



With the Colors

Excerpts from a letter from Lois Weck, aviation machinist's mate second class, who is stationed at Norfolk, Virginia, to her sister, Mrs. Harold Smallwood: "I've been wanting to write you for a long time. Now the news has piled up so this is a warning. Get ready for a long letter.

"Last week a sailor friend of mine from Lawrenceville took me down town to the Center Theatre. He is a cousin of Smiley Burnette, so he introduced me to him at the theatre, where he was appearing. Smiley took us two backstage and we met all the other stage performers and watched their show from the side behind the curtains. Your girls probably know him better than you do.

"One of my girl friends, Rosemary, took me with her last week to a civilian friend's house. This couple, Mr. and Mrs. Crosby, are very wealthy and have a beautiful home. I wish you had been with me, Mary. They have a son in the Army, so their home is open house for the service people. Did I say "house"? I meant mansion. There are three floors to the place. Mr. Crosby is a famous doctor. Mrs. Crosby is the sweetest woman.

"Rosemary's brother and a friend were with us. She and I made waffles in one of the Crosby's kitchens (There are two!) for the boys. You can imagine how two sailors who'd been out to sea for months enjoyed them. Afterwards we danced to the phonograph.

"Last week we went back to Crosby's with two American and two English sailors. The English boys were very nice, lovely manners and nice looking. They had never eaten waffles. So again, Rosie and I made waffles for the four sailors this time. We sat at the table for two hours eating and discussing everything. It made the boys so happy to have a little touch of home.

"Mrs. Crosby made us eat in her large dining room with her best dishes and the four boys dried dishes and loved it, too. We always bring our own food to cook though Mrs. Crosby scolds us because we do it. One of the English boys just loved to get ice cubes out of the refrigerator. Only the very wealthy have them in England.

"Cesar Romero visited Mrs. Crosby a few months ago. Her house is famous among service people for hospitality.

"I suppose you heard about our east coast hurricane. I'll admit I was scared. The wind blew seventy to seventy-five miles an hour. We had to go to the station theatre (the only brick building) for safety. Going over, I was soaked to the skin and thought I would never make it against that wind. We had to wear our wet clothes until the storm was over—about five or six hours. It didn't hurt our barracks, which is U-63 but it tore the whole roof off U-64 next door. Both floors were ruined by water and all the girls and their belongings were evacuated.

"Was I ever thrilled yesterday, Mary! A girl friend of mine has an uncle who is a pilot (lieutenant). I met him. He took Ruth and me in a navy plane to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Sunday. I was so excited. We flew right over the capital, the Washington monument and the congressional buildings. It was a wonderful ride. The most fun of all was when the lieutenant let me fly about half way back. I was in the co-pilot's

seat. I'm still thrilled over it.

"Mother will probably be scared when I tell her, but I was having the time of my life with the earphones on listening to the dash-dot of the radio beacon and my hands on the wheel. The new planes have a steering wheel instead of a stick. The lieutenant just said I did fine. All I've gone through in the Navy was worth that. I envy Dale. He has the best part, learning to fly.

"Don't worry about me. I'll try to be careful with this flying business but I love it!"

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Technical Sergeant Thomas E. Reece and his brother, Private First Class John S. Reece of Humboldt, formerly of Hunt City vicinity, met on August 17 in Italy at the field of the former's Liberator heavy bombardment group. The two brothers had not seen each other for more than three years.

In writing about the meeting, Sergeant Thomas Reece said: "Three years is a long time to not see your brother, so when you meet him, the reunion is doubly important, and that was the way it was when John and I recently got together in Southern Italy."

John is in the Medical Corps and was recently awarded the Bronze Star medal for bravery in the Italian campaign. He sent home a German first aid kit which he had picked up at the front. Thomas is in the Troop Carrier Command and participated in the North African, Sicilian and Italian campaigns.

The two soldiers are sons of Mr. and Mrs. Ray E. Reece of Humboldt. The latter had two other sons in the armed forces. Private First Class Charles Raymond Reece died July 7 from wounds received on New Georgia island in the Southwest Pacific the day before in a skirmish with the Japs at a point later known as Bloody Hill. His Infantry company was engaged in dislodging the enemy from a strong point which covered the crossing of the Barika river. He was buried in a cemetery on New Georgia.

The fourth son, James Howard Reece, is now in England with a Bombardment group of the Army Air Forces.