



## With the Colors

10/31/44

Headquarters Thirteenth Air Force, Southwest Pacific.—Second Lieutenant Don E. Meeker, son of Cecil E. Meeker of Hidalgo, was one of the bombardiers in the formation of Thirteenth AAF "Long Rangers" who struck at the vital aviation gas production center at Balikpapan in Eastern Borneo.

In the first daylight strike against that target, "Long Rangers Liberators carried on their history of making the longest range flights against new Jap targets. Recorded as the longest flight ever made by Liberators in formation, this crack outfit struck at Pandansari refinery, containing the greater portion of the Japanese aviation fuel production facilities in that area, and at the paraffin refining base nearby. The formations knocked out the important power plant, a refractionation tower, started a huge fire with smoke rising to 6,000 feet in addition to numerous smaller fires, and planted two direct hits on a 1,000 ton cargo ship at a pier nearby.

From twenty-five to thirty Zeros attacked the Liberators in eager passes that went straight through the formation. Antiaircraft fire was the worst many of the veteran crews had seen since the early days of Munda in the Northern Solomons from whence the "Long Rangers" made their first history in the Pacific warfare.

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Headquarters Thirteenth Air Force, Southwest Pacific. — Kenneth E. Gabel, son of Mrs. Clarice Gabel of 1127 Thirty-seventh street, Rock Island, formerly of Montrose, bombardier with a fast hard hitting B-26 squadron of the Thirteenth AAF in the Southwest Pacific has recently been promoted from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

Lieutenant Gabel has participated in forty raids against Jap installations and airdromes in the Northern Solomons campaign, where they concentrated upon the neutralization of Rabaul. More recently his squadron has been striking against enemy installations, airdromes, and shipping in the Celebes and Malamaheras west and north of New Guinea.

Lieutenant Gabel enlisted in the army in April, 1941, at Scott field, Belleville. He attended Officers' Candidate school at Miami, Beach, Florida, where he was commissioned in August, 1942. Since then he has attended Observer school at Brooks field, Texas and Gunnery school at Harlingen, Texas. He has been overseas since December, 1943.

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Private Russell W. Dufrain of the Marines writes to his sister, Mrs. Will Clagg of near Newton, from Guam in the South Pacific, under date of October 14: "I just finished reading your most welcome letter; was glad to hear from you again. As you know I have now been overseas for a number of months. My first stop was in Pearl Harbor, a lovely place which does not now show the wreckage of the Jap attack.

"After a few weeks we were again sent aboard ship. No one knew where we were headed for but all expected the combat zone. After a few uneventful days we came in sight of low-lying islands. They would have been lovely if they had not been all but destroyed by the ravages of the war. They were what is known as the Marshalls.

"After staying there for a few days we were off again, destination unknown. Not long after that we landed on the place I am writing this from, Guam, which could be the most beautiful island in the Pacific if the war had not hit it. I will never forget the first sight I had of it. A large island looming up out of the sea, with large coconut palms close to the sand beaches. Farther inland hills rolled back to the mountain which sits almost exactly in the middle of the island.

"At the base of the mountain is a green wall which at first we took to be a hill covered with grass but we found out later (the hard way) that it wasn't grass but jungle. Jungles! The one thing I always liked to read about. Remember the Tarzan series, it always was an interesting subject. Now I hate the very word; so hot and steamy. Even now going through them is bad. I often wonder what it must have been to the men who fought the Japs in them, that gallant bunch of Marines who secured the island in just half the allotted time.

"The natives are real friendly and were overjoyed to be freed from the Japs. They are more educated than most of the islanders, as theirs was almost a self-governed place before the war. As we have found out for ourselves, we were told that this was



the beginning of the stormy season. We haven't had any storms yet but I must say I've never seen so much rain in my life. We caught five inches of rain in two hours in a small wooden box, setting out in the open, and the natives say the rainy season is still two months ahead. I wonder just what they call rain over here.

"So you've sent me another package? Oh boy, I could sure go for some of those swell cookies and cakes you used to bake. I'll tell you how much I appreciate it after it arrives."

In an earlier letter Private Dufrein stated that there was nothing to see or nowhere to go on the island where he is stationed, so letters are appreciated. If any of his friends would care to write he would greatly appreciate it. Write in care of Mrs. Clagg.

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Miami Beach, Florida, October 28.—Private First Class Charles R. Ellsworth, son of Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Ellsworth, 927 West Jourdan street, Newton, has reported here after service outside the continental United States and is now being processed through the Army Ground and Service Forces Redistribution station in Miami Beach, where his next assignment will be determined.

Private Ellsworth served seventeen months as a first gunner in the mortar section in the Southwest Pacific theatre of operations. While there he was awarded the Combat Infantryman badge.

Army Ground and Service Forces Redistribution stations are located in various parts of the United States. Military personnel returning from overseas are processed through these stations before assignment to military organizations and installations within the United States.

During the period that returnees stays at an Army Ground and Service Forces Redistribution station, they are given a painstaking occupation and physical classification as well as physical and dental reconditioning together with various lectures designed to reorient men recently returned from combat areas. This processing is carried on without haste in pleasant surroundings conducive to mental and physical relaxation.

Before entering the service Private Ellsworth was employed as a clerk for the A. & P. Company of Newton. He became a member of the Armed Forces on November 23, 1942.

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Private First Class Herndon Dhom writes his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Dhom of northeast of Newton, from the Southwest Pacific area, where he is with the Army Engineers: "I am working on the afternoon shift now. I get in around midnight and by the time I get my rest it don't leave much time for writing. I will thy and tell you something about this island.

"I can't tell what I'm doing but I'm working pretty hard and getting quite a lot done. We have a lot of fruit here, all wild. We have all the bananas we want. We have six stanks hanging in our tent now. I found one bunch that had bananas on it over twelve inches lond. They are sweeter than most bananas and sure are good.

"There are some wild pineapples here and plenty of coconuts, too. We have found a few native gardens that have all kinds of vegetables in them. We are close to the beach and go swimming almost every day. I sure like it here and so do most of the other fellows."

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Private Duane E. Wilson, who is in England, writes: "I'm getting the Press pretty good and it is always welcome. It is good to read the hometown news and the 'With the Colors' column and learn where the rest of the fellows are stationed.

"I'm still in England with the Eighth Air Force. The bomber squadron that I was in, on D-day was given a Presidential Citation for good work. This entitles me to wear the blue and gold citation ribbon and a bronze star on my ETO ribbon."

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Corporal Richard Fasnacht has been spending a furlough with relatives near Newton. He is in the Marines and was returned to the United States after service in the Southwest Pacific. He is a son of Roscoe Fasnacht of Richmond, Indiana, formerly of Newton vicinity, and is a brother of Roscoe Fasnacht Jr., who was recently killed in action in the Pacific area.

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First Lieutenant Bess Wilson, Army Nurse Corps, who is in charge of the nurses at a large North African hospital, sends pictures of herself to her father, N. A. Wilson of near Newton. She was well and looked fine at the time the pictures were taken recently.

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Seaman Second Class Francis Bailey is visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. James R. Bailey of near Willow Hill. He has been at Berea, Kentucky, and reports to Memphis, Tennessee, for his new assignment.

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Corporal Paul J. Reep is spending a fifteen day furlough with his par-



ents, Mr. and Mrs. V. L. Reep of Newton. He is with the Air Force service group and has recently been in Kansas repairing a damaged Superfortress bomber. He expects to leave for the Southwest Pacific when he returns to his base.

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Midshipman Glenn W. Sunderland has been visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn H. Sunderland of Newton, for several days. He has been at Bloomington for several months.

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Corporal and Mrs. Leland Short are spending a few days with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Tipton of Willow Hill. Corporal Short has been at Hines hospital, Chicago, recovering from an illness incurred in England.

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Private Basil Auteberry, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Auteberry of Newton, has been awarded a Certificate of Proficiency in the Army motor vehicle operators' course at New Orleans.

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Private Ernest Tipton Jr. is in France. He is a cook in an Artillery battery, and was recently awarded the Good Conduct medal. He is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Tipton of Willow Hill.

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Mr. and Mrs. Guy Simpson have received a cablegram from their son, Sergeant Delbert Wayne Simpson, stating that he has arrived safely overseas. He is somewhere in England.

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Private Albert Wells Jr. writes that he has been transferred from the Eleventh Armored division to the West Coast Processing center at Camp McQuaide, California.

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Ralph C. Schackmann has been discharged from the Army and is now at home. He was in the Quartermaster department at Fort Benning, Georgia, recently.

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Lieutenant Paul Vanatta is spending a leave with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. M. Vanatta of Rose Hill. He is in the Army Air Force and has been stationed at Columbus, Mississippi.

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Private Robert Clark is spending a furlough with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Clark of Newton.