



With the Colors

Donald Tackett, who is in the Navy, writes Mr. and Mrs. Burress Tackett of Newton:

"Here it is the day of our Thanksgiving day celebration. As you will note from the date we are a little late in getting this "celebrated" chow but on Thanksgiving day we were a little busy with things more important and had "K" rations for our dinner. To-day we can really appreciate Thanksgiving and all that it means. To us it has a powerful significance in that it contains probably what the early Pilgrims meant the word to contain—heartfelt gratitude to God for all his favors and you can believe me they have been many.

"That word "Thanksgiving" has a fullness that only those who have lived under the shadow of Angelic messengers can understand, for we have seen the flap of their wings and heard the metallic thunder of their voices—but thanks be to God those reaching fingers took hold of the Japs and not us. We have seen the Nips go down into the sea, as fiery comets—we have seen their base tremble with the ague as though the earth were chaking and hidden volcanoes were pouring dust, debris and flame into the air. If our hearts are light today and we can speak in ordinary tones of voice, if we do not look like men from Mars as we walk the deck it means but one thing.

"It means we are thankful that to-day we have put aside our habitments of war, that our big guns are grimly silent and that we are anchored in safe waters. Here we will not see enemy periscopes or fear that torpedo wake.

"We have had a rugged time for the past several weeks as we were not far from the 'Nips' at any time. Before dawn each day we were at our battle stations—we were on watch constantly and not once for many days have our guns been not ready or our crew not on the alert ready for whatever comes. As we sailed into this area we put our mattresses below and we have been sleeping on the deck, on gun mounts, on gun shields, under the guns and always ready. Rain, rough weather, heat—all these things have worked us over and we are thankful that through it all they have found out we 'could take it.'

"The difficult part of war life is not the fighting, but the waiting to fight. For every time we fired our guns and fought off Jap planes or sent them to their ancestors we went to quarters a dozen times and were ready. One thing this trip has taught us is that if we have good fighter planes with us they save a lot of trouble. Many times Jap planes came after us but our own fighters intercepted them and chased them home. Several times, particularly at night, a few planes got in and then they found out what we could do. One of the Jap planes we hit fell so close to us that one of the machine gunners took a deep breath and said 'He was so close you could have hit him with a 'tater'. For those who were below decks the constant commentary of our paymaster, who reported the engagements 'play by play' gave us complete information and the crescendo of our guns put the necessary punctuation to his words.

"One of the truly great sights of this cruise was the ship shooting all her guns at one time. What a noise and what a reaction when they hit. But I guess the Japs could tell you more about that. I've not been away from my station for more than food in so long that I'm going to get away now. You can believe me when we say that we really worked and are ready for some recreation. For a while, a few days perhaps, there will be games ashore, movies out on deck in the evening, our orchestra will 'swing out' with some tunes and we will rest. But the rest is going to be tough on the Nips—we will be ready for them with all the more zeal and firepower when we catch them again. And one thing you can be sure of is this. We will catch them.

"So after the noise of firing at planes and other enemy targets and hardships of sleeping on the deck, after the heat of a boiling hot sun it is very pleasant today to sit down to a 'Thanksgiving dinner.' We know more now than at any other time in our lives what we all mean by 'Thanksgiving.' So remember us in your prayers and keep up the good work at home. We are doing our part here to hasten the end of this war. Every day brings us closer to Tokyo and you can bet the day we put our first gun on that city of the Rising Sun will be a day of Thanks-

giving for us all."

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Private First Class Bobby L. Bower writes Earl L. Dufrain from Iran, where he is stationed with a Military Police battalion: "I received your letter the other day and am just getting around to answering it. We have been having beautiful weather and it is warm enough for a fellow to go without a shirt. One sure thing it don't seem like Christmas over here, but maybe the war will be over next year.

"You were asking about the missionaries and how good a work they were doing. Well, here is an example. I met a native over here who acts as an interpreter for the Army. In other words, translates their native language into English. At the age of 6, his mother and father were killed and the Presbyterian Mission school took him in. They taught him all the things that would be useful in some kind of trade and at the same time clothed and fed him. He became a Christian.

"He told me to tell you that the missionaries are really doing good work and if it hadn't been for them he wouldn't have had the chance for the job, become a true Christian or even had a home. Sometimes I would think myself, while I was still home, that they didn't do the work they set out to do but now my mind is sure clear of that idea. The only thing is that there are so many people who haven't heard the word of God yet and we need more and more missionaries for this work. Whatever you do, don't let up on the offerings for missionaries.

"We are really having swell eats and we had the best dinner we have had since we have been over here. It consisted of steak, french fried potatoes, lima beans, cherry pie, hot tea and bread and fresh butter, so you see people on the home front are doing a wonderful job, besides over here.

"John Howard Ross is fine and said he would write you soon. We see each other about every day. I know Christmas will be over by the time you get this but I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and God's blessings for a new year."

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Private Harold R. McCoy writes from Greensboro, North Carolina, to the Press: "I have a little time before lights are out, so will drop you a few lines. The training for cadets here is pretty tough but it is very important that they are in good physical condition when they leave here for pre-flight school. We have a thorough physical program. We have an obstacle course, rope climbing, exercises, boxing, wrestling, etc. It is all very interesting to me.

"The weather is very changeable here. One day it may be rather chilly and the next day it may be raining or very warm. It never gets what you would call cold. I am always glad to get mail from friends. My address is:

"Private Harold R. McCoy, 302nd Wing, 1181st Training group, BTC No. 10, AAF, Greensboro, North Carolina."

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Mrs. Flora Crouse has received a letter from her son, Sergeant Ira A. Crouse, from somewhere in England. He wrote this letter Christmas day and says:

"I am just fine except I am so full of turkey, I can hardly breathe. We had a grand dinner today with turkey and everything that goes with it to make a dinner complete. I have spent a quiet Christmas. We are not working today, getting a good rest."

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Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Chapman were in Newton for a short time Saturday, enroute to Texas, where he was being transferred to a new ship. Melvin, a yeoman first class in the Navy, survived the sinking of the U. S. S. Lexington in the Battle of the Coral sea early in the war.

Melvin was recently married. He is a graduate of the Newton Community high school.

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Sergeant and Mrs. Ray Griffith have returned to Point Richmond, California, where he has been stationed for the past eighteen months, after spending a furlough with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alva Griffith of Yale. The whole family went to Chicago with him, while he was here. He likes it in California.

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Staff Sergeant Rush Stanley is spending a two weeks' furlough with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Stanley of Granite City, formerly of Newton. He is stationed near Tampa, Florida, and has been a radio instructor for the last few months, but was promoted to assistant section chief, just before coming home.

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Ross Grove and Bert Ward Jr. passed the Navy V-5 examination for aviation cadet at Effingham, Friday. They must yet pass the physical examination before acceptance.

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Sergeant James Lee Diel, who is in England with the paratroops, writes

his parents, Mr. and Mrs. James R. Diel of Newton, that he is well and feeling fine. He says action may be expected any time now, meaning, of course, invasion of the continent.

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Robert Mattingly, petty officer third class, United States Navy, who has been on duty in the Mediterranean area, is spending a furlough with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Mattingly of near Boos. He is being sent to school for special training.

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Staff Sergeant and Mrs. Dorris E. Scott and baby are here from Truax field, Madison, Wisconsin, spending a furlough with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer J. Scott, and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Westendorf of Newton.

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Private First Class Ralph E. Mineo, who is in the Hawaiian islands, writes Earl Mineo of Newton: "I am well and feeling fine. I saw Jake Romack a few days ago. He sure is a big guy."

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Roy William Reynolds, petty officer third class, has returned to Norfolk, Virginia, after a visit with his family and friends. His father, Harvey Reynolds of Newton, has been ill since November, but is improving slowly.

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James Reis, machinist's mate second class, United States Coast, is here on a furlough from Bolinas, California, called to Sainte Marie by the serious illness of his mother, Mrs. Anthony Reis.