hulton’s] views had hardened further since he ordered me to dismiss Bert Lloyd, who had now been on the staff for nearly eight years, on the ground that he could not have someone on the paper who was an admitted member of the Communist party, adding that he had not himself to be regarded as a “fifth columnist” or “sent to the Isle of Man” in the event of war with Russia. I was determined not to lose Lloyd, who was an excellent writer; nor did I think it would improve the image of Picture Post if we were to sack a capable reporter for his political convictions. I therefore offered to write Hulton a formal letter saying that I was aware Lloyd was a Communist, that he had never made any secret of the fact, and that I accepted full responsibility for continuing to employ him and for ensuring that his views did not colour any articles of his we wrote, nor influence the paper’s attitude in general. This offer was accepted, and so from month to month and year to year our uneasy collaboration was maintained.’ (4)

Bert Hardy and Bert Lloyd were best of friends. Hardy was no Communist, but he was open-minded enough to believe flexible Communists might be as good for the ‘Picture Post’ staff as flexible Conservatives. He was a photographer and a decent-enough man – as a result, he felt for the people he worked with and for. Hulton may not have thought as much about Hardy’s ‘politics,’ but the publisher could have learned a lot from his photographer’s humanity. The Cold War may have stirred the interests of Hulton’s staff behind the scenes as well as in ‘Picture Post’ per se, but other issues also moved Brits then. In the November 20, 1948, issue, an 8-page, 13-photo essay written by Lloyd and photographed by Hardy, provided a solid discussion of the question of the potential rehabilitation of prison inmates in the midst of crowded, difficult conditions. The introduction to ‘The Life of a Prison Officer’ reads: ‘Our prison system is out-dated. Public and prison officials agree. But with prison populations doubled by post-war crime wave, any progress demands more prison officers. And recruitment is tragically slow.’

The photo-essay’s first photo suggests the gist; in it, we see a small guard, the essay’s protagonist, dwarfed by the huge vaulted ceilings of Strangeways Prison. Officer Davidson is a good man called on to do a big job. Hardy photos tell a human story about him, but a negative tale about conditions in the historic prison. Lloyd’s parallel text concludes: ‘One result of all this violence and escape-mentality has been that, instead of prisoners getting more rehabilitation training, workshop hours have had to be reduced so that prison officers may give more time to searching prisoners and their cells. Like his colleagues, Officer Davidson wants to see our prisons made happier places. He believes it can be done. But, he says, far more prison officers than we’ve got at present will be needed if the prisons are to be run as decent folk feel they ought to be.’ The photos showing the huge vaulted prison ceilings remind this author (me, DeJM) of the monumental environment in Felix Man’s photo-essay with Stefan Lorant, about Mussolini from the 1930s.

From international economic and political issues and a Royal Wedding in 1947, to social-economic and political concerns at home in 1948, the varied and complex problems and solutions wrought in all these areas were on the minds of the staff of ‘Picture Post’ while the magazine was still ‘at its greatest’. In the coming months and years, Hardy, Hopkinson, Lloyd, and the rest of Hulton’s million-plus weekly readers, would be hard-pressed to think why ‘Picture Post’ should fail. But fail it would, and it’s hard to say if those key figures strove sufficiently to prevent its demise, or if there was nothing they could have done differently about it. (6)
Chapter 11:

After Bert Hardy photographed Marlene Dietrich's photo-call, he went to Positano, Italy with Derek Monsey, a journalist he wanted to forget. There, he worked on his own as much as possible, and fell in love with a doctor's daughter. Bert Hardy was forever falling in love with many women, which must have made his first wife a bit jealous or at least distracted, though who knows what Dora Hardy herself did to pass the time when Bert was gone. In Italy, he was suffering from a skin condition, and the doctor took good care of him, as did the daughter. Back in England, he photographed a starlet about to make it big, who was 'a bit different from the usual type of starlet'. Again, Hardy was working with Monsey, this time at Richmond Park. Bert later wrote: 'I took some pictures of her in the park and down by the river. I liked her, and we sat around and talked a bit before setting off home. On the way back in the car, I discovered that I had lost my cigarette lighter. I was really fond of that lighter, so I turned round and drove all the way back to the park, where we retraced our steps and crawled about in the long grass looking for it.

'The girl eventually found my lighter. She was very nice about it, and we all drove home. The next time I met her, years later, she wasn't quite so nice. She was famous now, and starring with Fred Astaire in a film being made in Paris. This was the first time he was dancing with a partner other than Ginger Rogers. She [the starlet] would have nothing to do with me when I asked her for the first pictures of her dancing with Fred Astaire. She had made an exclusive arrangement with an American photographer. In the end Astaire, who was very friendly and helpful, danced and posed for me, though she still didn't like being photographed with him. (Bert Hardy did take some very good photos of her, though, during both shoots.) 'Even so, I was still grateful to Audrey Hepburn for helping me to find my cigarette lighter.'

Later in 1950, Hardy and Bobby Birch took two young unknowns from the Rank 'Charm School' on a day-trip to Bourlogne. Hardy wrote: 'One was naughty and the other wasn't quite so naughty.' The naughty one let the photographer take pictures of the wind blowing up her skirt. She was Diana Dors, and the other young woman was Barbara Murray. Hardy's 'all-time favourite "saucy" personality', though, was Gussie Moran, or 'Gorgeous Gussie'. Gussie was a tennis player known for her short skirts and frilly knickers, which were always on display when she played. Hardy and Denzil Batchelor flew to Paris to do a picture-story about her. They had lunch, and then Hardy took some pictures of her kissing gendarmes, etc. Apparently, the group was getting on so well it seemed a shame to break up the party. Gussie had a date that evening with a rich Count and Hardy and Batchelor were all set to leave, but she would have none of it. The group went to a restaurant just outside Paris called Coq Hardi, and continued the party. Hardy took at least one photo, at one point, of the adorable tennis star in a bathtub. (He offered to find the soap!)

One day, after he'd spent a night in London, Hardy arrived at the offices of 'Picture Post' before anyone else had arrived. He was sitting in the office of Harry Deveson, picture editor, when the phone rang. Despite the early hour, Hardy answered and a business-like voice on the other end announced: 'Lord Beaverbrook is ready to be photographed. Send your man round immediately.' Hardy later wrote: 'The job had obviously been set up for somebody else to do, but as I was the only one around, I had to go. I found out that he was based at Arlington House, overlooking Green Park behind the Ritz, and I took a taxi over there./ 'It was all very difficult, as I didn't have the usual journalist to keep him distracted while I got on with taking the pictures. I had to do all the talking myself. Everything seemed to go all right. After a while, Beaverbrook abruptly said, “Have you finished?” “Yes, sir,” I said, and it was time for me to leave. While I was packing up my camera, he walked over to a tall desk, where he used to work standing up, and stood with his back to me. There was something about the way he was standing which seemed to show what sort of man he was. I quickly took out my Leica again to photograph that posture. Because of the quietness of its shutter, Beaverbrook didn't hear any other noise than the door shutting when I left. It was to become one of my best-known pictures.”

In March 1950, Tom Hopkinson sent Hardy to Bechuanaland with a relatively new staff-recruit, writer Fyfe Robertson. The ruler of that nation, Seretse Khama, was returning to his homeland after being exiled for the 'crime' of anti-racism – for marrying a white woman, Ruth Williams. Hardy and Robertson were soon at a disadvantage, because the men from the 'Daily Mail' and 'Daily Express' had found their way onto the plane on which Seretse was arriving. The magazine's duo hired their own plane to scoop the other reporters by getting pictures of the ruler waving to his wife upon debarkation. However, Seretse wasn't allowed to land on the predicted little airstrip, and he was placed under house arrest. Hardy and Robertson then got a place in Serowe to await further developments.

While they waited, the two men rented out their chartered plane to other journalists and made some money on the side. Before long, though, it became clear the reunion of the married couple was not about to take place, so Hardy and Robertson got an interview with Seretse in jail and smuggled in a bottle of whiskey, an anti-racialist crime for which they weren't caught. Then, they went back to Serowe and said good-bye to Ruth. On their way out of the country, the 'Picture Post' pair stopped at Mafeking to interview Tshekedi Kham, an uncle of Seretse. Reluctant at first, Tshekedi eventually told about a time when the British were miffed by his countrymen, and wanted to make a show of strength in Serow. They planned to position a big cannon in the town square to force respect from the villagers. Unfortunately, it got bogged down in the muddy road outside the town. Finally, Tshekedi had to come to the rescue and organize a gang of men to pull the gun out. This was how the British made sure everyone knew who was in charge.

'Over the years,' Hardy wrote in his autobiography, 'I enjoyed an immense amount of travel working for Picture Post. For all that, some of my best work was to be done much nearer to home.' For instance, as a contrast to his more exotic jobs, near the end of 1947 Hardy went to the gloomy Gorbals, then a slum area of Glasgow. He wrote: 'Knowing Bill Brandt's feeling for atmosphere, Tom [Hopkinson] sent him up to get a set of pictures of the backs of policemen standing at the ends of streets, but nothing which really showed the human side of poverty. Tom decided to send me with Bert Lloyd, to see if we could do any better....' The pair stayed at a good hotel and took the tram in daily to the Gorbals for their coverage. Hardy didn't find good pictures right away, but he'd come from an impoverished background himself and wanted very much to find some. But he did notice things from the start: 'The poverty was much worse than anything I had known around Blackfriars, and that was saying something. The long narrow streets were lined with high tenement blocks with grimy, uncleaned windows, and tattered rags for curtains. There was a tremendous amount of vandalism and drunkenness. Slowly, as we walked the streets, the misery began to get to us. There were few places for the children to play. One such place was the graveyard, where they played leapfrog over the tombstones. There was little for the men to do except go and drink away their cares and their money. But the people I felt most sorry for were the housewives. It was not their fault their flats were dirty....'

Hardy, a man with an eye for details, like Charles Dickens and/or some of his characters, continued: 'Each of the great blocks of flats had just one little lavatory at the bottom of the stairs, often with the door kicked off... I had to admire the spirit of the young girls, who still managed to look pretty and smart amid all the squalor. One day, when we were walking around, a woman standing outside her home called out to us, "If you want to see a bonny mess, come and look in here." Outside the back window we could see children playing on piles of stinking refuse. Like everyone else, they had to leave their gas-jets burning at night to keep the rats away. No one took much notice when I started taking photographs. There were two rooms: in the front room, a girl aged about sixteen, obviously pregnant, sat at a table covered with dirty cups, and a Sifa salt packet, while her brother slept in a bunk bed behind her. In the next room the man who lived with the girl's mother lay drunkenly sleeping, at eleven in the morning, in a bed with filthy sheets.'
When the picture-story was published, Brandt's pictures were published on the first page, and Hardy's with the rest of the essay. The Cockney Eye entered his Gorbals stills in the newly-established Encyclopaedia Britannica Photographic Awards Contest's 'Sequence' section, and thought no more about them. But one Gorbals photo by Bert not published in 'Picture Post' turned out to be his all-time favorite – two young street urchins off on a lark. He had pre-focused for 6-to-12 feet, as he normally did on the street, and when he rounded a corner, two boys were walking side-by-side towards him. He fired a shot and that photo will likely out-survive all other photos of the Gorbals. (2)

In early November 1948, Hardy went with Kurt Hutton, Lionel Birch, and Hilde Marchant to do a 'silly story' called 'The Pretty Girls of Leicester.' Hardy and Hutton, being veterans of such affairs, lined up several likely young women to have their pictures taken. One day when Hardy and Hutton were in their room, a chambermaid came in who wanted her picture taken, too. Hutton was not interested, but when the woman persisted, Hardy fired off a shot of her, bent over the grate she had come to clean and looking back over her shoulder with her one good eye. Hutton asked Hardy why he'd wasted his film; but that picture, of the wall-eyed chambermaid, did appear in that photo-essay.

Their stay in Leicester soon cheered Hardy: it was there he received a telegram from Hopkinson indicating he'd won the Encyclopaedia Britannica Award for his Gorbals Sequence. Back in London, Bert collected his prize – a check for 75 guineas and a plaque – in the Savoy Hotel River Room on November 16. On November 18, he and Bert Lloyd started work on a picture-story about another poor area, this time a little closer to home; the Elephant & Castle. Hardy and Lloyd had trouble starting it, as they did with their Gorbals Sequence. It was a dreary November and there was plenty of smog – everywhere. Then, one day as the pair were walking around, they came upon a young couple very much in love. Hardy took their picture, and then he heard a voice from across the street calling, 'Ow about taking a picture of me, love?' Thinking this a contact, Hardy asked: 'What are the places like round back?' The woman replied, 'Bleedin' awful. Come and see for yourself.' "What's your name?" I continued. 'Maise.' "Where do you work, then?" 'Piccadilly' "Whereabouts?" Next – she paused for a moment, looking thoughtful, and said, "Lyons Corner House." It took me a while to realise why she had been so vague: she was a prostitute.

Both Berths followed Maisie down a narrow passageway to a tiny yard, with wash hung there. Hardy looked through a window and saw a young couple half-lying on a sofa inside. Maisie said the photographer could go inside, and there he asked if he could take some pictures. The couple seemed unconcerned. When Hardy set up his camera and tripod, ‘…they watched me blankly, without moving. In the end, we discovered the reason; the girl was also a prostitute, and the man was a Canadian who had been released from prison the day before; they had spent a hard night in bed celebrating his release.' The best still from that scene was used in the 'Family of Man' group exhibition that toured the world in the 1950s; but in some places, the photo's is origin is dated 1939. However, near the end of 1948 is more likely, because the publication date (or photo-creation?) date in the caption I have from the Hardys on the back of thr print of that image they gifted to me, reads; ‘8.1.1949’ (8 January 1949, in British style). (3)

Other photos by Hardy from that photo-essay are superb, too – including his view of two children looking off-camera, one of them (a young girl) playing with a broken-down doll; his picture of schoolchildren in a graveyard with plenty of denuded trees; a silhouette of a blacksmith; and two men with caps enjoying themselves in an old folk's club. Meanwhile, Maisie's husband was in prison and she lived with a girlfriend. After their first meeting, the two Berths used to meet every day with Maisie, she being their regular contact for the Elephant & Castle picture-story now. She told many stories to the two men, and they knew she had had a hard life. For instance, during the war a 'shy' RAF man was one of her clients. Maisie had a room near Victoria Station, so the couple took a taxi to it. Inside the taxi, Maisie smelled something terrible, but didn't say anything right away. When they got to her room, she finally asked to see the man what the horrible smell was. Now aggressive, the man opened up his gas mask case and showed her a woman's breast in an advanced state of decomposition. ‘I cut that off a woman a few days ago,' he boasted, 'and now I'm going to do the same to you.' Maisie had to think fast, and managed to persuade the man to grant one last request to her before he killed her. She said if he would take her across the road to a pub for one last drink, she wouldn't try to escape. He believed her and she ran at first chance. Later, she saw him when a policeman was nearby, and the officer arrested the gruesome culprit. Maisie helped Hardy and Lloyd cover almost every aspect of life in Hardy's birth-distrcit, and they bought her some decent liquor to celebrate later. But when Hardy went to visit her a few months along, she was in prison. The photographer would write, 'She had helped us to do what turned out to be a really wonderful story. The magazine was pleased, and I got a lot of strong pictures which subsequently won my second Encyclopaedia Britannica Award.' (4)

Hardy did another picture-story with Bert Lloyd, in 1950 on the River Tyne. The pair followed it through the 'lovely market town of Hexham' and along Hadrian's Wall. Because the scenery was so beautiful around Hexham, and because the Hardy family had not had a holiday together in a long time, Bert decided to take them to Hexham a month later. The Hardys camped in a clearing circled by woods outside Falstone. Bert told the rest of that story in 'My Life.' 'When we went into the village one day to collect some groceries and a newspaper, I saw that the war was hotting up in Korea, and that a Picture Post journalist, Stephen Schimanski, had been killed flying back to Korea from Japan.' "I knew immediately that I wanted to go. I went straight to the telephone box outside the shop and called Picture Post. When I got through to Tom, I told him that I would like to go. He was pleased to have a volunteer: after the death of Schimanski he didn't want the responsibility of sending anybody to what looked like being a fairly nasty war. For the time being, he had made arrangements with Magnum, a large international photographic agency in Paris, but when he managed to sort that out, he would let me know,' Hardy continued, 'A couple of days later, we were all in our tents when we heard someone coming through the woods calling out, 'Is there anyone here called Hardy? You're wanted on the telephone.' Tom [Hopkinson] had rung up the village telephone box, and someone had come to find me. I went back to the box, and Tom told me that he had managed to put off Magnum. As soon as I finished my holiday I would be going to Korea with James Cameron.' Hardy added: 'Although I was excited, I didn't realise just how important my trip to Korea was going to be, not only for me, but for the future of Picture Post as well.' Tom Hopkinson would later let Hardy and Cameron know just how grateful he was to them for 'volunteering' for the Korean coverage. The editor let readers know, too, in his autobiography: 'Our best trouble-shooting cameraman was Bert Hardy, and the reporter most experienced in war coverage was undoubtedly James Cameron, who had joined us only recently from the Daily Express.'

In Korea, Hardy and Cameron completed at least three picture-stories for potential 'Picture Post' publication – the first was 'The Road to Hell,' published in September 1950; the second was 'Terror in Korea; We Appeal to U.N.,' which dealt with alleged South Korean atrocities, which wasn't published for many years due to Edward Hulton's un-ease about it; and 'Inchon,' which ran on October 7, 1950. (5) No matter how the Hardy-Cameron pair ended up in Hopkinson's office in August 1948 en route to Korea, it goes without saying their war reportage was sterling. First, though, they had to get security clearance in Tokyo, which they did in decent fashion. Tokyo was not the difficult part of their journey – almost everything to come, for the next few weeks, would be.(6)

Tom Hopkinson and Edward Hulton were building to another climax in their highly volatile relationship. This time, the editor could have said he rued the day he became Hulton's editor – though he never regretted that he sent Hardy and Cameron to Korea. That twosome, intuiting the tremendous courage of their editor, went into the battles they did in Korea, because although they surely respected Hulton, they loved Tom Hopkinson as much as any journalists can professionally love their editor. The stage was set, then, for a bit of rough stuff.

1-‘Bert Hardy: My Life,’ by Bert Hardy. London: Gordon Fraser, 1985, pp. 97-100.
Chapter 12:

It's been said the life of a Western journalist visiting Asian countries in war-time often has brought with it a sense of unbearable privilege. In those countries just after World War II, it must have been especially hard, then, to be compassionate, accurate, and truthful. At least some Communists were in all those countries fairly soon, and by late June 1950, the United States and its Allies were embroiled in what US President Harry S Truman termed the 'Korean Police Action'. Never a declared war for the Americans, it has more recently been called 'The Forgotten War' and 'The Coldest War'. It was all three; to important degrees, and a little more besides.(1)

If Bert Hardy and James Cameron were not friends when they left for South Korea on August 12, 1950, they were afterwards. Though it was almost 30 years before they'd meet again (when Hardy took Cameron's picture at the latter's London home in 1981, a few months before I interviewed both men in their respective homes), they went through enough of war's hell together during their Korean War sojourn, that they felt a kinship to each other the rest of their lives. But James Cameron told this author during our interview in November 1981: 'Bert Hardy is the sort of fellow you either get along with, or take out and shoot.' Cameron chose to get along with him. And Hardy said, 'James Cameron is a great writer and a very kind man.' He, too, chose to get along with his compatriot and colleague.

In 1950, James Cameron was busy on a book while in South Korea. Its title came to be 'Touch of the Sun.' One illuminating passage in it describes how Hardy and Cameron obtained Allied approval as war correspondents then: 'Getting accredited to Supreme Command Allied Forces [in Tokyo] was almost frighteningly simple. Bert and I...went to a desk somewhere in a gaunt, stark building full of what appeared to be welterweight champions in Fifth Avenue uniforms, and explained our requirements to a corpulent American major, who said "Sure, sure," in a preoccupied way, and "Fine and dandy, fine and dandy." He waved us cordially...to a young woman who had us photographed and filed...and finally gave us a little card which said that we had been...guaranteed as reliable people to penetrate the higher mysteries of the United Nations Command. No one at any time...asked to see our passports: The 'Picture Post' pair did not have as much trouble with the US military in Korea as they would with their boss, Edward Hulton, when they returned to London.(2)

On August 18, 1950, Hardy and Cameron arrived in Taegu, South Korea. Taegu was to be their base of operations for the next few days. They met Randolph Churchill there, sharing a bottle of whiskey with him; and they did their first Korean picture-story, 'The Road to Hell', around the time they left that city. The duo were headed down a dusty road on the way to the front lines, when Hardy noticed an old Korean man lying on the ground in the blazing sun. Hardy wrote in 'My Life': 'I decided to have a closer look. He must have collapsed from exhaustion, or heat, or both. There was a smear of blood, still wet, on the wall behind him, where he had hit his head in falling. His eyes flickered, so he was still alive, but his lips were parched. I thought I'd give him a drink of water to see if that did him any good, but then I had a better idea...I asked an American soldier if he would mind giving the old man some water while I took photographs. The American smiled: "Sure," he said, "just so long as the water comes out of your bottle and not mine." As far as I was concerned, it was a small price to pay. I took a few pictures and we carried [the old man] into the shade. That picture was used on a full page in the magazine.

Hardy commented on medical facilities in Korea, too, with pictures. He later wrote that the South Koreans showed a sort of indifference to their own condition, and to that of their fellow countrymen, which distressed the photographer. He'd also take pictures of North Korean prisoners being treated medically by their Southern brethren. After Cameron wrote his story in Tokyo and returned to Korea, the two men camped in the tented area at Pusan, sharing liquor and talk with Ralph Izzard, of the 'Daily Mail.' By late August or early September, the fighting was very heavy between Taegu and Pusan, the latter city being the toehold port-enclave that would help save South Korea.

At Pusan Station, Hardy took photos of the wounded, arriving on trains. One day, as they were leaving the station, '[W]e were stopped in our tracks by the sight of another type of human cargo which had come down from the North, and was now filling the square outside.' Hardy continued: 'About sixty of them – from boys of no more than fourteen to old men – were squatting miserably, dressed in rags and tied together with ropes...The human degradation reminded me of the scenes I had witnessed at Belsen. Our enquiries drew the answer that these were "political prisoners" – not North Koreans, but people suspected of having the Wrong Views. We wondered how young boys of fourteen could possibly be "political" prisoners, but since none of them had been tried anyway, it probably didn't make much difference how old they were or what they thought. At intervals, a batch of them would be separated from the rest and herded into the back of a lorry which then drove off. Our impression was that they were being taken off to be shot. We were appalled, and decided that we must try to do something about it.'(3)

Hardy and Cameron went immediately to the UN Office, because the 'Korean Police Action' was as much a UN production as an American or South Korean affair. No luck there. Then, they went to the Red Cross Office, where they were told the only people who could help were UN personnel. The pair then returned to the UN Office. Nothing. Hardy noted: 'We just felt that people in the world outside should know that these things were going on; then perhaps they could be stopped. We didn't realise how drastic the consequences of the story would be for the future of Picture Post.' Hardy sent his pictures off with Cameron's story. He then photographed for a potential report on a South Korean army recruit who didn't want to serve his country; but after Hopkinson cabled Hardy and Cameron, saying they could come home, that's what the pair thought about next. (This author has not been able to confirm the recruit picture-story was ever published in the magazine, though I seem to remember having once seen some picture/s from that coverage published somewhere.)

Before Hardy and Cameron could leave, though, a massive build-up of equipment and troops occurred in Pusan. After they talked with an American officer, the pair got on a boat headed (they didn't know where yet) for Inchon it turned out, the northwestern port of South Korea. What they didn't realize fully yet was that they were part of the UN force that would turn the tide of battle in the war, allowing the South Koreans to regain the territory lost when North Koreans attacked them on June 25, 1950(4) The tides at Inchon are treacherous and landing craft can only go ashore there two days each year; September 15 was the next time a landing would be possible.


that I was too frightened to be seasick..." Frightened the pair may have been, but everyone on the UN side who went in at Inchon had work to do, and they did it. The press and the Marines had hit the wrong beach at Inchon, one that was being "softened up" by US artillery, but they still overcame the odds and did their jobs. James Cameron wrote in 1967 that the beach was a "tormented quagmire, a lunar landscape of mud ground into pits and gullies by the tracks of the machines."

Next day, Hardy and Cameron went ashore again. They got more good pictures, of all kinds of dramatic sights: Marines and ROK troops shoring down Inchon's inhabitants, making a bigger mess of the place; UN doctors treating wounded of both sides; North Korean troops being captured; and residents responding 'happily' to the UN liberation, despite miserable conditions. Hardy took one of his most-tragic photos there – of a badly-wounded old Korean peasant walking amid the rubble and destruction. Two little girls, one with her hands up, trail after the old man; other Koreans also waved to Hardy. After a while, the threesome decided they had enough material for their Inchon picture-story, and headed out. They took a rocket-launching ship to Sasebo, Japan, then an amphibian aircraft to Tokyo, where, immediately upon arrival, Hardy tensed their packet to a BOAC steward just closing his plane's door. Hardy told the BOAC man to phone 'Picture Post' as soon as he arrived in London. It was a gamble, but the packet had to beat a September 25 press deadline.

Their packet made the deadline, and the picture-story that resulted made history. 'Inchon' was published 7 October 1950; and Hardy's pictures were every bit as good as Cameron's gripping text. Hodgson said Hardy's pictures were the best he'd ever seen, and laid the pages out himself. Those photos won the Korean War Category at the Encyclopedia Britannica/Missouri Pictures of the Year Contest, in early 1951, and one of Hardy's most dramatic landing photos appeared in 'Life' Magazine that spring. Cameron's text was emphatic about the horrors of war – he was a confirmed pacifist. But that writer pointed out, 'God was on the side of the big battalions; they were even that big.' Then, he concluded his 'Inchon' text: 'Why the North Koreans did not resist more forcefully I do not know... they lost this beachhead, they lost the town, they lost their lives, in numbers, and with them the lives of many simple people before them, who had the ill-luck to live in places which people in War Rooms decided to smash. It seems clear they could have hurt us more than they did, but the hammer was too hard... Sitting here one is glad to be alive – a bit ashamed, maybe, but glad."

As mentioned previously, the former Marine, and noted war and Picasso photographer David Douglas Duncan wrote to this author in July 1990, 'Bert Hardy and others at Picture Post earned everybody's respect, and not just for [their] Inchon shots.'(6) There was that other Korean story, too, that gained respect for the 'Picture Post' pair, as had Hardy's coverages from WWII. The materials for 'Terror in Korea; We Appeal to UN' were back in London in mid-October. Jorge Lewinski's account is relevant. Editor Tom Hopkinson knew the Hardy-Cameron atrocities picture-story was 'dramatic'. And so – 'Hopkinson checked the facts painstakingly, and the story was ready for publication in Picture Post. At the last moment, Sir Edward Hulton, the magazine's owner, intervened and suppressed it on the pretext that it would help the enemy. Hopkinson resigned [he was actually fired], and the story did not see the light of day until it was shown only recently in a television programme.'

Lewinski was not perfectly correct here – i.e., Cameron's text and some of Hardy's pictures did see the light of day before that programme in 1977. Cameron's text was stolen by the 'Daily Worker', and it was included in the report entitled 'Owner Bans Korea Exposure: Picture Post Editor Is Sacked,' which ran Nov. 1, 1950. Then, the following year, at least one of Hardy's atrocity photos was published in 'Picture Post'. In more recent years, the full layout itself has been published, too. Media and political pressures on the UN Command soon resulted in tighter controls on UN troops, including South Korean troops; while North Korean and Communist Chinese troops may have been placed under tighter controls, too, as a result of media and diplomatic pressures. (Incidentally, the infamous incident at No Gun Ri, South Korea, in July 1950, in which an AP reporter later claimed as many as 400 South Korean refugees had been massacred by American troops, which won the reporter a Pulitzer Prize in 2000, has been largely discredited since then.)

Hardy's pictures and Cameron's text in the aborted layout had been hard-hitting to Hulton especially, even if drained of some of the original passion by Hopkinson's tight editing. Journalism should not be as much a weapon, then, as Hardy, Cameron, and Hopkinson thought it should be in 1950 – at least according to Sir Edward Hulton. The promotion of more humane approaches to war, an honorable enough goal in most war-time situations, had 'tampered with' the good of the UN Command, and it needed to be 'left alone' in the magazine. Not only had socialism clashed with capitalism, but self-censorship had come into conflict with the principle of free expression.

Participants and historians have said and written that the 'non-publication' of the Hardy-Cameron atrocities picture-story was the death-blow to 'Picture Post' as a respectable magazine. But the magazine did not fold for nearly seven more years. And though James Cameron soon left for greener pastures, Bert Hardy stayed with 'Picture Post' until the end. And that photographer took many thousands of excellent photos between November 1950 and July 1957 for Hulton's best magazine. Apparently, Hopkinson – the glue that held his staff together for a decade – was not totally indispensable. His replacements (and there were many) held 'Picture Post' together halfway well (though not as well as Hopkinson had) for the remainder of its years. Hopkinson had been good; but so too were the writers and photographers who stayed on, which that editor had so meticulously brought along in the 1940s.

Meanwhile near the end of November 1950, the Communist Chinese invade Korea, and the legend of another key battle, "Frozen Chosen", was formed. Both Inchon and the Chosen Reservoir provided environments for turning points, one favoring each side. In the end, the war bogged down and was ‘ended' by an armistice signed in July 1953. As of early 1951, a peace treaty had not been signed.

Soon after being in Korea, Hardy and Cameron were on their way to India from Japan, and Hopkinson was still at the magazine's helm. Cameron was a good friend of Prime Minister Nehru and the reporting team spent a relaxed time with that leader and his family. At one point, the trio were joined by Nehru's daughter, Indira Ghandi, and her own son, Rajiv. Hardy photographed them together by a lily pond. In that still, he was picturing the next two Indian Prime Ministers, plus the then-present one. Both younger offspring would be assassinated, though, before they'd served out their terms.

Back in London, the twosome worked with Hopkinson on their atrocities report. There was other work to do too, but the staff still had Hopkinson's predication on their minds. Hardy wrote in 'My Life.' Bert Lloyd and I were wandering around London looking for the best Guy Fawkes we could find for a story on Bonfire night, when we heard that Hulton had personally ordered the presses stopped at Sun Engraving in Watford, and the issue of Picture Post to be made up again without the story of the political prisoners. Rumbles and noises of dissent began to be heard. There was talk of mass resignations if this sort of interference in editorial policy happened again. Bert [Lloyd] and I were up in Birmingham starting work on a story about a day in the life of a typical shop girl, which ended up as "Millions Like Her"..." Hardy wrote in 'My Life.'

Hardy originated that in spite of all the talk about mass resignations, most of the staff stayed put. Hulton may have been forced to make a severance payment to Hopkinson, but he would not do so for anyone else. The photographers, in particular, would have been hard hit by resigning – there were no other media vehicles to compare with 'Picture Post' in Britain then. And so, Bert Hardy went back to Birmingham, with mixed feelings, to finish his picture-story on the shop girl. He'd begun that photo-essay with old friend Bert Lloyd, and now he would have to be happy enough with Hilde Marchant as journalist. Soon enough, he was being satisfactorily challenged by other good picture-story assignments. Tom Hopkinson was a close friend and superb editor for his work, but Bert Hardy had to survive – and survive he did, with sufficient courage and skills.

Many scholars have speculated in similar cases about how well worker ownership of such publications might do. But John H. Whale, a noted British journalist, wrote that no matter who owns a specific publication, it's still essential to pay for salaries, newsprint [and today, computer-networking, too], and advertising. And because of the example of the Labour Party's failings in the 1940s and later, many Brits are still happiest when they have a 'boss' supervising their work patterns. The staff of 'Picture Post' may have been upset with Hulton's firing of Hopkinson; but it should go without saying that most of them also knew where their bread was buttered then, as their
publisher instructed them somehow, and Tom Hopkinson – great a man and editor as he was – wasn’t the man signing their pay checks then. Edward Hulton was.(10)


2-From this author’s November 1981 separate personal interviews with Bert Hardy and James Cameron; ‘Touch of the Sun,’ by James Cameron. London; H.F. & G. With-erby Ltd., 1950, p. 293.

3-‘Bert Hardy: My Life,’ by Bert Hardy. London: Gordon Fraser, 1985, pp. 118-120. Hardy’s estimate of 60 prisoners was probably his ‘first take,’ compared to Cameron’s total figure, during the day, of 700 prisoners (see Cameron’s autobiography, ‘Point of Departure’), in Pusan.


5-‘Inchon,’Picture Post,’ October 7, 1950.

6-From a July 3, 1990 letter by David Douglas Duncan to me, this book’s author.


8-‘The Picture Post Album.’


Chapter 13:

Tom Hopkinson used to say his photographers on ‘Pictures Post’ were ‘racehorses.’ All they needed was to be got to the track, fed, and cared for properly, and they would act like thoroughbreds. Bert Hardy was the lead-racehorse, among all Hopkinson’s trusty stallions and fillies, because he was not only the best trouble-shooter for the magazine, photographing regularly in the most dangerous and difficult circumstances, but also he was the most naturally artful of photographers on the magazine’s staff, because of the advanced social and aesthetic qualities of his pictures.

Bert Hardy had his own decent and informed view of the aftermath of ‘The Hopkinson Decade’ at ‘Picture Post.’ He noted in ‘My Life’: ‘Although things quietened down after Tom’s sacking, they were still not back to normal. At that stage it was impossible to guess just how much the paper had lost when he went. Looking back on it, it seems quite clear that without Tom’s social commitment, Picture Post lost its edge and its popularity. Contrary to the opinion still held in Fleet Street, people aren’t only interested in pictures of pretty girls when they buy magazines.’(1) Ted Castle took over for Hopkinson as ‘interim editor.’ Castle was an able replacement, for the most part; but he would be ousted by Hulton in a brief period of time.

Meanwhile, Hardy and Cameron were paired up again in a ‘silly story’ at Bertram Mills Circus about a little boy who wanted to be a clown. Then, at the outset of 1951, they were sent on a coverage in the direction of Tibet. The Dalai Lama was fleeing from a Chinese invasion, and the Himalayas were 28,000 feet high and 6,000 miles away. The British duo never got to see that great Buddhist leader, but they did experience the awesome power of nature in the Himalayas. Along the way, they did picture-stories on the natives of that region. Still paired, Hardy and Cameron were next sent to Spain, where labor strikes were on people’s minds. Hardy had to be especially careful because picture-taking was absolutely forbidden there. Cameron made some contacts with the underground, and eventually got a free ticket to a bull-fight for one of their meetings with contacts. The journalists stayed in Barcelona.

Back in England, Ted Castle, who served as interim editor for the six months Hulton had originally agreed to, was sacked May 1, 1951. Frank Dowling, once an advertising man, replaced him. Dowling had a chauffeur-driven car and was a completely different type from Hopkinson. Still, Hardy liked him, especially after Dowling gave him a 500-pounds-a-year raise. Dowling also liked Dowling’s son, Brian, a staff-journalist who took over as the photographer’s best friend after Bert Lloyd resigned. (Brian did the interviews with Bert Hardy for Bert’s autobiograhpy.) Hardy claimed that beneath young Dowling’s posh, public school appearance lurked the heart of a true prankster and world class boozzer. They once worked on a special Northern edition of the magazine, and when they were doing that in Liverpool, they used to ‘go out on the razzle-dazzle every night.’ The twosome also worked together in Paris several times. In May 1951, they were doing a picture-story on a night-club called the Bal Tabarin. Hardy sensed the story wouldn’t ‘make’ so with 36 hours left there, he decided they could do a picture-story on a Sunday morning in the Champs Elysees. Hardy noted in ‘My Life’: ‘In summer all the cafes (in Paris) have tables with large parasols outside on the pavement. I wanted to capture the feeling of Sundays with everyone looking natural, so I didn’t want anyone to know I was taking photographs. Brian and I sat down at a table with a drink, and I set my Rollei (a 2-1/4”-square camera with a normal lens) at a distance of about six feet, and kept my eyes open. Whenever I saw a good subject, I would start to explain to Brian how the Rollei worked: “This is how you wind the film on. You look down here for the viewfinder. And you press this button to take the picture. “ Because of the reflex viewfinder it was easy to aim the camera without looking as if that was what I was doing. And the shutter action was so quiet that nobody noticed what we were doing. This was how I managed to make one of my best-ever stories out of an idea forced on me by the desperation of a pressing deadline.’ Hardy may have been up to some tricks when he took those pictures, but he did remember it was the Lord’s day, and also took a good photo of a priest walking with newspaper.(2)

Later in 1951, the magazine’s circulation was declining, so Frank Dowling decided to run a 10,000-pound competition for amateur photographers. Hardy was to launch the contest with an article about how to take a picture. Hardy wrote in that article that the person behind the camera is more important than the type of camera he or she has. Box cameras, he noted, were as good as plate cameras. Dowling said he would have to prove that. Hardy wrote: ‘[Frank] arranged for me to travel up to Blackpool, where I would be presented with a Box Brownie by the Lord Mayor. I would then have to try to make a really good story’. As per instructions, Hardy went to Blackpool (with Brian Dowling) and received his Box Brownie. Then, Harry Deverson, the picture editor, phoned and told Hardy to leave to do a story with Derek Wrage-Morley on an Irish island. Hardy only had time left for one trip up the beach and one trip back before leaving. He continued in ‘My Life’: ‘With a standard-issue Box Brownie and a close-up lens plus yellow filter and an improvised cardboard viewfinder, I roamed the Golden Mile looking for suitable subjects. In the end I got a couple of show-girls from the pier theatre to help me. The picture I eventually took of the two girls sitting on the railings with their skirts blowing up has been one of my most popular photographs. People who have hardly even heard of me will suddenly remember that picture: “You’re the man who took the picture of the two girls on the sea-front at Blackpool.”’ The picture may have been a bit laid-on, but it seems as natural as milk in a bottle. It was used on the cover of ‘The Picture Post Album,’ and is a ‘grabber’ from the start. Hardy next teamed up with some old friends from his ‘Bicycle’ days to cover the ‘Tour de France’ – Bill Mills and Jock Wadley.

About then, Bert’s marriage to Dora began to break up, even as his prosperity increased. He blamed it on his life-style and soon moved his family to Blackheath from Eltham. Hardy wrote: ‘Although I had probably changed because of my job and the sort of people I met, the fact that I was hardly ever at home was... as much to blame as anything for the fact that I and Dora stopped getting on. By now, I was working on several stories a week’ Also, Hardy’s seeing other women, on and off the job, may have had something to do with the final breakup with his first wife. Hardy then did an essay on hop-picking at Kent with young Dowling, including a beautifully lit still of Cockney children playing under a tree. From there, the pair went to Portugal for a similar picture-story on the port wine harvest. Hardy did a superb picture-sequence
there, with his silhouette of a man with loaded mule at a gate being gorgeous.

From the wine harvest, Hardy and Dowling went to nearby Fatima for a story on a festival for the end of the Holy Year. Fatima was the apparent place the Virgin Mary had appeared to three girls in 1917, and hundreds of thousands of pilgrims were making their way there along the dusty roads in motor coaches and on foot. Mass was being said continually but the high point of the celebrations was a great ceremony at night. Hardy wrote: "Thousands of people watched as a statue of the Virgin surrounded by fantastic gold lanterns was carried to the sanctuary in the Chapel of Apparitions. It was a dramatic scene I liked: candle-lit and full of atmosphere. I used a flash bulb to freeze the faces in the foreground, and the slow speed of about one-tenth of a second picked up the light of the candles of the pilgrims in the background and blue[red] the candles, and added an extra feeling of energy to the picture."

After Fatima, Hardy and Kenneth Allop began a coverage of political unrest in the Sudan. However, they cut that stay short after their car was attacked by protestors and fists thrown at them. From the Sudan, the pair went to Kenya. Hardy photographed stories on native rain dances and the local prison. Then, he and Allop went on an elephant hunt. Apparently, a rogue elephant was trampling natives' crops and had to be shot. Hardy had a close call, and saw an elephant dropped in its tracks 7 or 8 yards from his feet by a British Commissioner with a hurricane gun. Hardy claimed he was more scared at that moment than he was at Inchon.

Back in London not long before Christmas 1951, Hardy covered a party at the Empress Club in Piccadilly, attended by the Duke of Edinburgh, Frank Sinatra and Ava Gardner. He was the only photographer allowed in, and wanted pictures of the husband of the future queen. The Duke didn't want his picture taken, but Hardy managed to get some good shots of him dancing rather closely with Ava Gardner. However, when he got back to the 'Picture Post' darkroom, Edith Kaye decided the pictures were too compromising, and destroyed the negatives (though some of the images survived, because one or two of them are published in Bert's autobiography from 1985). Also at Christmastime that year, Frank Dowling came under a cloud at 'Picture Post,' and went off on a long holiday. While the elder Dowling was gone, Hardy was on the Continent aching to be home. Since his Tibetan journey with Cameron in Jan. 1951, Hardy had been to France three times, to Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Egypt, Kenya, Sudan, Greece and Turkey, not to mention Lancashire and Kent. Once he got back to London, Bert started a new picture-story with Brian Dowling called "The Life of a Chorus Girl" in Piccadilly, but the number of pages in the magazine had been reduced, and the picture-story was pulled.(3)

Other Hardy coverages got less play than formerly, and he began to wonder about the future of the magazine. James Cameron had left the magazine already, and then, after he returned from Egypt and his coverage of the ascent of General Noguib, Hardy found the situation at 'Picture Post' getting even worse: two photographers and four more journalists had been sacked. Besides that, Hardy was sent to Main-Maa (a secret society dedicated to the violent overthrow of British rule) country in Kenya, where he escaped a close call or two. Also, he had again entered pictures in the Encyclopaedia Britannica/Missouri Contest – his Piccadilly portfolio. In Kenya, he learned to ride once more that contest; 'Picture Post' was finally forced to run some of those pictures. At about this time, John Pearce, Hulton Press's Managing Director, who'd tried to calm everyone down when Ted Castle was sacked and Frank Dowling appointed, was himself fired. Hardy went to Italy shortly thereafter and photographed Ingrid Bergman and her baby twin girls. In Belgrade next, Hardy was attracted to some very smart-looking professional women, but his 'phobia' about paying for sex prevented him from taking things further.

However, Hardy came upon a good photo-op in Belgrade when President Tito agreed to be photographed by him. Tito's wife came into the meeting unexpectedly and Bert took one set of black-and-white and one set of color pictures in about ten minutes. It was the first time Tito's wife had been seen in public by the media. Those intimate photos helped evoke a funny question about the friendship between husbands and wives. Hardy was asked by Mrs. Tito, 'Why do Englishmen always want wives and husbands to appear so closely united when [Yugoslavians] are told that British wives wear the trousers and beat their husbands?' On Coronation Day (2 June 1953) for Queen Elizabeth II, Hardy was allowed to take one picture from a rooftop as her coach passed. It was used on a full-page spread after being rushed up to Sun Engraving at Watford.

Then, Hardy went on one final holiday with Dora and the boys, to Gairloch. It rained non-stop and realizing the vacation was costing him a lot of money, Hardy did a picture-story about sheep being rescued in the mountain. When he got back to London, he presented it to Frank Dowling. Because Hardy was a full-time employee, Dowling said he could pay him would be expenses. Hardy wrote: 'Without giving him time to reconsider, I immediately presented my claim for two weeks' stay for the family in a bed-and-breakfast, plus liquid refreshment and mileage. There must have been a few raised eyebrows in the accounts department, but it was passed. It was my greatest-ever expenses coup.'

In August 1952, Hardy was offered a job by 'Life' Magazine in New York. He said they offered 3-to-4 times what he was earning on 'Picture Post,' but, he wrote: 'I knew that on Life, even the best photographers only got about one in three or four stories used, and that they often spent up to three months working on a story. I liked to work under pressure: I didn't think I could work properly in that sort of vacuum, so I turned down the offer. When I let this be known to the management of Picture Post, they rewarded my loyalty by giving me a new and bigger company car.'

After Hardy came back from the Gairloch holiday, he went in to have his right eye (his viewpoint eye) checked. He had to spend some time in at Whitechapel hospital and because he was treated decently by everyone there, he decided to return with Brian Dowling and do a picture-story about it. In October 1952, '… we went and spent ten days covering every aspect of life in that hospital, from prayers first thing in the morning to lights-out at night. Although some of the doctors were not all that keen on our presence, we got on extremely well with most nurses and patients. On the last night, Brian and I smuggled a couple of bottles into Rachel Ward and, in a small room at the end of the Ward, we had what can only be described as a fairly wild party with the nurses and a couple of patients who had been with me. Some of Bert's pics from that assignment remind of the best hospital photos he took in WWII.

Eventually, in November 1953, Frank Dowling was fired. Edward Hulton himself took over the top editorial spot on the magazine, and he named Len Spooner, formerly editor of 'Illustrated,' to be his assistant. From that crucial point, as Hardy wrote, 'The decline of Picture Post went into top gear.' Hardy soon found himself covering football games with 8 ASA film. (His shutter speeds must have been super-slow!) His assignment to the Berlin Conference, then, was an exception rather than the rule. It was 'bread-and-butter' material, but not interesting to do, Hardy claimed. Still, he was the only photographer to get pictures of Anthony Eden shaking hands with Molotov.

Back in England, Bert Hardy found himself doing too many laid-on picture-stories, including a fictional series about what happens when a prisoner leaves jail. More-than, under Hulton's editorship, the magazine's lead-photographer now found himself doing picture-stories with titles like 'Frankie Howard Rescues Three Pretty Girls,' or photographing Eva Gabor, Zsa-Zsa's sister. One of Hulton's ideas was a series called 'Personality Girl.' A different girl was featured each month, and as Hardy wrote: '[I]t wasn't normally her personality that distinguished her. They were usually bright young things, and often seemed to have double-barrelled names. I had a bit of fun with Miss Jocelyn Wardrop-Moore by getting her to scrub the steps of her Kensington mews cottage for the picture. I think she enjoyed it too, and I'm sure it was a novel experience for her.'

One compensation for staying at 'Picture Post' was that Hardy was becoming friendly with the Hultons – especially Lady Hulton. He went ski-ing with her in Switzerland, but didn't actually ski himself. It went to Germany to cover a factory that produced artificial limbs (his father's old business). And in early 1955, he was present for the laying of the foundation stone of Hulton House in Fleet Street. Everything was not perfectly well, though, in Bert's world then. Kenneth Allop left the magazine in August 1955, and more staff were sacked that November. But Hardy wrote: 'Although it was getting more difficult to do good stories, it wasn't impossible. A story I did about an unemployed man in Londonderry just before Christmas was so touching that it brought in a record number of donations from readers.'

In November 1955, Bert's father had been admitted to St. Francis's Hospital in East Dulwich. He was still there when, three weeks later, his mother also had to be admitted with what turned out to be leukemia. Only two days later, she died. His parents had been moved in later years, from Blackfriars to Crystal Palace, and their eldest
son didn't think they were as happy in their new surroundings. The old neighborhoods – where Albert Sr. earned the nickname 'Seagull' for telling his wife his pay packet had been stolen away by a big seagull, when he had, in fact, drunk it up – would have been a nicer place to leave this world from for both Hardy parents. In early 1956, Hardy did a picture-story called 'Loneliness in London,' with which he used a model whom he soon recommended for a job at 'Picture Post.' Her name was Katherine Whitehorn, whom became a famous journalist herself.

Meanwhile, in March that year, Bert called it quits with Dora. He noted later he had been leading a double-life with future wife Sheila, who was on the magazine's staff as a picture-researcher. He wrote: 'When I telephoned Sheila to say that I had made up my mind, she thought for a bit, then asked me to make sure to buy a bottle of milk on my way to our new address (brother Sid's house in South London). No sooner had we moved in than I was sent to Cyprus to cover the civil war there.'(4) Bert Hardy was a war photographer once more; but did he want to be just-then?

Chapter 14:

Bert Hardy covered the war in Cyprus with Timothy Raison, son of Hulton Press Director Maxwell Raison. Hardy later wrote: 'The war in Cyprus was a dirty war. It didn't have the photographic interest for me of the Korean War.' He wasn't fond of the guerrilla nature of the action, but did come up with one vivid view of British troops searching an old man with a donkey, for explosives. The photo shows either the 'calmer' side of that war, or its more dangerous side, depending on what the viewer thinks the chances are the old man has a bomb in his belongings. Next, the Hultons asked Hardy to fly to Rhodesia, where he took pictures of them in Salisbury; then he photographed their tea plantation in Nyasaland. After flying over Victoria Falls in a private plane with Lady Hulton and taking more pictures of her (which made a two-page color spread in the magazine), he flew back home with her and her party.

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2-'Bert Hardy: My Life,' pp. 135-139.
3-ibid., pp. 139-157.

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Hardy made the 'Strand Man' famous. He'd started out with a female and a male model one night and began taking pictures. Before long, Hardy realized the woman looked like a pick-up, so she was let go. Hardy wrote in 'My Life': 'From then on it was plain sailing. At about midnight we were on the Albert Bridge, with some final shots of the model leaning against the parapet. Terry was holding a strong torch to get just enough light on the man's face to look like lamplight without losing by contrast the streetlights in the background, many of which were now being turned off. We ended up at about six o'clock at a coffee stall in Sloane Square just as it was getting light. From that night's work, for which I paid 80 guineas [the old guineas used to equal 21 shillings, just over a pound] each, and two 48-sheet posters, for which I was paid 250 guineas each. It was a very good night's work, and as a result I was asked to shoot the whole campaign, which lasted over a year.' Later, 'Monsewer' Eddie Gray, of the Crazy Gang, imitated the Strand Man in his act.(5)

Soon, Hardy was hired to do Heineken's and KLM campaigns. He was doing three or four times as much work as the average advertising photographer, and still traveling a lot. He liked making good money and being able to use his own ideas with his cameras. For a full-sized BP poster ad, he decided to use movement creatively again. He had his son Terry drive quickly along a Kent-Surrey-boundary road (soon he would be living nearby) while he sat in the trunk, and took a picture with a slow shutter-speed and trees framing the action. It worked beautifully. By July 1960, the end of his first full year of advertising, Hardy had earned 25,000 guineas (more than 25,000 pounds). For an Electricity Council ad, he used brother Sid to model. Sid was supposed to be a night worker coming home to a nice meal, ready and waiting for him in his electric oven. Sid built a fake fence and they painted it green. Everything worked fine, as a real milkman's truck came along when the light was right. Hardy got his picture. But then along came a real night worker on his bike, cycling home. As he slowed up, Hardy opened the gate of the little fence and the man pedaled straight through, 'gripping all over his face.'

After that, Germany's 'Stern' Magazine teamed up the top photographer and journalist from each of several countries for some special issues, and Hardy and Malcolm Muggeridge were chosen from Britain. They went to Belsen, among other places, and Hardy told his famous partner about his throwing a plate of food in a German guard's face. As they stood by the giant slabs marking the graves of Belsen's victims, Hardy noticed Muggeridge crying and left him to it. Another thing, he was walking around Munich. When he saw a baker's window full of cream cakes, he asked permission to take pictures from behind the counter. As if on cue, a smartly dressed family came along – all rather on the heavily proportioned side – who stared at the cakes. 'The look on their faces,' Hardy wrote, 'told the whole story.' He took many pictures that week, and they were used over two editions of 'Stern' magazine.

Odhams had been letting Hardy use one of its offices, but in 1962 he had to leave it. He noted he was having trouble finding a place until – '[Brother] Sid noticed a little building up for sale in Burrows Mews, off Blackfriars Road. It was opposite a bomb-site which had once been a school where, as a boy, I had listened to the saucy stories of the instructor who was supposed to be teaching us all about petrol engines; and it was only a few hundred yards up the road from Friar Street and the Priory Building. Sid did the conversion work in record time. Within three or four weeks I had a new office with a proper developing and printing laboratory downstairs. I now managed to persuade Gerry Grove, who had worked for Hulton's and Odhams for years, and was without a doubt the best printer in London, to join me. The partnership of Grove Hardy was set up.'

After five years of advertising work, Hardy's client-list shortened and he decided to buy a farm. He had been discussing the idea with Sheila a while, and on Feb. 21, 1964, they viewed a 50-acre farmstead in Surrey (which they would live in together until Bert's death in 1995, and which Sheila continued living in thereafter). Four days later, they bought it. At end of April, they moved in, learning everything about farming from scratch. Their bible was 'Primrose McConnell's Agricultural Notebook,' a 19th-century text.

Bert soon did a promotional book with Lionel Birch about the 'Queen Elizabeth' cruise liner, and Sheila was temporarily left alone. Leaving a return-trip, dockside party back home (into which Sheila had been smuggled) in the early morning hours, the photographer was driven back to the farmstead by his wife. Arriving at dawn on a beautiful morning, Bert was eager to start his new life as a farmer. He wrote, 'Instead of going to bed, we climbed the haystack. It was very ticklish, but of all the uncomfortable places I have slept, that was the best. 'I was back home.'(6)

Bert Hardy loved that home, and he loved Sheila and his family, too. He made a beautiful photo in 1978 – of two of his grand-daughters running in a lane leading to his house. This author owns a copy of that picture (as I also own a wonderful children's photo-essay booklet by Bert, 'A Horse Grows Up,' and his other photo-books, too). It is a truthful rendering of 'the light' in Bert Hardy's life near the end. He lived, of course, 17 more years from that photo's date; but in his 'retirement,' as he told this author in our last phone conversation of January 1995, 'I still take pictures occasionally. I don't lecture regularly any more about my work, but I still take pictures.' Bert may also have said to me then, something he said perhaps more than once: 'Everywhere I look and most of the time I look, I see photographs.' The title of one of my own photo-books is, 'Most of the Time, I See Photographs.' Bert lectured at times at London College of Printing about his life and work. That was in the 1980s, mainly. He was named an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, too. And he kept his printing business and his farm going. Mrs. Hardy still lived on that estate in Surrey, at last check. And she also ran his printing business in London, until about 2007, which in later years was called the Bert Hardy Darkroom, where Charles Keeble was Principal Printer and Manager.

While Mr. Hardy was living, near the end he sent me and my son picture postcards, Christmastesimes. We own about 15 of those signed picture postcards; they are all Bert Hardy originals. One of my personal favorites is a view of a large statue of Jesus Christ on a cliff-side overlooking water. It was the last Christmas card sent from him to us while he lived, and he was pleased to know we liked that card very much. Sheila Hardy continued sending Matt and me Christmas postcards after Bert's death. One of the last cards, I believe, showed a dark wood in black and white, with fog rising up between the trees. It reminds of what Sir Tom Hopkinson said and wrote about the fate of 'Picture Post' at its close: 'Who really killed Cock Robin? I think the truth is that a magazine has a special character of its own, and it has to keep to that character. It is for that character that the readers buy it, and it is this character which keeps the staff enthusiastic and united. In its last years Picture Post became not one, but many different magazines. So I do not think that television is to be blamed for killing Picture Post. I think it just lost its sense of direction and wandered off into the fog.'(8)

Bert Hardy noted in his autobiography that he never loved his advertising work the way he loved working for 'Picture Post.' There was a special feeling about that magazine, he said, and it made him the kind of photographer he will always be remembered to have been – willing to set up a shot every so often, but mainly focused on the truth, and the beauty and wonder of human life, in all its depths and dimensions. In Nov. 1995, four months after his death from a heart attack, there was a memorial service for Bert Hardy, Picture Post hero and legend, in the Fleet Street area. St. Bride's is the Church of Journalists of Britain, and around the time of his memorial service there, a memorial plaque was put up in the church. This author could not attend that service, much as I would have liked to; but Sheila Hardy assured me there were many key people there that day. Also, more recently, a Historic Marker, the Blue Plaque, was placed on the Priory Building Bert Hardy was born in. And various exhibitions of his work have been occurring, too, including at London's famous Photographers' Gallery.(9)

Even more crucially, I'll wager there was a 'spirit' in the air the day of his memorial service. Bert's spirit (like that of the spirit of key characters in Charles Dickens's best novels and stories) is alive everywhere in British journalism these days (there was even another British journalist named Bert Hardy, who died more recently – a famous newspaper publisher and/or editor); perhaps it is also living throughout the rest of the world, as well. If it is, that spirit says, 'Take a picture of it; it not only lasts longer; if you do it well, it also lasts stronger.' The heroism of that legendary Fleet Street photojournalist should be clear to anyone now who knows about him and his life, which was dedicated to photographic work, his true vocation. Come-up from a 'raggy' early existence, in key ways like a Dickensian hero, Picture Post's Bert Hardy made the most of his opportunities in this world; and rarely looked back. He loved his family, though, till the end, and they knew that, completely.

For Mr. Hardy's extended family, then, his legacy lives on, in many ways. His two sons (Michael and Terry) have grown up to be first-rate photographers, like their...
father. They still love their father, as do their mother; and they love Sheila, too, very much – in fact, it's incredible the way Bert Hardy's legacy was and is loved today. His career may not be as well-known in some places as in others; but this author will wager that someday it will be known everywhere. Bert Hardy was a champion thoroughbred and a rock, a diamond-rock. His life and work will stand the test of time. And his contributions to the world of photography? We'll deal with those more specifically in our final chapter. Bert may have had his weaknesses – like any human being – but he also demonstrated tremendous courage, talent, and resolve. He never truly doubted his parents or his siblings; and if he couldn't make everything right with Dora, his first wife, he did make things right with their children, and with Sheila. That is saying a lot.

One additional thing about Bert Hardy: he would not have been as successful in this life as he was, if God (of one description or another) hadn't been looking after his best interests. Bert knew when 'the Lord's day' was, is, and will be; he also knew God forgives those who forgive others. Perhaps, like all of us, Bert's life needed some forgiving; but it also exhibited a lot of loving. He had a great deal of love to give; and he found love in return, time and again. I guess he was very lucky that way. This author, for one, is extremely grateful to God and to Humanity that Bert Hardy – and with him, James Cameron – came into my life when they did. It has occasionally been 'hell-to-pay' thereafter. But it has often been 'heavenly' thereafter, as well, more often heavenly than not.

2-From this author's 1981 phone-talk with Gerry Grove.
6-Ibid., pp. 182-183.
7-Ibid., pp. 183-187.

Chapter 15:

Prof. Michael Hallett, a notable British photo-scholar, didn't give much credit directly to the contributions of Bert Hardy and other key contributors on the 'Picture Post' staff—where Bert spent the keyest part of his career—in that author's serial essay, 'The Picture Post Story,' which appeared first in 1992 in the 'British Journal of Photography.' Later he published a large-format pamphlet based on that serial essay, 'The Real Story of "Picture Post".' Prof. Hallett focused on the Stefan Lorant period (1938-40) of editorship at the magazine, plus the earlier magazines Lorant edited, and though Stefan Lorant set in place the tone, philosophy, and early layout principles of 'Picture Post' in the initial two-year period, Tom Hopkinson had to actually direct and edit that magazine the next ten equally crucial years, and could lay out a page fairly well himself, too, because he learned from editors like Lorant. For his part, Leslie Shaw saw an enhanced contribution by Bert Hardy during the span of that magazine (1938-57). Shaw wrote in 1980, "Bert Hardy was Picture Post. The truth exists in-between, but Bert turned out to be equally valuable to Lorant's and Hopkinson's worth there, and some other key personnel's, too.

In his serial essay, Prof. Hallett quoted Stefan Lorant regarding that founding editor's original intentions at 'Picture Post': "I wanted to appeal to the masses, the common man, to the workers, to the intelligentsia. I jotted in a little notebook what I wanted to do, and I still have it. The first sentence in it reads, "to print the truth and to do it honestly." Then it continues, "to enlighten the readers of subjects on which they have little knowledge; never talk down to them; never underestimate their intelligence; but share with them a common knowledge, to learn together."(1) Lorant's ideal was and is an honorable one, no matter what publication one is referring to. And it has been said of Bert Hardy that he 'eventually became known as an "all-round cameraman" (who) established what has been called a "populist idea of Britain"."(2) To be sure, if Bert Hardy had done nothing else when he worked for Edward Hulton at 'Picture Post' (and he did plenty else), he should be thanked for at least helping to establish that populist idea of Britain – in war and peace – or perhaps he strongly helped re-establish it, because Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and many other Brits had begun establishing that idea before him.

It's relevant three of Mr. Hardy's images were included in the greatest humanist-populist, group photo-exhibition so far, Edward Steichen's 'The Family of Man.' All three photos were taken during Hardy's years at 'Picture Post.' The first (in order of appearance in Steichen's exhibition catalog) is Hardy's still of a Burmese monk-philosopher in a 'despairing' classroom moment. Steichen's poetic caption for the entire spread that photo is a key feature of, reads: '... the wise man looks into space, and does not regard the small as too little, nor the great as too big; for he knows that there is no limit to dimensions.'(3) That two-page spread suggests the range of the human mind, and the strength and size of the human heart. The second Hardy image there is a photo that very much helped re-establish the populist idea of Britain. In fact, in 'How Hulton and the Hungarian Made Picture History,' Hardy's photo is published with the caption: 'Bert Hardy's Elephant and Castle couple: "this was the start."'(4) Bert's photo of a prostitute in the arms of a convict just released from prison, with beautiful window-light shining in on them in otherwise dreary conditions, suggests again the range and depth of the human mind, heart, and yes, eye. The third and final Hardy image in that catalog is the photo of a Burmese girl and a woman (her mother) in a church interior in England.

As Prem Olson, one of my printers while I lived in 1981 London, said late in my semester, "I know of a man who takes good pictures, and also tells a very good story.' Sally Soames, a 'Sunday Times' photographer, had recommended I have Grove Hardy Ltd. print my BW's early that autumn. I didn't think much more of the connection, but so many things and people are connected on that 'small island,' Britain, that after Prem mentioned the man he knew of was Bert Hardy, I phoned Mr. Hardy (he turned out to be co-owner of the printing firm Ms. Soames mentioned that September) – to write a story about him and take a picture or two of him. And when I first walked into the Hardys' home, I spoke of Ms. Soames' colleague John Whale, my editor at the ST. The Hardys asked if his name was 'Mr. Wall,' and I said, 'Mr. Whale.' Notable walls figure into both men's works.

Even if Bert Hardy's photos alone have been enough to work over human hearts and minds, his added-in life-story evokes even more poignancy, humor, sadness, joy, and empathy. As Robert Kee, a writer-colleague of Bert's at 'Picture Post' and a great author, noted in 'The Picture Post Album'—once Bert had purchased his first Leica and took pictures of bicycle races with it, he'd found his medium. Kee quoted Hardy, 'Swinging the camera with the movement [of a bicycle race] and using it generally as an extension of my eyes came naturally to me.' Kee noted, 'These two simple principles, coupled with his discovery that by using forced [lab] development he could obtain pictures in almost any light, were to help make one of the great photographers of the age.'(5)

Tom Hopkinson wrote in 'Contemporary Photographers' that Bert Hardy was one of the great recorders of social conditions, in the tradition of John Thomson, Jacob
Riis and Lewis Hine. (He also might have mentioned, in the tradition of Shakespeare, Dickens, and Dorothea Lange, too.) Hopkinson also wrote that Hardy revealed the character of people, much like the satirists Rowlandson and Hogarth did earlier in Britain. Bert Hardy was a populist-satirist-realist who knew how to suggest people's inner lives as well as the conditions they lived in, as he told their very personal, and often, personable stories, via photos combined with words. Hardy did so for a magazine known for its environmental, character-oriented portraits and action-shots. As Kee wrote, 'Picture Post caught characters in a moment of their own... without imprisoning them within it.'(6)

The 'Cambridge Biographical Dictionary' includes an entry about Bert Hardy: It reads: 'HARDY, Bert (1913- ) English photo-journalist, born in London. He started as a messenger and laboratory assistant in a photographic agency and although self-taught was, in 1938, one of the first to use a 35mm camera. He was on the staff of Picture Post until 1957, except for service as an Army photographer from 1942 to 1946, during which he recorded the horrors of the concentration camps, and his later assignments took him to the Korean and Vietnam [I've never been able to confirm Bert photographed in Vietnam] Wars. After the closure of Picture Post he was in much demand for advertising until his retirement in 1967 [1964 was the year Bert Hardy took up farming]. In both war and peace his portrayal of ordinary people was outstanding, and his records of London under the Blitz rank among the finest of the period.'(7)

If Bert Hardy wasn't the only person who made 'Picture Post' work, he was a great contributor to its finest efforts; and no complete history of 'Picture Post' should diminish his name or works in the final record. The courage of Bert Hardy was as heroic as his talents. During the German Blitz of London, at Osnabruck, in Pusan, during the Battle of Inchon, and elsewhere, he made his photos work, because he persevered, with great human wit and heart, in the face of intensified obstacles and dangers. He may have been just as afraid as any other person to be where he was, but somehow he managed to excel in those risky places, come what may. Perhaps it was his thoughts of growing up poor and hard-working, but loved, that kept him focused on his vocation and, in key ways, his family.

James Cameron once wrote a much-quoted passage I included in my complete history of 'Picture Post,' 'All the Best,' suggesting a writer can disappear from early from most events and pen something later to go along with the pictures, but the photojournalist has to be on the scene and fully present at events, and often sticks his/her head out in the midst of dangers, to bring back his/her pictures. In 'The Best of Cameron,' JC stated it more succinctly: 'We were both, I think, equally scared to death, but Bert was perhaps less used to being scared to death than I, and it has to be remembered that while a writer can skulk in a ditch and think about his story the cameraman has to stand up and take pictures.'

Bert Hardy, as great as he and his work were, never rested on his laurels; with his family and friends, he knew he could never afford to. When his siblings stole his sweets from him when he was young, he knew enough to hide them. And he came to love his few sweets very much. He especially treasured, then, what his mother used to do for her children, noting: 'My mum, Blanche, was a very hard-working woman. She had to be with seven kids to bring up. At one time, she used to work in the evening as a charlady at a big house near the Tottenham Court Road. As the eldest child, I had to look after my brothers and sisters while she was away. At about 8.30 we would go and wait for her by the bus stop at the Obelisk (now St. George's Circus)--a line of us, with the youngest in a push-chair... At last a number 1 Tilling Stevens bus (a strange bus which was partly electric and partly petrol-driven) would arrive, and my mum would get off and we would rush up to her, happy once more. Sometimes, if she could afford it, she would buy us a pennorth of sweets between us as we walked home.'(8)

Another personal note here. Bert's paternal grandfather used to paint doors for a living. In fact, he was a master painter of doors. Reading about him in 'My Life' made me think of the picture I took of Bert and his dogs by a door at Bert and Sheila's Surrey farmhouse. I believe I took four photos of him by that door, but the keeper is my best view of BH and his dogs, Lizzie and Kim, a print of which was added to the Photographs Collection of the British National Portrait Gallery in 2003, donated to them by him. Charlie Keeble printed it and delivered it to the NPG, at my request. (The Bert Hardy Darkroom always did superb and enduring work for me, and never over-charged me.) Also, as Mrs. Hardy told me in our ca. 2005 phone conversation, 'I know you took that picture, because I was there when you did.' Unlike Bert Hardy, this photographer-author has not won many awards yet for his photos, though I've won some for my books and writings. I have gained many name-credits for both my published writings and photos, though. Included among them are my writings about Bert Hardy and 'Picture Post' in the 'Weekly Missourian' (1984), 'British Heritage Magazine' (1990-1991), 'Journalism Quarterly' (1991), 'British Journal of Photography' (2002-2003), 'Smithsonian' Magazine (Mar. 2007), and 'RPS Journal' (July 2015), and in many of my books, including 'Spirit of the World,' 'Spirit of America;' 'Pictures of Human Life;' 'Fame: Among the People;' 'Human Character,' and 'American Eyes.' And my part in Bert Hardy's story would be incomplete without my having written a complete history of 'Picture Post', in preparation for a photo-history class I took with Josef Prof. Hanno Hardt in 1993, which photo-history came to be titled 'All the Best.' Also, I've written a dual-biography of Hardy and Cameron, 'Cradial Colaboration' (2013), which grew out of my pamphlet 'A Quintessential Picture Post Crisis Recall'd'(1998), the latter of which my 1981 London teacher and editor John H Whale said was the best piece of writing I'd done until then. I included a citation from one of John's own books, "Journalism and Government" in AQPPCR and in TCE in a couple places. My tandem-solo-bio book for 'Cockney Eye' is 'James Cameron's World.'

I also need to say that when I was researching and writing my fairly involved, end-noted essay about Dorothea Lange ("Photographic Equality"), the editing of it was assisted by Graham Harrison, founder of a photo-histories website, which I was also assisted in by a good mutual friend of ours at Getty Images (which owns Bert Hardy's best works), its London Vice President, Matthew Butson. At the time, I read and was positively informed by two essays Mr. Harrison wrote and published about Bert Hardy, especially "The Life and Times of Albert Hardy (1913-1995)". I will always be grateful for Graham Harrison's part (and Matthew Butson's, Prem Ohrens, Sally Soames's, Sheila Hardy's, and Charles Keeble's, too) in my education about Edward Steichen, including Joanna Steichen, John Szarkowski, Wayne Miller, Mary Funk, Jon Tarrant, and Roger A. Grant, as I am grateful, too, for my part in the education and happiness played by my direct-ancestors (including, I discovered in 2012, the 17th-century explorer Louis Joliet), my parents (David A. Fitzgerald-Marcou and Rose C. Muskat-Marcou), my son Matt and his family-to-be, my siblings (Dennis, Dan, Tom, Diane, Lynn, and Mary- Kate) plus their offspring and significant others, other members of our family, good friends, teachers, students, peers, the US Army, UPS, Fed-Ex, USPS, the Pulitzer Prize Competition, theatres, designers, binders, readers, archivists (especially Kelly Krieg-Sigman, Anita Doering, and The La Crosse Public Library and Archives, Nancy Angelina), including the Minnesota Historical Society's Jon Nelson; the Smithsonian Institution's David Habersch, Tom Frail, Ann Shumard, Kim Sajet, Laura Manaker, Jennifer O'Neal, the directors and staffs of the American and British Portrait Libraries and Archives, the American Art Museum, the National Gallery of Art, and the National Assembly Library of South Korea, publishers (especially Speranza LLC, DigiCOPY, La Crosse History Unbound, Blurb, and Sue Schuermann, who created a very impressive Missouri J-School Library web-page for my works), designers, printers, binders, curators, and exhibitors for my/out works, plus Bob Mulock, May's Photo, Kevin Blum, Richard Dungan, Dale Barclay, Mark Smith, Charles and Christine Freiberg, David W. Johns, the Yi and Sim Families of South Korea, the La Crosse City Housing Authority, the La Crosse Tribune, and all the schools (especially St. Joseph's Cathedral's, St. James, Logan, Central, Onalaska, and Aquinas High Schools led by courageous administrators/teachers like Ted Knuston), colleges (UW-Madison, U-Minneapolis, UI-Iowa City, UM-Columbia, Drexel University, Western Technical College, Madison Area Technical College, and UW-La Crosse), and all the religious centers my family and I have attended and will attend, the Muskat Family, the Marcou family, my good cousins Steve Kiedrowski and Ed Marcou, our clergy (including the Diocese of La Crosse, FSPAs, School Sisters of St. Francis, Missionaries of Charity), sponsors, subjects, counselors, medical staff, and providers of many positive kinds. All of you make our world go around, as do God and All the Good Souls in Heaven and on Earth.

Bert Hardy's favorite picture was his view of two young street urchins off on a lark in the Gorbals slum of Glasgow. If ever a photo of his revealed character/Â’s, that one does. The boys are walking towards him, yet just off to the right, and the mood is upbeat, despite their poor attire (old shorts and sweaters). Their 'looks' always reminded Mr. Hardy of his youth in the old Elephant & Castle District of London. And he must have been pleased with the inner faces those boys' faces brought out in him, and in all of us who care about people in photos. Sheila Hardy, his widow, has her own favorite picture. During the Winter of 1947, when Brits were suffering greatly from a treacherous Blizzard and energy shortage, Bert Hardy took a photo outside the Hercules Bicycle Factory at dawn. It shows men milling about in the snow near factory.
buildings. It is a mood-poem as well as a decent overall view of people in their environment, and it is the photo used opposite the dedication page in 'My Life'. Bert Hardy, who first made a photographic name for himself taking pictures of bicycle races, gave as much love to people, then, as he received from them. Some people may criticize Bert Hardy for his dealings with his first wife, Dora, and the long absences from her while they were married. Mr. Hardy admitted later he'd made mistakes in that first marriage. If their marriage could have worked, and the way to make it work had been shown to the couple, without sacrificing overmuch Bert's calling, he may have worked harder to make that marriage last. But Bert did find a gem in Sheila, guardian of his life's and works' best interests. Others may criticize Mr. Hardy for doing 'laid-on' or set-up photos. He did quite a few of them, especially early and then later in his career; but he always liked real people best, in real situations. During warfare, especially, his photos were generally unposed, and his courage and skills demonstrated in abundance. We're grateful most of his photos were 'The Real Thing', as one of the photo exhibitions including his works was called.

A.N. Whitehead once wrote, 'The mind is never passive. It is a perpetual activity, delicate, receptive, responsive to stimulus.' Bert Hardy's work was never passive; it was active generally. He was always looking to improve on his best work; and he was forever looking flexibly new photos. He utilized angles, techniques, cameras, and people no one else thought to use before. And if he was self-taught as a cameraman, he knew how to school himself properly;(9) Mr. Hardy 'went with the flow', whenever possible. And yet, in editorial conferences at 'Picture Post', Bert Hardy came up with good ideas. In the field, too, he knew how to adapt his ideas to circumstances. He was as fluid as he was firm in the thought-processes that go into great photography. Perhaps those basic elements came partly from his grocery store days, when meeting people in quantity required a key degree of quality, too. Whitehead would have respected Bert Hardy, who lived Whitehead's philosophy in the 'real world' in 'real time'. When Hardy and Cameron walked into General MacArthur's office one day during the Korean War, Cameron told me the general said to them, 'Godammit, now what are you two doing here?' – the good UN Commander must have been thinking the pair were a couple of 'troublemakers'. But Hardy and Cameron were working Whitehead's 'insistent present' as few journalists before or since. They were the vanguard for change, and the good general didn't like his porridge stirred too much, I'd guess. Bert Hardy liked change, but one thing he didn't like was the thought of giving up working for money. He was a 'blue-collar capitalist', a man who loved to work, and who loved the financial sustenance that came with it – for he liked to use his talents well, and not sit passively by to merely rake in his keep. He'd been raised for survival, in a Neo-Dickensian world, and survive he and/or his work still do – in this world, and hopefully, in the next as well.

Bert Hardy said he never had much faith in organized religion, but once said he'd thought about becoming a Buddhist. And yet, as time went by, Bert Hardy grew to have an appreciation for what God, in some form or another, had given him. And his images include photos of many clergy over the years, too. He enjoyed photographing Fatima and St. Marie, and his picture of a nurse praying in his Whitechapel Hospital picture-story is an example of a delicate eye, giving credence to the idea of God in all our lives. Sir Tom Hopkinson used to speak of the 'clear issue' that brought his editorship of 'Picture Post' to an end. For him, it was a question of the free expression and political independence of his staff, because without those traits in their work, the readers, and even the owner of 'Picture Post' would not have been well-served. To that end, Bert Hardy and 'Picture Post' knew how to look hard and record, as Stuart Hall once wrote.(10) Without those abilities, the Hardy-Cameron picture-story of atrocities at Pusan, Korea, would never have been done. Even earlier, Bert would not have been able to photograph well at Bergen-Belsen, if he did not have those abilities. It's conceivable Bert Hardy may have had a hand in the demise of 'Picture Post'. But it's also true he contributed so much of a positive nature to its pages, it may have been only a matter of time before he reached his 'limit' and/or that magazine did. Bert was almost too good to be true, as Tom Hopkinson would have been the first to admit. The way young Bert came into Hopkinson's life and career when he did was as close to miraculous as a journalism miracle can be. Sir Edward Hulton didn't worship at Sir Tom's altar after 1950, but the Hultons came to like Hopkinson's leading find, Bert Hardy, very much. And Sir Edward did his share to make 'Picture Post' great, like Lorant, Hardy, Hopkinson, Cameron, Lloyd, Kee, and the rest of the staff, subjects, and readers. When Stefan Lorant came to him in 1938 to begin the first popular photo weekly in Britain, Sir Edward Hulton may not have known it fully then, but he was joining hands with some of the greatest media professionals ever to bear that name. And, eventually, they all came to believe, as this author does, in the 'Picture Post' mystique, which in non-religious ways perhaps, is a little like the Mother Teresa mystique. I also photographed the Saint of the Gutters, and later received 18 inspirational letters from her, In some key ways, knowing Bert Hardy was like knowing Blessed Mother Teresa, both human gems, with unique personalities, who understood public relations well.

Bert Hardy was once humbled by the moon, the same moon Neil Armstrong walked on, and Neil passed in recent years. As a result, Bert and his work still teach us that knowing Blessed Mother Teresa, both human gems, with unique personalities, who understood public relations well.

1. 'The Picture Post Story,' by Michael Hallett. 'British Journal of Photography,' July 2 (pp. 13-15), July 9 (pp. 23-23), July 16 (pp. 24-25), and July 23 (pp. 24-26), 1992; 'Bert Hardy,' by Leslie Shaw. 'British Journal of Photography,' NM, 1989, pp. 24-35.

Man on a Ladder, ‘Fire-Fighters!’, Feb. 1, 1941 (Earned BH First PP Photographer Credit) by Bert Hardy.

(Left) Marlene Dietrich Wows Journalists at Savoy Hotel, London, 1949, by Bert Hardy.

(Right) Bert's Favorite Photo: Gorbals Boys, Glasgow, Scotland, 1948, by Bert Hardy.
The UN’s South Korean Political Prisoners, Pusan, Korea, 1950, by Bert Hardy.

Hardy and Cameron in Korea, Sept. 1950, by Ralph Izzard.


(Below) Rural Dean of Stepney (Dean French) Chased Happily by Children, England, 1942, by Bert Hardy.

President Eisenhower Campaigning for Re-Election, USA, 1956, by Bert Hardy.

(Bottom) US 1st Marine Division Landing on Sea-Wall, Inchon, Korea, Sept. 15, 1950, by Bert Hardy.


Elephant & Castle Couple (‘Family of Man’), London, 1949, by Bert Hardy.

Royal Army Troops Checking Man and Donkey for Explosives, Cyprus, 1956, by Bert Hardy.