



## With the Colors

Jan. 16,  
1945

An Eighth Air Force Bomber Station in England.— Staff Sergeant Fay Bixler, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Bixler of near Newton, is an Eighth Air Force sub-depot supply sergeant, who recently completed one year's overseas service with the 452d Bomber Group's depot detachment.

This unit operates as an aircraft factory in reverse. When B-17 Flying Fortresses that almost daily attack military and industrial targets deep within the heart of Germany suffer severe battle damage, they are repaired and "put back" into the air by sub-depot. Engines are torn down and reconditioned and other equipment, such as landing gears, fuel lines and fabricated sections are thoroughly inspected. If beyond repair, all usable parts are stripped and used immediately on different Fords, or stocked for future needs.

Guided by the motto "Keep 'Em Flying," these men supply machine tools, flying clothing, life rafts, parachutes and countless other items necessary to maintain the planes in perfect flying condition. The manner with which Sergeant Bixler performs his daily assignments plays an important part in the successful functioning of his department.

He is a member of the Third Bombardment division—the division cited by President Roosevelt for its historic England to Africa shuttle bombing of Messerschmitt aircraft plants at Regensburg, Germany.

Sergeant Bixler was a farmer before entering the Army in December, 1941.

Private George Bickers of Willow Hill writes to his wife from England: "The Red Cross is a wonderful organization. I think they are a big help in several different ways. I don't think they can be beat. Seems like they're always ready to help us any way they can.

"My buddy and I are at the American Red Cross Service Club writing. We toured London a little bit today and saw Buckingham palace, the Queen Victoria monument, Hyde Park, and several other interesting things. London is quite a big place. It would take a long time to look it all over.

"I've heard quite a bit about London, but I didn't think I'd ever be here. But here I am. You can see quite a bit of destruction caused by air raids. I guess it has sure taken a beating.

"The Red Cross has a tour scheduled for tomorrow for anyone who wants to go. We may go on it. That way we could see lots more, and there would be someone with us who knows all the places, and could tell us all about them. I think that would be better than going out by one's self and trying to see just what ever we could find.

"Joe and I are going to a show tonight, in fact we're sitting in the show building now waiting for it to start. The Red Cross is putting it on. We went to church this morning. Of course we go to different churches, but we went part way together."

Private First Class Lowell Adkins writes from France: "I didn't have much to do so I thought I would write the Press and let you know I am still here and still thinking of Newton. I get about all of the copies of the Press now and they are a great help.

"I was wondering if there is anybody from Newton who has been over here as long as I have. I will soon have three years service on this side of the ocean. I finally met another fellow from Newton in the hospital in Paris. His name was Woods and we had a good talk. If you will print this, I will see who is the oldest timer over here from Newton."

Lowell was stationed in Iceland before being sent to England and later to France with an Infantry division. He is a son of Mr. and Mrs. B. T. Adkins of Mattoon, formerly of Newton, and a grand-son of Mrs. Sterling Adkins Sr. and John W. Lambird of Newton. He was known as Shorty here.

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Corporal Bill Bickers, who is with General Patton's Third army in France, writes his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bickers of near Newton: "I was astounded to hear that someone was telling that we were starving to death. I wish such dam people would keep their mouths shut if they don't know what they are talking about. They sure as hell don't know what they are saying, when they tell such things as that, so don't let such things as that worry you.

"We had turkey for Christmas and New Year's and have chicken quite often. I always have candy or something in my field bag, so what more could a man want. I've told you time and again I have plenty to eat. I did ask you to send me some soup and things but not because I didn't have enough to eat. We just like to fool around and stew up some soup or coffee now and then."

An Eighth Air Force Service Command Station, England.—Staff Sergeant David R. Firebaugh of Newton, an aircraft inspector at this strategic air depot where American pursuit planes are reconditioned, played center with the "Mudcats," this station's foot ball team, in this season's European Theatre of Operations gridiron wars.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond S. Firebaugh of Newton, Sergeant Firebaugh has been serving in England since September, 1943. He entered the armed forces in 1940.

Sergeant Firebaugh was formerly a student at Eastern Illinois State Teachers college, Charleston.

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Private James Ping writes his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Claude Ping of near Willow Hill, that he has landed somewhere in New Guinea. "I ate my Christmas dinner there, read twenty-six letters which I received and went swimming.

"We are now using Dutch money, which I don't understand very well yet. I do know I have twice as much as I would have in U. S. currency."

He hopes to soon see his older brother, Paul Ping, who was in New Guinea, but who has been transferred to the Philippines.

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Yeoman Third Class Ruby J. Brackett writes the Press: "I have only recently been transferred to Port Clinton, Ohio, and I find it quite cold. There is a very heavy snow on now. This job is connected with an entirely different phase of the Navy than my jobs on Naval Air Stations. I think it will be quite interesting. The town itself is interesting, for it is located on Lake Erie and I've never lived on the lake before."

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Staff Sergeant Russell Harrison, who is in France with an Ordnance repair company, writes the Press un-

der date of December 31: "I had a busy Christmas; worked as usual; just an other day in the ETO (European Theatre of Operations). It has been clear and cold for the last week but the weather is normal again. It's raining. The mud of France has Jasper county clay beat a country block. I am feeling fine."

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Private First Class Lloyd E. Derixson is convalescing very satisfactorily following an operation for appendicitis January 9 at the Station hospital at the New Orleans Port of Embarkation, his father, Jasper Derixson of Newton, has been notified.

Lloyd was better known as Bones when he boxed in amateur bouts in Southeastern Illinois.

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Sergeant Glenn O. Alexander, now stationed at Blytheville, Arkansas, stayed over in Newton, Friday, on his way to Scott field, Belleville, where he will depart for Puerto Rico to bring his wife and child home for a visit with his parents and relatives near Newton.

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Charles Russell Catt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde H. Catt of Willow Hill, has arrived at the Infantry Replacement Training center at Camp Wolters, Texas, for his basic training. He has been assigned to a battalion stress-specialist training.

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Aviation Student Charles R. Lewis, has returned to the Frederick Army Air field in Oklahoma, after sending several days furlough with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Lewis at Wheeler and other relatives and friends.

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Corporal Virgil Bliss has landed in Seattle, Washington, after two years in the Aleutian islands, his wife at Newton has learned. He is expecting to be home on furlough, enroute to Louisiana.

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Ralph Parr, son of Mr. and Mrs. Don Parr of Oblong, joined the Navy last week at Springfield. He is 17 years of age.

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Private John Auteberry has been given a medical discharge from the Army at Fort Sheridan.