

JOHN FLANAGAN

WRITES OF LIFE IN

ARMY IN IRAN

Feb. 24, 1944

**TELLS MAYOR DAVIS RED CROSS
IS DOING FINE JOB IN
ARMY CAMPS**

Mayor John D. Davis has received a letter from John Flanagan, son of Police Officer Tom Flanagan, who is serving in the army in Iran.

In his letter John says some fine things about the way the Red Cross is functioning overseas and he tells many interesting things about the life and customs of the Persians. His letter follows:

Dear Mr. Davis — I received your most welcome letter yesterday and sure was glad to hear from you. I often think of my friends and people in the good old home town. I hope this finds you well and getting along alright.

Yes, this country is really different from anything I had any ideas about. The Persians are so different from the Europeans, not only in speech but in their ways of living and religion. As yet I haven't been able to learn very much of their language but hope to before long.

I visited Ahway about four times and it is really a quaint old city. It has a population of about 31,950 and the language of the inhabitants is Arabiac mixed with Iranian. It is located on both banks of the Karun river. The natives live in adobe-like houses much like the houses in the southwestern part of the United

States. A lot of them have a garden with a few small trees and shrubs and some even have a small pool. Not many of the people have stoves, but build fires in the middle of the floor. The fire heats the house, along with the smoke and they also cook their meals there.

About all I ever saw them eat was dates, onions and some kinds of greens. Their wheat cakes are about a foot in diameter and very thin. They also have tea, which is very dark and very sweet.

The bazaar is the place where they sell their wares. They sell almost everything imaginable, such as cotton, wheat cakes, fruit, tea and Vodka. The merchants are very shrewd when dealing with Europeans and charge them plenty for everything.

You said you had never been to Iran but were in Baghdad. I imagine it was a lot nicer there than any place I have seen so far in Iran.

Yes, we have plenty of good food here at camp. I guess they try to feed us as good as they can. It is all canned stuff though, but occasionally we get meat, eggs. We don't get a lot of entertainment here but what we have is very good. We get quite a few U. S. O. Shows here. Bob Hope is supposed to be on the way and we have had such celebrities as Fredrick March, Jack Benny, Nelson Eddy and several others. We see movies but they are not very late ones.

We now have some Snack Bars which will serve coffee and cookies to all. The Red Cross is sure doing its bit to help out, too.

As bad a spot as it is though, I guess, as you say there are probably places a lot worse.

I am sending you a couple of pieces of Persian money. They are five and ten rial piece. At first this form of money was very hard to get on to, but now it is easy to use. This kind of money seemed unusual at first because of the different sizes and colors. Each denomination is of a different size and has its own particular color. The five rial piece is red, the ten, blue the twenties, orange; the fifties, green the hundreds different shades of brown depending upon the makers; the five hundreds are blue and the thousands are green.

There isn't much more to write about, but will do better next time. Best Wishes, — John.