



With the Colors

May 18, 1943

John Howard Ross, who is somewhere in Iran (Persia) writes his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar A. Ross of Newton, as follows:

April 17: "As you probably already know by now, I received several more letters last week and your Christmas package. It couldn't have been more complete; everything I will actually need for a long time. I found the bill wrapped around a tube of shaving cream. I won't be able to spend it here, unless I get it changed to Rials. I think I'll keep it as it is and then I'll never be broke. Last Sunday, I received more letters and a package from the Gruenewald's. Jean sent me a carton of walnettos. Even if she isn't two years old yet, she sure knows what I like. Thanks a lot for your package and thanks to the Gruenewald's for theirs.

"One of my letters last week was from dad; also several from mother. As I have said before, I'm always glad to hear individually from you both. The mail still comes by jerks. From the 14th of March to the 23rd. Mother, you said something in one of your letters about one of Jimmy Fiddler's programs that I didn't get. I think maybe you left out something that you meant to say.

"Mother, you asked what I had to do with the Red Cross and such organizations or what they had to do with me. So far nothing. I haven't had any occasion to need them, that I know of.

"The people of Persia are actually white, but they are so sun-baked, scorched, and coated with layer upon layer of dirt that they are very dark complected, but when one scrubs down to the bare skin they have a deeply tanned white skin. The population is chiefly made up of Persians and Arabs, but the majority is a conglomeration of all Asia. Although this is the cradle of civilization, culture and industrial progress have been retarded because of the dire poverty and ignorance, as well as lack of ambition by the average man. There are a few ambitious and intelligent tradesmen, but the majority are so lazy that they care only about enough to eat.

"The people live more like animals than humans, living in caves, gutters, and huts made of brush and grass mats. This is a great country for when one does want to build a house all he needs to do is dig a hole, mix a little mud and start building. There is no lumber, cement, glass, or anything commonly used for constructing buildings, so all they can do is build walls of mud, mixed with straw, then poles are placed over the roof and more mud piled on top. The mud bakes as hard as concrete and being two or three feet thick acts as insulation against the intense summer heat.

"It is hard to describe how these people live for you can't imagine humans living as these people do live. Water is scarce and apparently it is illegal to use for washing for the natives rarely wash their bodies or clothing. And the clothing usually consists of a bunch of rags tied around their body, often times it is

burlap bags or pieces of canvas. Men and women alike wear skirts and when a guy is really well dressed he wears one of the old fashioned night gowns. Some of the merchants and higher class people however, have adopted modern dress and wear clothes much like our own, but the styles are pretty sad.

"The country is very barren and unproductive for most of it is desert. In the northern half there are a lot of mountains so the vegetation is heavier and they have farms where they raise wheat, rice, fruit, etc. The famous rugs also come from this section, (you can get a better quality and a cheaper price at Macey's, in New York). The southern part of the country is all desert and nothing can be grown except by irrigation. The heat is terrific during the summer months and goes as high as 180 degrees, so naturally everything is scorched, and even the sand becomes snow white.

"The country is very unhealthy, partly because of the climate, but chiefly because of the filth and unsanitary conditions. The filth is indescribable and consequently there is a lot of diseases. Malaria and typhus take the largest toll of life among adults, but the death rate of children is very high because of disease and lack of medical care. It is a great country but for my part the Persians can have it.

"I understand that the papers and magazines are carrying a lot of stories about this part of the world and describing conditions here, but don't get alarmed about what I have told you or what you read about disease for we have an exceptionally fine medical department, and they do everything possible to protect the health of the soldiers. We are separated from the natives and rarely come in contact with the coolies, who are the chief carriers of lice and disease.

Wednesday, April 14th. "Kinda circulate this around a little, so I won't have to write it over again. More mail in today. Also the latest editions of the Press, October 20, 23, 30, and November 3rd. I rather enjoy keeping up on the news at home through the newspaper. Ha. I see where O. A. Ross, is advertising a house for rent."

Carl Eugene Tolliver, 19, foster son of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Price of Route One, Newton, was advanced to the rating of fireman, first class upon the completion of an eight weeks course in the operation and maintenance of internal combustion engines at the Navy's school for diesel operators on the campus of Iowa State college at Ames last week. The blue-jacket now awaits assignment to duty with the fleet or at a shore station.

Selected for this special training upon the basis of a series of aptitude tests and a personal interview given him during recruit training, he has been taught the operation of machine tools; how to overhaul engine auxiliaries; the theory of pressure and air systems, and the operation of electrical apparatus.

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Corporal Vernon L. Wyatt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Wyatt of Dundas, vicinity was graduated from the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command school of the Chevrolet division at Detroit, Michigan, Monday, where he has successfully completed an intensive course of instruction on airplane engines.

Having received his training, in this specialized course Corporal Wyatt,

will be transferred to an Army Air Forces unit where his newly acquired skill will be used to keep the nation's fighting aircraft at top efficiency.

Corporal Wyatt has been in the armed forces seven months and was previously employed at the Newton Box and Basket factory.

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Edward Utley, boatswain's mate second class, United States Navy, is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mont Utley of Newton. He has six days here before he returns and will join a new ship when he reaches the Pacific coast again. He has been in the Navy for seven years and since the war broke out has been in the Pacific. His ship was damaged last fall but returned to active service several months ago.

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Technical Sergeant Archie Dorn of Camp Campbell, Kentucky, was home over the week end for a visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dorn of Bogota vicinity.

Private Edgar Andrews is spending a short furlough with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Andrews of Newton. He is located at Camp Polk, Louisiana, in the Eleventh Armored division.

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Scott Cummins, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Emery Cummins of Willow Hill, has ben promoted from ensign to lieutenant (j. g.), United States Navy.

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Robert Davidson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Davidson of Newton has been transferred from Norfolk, Virginia, to New York. He has been assigned to a cruiser.