

Costa Rica Haven for Canal Zone Officers

Land of Coffee and Orchids Offers Welcome Escape in Cool Mountains

United States Army officers stationed in the Canal Zone know Costa Rica well. Before the war many of them had learned to escape to the little Republic just north of Panama for a few days in the cool air of its volcano-ringed highlands.

But here in North America you don't hear much about Costa Rica. It is a quiet, God-fearing neighbor. It doesn't get its name in the papers. It is a nation of small farmers who take pride in its stability and progress. And it is one of the purest democracies on earth.

The Name

It was Columbus who christened it "Rich Coast" when, on his last voyage to the New World, he landed at what is now Puerto Limon and saw the Indians decked out with gold discs. He thought that they must have rich stores of metal and that the river sands must be thick with gold. But the gold seekers who followed Columbus were disappointed; Costa Rica had little readily accessible gold. The gold seekers went elsewhere, and only the farmers stayed. Costa Rica has mines, but its real riches are in coffee—and in the bananas planted nearly four centuries after Columbus by a tough jungle-busting New Yorker named Minor C. Keith, who also built Central America's first railroad between Puerto Limon and the Costa Rican capital.

The Country

Mr. Keith's railroad, which took 19 years to build and cost the lives of 4,000 men, starts out among the palm and banana and cacao plantations of the hot, wet Caribbean coast. It makes its way through a dense tropical jungle, hung with moss, vines, orchids, shimmering with birds and butterflies, treacherous with swamps. Then it climbs, suddenly and precipitously, 5,000 feet up through cedars, past mountain torrents, across dizzying gulches, to the cool central plain.

Costa Rica is about the size of West Virginia—23,000 square miles—with only a little over a third of West Virginia's population. This small territory is divided into three separate areas by boundaries of altitude. In the sultry Caribbean lowland, where it may rain 300 days a year, live mainly United Fruit Company managers and the West Indian Negroes who work on the banana plantations. The Pacific plain is a cattle country. The real Costa Rica is the lovely meseta—the central tableland at an altitude of 3,000 to 4,000 feet, with higher mountains towering over it. It is a country of tall green grasses, fresh winds, and perpetual spring. Here live three-quarters of the population. Here are the four largest towns, within a few miles of each other: San Jose, the capital; Cartago, the old Spanish colonial

capital, clinging to the foot of a volcano; Alajuela and Heredia, set down in the midst of sugar-cane fields and coffee orchards. Here are hundreds of small proprietary farms, from 10 to 100 acres each; 80 per cent of Costa Rica's cultivated land is owned in such small holdings. Here grows Costa Rica's famous coffee—which all used to go to the London market — its white-flowered, red-berried trees clinging to mountainsides so steep you would think the orchardists would have to use ladders to tend them. The farms are neat and well-cared for; their low adobe houses have painted windows, filled with masses of bright flowers; their porches are heaped with drying ears of corn, beans, onions. The cities are small, low-lying, unpretentious. Even in San Jose, for all the impressive public buildings and the elaborate, sophisticated National Theatre, and the formal parks, the wide streets lead straight away into hills and fields.

For Costa Rica is still a pioneer country, like the United States Northwest. Much of the rest is still virgin forest — cedar, mahogany, cypress, guayacan. Each year the forest is pushed back a little farther by new roads. But outside of the few cities, away from the few railroads and the air lines, Costa Rican life has all the simplicity of the frontier. A gaily painted two-wheeled oxcart is still part of the Costa Rican farmer's standard equipment. He travels from village to village in it—unless he travels on horseback; in it he carts his harvested coffee berries from his own "orchard" to the neighboring beneficio or plant for treatment and shipment abroad; it may even be seen, pulled by a pair of leisurely oxen, in the streets of the capital.

The People

There are some 639,000 Costa Ricans. Only about 3,500 of them are Indians; the rest, except for the West Indian Negroes in the coastal banana plantations, are white. Their ancestors were hardy, energetic peasants from Galicia and the Basque Provinces of rocky northwestern Spain who set a pattern of hard work on small farms. The men are solid, sober citizens of dignity and pure Spanish speech; their graceful women still wear, in the country, long braids, flounced printed cotton skirts, and embroidered shawls, the heritage of Spain. For gayety, the provincial towns have concerts in their shaded parks, and they still have bull-fights: neither the bull nor the torero is ever hurt and anyone may try his hand. But the national sport is soccer, which the young men play in the park in the late afternoons.

The Costa Ricans have set up

under these tropical skies in the shadow of these Central American volcanoes, a way of life as sober and deliberate as that of a New England village, and as free in its expression of opinion. It is not a way of life they would willingly part with. In the 1850's under President Juan Rafael Mora, they fought to keep foreign control and slavery out of Central America. They would do it again. They have one of the freest presses left in this world, and one of the most enlightened school systems. Twenty per cent of the national budget goes into the schools: the schools are free and every child must attend. Costa Rica's greatest hero is no man-on-horseback, but President Jesus Jimenez Zamora, who back in the 1860's laid the foundations of school system, including public institutions for girls at a time when many more advanced and wealthier nations had never dreamed of such a thing.

Every Costa Rican citizen is required by law to vote in the presidential elections held every four years and in the elections to the one-chamber legislature. The president is responsible to the congress which may and often does override his authority. The president lives like an ordinary citizen, he walks about the streets unguarded; his house is open to any citizen of the republic.

... and the War

This is the country which was one of the first of the American nations after Pearl Harbor to declare war on the Axis. Months before December 7, the Costa Rican congress passed a law providing for deportation of any person circulating Nazi opinions, and the law has been applied more than once. Since the war, Costa Rica has firmly put her German citizens of Nazi sympathies into concentration camps.

Costa Rica has a standing army of only 500; she has always been proud of having many more teachers than soldiers. But she has large reserves (150,000) in proportion to her population. She has a highly strategic position, as the nearest Central American nation to Panama, and her people realize it. President Calderon Guardia warned them recently that the country might "become a field of operations for powers trying to commit aggression against the Panama Canal." Costa Rica owns a strategic island—the Isla de Cocos—southwest of her own coast in the Pacific.

Meanwhile, besides her coffee and her bananas, and the cacao from which are made some 10,000,000 pounds a year of fine chocolates for the United States' sweet tooth—besides these staples of her economy, and sugar, and hardwoods like mahogany—Costa Rica has rubber which grows wild in her jungles. The Goodyear company has a Costa Rican plantation which is beginning to produce excellent commercial rubber.

Since the Nazi occupation of Denmark, customers at barber shops in many places must bring their own towels—Danish towel-making has gone to Germany.

Billfold Girl



. . . . of the Week

He didn't know she was an office girl on vacation. But she knew he was a truck driver. He came into the little restaurant where she worked at three o'clock one morning.

At 3:30 Pfc. Oral Wheeler found himself getting diffy-daffy over a 5' 3", slender brunette lass who weighed 106 pounds, was named Melba and made his heart do cartwheels.

It worked both ways; so three months later they decided to get engaged and in another three, married. After nine months of married happiness, Pfc. Wheeler was inducted into the Army at Fort Douglas, Utah, was sent to Camp Adair and his wife followed him shortly thereafter.

Now both, to set something of a precedent in our Billfold Girl serial, are right here at Camp Adair. Mrs. Wheeler works as a stenographer in the QM Property office under Major Brandt. Pfc. Wheeler is a chauffeur in the SCU Quartermaster.

Mrs. Wheeler plays piano and Hawaiian guitar in leisure time. Other hobbies are horseback riding, dancing and bridge.

Yank Airmen Like Charms—Who Doesn't?

Yank airmen in the South Pacific don't believe in rabbits feet and four leaf clovers for luck.

Not they . . . but a story today shows they believe in just about everything else. Lt. Albert Kinder of San Antonio, Texas, carries a pair of red socks in his hip pocket whenever he's in the air. Just for old times' sake, he says.

And for old times' sake no doubt, Capt. Wayne Rathbun of Waterloo, Iowa, carries two buttons off a bartender's vest.

During the last war the mail-order price for a pair of overalls rose from 82 cents to \$2.95, and at one time a 10-pound bag of sugar cost \$2.67.

Red Cross Stands To Its Principle

"To Aid; To Act In Relief—Build Morale"

According to Army Regulation, the congress of the United States created the American National Red Cross with purposes as follows:

"To furnish volunteer aid to the sick and wounded of the armies in time of war . . . To act in matters of voluntary relief and in accord with the military and naval authorities as a medium of communication between the people of the United States of America and their Army and Navy."

The two main jobs of the Red Cross, to bolster morale by relieving anxiety and worry of any member of the armed forces from whatever cause—at his own or at his commanding officer's request.

And, two, to obtain confidential information on home conditions required by commanding officers in considering questions of discharge and furlough, and by medical officers in matters of medical care and treatment.

Caddy Caddies for Nice New Glee Club; Cpl. Hayes Leads 'em

Inspired by Miss Ann Caddy, Corporal "Oscar" Hayes of the Timber Wolf Division began to organize a glee club at Service Club 1 on Tuesday evening of this week.

Cpl. Hayes, who taught voice for five years in Los Angeles before entering the Army, started the boys off on community singing. Before the evening was over, the vocalists sang Sibelius' "Finlandia" in regular barber shop quartette fashion.

Those taking part in the singing are Cpls. Robert Getz, Gorlyn Oldre; Pfc. James Hall; Pvts. Edward Milligan, Jerry Morales, Frank Bower, Thomas de Mastri, and Winthrop Lawson.

Pvt. Charles Duncan accompanied the boys on the piano.

Nylon Screens Will Be Very Fine Indeed

Another contribution to post-war living—a nylon window screen—was announced by E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.

The chemically made screen can be raised or lowered like a window shade, the Company said, can be produced in any color, requires no painting, and will not corrode or stain sills.

Its elasticity is such that pencils or other sharp-pointed objects can be thrust through it without damage, the strands snapping back into place when rubbed with the fingers.

The company said that wide-scale tests would be made of the material during the summer, looking toward possible military use.

About one third of the officers in the Army came up from the ranks.

February, 1943

Eugene Gleemen wow Field House crowd . . . civic leaders from surrounding towns meet with Adair officers to map defense recreation program . . . opening of SCU Non-Coms Club set for March 6 . . . Capt. Rutledge, Tent City vet, leaves . . . "Junior Miss," USO-Camp Show, plays to capacity house . . . "Camp Adair Day" held in Eugene . . . "Dogs of War" arrive on post, to aid in sentry duty . . . bomb demonstrations staged . . . income tax tables for soldiers, officers rear ugly heads . . . Adele Adair is busy social butterfly . . . weekend train to Portland popular innovation . . . 96th Officers' Club boasts "glamourizing" murals . . . Sgt. from 96th has 27-year service stretch . . . camp-wide contest to elect typical "PX Girl" launched . . . Ada Leonard's all-girl troupes presents variety show . . . gremlins noted about camp, on rifle range, in kitchen, most everywhere . . . Brown and Black upped to Tech. Sgts. . . Mrs. McCoy sponsors Liberty Ship representing Camp Adair . . . once more, that Hayworth gal smiles from the back page . . . 96th League reported well in stride . . . free legal advice developed by Lt. Col J. W. Bonner . . .

