

Story of North African Invasion Told by Sgt. Leitzke in Letter Home

A dramatic story is tucked into the pages of a letter which recently reached Mr. and Mrs. Henry Leitzke of Fairhaven Heights from their son, Staff Sergeant Leonard Leitzke, United States army air corps ground crewman, who was in on the African invasion last November. Incidentally, tomorrow, July 10, the Leitzkes will cut a cake for Leonard's 23rd birthday.

Here is the letter addressed to his mother and dad:

"You probably know I went to Fort Dix from Everett where we were properly equipped and put through mock battles, etc., to get us in physical shape.

"The morning of November 1, we marched to the pier and that evening, taking our last look at the good old U. S., we marched up the gangplank. We sailed that night. It was a ship built by the Germans in 1929, I believe.

Voyage Over

"We were on E deck, below the water line, and the conditions were terrible. It was almost impossible to breathe and a person couldn't even sit up, it was so crowded. All in all, it was a terrible trip, including the unattractive food. Nights were killing with everyone trying to sleep but even with our clothes off it was impossible. The ocean itself was beautiful except for about five days when we were in a bad storm and the waves were really high. I did not get sea-sick at all, but was sure sick of everything else.

"To top it off we ran into a pack of German submarines off the coast of Africa, and instead of landing November 11, as we were supposed to do, we dodged submarines for seven days, going north during the day and south during the night and finally landing at Casablanca on November 18. We were sure a happy bunch of fellows as we marched through the streets of Casablanca with the torrential rains pouring down and us singing 'God Bless America.' It was nine miles of rain, mud and cold with our heavy packs, to the airdrome where the louse-infected stable offered a most welcome lodging.

At Casablanca

"We stayed at Casablanca only about a week and then moved one night to Port Lyautey. While at Casablanca, Jack Lindh, my old high school and Riverside locker partner and chum looked me up. He is a lieutenant co-piloting a B-25. We had a nice visit, but have not seen him since.

"While at Port Lyautey, we assembled wrecked airplanes and won ourselves an 18-point lead, making us supposedly the best service squadron in North Africa. This good rating that we earned for ourselves later got us into plenty of action.

First Bombing

"We left one dark, rainy night and saw our first bombing in Algiers. We were in the railroad yards when the bombs dropped about three miles away. Three miles sounds far away, and is a safe distance, but one didn't know when a bomb would drop where you are, especially when you are standing in a railroad yard.

"We continued our trip by ancient railroad to Ain M'Elia where we were only about a week, just long enough to set up our shops. Then it was pack again and leave for S'Beitla, the most advanced air base in Tunisia. Our '18-point better than anybody else' record gave us this questionable privilege.

Advance Base

"We arrived at S'Beitla about February 1, I think, as we left P. L. just before the president arrived there. Every day a German plane which we called 'Photo Freddy,' came over taking pictures as we set up our equipment. As yet we had no planes. Then on Valentine's day, after listening to the big guns of the front some 15 miles away, German dive bombers bombed us, and that night we were almost encircled as the Germans pressed on. Trucks rolled by the hundreds that night and we evacuated to Tebessa.

"That was the battle of Kasserine and Faid pass and was the beginning of our tiresome and disheartening retreat. Staying one night at Tebessa, we moved to Yonks Les Baines, to



St. Sgt. Leonard Leitzke

Konif, to Le Kef, back to Ain Beda and then to Teletpe where we stayed for some time. At the other places we would stay from one to two days, just long enough to unload, dig fox holes, and then load up again and move out as the Germans were pushing on and we were not fighting troops, thank heavens.

"When we came back to Konif the second time we stayed two weeks and saw a German Stuka dive bomber shot down. As we left Konif the second time for Le Kef, our convoy and a British one intermingled and was attacked by dive bombers and strafed. As we wove in and out they always seemed to miss our trucks and hit the British. We didn't lose a truck and only one of our men was hurt—a bullet in his leg.

Things Quiet Down

"From then on things were quiet until Teletpe where we were bombed and strafed twice. I saw my first dog fight there when one of our pilots dove into a bunch of ME 109's and shot down two of them. Both the Germans bailed out as their planes burst into flames.

"We left Teletpe again for S'Beitla and then to Maklar, to Le Sers to our present location which I can't tell. Always up until the fall of Tunis and Bizerte we were the most advanced air base.

"Of course, this is a very brief account of my stay over here, so if you'll keep this letter I will fill in all the details when I come home. Love, your son, Leonard."

Berlin Radio Reports Allied Battle Units Leaving Gibraltar

LONDON, July 9 (P)—The Berlin radio reported Thursday that battle units of the allied Mediterranean fleet, reinforced by recently arrived American cruisers and aircraft carriers, had left Gibraltar, leading "to the supposition that the American allied commander is preparing for an attack against Europe."

The broadcast, which was recorded by The Associated Press, declared that the allies, in addition to strong concentrations of warships and transports, have 44 infantry divisions and 15 to 20 tank formations poised between Morocco and Syria.

Kaiser Aircraft Escort Carrier Now Part of U. S. Navy

ASTORIA, Ore., July 9 (P)—The USS Casablanca, first aircraft escort carrier built by Henry J. Kaiser, was a full-fledged unit of Uncle Sam's navy today.

The ship was commissioned by Capt. J. D. Barner, commandant of the naval station here, on behalf of Vice-Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, 13th naval district commandant, and turned over to Comdr. S. W. Callaway.

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MEN AND WOMEN IN SERVICE

VISITS BROTHER — Machinist Mate 2nd Class Richard L. Peck

writes his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. John S. Peck, of Klamath Falls, that he has been made happy with a short leave and is planning to spend it with his brother, Arthur H. Peck, at Arcadia, Calif., and doing research work for the California Institute of Technology at Pasadena. The brothers haven't seen each other since the war began. Sailor Peck has been stationed in the bay district.



Keith McGillivray, who is in the naval reserve under the V-12 program, reported July 1 at Willamette university to continue his studies. McGillivray attended the University of Oregon last year, and majored in pre-med. He is a graduate of KUHS and is the son of Mr. and Mrs. D. T. McGillivray of 2334 Vine street.

ARMY, NAVY TURN DOWN COX REQUEST

WASHINGTON, July 9 (P)—The war and navy departments refused today, by direction of President Roosevelt, to turn over to a house investigating committee headed by Rep. Cox (R-Ga.) certain documents it had requested to support charges that the federal communications commission was interfering with intelligence operations of the armed services.

The department's position was stated in letters, made public by Chairman Cox and signed by Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson and Acting Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal.

Forrestal and Patterson also notified the committee they would not permit the appearance of army and navy officers the committee desired to question.

Private Selmer O. Olson Jr., formerly of Bly, is now stationed in Africa. He is a switchboard operator with the U. S. signal corps. Olson was employed at the Ivory Pine Lumber company in Bly prior to his enlistment in the army. He states that he is getting along fine and likes his work.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Joneschiet of Jackson, Calif.

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Sergeant Stanley Ezell, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Ezell, 4709 Summers lane, Klamath Falls, was graduated recently from the army air forces' flexible gunnery school at Fort Myers, Fla.

Sergeant Ezell entered the army nine months ago, having formerly been employed as a welder. He is a graduate of the airplane mechanics' school at Sheppard Field, Texas.

FORT KLAMATH — Corporal Willard Williams of the U. S. marine corps was a Monday

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