



With the Colors

Aug. 3, 1944

Corporal Louis C. Meislahn writes from North Africa in a letter to his brother, Donald Meislahn of Island Grove, and his sister, Mrs. Roe Adkins of near Lis, written May 16 and just received last week:

"I suppose you wonder where I have been and what I have been doing so, I will try and tell you. We left the states the night of January 13 and landed at Casablanca the afternoon of January 25. It was a swell trip, without a bit of trouble. We stayed there until March 17, then we loaded on the train and went east over to Tebessa, a trip of about 1,200 miles.

"That trip took us just a week, as the trains over here aren't as fast as the old Pennsy. Tebessa had only been in the Allies' hands a short time before we arrived. We stayed south of there a couple of days and then headed for another little town just taken by the Allies a few days before.

"After a day there we headed for El Geuttar and Sunday, March 28, we got in our first scrap. We stayed there until we had all the 'Jerries' chased out of that country and then we headed north and got into another little scrap up there. Everything went o. k., not a man hurt, and no hardships whatsoever. I didn't lose a minute of my precious sleep.

"Right now we are camped south of Maeteur. Yesterday we went to Tunis and one of these days we are going to see Bizerte. It's really some life and not to bad at that.

"The barley is ripe and the wheat and oats soon will be. Yesterday we saw several farmers cutting barley, some were using a scythe, some used a mower and some had binders exactly the same as we use, only they were pulled by oxen. They use from four to eight head on a binder and to the mower they usually have two oxen and two mules. This really is a small grain country but as yet I have never seen any corn or clover.

"Now back to the war again. No doubt you have heard about all the prisoners that were taken. Out of all that bunch, I only saw one, but yesterday I saw a lot of their equipment and, believe me, they had a lot of it over here. Most of the small towns are all torn up. One little town in particular is just leveled. The only building that wasn't hit was a church. Tunis itself isn't torn up much, only the docks, and they are simply a mass of ruins.

"Tunis is a very nice city. I really was surprised to see such a nice place. The European people are so nice and clean and there isn't nearly as many Arabs there, as in Casablanca.

"We also went to Carthage. That is a very ancient city. There wasn't any fighting done up there so it looked real nice, with its old historical buildings. There are also a lot of new buildings, some of the most beautiful homes that I ever saw. All buildings in Africa are made of tile or stone. They even have tile roofs.

Well that's about all I know for this time, so I will close and again I will say don't worry about me as I will get along."

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Josiah Jourdan Jr., who was recently inducted into the Navy and sent to the Naval Training Station at Farragut, Idaho, has written his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Jourdan of Newton, that he has been given a medical discharge and will be home in a few days. He was hospitalized for several days recently.

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Mr. and Mrs. Zenas Price of near Newton have received a cablegram from their son, Leon L. Price, in which he said: "All well and safe. Please don't worry. Letters sent." They had heard from him May 10.

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Aug. 9 * * * * * 1943

Neil Weber Strole of near Newton has been enrolled in the Army Specialized Training program in a basic engineering course at Lake Forest college, starting August 9. Upon the completion of this thirty-six week course he will be assigned either to an advanced engineering course or to an officer candidate school. Trainees for the program are chosen from the ranks of the Army on the basis of personality, capacity for leadership, intelligence and scholastic records.

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James Edward Thompson, an aviation machinist's mate, United States Navy, who saw nearly nine months' service with the Navy and Marine Air Forces on Guadalcanal, including most of the fighting to capture the island, has landed at San Diego, California, and is expected home on a visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Thompson of near Newton.

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Private Wilfred C. Harrison returned to Camp Grant, Rockford, after a week end furlough with his wife and parents, Mr. and Mrs. Will Harrison of Mattoon. He will finish his basic training next week.

His address is, Private Wilfred C. Harrison, Company C, Fourth Platoon, 29th Medical Training battalion, Camp Grant, Illinois.

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3 In a letter ^{Aug. 3} to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred H. Weck of Newton, Miss Lois Weck, a Wave now in training at Hunter college, New York City, writes: "It was a good trip to Indianapolis. The Illinois Central conductor took me to the building to get my berth ticket. It was lower 12 as Mr. L. A. Richards said it would be. We had a swell time on the train. I met another girl going from Indianapolis. Whatever you do don't travel on the train. Every berth was given to a Wac (there were six on our train), a Soldier, Sailor or Wave. No civilians in the Pullmans at all.

"In the dining car the six Wacs and we thirty Waves were the first to eat. It was a delicious meal, soup, chicken, apple pie, etc. Then about a hundred or so soldiers and families ate. I doubt if there was anything left for the civilians.

"Our train was the Pennsylvania "American," two baggage cars, six coaches, dining car, three Pullmans and club car. It was so heavy we could hardly make the hill at Pittsburgh. I saw the big mills at Pittsburgh; they made the sky red. We had thunderstorms all through Pennsylvania. Slept quite well in the berth even though I was excited.

"I got to New York at 10:30 a. m. and we were met and directed to the Armory. Don't let anybody tell you the work is easy. They're really tough. Ate supper at the college dining hall.

"We march everywhere. It's left, right, column left, or column right, march. Reveille at 5:30; bed at 9:00 p. m. We get our uniforms so that we will have them for the first anniversary of the Waves on July 30. I will have my picture taken as soon as possible."

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In a letter to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. William C. Eveland of near Newton, Private Merle L. Eveland, who is somewhere in the Southwest Pacific area on an unnamed island, writes that he is well and enjoys the Press. He says he even reads all the advertisements to keep up on what is going on.

Private Raymond V. Dhom writes Mr. and Mrs. Charles Burton of Falmouth vicinity, his uncle and aunt, from Camp San Luis Obispo, California: "How was the fair? I notice in the Press that they must have had some pretty good race horses. The way I've been hearing from the folks at home, old Tom must have been home for the fair this year.

"There hasn't been much happening here. We lost one of our best men last week. He was hit accidentally while playing ball and died the next day. They had church services for him Saturday morning, so our whole battery went to church. He was one of the best artillerymen we had. George Burns and Gracie Allen are visiting his camp this week, and I think I will try to get over and see them."

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Five more Newton men have exchanged their civilian clothes for the "Navy blue." They reported to the United States Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Chicago, recently and are now undergoing a period of "boot training" there.

Their training will stress physical conditioning and an indoctrination into Naval customs and procedure, but will also include the fundamentals of seamanship, and a series of aptitude tests designed to help place each in the type of work for which he is best fitted.

Upon completing training each man will be given a nine-day leave, and then assigned to a service school for further training or directly to active duty at sea or at a shore station, depending upon his scores in the aptitude tests.

Some bluejackets are given ratings and sent directly to active duty upon completing recruit training if they have sufficient experience in a particular skill needed by the Navy.

The new recruits are: Howard G. French, Donovan C. Bower, Donovan D. Scott, Cyrial W. Kinder, and Leroy E. Wakefield.

Corporal Samuel Ragsdale of Fort McClellan, Alabama, is at home on a furlough with his father, Albert E. Ragsdale, and family of Wheeler.

Sergeant Clayton Wright spent Sunday with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Wright of Newton. He is at the University of Illinois, where he is studying French under the Army's Special Training program.

*Aug. 2 * * * * * 1942*

Gunner's Mate Third Class John A. Connor has arrived at an Advanced Gunnery school at San Diego, California, after completing his course at Great Lakes Naval Training Station. His wife will join him soon..

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Lieutenant and Mrs. V. Floyd Jones are here from Pauling, New York, where he has been stationed with the Army Air Force. He is being transferred but doesn't yet know where.

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Ray E. Everly, local Navy recruiter, announces that Harold Dean Whalin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Eli Whalin of Rose Hill, has applied for enlistment in the United States Navy.

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Mrs. Grover Weck has received word that her husband, Private Grover E. Weck, has landed safely overseas. He is in A-1 condition.