



With the Colors *Aug. 24, 1943*

Captain Howard J. Nagle writes his parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Nagle of Willow Hill vicinity, from North Africa:

"I have felt 100 per cent here so far until last night when mosquitoes and a case of 'nerves' kept me from sleep. I have gotten along very well since activating my new company. However, there are some extremely disgusting things which some of us have to tolerate and which makes just one more reason why I would like to get this war over with.

"I have told you some of my earlier impressions of this region. The location is ideal. Although the sun is high and hot at midday, there is always a cool and refreshing breeze from the ocean. We are very near a large city and I go in on business often. I try to get in during the day to do a bit of shopping, for there are many articles made in this section of Africa and in France which are still in some of the stores. Prices used to be cheap but with the influx of foreign military forces, the people have taken advantage of it to raise prices two or three times.

"There are more and finer public buildings and homes here than in the place we were when we first came from the States. I have been in one great cathedral, which I had thought was Catholic, but found that it was Protestant. Some of the ancient Arabic parts of the city are off limits to American military personnel. I drove a truck through the Arabic section yesterday.

"One characteristic of the Arabs seems to be laziness and a tendency to sleep during the day—anywhere, even on the sidewalks. They have camels, horses, cows (for beef only), and lots of donkeys, sheep and goats. A chaplain, Lieutenant Barker, and I took a drive out in the country one evening and saw a lot of the natives first hand. One little donkey was pulling a big cart with a family and provisions, apparently coming from town. I always think the article most used by the Arabs is a stick with which they beat their poor donkeys, for they beat them almost all of the time.

"We drove up alongside a camel carrying a big load. It was funny to watch the beast with its high rear end wobbling from side to side and swinging its long neck and head steadily from side to side. Many of the Arabs hereabouts live in thatched huts and from the outside you can't tell which huts the goats, dogs or people live in. They probably all live together. We bring Arab laborers here to our camp each day. They are queer people. Some must be good and others not so good. They have a faculty of walking over something they want, squatting slightly and presto, it's gone. They wear every description of clothing, mostly holes, and I see them sometimes wearing such hats as wooden boxes and big hunks of paper roofing.

"I have seen considerable of the big air forces which are operating in North Africa and it would do your heart good to see these first class fighting planes, which are doing so much toward softening the enemy in Italy and Germany. Alongside the American activity is a lot of British RAF. Those boys are really veterans and their work is primarily with fighters.

"The Supermarine Spitfire fighter is about the most thrilling sight to behold as it streaks through the air. I think the most thrilling thing I ever saw was a Spitfire on the tail of an American P-38 Lightning as they roared overhead at better than 400 miles an hour and doing something like 600 miles an hour in power dives.

"Perhaps you remember what an ardent proponent of air power I used to be, and of the part heavy bombardment would play. Well, the heavy bombers have been doing a more remarkable job than I ever thought possible. The 'queen of the skies,' the big four motored B-17F, Flying Fortress, is the grandest of all warplanes. In future struggles, the worn out doughboy will be very grateful to these bombers and the British for their help in bringing the enemy to his knees."

To Mother

I miss, mother, as never before;
And this day I am thinking of days
of yore,
We were so happy, our little family,
And I wonder if e'er 'twill be as used
to be,
We can only hope, I do realize,
That the day soon will materialize.
I have plans for that day, just as you;
And will our plans all come true?

We believe they will, for without that hope,
Life, now, would be like a sour note.
But it will be over, and our plans come true;
And before long I will return to you.
That day of returning and that day of rest,
Will be enjoyed by many in that peacefulness.
Life will be made normal as 'twas in the past;
'Twill be full of happiness, laughter and gladness,
So tell sis, dad and brother, too,
That your son will be coming home to you.

—Captain Howard J. Nagle

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Private James R. Meeks, who is in an Anti-Aircraft battalion in Sicily, writes his sister, Mrs. Edward Wilson of Newton, under date of August 11: "I received a letter from you this morning but it was an old one. I'll tell you a few things about Africa. It's not so hot and it's a pretty place. You probably have it pictured as a jungle; at least I did have at first. The people are Arabs, French and Italians.

"Did you see the movie 'Casablanca?' I have been there and it sure is a nice place, with lots of pretty girls, too. Africa was a paradise compared to this place. All there are here are vineyards, mountains, ants, mosquitoes, fleas and Dagos.

"As far as telling you anything about this war, I can't. You probably know more about it than I do. But I assure you I'm not training. I am all right and getting along fine.

"As far as my getting home before the war it over, I don't know. I sure would be glad to get back once more, but I want to go ahead and finish this fight now that I'm over here. I sure enjoy getting letters, so keep writing as often as possible and tell me all the news."

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A Newton soldier, Engineering Student Ray A. Weber, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Weber, is among the approximately 3,000 men now in training at Michigan State college, Prof. S. E. Crowe, coordinator of the Army program on the East Lansing campus, announced today.

Ray was assigned to MSC under the Army Specialized Training program, which sent 800 engineers and 300 language and are students to the college for academic and military study.

Engineering students receive instruction in mathematics, English, and technical subjects. The language and area men study the language, culture, economics, and political history of areas which are expected to come under Allied military government before the war ends. All academic instruction is handled by members of the college faculty, Professor Crowe said.

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Private Fay G. Bixler writes his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Bixler of near Newton, "that you may think it's tough being rationed in the United States but you don't know what it is compared with the way we're rationed here in England." He is with a United States Army Air Force unit in England and has been for a year. He was originally a gunner but more recently has had some sort of a job that keeps him on the ground.

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Lieutenant (j. g.) Glenn Bayles has been spending a short leave with his mother, Mrs. R. E. Bayles and his brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Harry H. Love of Newton. He is a flying instructor at the Naval Flying school at Olathe, Kansas, and flew to Newton in a plane. He flew quite low over town, Thursday afternoon, doing barrel rolls, upside down flying, turns and dips before landing near Newton.

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Private Delbert Wilson is spending a few days with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Wilson and his wife at Newton. He was called to Elgin by the death of his brother-in-law, Emil Daus. Delbert was recently transferred from Camp Robinson, Little Rock, Arkansas, to Camp Fannin, Tyler, Texas.

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Major Homer Kasserman of Oakland, California, was in Newton for a few hours, Monday, meeting his son, Private Homer Kasserman Jr., who was here on a furlough from Macon, Georgia. He was enroute to Chicago on Army business.

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Private and Mrs. Homer Kasserman Jr. are spending a furlough at Newton. He will probably be given a discharge from the Army Air Force in the near future, for he has been in the hospital much of the time since joining up at St. Louis.

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Second Lieutenant Raymond Wagner Jr. is spending a short leave with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Wagner of near Newton. He has been at Camp Wheeler, Georgia, and is being sent overseas.

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Staff Sergeant John F. Groth is

visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Groth of Wheeler. It is his first furlough in a year. He is being transferred from an Air Base at Jacksonville, Florida, to Washington, D. C.

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Seaman Duane Sims is here from Great Lakes Naval Training Station, on a furlough following the completion of his boot training.

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Corporal Estle I. Short, is now in Company A, 741st Tank battallion, (M), Camp Pickett, Virginia.

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Corporal Jacob D. Flinn is visiting his parents and other relatives near Latona.