

In Correspondence from Dr. Alvin Roberts' Family in Hamadan, Iran

Hamadan, Iran, Sept. 4, 1962:
"You may have noted by the news media that we had an earth tremor here about three nights ago. It was so mild compared to the one that I experienced in Japan in the fall of 1946 that we just shrugged it off.
"Now the news is beginning to seep through that it is the worst in the history of Iran. Communications get pretty viscous out here. All this death and destruction was just about next door, and we get the word in three days.
"We here in Hamadan were surprised to learn from the Tehran papers that Hamadan was a disaster area. One of our friends heard in a tea shop in Resht, up by the Caspian, that 'Hamadan was wiped off the map.'"
260 Miles From Tehran
Hamadan is about 260 miles in a southwesterly direction from Tehran. It is a city of about 410,000 people in an area of Iran where mountains range upward to 11,000 feet high.
It is the home of Dr. and Mrs. Alvin Roberts and family of Central Point for a year, while Dr. Roberts serves as a medical missionary in Hamadan hospital under the auspices of the First Presbyterian church of Medford.

In letters from members of the Roberts family, such as the one above, the part the U.S. Army played following the earthquake is praised.
Mrs. Roberts, in a later letter, wrote:
Tremors Since Earthquake
"We have had some tremors since the earthquake. Lawrence (the Roberts' son) went with a carload from the mission and hospital yesterday to take some medicine to earthquake victims. They brought half of it home. 'There was nobody sick,' they were told.
"They drove 10 miles back to a village. Heard about one village where only eight were killed. The reason was a tractor had been driven into town about 10 p.m., and people were all out admiring it when the quake came.
"I am very proud of the U.S.A. which flew doctors, nurses, mobile hospital, and helicopters in from Germany. They and the Iranians themselves have done a tremendous job."
The family has settled down for the year, and Dr. Roberts wrote that "we will be relatively happy here for the year." He said they have been accepted by the community and the governor is friendly.

Trial Hanging on Wall
"One of my trials," he wrote, "is a nice big framed picture of Lake Louise in the room I use in the clinic. Really, it is nice to know there are places with green grass and visible water."
Dr. Roberts said "It is not a satisfying situation to practice in." This is because of the culture and mores which he said makes it hard for both the missionary doctors and the Iranians. The practice is much different from the practice carried on by physicians in this country, and seldom is there an illness which is not complicated in some way, he said.
Of medical agents, Dr. Roberts wrote:
"There are people who act as agents for sick people and go about and get bids on the treatment. They will go

to a doctor and say, 'I have a patient who needs an operation; for how much will you do it?' and then take the lowest bidder and charge the patient a much higher fee and pocket the commission."
Without Consistence
"These people meet the buses and get a hold of the villagers coming to town for their illnesses. It is a

vicious system as these individuals are totally without conscience. There is no organized medicine in Iran.
"We remain aloof from this dirty business, but are now and then reminded by patients who have been victims that it exists.
"I was interrupted at this point, and have just finished operating on the patient whose plight provoked

the above outburst. He was taken away from the hospital this noon because we wouldn't bargain with his 'manager.' Tonight he was brought back by concerned relatives. He had been very ill since yesterday.
The operation took three hours, Dr. Roberts wrote, and was completed at midnight.
Work is Never-Ending
In a letter dated Sept. 13, Dr. Roberts said: "Our work goes on and on and is never-ending. We could do more and more if the human stamina was up to it. The surgery I'm doing is real stimulating."
But it has not been all work. A bus trip from Hamadan to Tehran is described, as is their stay in Tehran where they visited their daughter, Judy, who is attending school there.

A ride in one of the Tehran taxis, Dr. Roberts wrote, "is a very impressive experience. This blurring at high speed is done with a nonchalance which rather unnerves me. Last night, on one occasion, we came so close that even the drivers got upset. I suppose the average trip across Tehran may give you 25 to 30 breath-takers."
Attend Softball Game
They attended a softball game with their daughter (the Americans in Tehran have a league), and "there is a supermarket in Tehran which looks absolutely fabulous... all the USA goods. It is about the size of Faber's (not including lockers or produce)." Faber's is a Central Point market.
Lawrence tells of a trip downtown with his father: "Again, at the expense of our lives, we rode a taxi down... After a little walking around trying to keep out of peoples way, look inconspicuous, keep hold of our belongings (cameras), keep from falling in any wells, holes, sewers, jubes, etc., and trying to casually snap a few pictures in between dodging people and swatting the bugs, we gave up, walked up to the big circle in the middle of town, and sat. There we only had to worry about the people and flies."
Dr. and Mrs. Roberts wrote about going to morning devotions, church, shopping for rugs, the food situation, going to Persian church, and visiting the home of the Roberts' laundry lady, who gave birth to twin daughters.

At Work A Week Later
Mrs. Roberts writes of the birth, "she was back at work yesterday—washed and ironed! (one week after giving birth to twins). She didn't want the babies because she couldn't feed them," Mrs. Roberts wrote.
UNICEF milk was obtained, the mission gave her husband a job, and baby clothes were obtained for gifts. "The things had been made by ladies missionary societies at home. I was thrilled to be on the giving end of the things."
"The visit was interesting. Their house is two rooms built against the mud wall. One room has beautiful Persian rugs on the cement floor. No furniture, but the rugs are nice to sit and sleep on... She had the babies wrapped tightly, with their arms fastened down inside the wrappings. They were bound by wide bands like a papoose, only no board. I wondered how often she undid it all and changed them."



Shown in Egypt en route to Hamadan is the Dr. Alvin Roberts family on camels. Left to right, they are Mrs. Roberts, Dr. Roberts, Phyllis, Judy and Lawrence.

About Earthquake Relief

By JOSEPH MAZANDI
United Press International
Tehran, Iran — UPI — The earthquake relief work of the United States and other foreign nations, which saved thousands of lives after the Sept. 1 quake, will face another crucial test this month.
Rehabilitation and aid teams are racing to beat the start of Iran's bitter mountain winter in their efforts to get all of the 100,000 homeless survivors under adequate shelter. If they do not, more deaths may be added to the 12,000 toll of the quake itself.
Dr. Hossein Khatibi, director of the Red Lion and Sun society (Iran's Red Cross) called the American contribution thus far "enormous" and expressed confidence the winter deadline would be met.
Promise Government Aid
The Shah of Iran, who toured the hardest-hit villages on foot shortly after the disaster, has promised that the 186 villages completely destroyed and the 114 seriously damaged would be rebuilt at government expense.
But before this project can be carried out, temporary shelter must be erected quickly.
Khatibi said 1,200 prefabricated homes are on the way from Britain and 8,000 winterized tents are expected from the United States.
He said the tents would be warmer and better housing than the villagers had had before the disaster.

The canvas peaks of U.S. Army tents began appearing among the rubble of Iranian villages within days after the earthquake hit. U.S. Air Force warehousemen were loading the first of 1,000 tents, 10,000 blankets, and tons of medicines into transport planes a few hours after the news of the disaster reached U.S. bases in Europe.
The most spectacular part of the American relief effort was the airlifting of a complete army mobile hospital from Ramstein Air Force base, Germany, to Ghazvin, the aid center 80 miles west of Tehran.
The hospital had 100 beds and its staff included 18 doctors, 22 nurses and 135 medical aid men. It treated far more patients than its bed capacity might indicate. In its three weeks in Ghazvin, it had 177 inpatients and 340 outpatients.
U.S. Army helicopters, also airlifted from Europe, flew out to remote villages from Ghazvin, carrying relief supplies on the trip out and bringing back patients.
The hospital was well-equipped to handle disaster victims because it is geared to wartime conditions. But an Iranian named Ida presented it with unforeseen problems.
Ida was the first baby born in the hospital. Her mother had been seriously injured and taken there. Ida is not the baby's Iranian name but her hospital nickname. It stands for Iran Disaster Assistance, the title of the operation.
How to care for the baby became the special task of medical corpsman Sgt. Donald L. Webb of Cincinnati, Ohio. He used a surgical instrument case as a bassinets. Baby clothes were fashioned out of the cotton material used under plaster casts, nipples out of rubber glove fingers and diapers out of gauze.
When the hospital's second and third babies were born, Webb and his fellow corpsmen were old hands in the nursery department.

The helicopters shuttled between the hospital and mountain villages so isolated that mule pack trains had been their only contact with the outside world.
In one village, Milak Sufia, the villagers were so grateful that they sacrificed a goat near the helicopter in honor of its visit. The crewmen graciously declined the meat, telling the villagers they needed it more.
Captains Louis L. Mizell, New Castle, Colo., and Alastair A. Calhoun, Philadelphia, and SP4 John M. Barber, Laurinburg, N.C., were the crew that flew to Milak Sufia.
Preventive Medicine Team
The hospital is gone now, its work finished, but an Army preventive medicine team has stayed. It has been working around the clock, trying to restore sanitary conditions, acting up clean and safe water supplies, advising villagers on spraying against insects, and seeing to the burial of dead animals.
Now the priority project is shelter, temporary and permanent. The new homes promised by the Shah will transform the disaster area into model villages, with modern construction and sanitary facilities most of the homeless had not had before the quake.
In addition, the United States, Sweden and Norway each have offered to build one entire village. The United Nations will aid in other construction through its relief teams here.
Money and material from nearly 30 nations, meanwhile, is helping in the drive to get temporary winter shelter for the homeless.



Ida Amami, the first infant born in the U. S. Army's eighth evacuation hospital at Ghazvin, Iran, is fed by Sgt. Donald Webb of Cincinnati, Ohio. Ida's mother was badly burned in the disastrous earthquake that shook parts of Iran Sept. 1. Ida was named after the code word for Iran Disaster Assistance (UP4).

About Arab Dissensions

By K. C. THALER
United Press International
London — UPI — The Middle East is in ferment again, with Russia standing at the ready to exploit its tensions if it can.
Dissensions among Arab rulers are ages old, but recent events have revealed new ones, deeper and more bitter than ever. Arab unity, so long a slogan and a goal, has been taking a battering.
Suspicion, fear, greed and rivalry for the leadership of the Middle East are the key factors behind the Arab world's troubles, now bubbling at high heat after a period of relative stability. Items:
YEMEN:
The September revolt in Yemen and the overthrow of the Imamate was but a symptom of the wind of change that blows through the Middle East even as it does through black Africa. The force of this wind has been reflected in a variety of ways other than the Yemen uprising.



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ARAB LEAGUE:
Only a few weeks ago inner-Arab quarrels almost broke up the 13-year-old Arab League, the alignment designed to be both the instrument and the symbol of Arab unity. Sharp differences have left the league weakened to the point of insignificance.
SAUDI ARABIA:
The coup in Yemen sent jitters through its neighbor Saudi Arabia whose feudal system is under the fierce protection of King Saud in the face of growing revolutionary pressures from the outside, especially from Cairo.
EGYPT:
The present unease in the Mideast goes farther back, to the breakup of the Egypt-Syria union a year ago which destroyed at least temporarily the hopes of United Arab Republic. Nasser to unite the Arab nations. This was followed by the dissolution of the merger between Egypt and Yemen where some observers now see Nasser's influence stirring again. Nasser himself appears to be experimenting with socialism, but it is a brand of socialism not particularly recognizable to western eyes.

World attention was again thrust on the Middle East, one of the world's most troubled areas, by the September revolt against Imamate of Yemen. Rivalries among Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel are presently being intensified by Soviet arms offers to Egypt, Iraq and Syria. (UPI)
JORDAN:
Last month, Saudi Arabia and Jordan joined in an open anti-Nasser front by forming a unified military command and a political and economic partnership.
SYRIA:
Since her breakaway from Egypt, Syria has been flirting with Iraq and Kassem, President Nasser's top Mideast rival. There has been speculation about the creation of a "Fertile Crescent," a long-standing dream for close association of Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. This would be a direct affront to, and defeat for, Nasser.
IRAQ, ETC.
There are other troubles. Iraq is casting covetous eyes on Kuwait and its oil, claiming Kuwait really is its territory. Nasser and King Saud of Saudi Arabia have been exchanging bitter charges that each is plotting to assassinate the other. King Hussein of Jordan also charges Egypt is plotting his death. Iraq's Kassem fears both Nasser and the Kurds of the north who refuse to accept his leadership and are in constant rebellion.
THE KREMLIN:
In the middle of it all a fresh influx of Soviet arms — jet planes and missiles — has revived the arms race in the Middle East. Nasser has been accepting Soviet aid on a considerable scale. An Iraq mission is currently negotiating in Moscow for more up-to-date weapons. Syria is in these negotiations, too.
The new Russian arms reaching the Mideast induced the United States to try and redress a threatening imbalance of military strength by promising missiles to Israel.
It is Israel that is the one unifying force among the Arabs. They all hate and fear the Jewish state and have vowed its destruction. It is about the only common bond the Arabs have apart from the Islamic religion.
Divide Arab Nations
Selfishness, suspicion, resistance to change and power ambitions are what mainly divide the Arab nations and their leaders. Nasser and Kassem, as has been noted, both aspire to a broad leadership of the en-

tire area. Egypt is population-choked and poor. Kassem wants to retain the oil and power he now has and extend it, his immediate target being Kuwait. King Saud has his great oil wealth and a completely subject kingdom and wants to keep things that way. Jordan, squeezed between more powerful neighbors, feels herself in deadly peril from both Israel and Egypt.
Most of the Arab world is non-aligned either with East or West. Most pro-western are Lebanon, Jordan and Saudi Arabia and they do without Soviet aid. Egypt, Yemen, Iraq and Syria, while non-aligned, accept and have sought Soviet help, both economic and military.
Communism in seeking a political foothold in the Mideast faces a powerful deterrent in the anti-Communist Islamic religion. It is the same religion that also defeats efforts to westernize Arabia. Soviet and American missions in Arab countries have made little impact on them.
The problems that keep the Middle East in an uproar are mainly home made — but nevertheless threatening to the general peace because of Soviet trouble-making.