

OUR SAVIOR'S "G.I.'S"

Vol. 1 - No. 8

Christmas - 1944

THE STAR OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

Once again Christmas will remind us of the angelic choir that filled the air with heavenly music as it sang "Glory to God in the highest and on earth PEACE."

In spite of the tumult of the war this song should still re-echo in our hearts, here at home as well as in the many different regions where readers of this paper will celebrate the holy season this year.

The Bible is not a collection of beautiful fairy tales. It is God's revelation to man, enabling him to see the deep realities of life and to receive salvation. The Christmas story tells both of shepherds and of soldiers - it tells of peaceful people who in the quiet night listened to the song from above and of wise men who followed the guiding star. But it also tells of the wicked king who commended his soldiers to kill innocent children in order to destroy the newborn Prince of Peace.

Gross darkness still covers the earth, and evil anti-Christian forces are waging a gigantic battle. But those who will lift up their eyes will still see the star that is ready to guide.

When we as children heard the Christmas story, some of us deeply desired that we might see a star in the sky to show us where to go. Bible readers who ask God's Spirit to open the Scriptures for them and who are willing to follow the Light of the World, will sing with Grundtvig:

"We, too, have a star to guide us,
Which forever will provide us,
With the light to find our Lord.

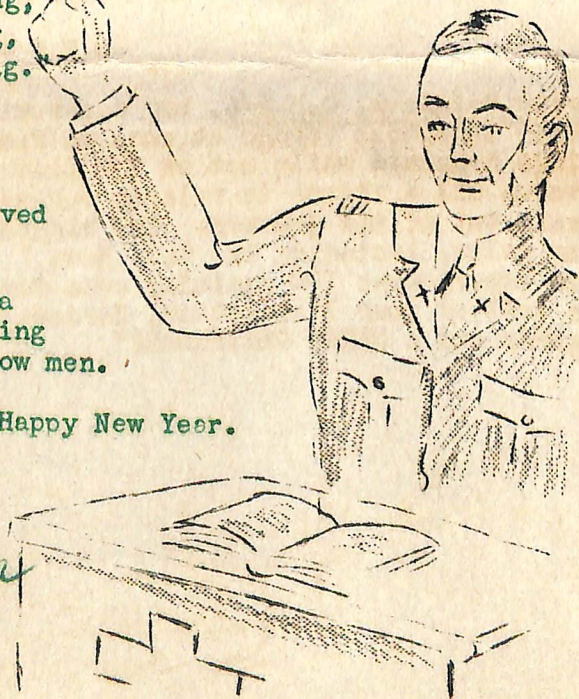
And this star as bright as day,
Which will never lead astray,
With its message so appealing,
Is the Word of God revealing,
Christ to us as Lord and King.

When we accept God's guidance in His Word, the star of FAITH will shine in our hearts. There can be no peace on earth among men in whom God is not well pleased. But where Christ is received the star of HOPE will gleam in spite of all the horrors raging in a world locked in deadly war. And when we follow its light, we are lead into a New World where the star of LOVE shines, revealing and reflecting love to God and love to our fellow men.

May God give you all a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely yours,

Paul E. Nyholm



Another newcomer to our ranks - Welcome Bob Stephens, G.M. 3/C - U.S.S. Palmer - Bob was in port when he wrote: "I just received the September issue of the G.I. News, and it was a most welcome surprise. I'm afraid that I am unable to contribute very much news to our press, because of the Censor's watchful eye, but I can say that I miss everyone and long to get back. I'd like to say hello to Gordon Pedersen, but I think he'll remember me better by the name, Bob Campbell." Here's Gordon's address, Bob - Gordon Pedersen, Q.M. 3/C, U.S.S. Peril, (A.M.272) c/o Fleet P.O. New York, N.Y., and Gordon, here's Bob's address - c/o Fleet P.O., San Francisco, California - now you two do something about it, hear? But in the meantime, don't forget that we Ed s. are always hungry for news too!

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The Lt. Tony Bangs have named their little bundle from Heaven "Ronald Anton" - Hi Ronnie!

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Our good friend, Harold Andreasen S-2/C has moved again, this time to Glenwood Springs, Colorado, where he writes - "The G.I. paper had a time catching up to me again. Am waiting here for my discharge papers to return from Washington. I don't know how long it will be, but when they come my wife and I are coming to Chicago for a visit before returning to California where we plan to make our home. The scenery around here is beautiful - words alone cannot explain it. At this time I wish to thank the Brotherhood for 'Christmas Chimes'." --- We'll be looking for you and the Missus, Harold!

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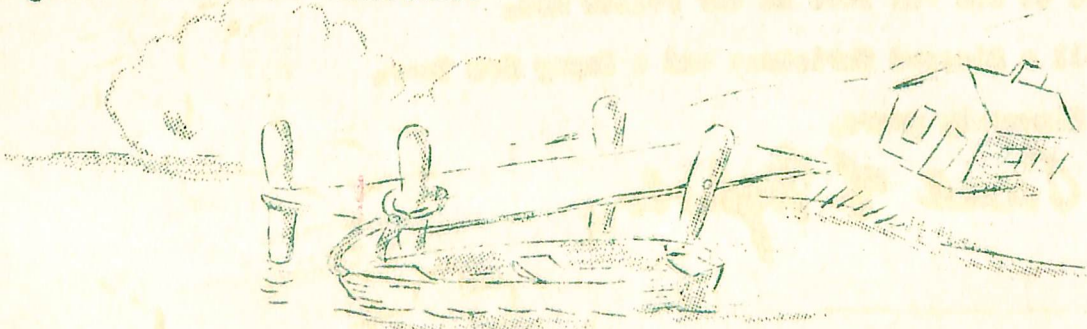
A note from A.M.M.1/C Arne Nielsen says: "Thanks for the generous compliments you paid my pennings - didn't think it rated the G.I. News though." (Any letter gets a G.I. rating as far as we're concerned, Arne - we think they're swell!)

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A/C Norman Jensen, Florida, says: "We can all be thankful that the U.S. is winning the war, if for nothing else. Every time I think about griping about being so far from home, or getting up at 0445, or the barracks are cold, I think about the fellows overseas and feel pretty small. We are pretty close to the ocean, but never see any large ships, must be too shallow. Surprised and happy to hear about Jessie, and certainly wish her all the luck in the world!"

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Gordon Pedersen, Q.M.3/C, our sea-roving sailor discloses that "again after a rather strenuous voyage at sea, we find ourselves moored to the dock. Several things happened while out on the last cruise which were exciting and sort of gave us all a chance to release our madness, also taking a large part of the strain out of the journey. The biggest joy of all was to find mail from the home folks, including the G.I. News." (Yes, Gordon, in fact the CENSOR thought your experiences TOO exciting even for our consumption!) This is about all that was left of your last letter, Gordon, except "And to all I extend my very best regards and a MERRY CHRISTMAS!"



A CHRISTMAS WISH

We are thinking of you today, because it is Christmas. And we wish you joy. And tomorrow, because it is the day after Christmas, we shall wish you joy. Mayhap we cannot tell you about it from day to day, for you may be far away, or we may be entangled with the happenings on the home front - but it makes no difference - our thoughts and wishes will be with you. Whatever of joy comes to you we shall be glad. Clear through the year, without pretense, we wish you the Spirit of Christmas!

Henry Van Dyke

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Fellow G.I. Readers: I'm not a Chicagoan; I don't belong to "Our Savior's" (I only work and worship there each Sunday - if I don't have guard duty); and I know only a few of you men in uniform from times when you've been home on leave; yet we stand on common ground in that we all read "Our Savior's G.I.'s". I've enjoyed every issue, too! I'm at present engaged in the Chicago Theater of Operations, Navy Pier Campaign, a battle at great odds against the cold lake winds that have a way of searching you out even under two woolen blankets. --- But this was to be a Christmas letter - so said the editorial staff. I had this Christmas letter all written and finished and then I tore it up. It was too gloomy for a Christmas letter. I was telling about how angry I became when I thought of the abuse which non-Christian people heap upon the Christmas celebration of our Savior's birth. Oh, they don't mean to - it's just that they have no time for the church and Christ's precepts and yet at the same time they aren't as honest as old Scrooge in the "Christmas Carol" was. I know he was miserly and gruff and selfish, but he didn't believe in Christmas and so he treated Christmas like any other day. The only ones who have an honest right to celebrate Christmas are the friends of Christ. But instead the season is exploited commercially and socially. To some it's like New Year's Eve, a time to get drunk - in some minds it's like Halloween, the religious origin is forgotten. The very men who use His name in cursing about a "Merry Christmas" perhaps all in the same breath. I do admit that Christmas brings more joy and good will and a little more unselfishness into the lives of even non-Christians, but think of the real joys of Christmas which are missed! So, before I wish you a Merry Christmas, I'd like to think a little about it's religious origin, about the birth of a man who was able to offer us a courageous, practical, and workable philosophy of living, and (I must add) of dying. That's what I wrote and tore up again, but somehow it leaked out of my pen again. --- A Happy and Blessed Christmas to you all in Jesus Name - Sincerely, Ethan A. Svendsen - (R.T. 3/C U.S.N.R.)

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Well, here's word from one of our boys who was in the Philippine invasion, Cpl. Johnny Nasser - but let him tell us about it (much as he can): "Just a few lines to let you all know that everything is all right. This has been a new adventure, and in my opinion they can keep it! Although we are in there plugging. The day before invasion our Chaplain gave a service for all religions combined in one. It sure was wonderful, knowing He was at our side in battle. That day was the closest I've been to God! Seemed as if I could feel His presence right next to me. One thing I've found out is that there are no atheists in a foxhole or in battle. We've heard some horrible tales from the natives here of what the Japs did to the white school-teachers, preachers and missionaries, so we sure are glad to be here. Am looking for the paper in our first mail call in a couple of weeks, to see how the rest of the boys are making out, so in the meanwhile give my regards to all my friends." Okay, Johnny, we will, and don't you forget we're right behind you, buying a little more ammunition every day, and saying a few more prayers every day.

Walter Rasmussen T.M. 3/C wrote us a nice little letter, right after he was in church in November - this time from Norfolk, Va. - "It's been just over a week since I arrived here at school. It has been a very busy week getting used to the rules and regulations of this base and they want the rules to be followed or else! This is supposed to be an advanced Torpedo School, but as yet we haven't been in the shop - we've been getting practice on how to set up problems in Fire Control, that is, figuring or estimating the angles of the target to make a hit. I've been out to the Air Station several times since being here, hoping to see Melvin Nielsen or Bob Haley, but so far no luck. I know where Melvin works, but by the time I get there he has quit work and those I've asked don't seem to know where his barracks are. Oh, well, maybe I'll meet one of them. I received the book 'Christmas Chimes' here today, but haven't read any of it yet - in the next letter I'll let you know how it is." Hope you've had better luck by this time, Wally, in finding either Melvin or Bob, or both - seems like you three should get together!

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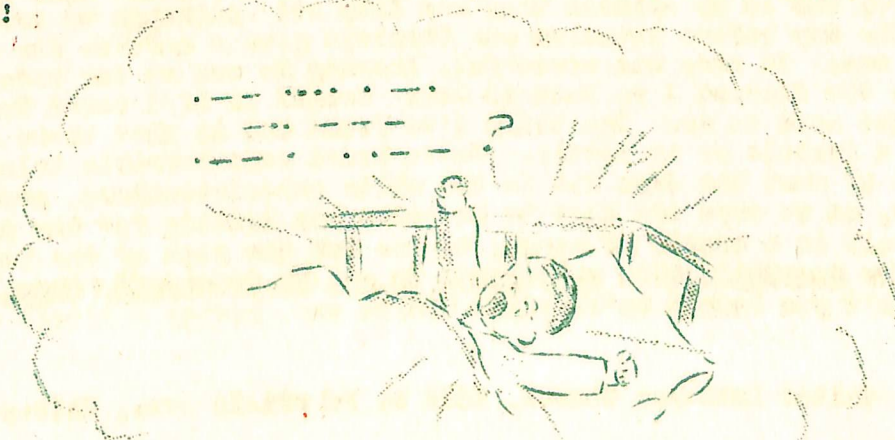
Here's a little inside info. G.I.'s: A.O.M.B.3/C Bob Haley's ONE AND ONLY will find a solitaire in her stocking on Christmas morning, and he will be strolling down that middle aisle to the strains of Lohengrin some time in the month of February. CONGRATULATIONS!! And all that goes with it, Bob, to you and your bride-to-be, Miss Martha Hines, of Windsor, Virginia - and may you have a long and happy life together!

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We're always glad to get a letter from S/Sgt. Frank Rasmussen, in China: "Believe it's about time for me to write a few lines to you all. The paper I have received with pleasure. It is good to hear from some of the other fellows. Things have been quiet here the last month, and from the looks of things will be that way for the next few. For a while things were kinda rough, but that is to be expected. I hope within the next year I'll be able to come in and say hello in person, but then old Uncle Sammy has something to say about that. By the way, I would like Pastor Rasmussen's address, so that some time when I have the time I may be able to drop him a line or two. (Ed. note: You'll find it on another page, Frank, as we thought some of the other boys would like it too.) One of these days we may leave here to go to a rest camp, but that isn't for sure yet. I'm hoping that we get relief from here before too long. There are just three of us here - a Lt., an interpreter, and myself - we have had a school for the Chinese soldiers, and the time since has passed very slowly."

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Our humble apologies, Jessie - It seems that we just about had everything wrong in our last issue - Cpl. Jessie Norman Stewart said "I DO" on the 5th of October instead of the 8th, and her G.I. Joe carries the same rank and rating as she. They are both Radio Technicians. Maybe there'll be a 'little' STATIC in future years!!



SONG FOR A CHRISTMAS TREE

Today the winds of all the world
Blow wild and cold and insecure,
But here one flower is still unfurled,
One fruit can still endure;
Here is the Tree that shines each year
With blooms of gayly-colored light
And, closing us from hate and fear,
The holly's hedge burns bright:

And still we laugh with each loved child
Because the Christ could come and stay
With love, within a world more wild,
More dark, than ours today;
Could wake among its wounds and wrongs
And cruel deeds and evil wars
Hearts that held fast to Christmas songs
And peace, and dreams of stars:

Oh, if for this short Christmas while
Our world that hates can still forget
And turn in love to sing and smile
With gifts and laughter yet,
Then surely in a wider world
Some day Christ's peace shall be secure,
The flower of love be all unfurled,
The fruit of love endure!

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We were beginning to worry for fear we wouldn't have anything in our Christmas issue about Chaplain Rasmussen. After all, our paper wouldn't be complete without something from him! But he didn't desert us and sent the following letter addressed to the congregation: "Here I am on my way back from Jerusalem. Was so fortunate to get ten days D.S. to Cairo and the Holy Land. Now I am waiting for a plane back to Cairo, and then I expect to see a few sights there and then back to work. Have enjoyed my visit a great deal. There are definite disappointments, naturally. The 'commercialization' of these Holy spots - the competitive alters and clutter of, to me, semi-religious things that have been added thru' the years. But it is an experience to have seen these places and put oneself back to the days when Christ walked here. I could not begin to describe my thoughts and feelings as I spent these days here, but I do want to send greetings to you all. Perhaps, some day, I will be able to give a talk on some of these things. To have seen them will make my future reading of the Bible more vivid and realistic. Now with the vision of Bethlehem still fresh in my mind, I went to send you this as a Christmas Greeting to you all. No matter where we may be - even in the midst of the noise and clamor of war, the Christmas Gospel must sound! Perhaps, too, that by then, God in His mercy will have granted His peace, at least in this part of the world. Tho' I sometimes think he tarries so because, in spite of much talking 'about God, and prayer to Him' we are rendering only lip-service and have not learned really to depend upon Him in penitence and in faith. Now then may God bless us all and watch over each one - that above all else - we may be drawn closer to Him. Sincerely yours, P.G.R."

And still another newcomer!! Gosh, you fellows make us feel good! This time it's Clifford H. Hoye, S.F. 2/C and we believe he's somewhere in the South Pacific - "I received your G.I. paper and the Wells of Salvation today - both were very much appreciated. It has been a long time, and in glancing through the paper I can't seem to put the names with any faces. In a paper I received some time ago you had a piece in there from Jessie Norman - I sure wish you would send me her address as I would like to write to her. (Ed. note: it's on another page, Clifford, and don't mind that she's Mrs. Stewart now, I'm sure she'll be glad to hear from you nevertheless.) There isn't much I can tell you about life out here, except it isn't like being in Chicago. I imagine it is a little cold back there now. I'm sitting here in my shorts writing this and that is all I can say for the place that is good. I enjoy reading the G.I. paper, so keep them coming, and tell everybody there that I'm fine, but I'd sure like to trade places with one of them for Christmas. I'd give anything to see Golden Gate Bridge right now. Goodbye for this time and God bless you all - tell everybody hello from me." WE'LL keep 'em coming, Cliff, now how about yourself? Come again!!

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Here is a Texas man, Ensign Louis A. Nielsen: "This is a rather difficult letter for me to write and yet I feel I would like to write and say 'thank you' for the mail I have been receiving the past weeks. Have received two magazines and several of the G.I. News. Although I know personally none of the fellows from your church, I do enjoy reading of their adventures. Also, my brother Arne wrote some time ago and you know I can't let him beat me out. (Ed. note: Look what competition did this time!) as for news, there's not too much from me. Have been a cadet in the Navy Air Corps for about nineteen months (seems like a lifetime) and a few days ago finished as a cadet and received those there 'Wings'. Have worked pretty hard for the past year and a half and hope to get a few days leave - then will go on to operational training somewhere in Florida. Thanks for your kindness in sending me the correspondence of the church." Congratulations!! And Louis let us hear from you when you are a Floridian.

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Roy Harris, G.M. 3/C, far, far from home, says: "Have seen two more twisters again - one while coming in off patrol and the other whirling around the bay here. You should have seen the excitement - the boats were running around trying to dodge it, and when it headed for the docks, men and trucks evacuated the surrounding area, but fast! We just stood and watched it from the cockpit. It broke up shortly after it hit the dock, and was really sucking up the water. The natives eat those sea turtles and from what I gather they're pretty good eating. It is raining so hard we can hardly see the beach and it's getting near chow time - if I wasn't so doggone hungry I wouldn't bother. Oh, well, there's nothing like a little 'corned willie' to pep a man up. --- Back from chow, no 'corned willie', we had hash instead, just about the same, dehydrated spuds, corn, BEANS and jello for dessert. Boy! will it ever be nice to sit down to an UNDEHYDRATED meal of good food again. The shells that I made the bracelet and necklace of (for his Mom) are found inside the holes in the coral rock. After picking up quite a few the best thing to do is to bury them in the ground a couple of weeks, because what an odor they give off when dead. Then putting them together is when the headache comes. We didn't eat those wild boars and pigeons - we gave them to the natives. They resemble our domestic porcines a great deal. The native canoes are made out of a log, with the center cut out and the ends don't come to a point, they are more or less blunt, with an outrigger attached. The opening is very small though - you can just barely get both legs in side by side. The paddles are so oddly shaped. From our news bulletin we see cigarettes are really scarce on the home front. We don't have any trouble getting them out here. Aage Johnson really deserves a lot of credit and commendation for those pictures in the G.I. News that he had printed up." --- We think so too, Roy - And how do you like our little sketches, etc. - they are Aage's too - we're mighty proud of him!

And just in time for our Christmas issue comes a letter from CORPORAL Bill Rasmussen - Congratulations, Bill! - "Just a line to thank you for the G.I. News and the pictures I received were a surprise, especially the one on the paper which I didn't even know had been taken. Thanks a lot to Aage Johnson for the enlargement. As soon as I got back I took my Corporal examinations and made good, so now I'm 'Corporal' Rasmussen - I still think I got into this too late to catch up to my illustrious brothers, especially Frank. Our trainees fired the Howitzers for the first time last week and are getting their baptism of fire over their heads this week when we run the wet runs on the battle course. I have a couple of eighteen-year olds who are afraid of it. I've tried to tell them that all Army men have taken it and that there isn't a chance of anything happening as long as they obey orders. I think I convinced them, at least they seemed to be satisfied when I told them I'd take them over myself. I'll probably regret it because it's been raining for three days so it will be plenty muddy, but then it's easier sliding under the barbed wire. Sunday I visited the Lutheran U.S.O. I didn't know they had one but happened to see it advertised and it is very comfortable and homelike with all new equipment and furnishings. Coffee and sandwiches, cookies or doughnuts are served every night and Sunday afternoon so I've just had my afternoon coffee. I visited their church this morning and after dinner came over here to write a few letters and have a game of ping pong. I really don't need the exercise though, because yesterday we had a march through the mud to a demonstration - it amounted to ten miles, but with the slipping we did backwards it was much longer. We were mud to our knees when we got back to the battery. It is time to eat again and that is something I never neglect - my food - so until next time, the best of luck to the G.I. News and keep it coming." --- Same old Bill, always thinking of his stomach - Come again Bill, we like it!

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Here's a little good news from Pvt. Victor Sorby, who is still in the hospital "somewhere" in England - "Well, by now, my wounded foot is coming along fine - I am able to walk almost like new and the slight limp I do have will work out in a short while. I have had wonderful medical attention and these sulfa pills and penicillin are really wonder drugs, and us boys in the hospital really have a lot of faith in them. The weather over here in England is beginning to turn cold and we have had a lot of rain and fog. I have been receiving the G.I. paper that the church sends out regular and I must compliment the staff on their wonderful work. In a short time I am going to leave this hospital for a station hospital where I will start all over again with some infantry training." --- Let us hear from you again, Vic, we want to know how you're getting along.

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Well, well - our old friend Clifford Stenstrop is back with us again - Hi-ya Cliff: "I received my letter yesterday wishing me greetings from the people of the church, and I want to thank you and everyone else for remembering me. I'm not in South Carolina any more. I'm stationed at the West Coast Processing Center, at Camp McQuaide, California, about 90 miles south of San Francisco. I can throw a stone into the Pacific Ocean from my barracks door." --- Glad to hear from you again, Clifford, we were wondering what became of you.



Enclosed you will find a little tag that may prove to be valuable if anything should happen to you, which we of course hope will not take place, but nevertheless must be prepared for. Kindly attach it to your identification tag - it will assure you assistance of a Lutheran Chaplain, if at all possible, and may also be of value in other ways.



GLIMPSES OF HOME -----Br-r-r-r, cold, sloppy and snow flurries now and then - in fact we had about one half inch of that white stuff on Thanksgiving Day - it was truly beautiful the way it clung to the trees, but by the time we went home from church it was practically gone. -- Christmas almost here and everyone busy as a bee -- We all have so much to be thankful for - concerts, operas, ballets, ice shows, plays, etc. Speaking of plays, the Luther League gave a play Thanksgiving Eve, "A Modern Thanksgiving". Those youngsters are really tops! -- Our Candlelight Service by the Choir will be held Sunday, December 17th - Wish you could be here to help us out, Ken Mangum. -- Mr. Charles Rasmussen's son and wife were driving in from St. Louis a couple of weeks ago, and on the way picked up a sailor who was also headed for the Windy City. Upon arriving here he asked Mr. Rasmussen to give him the address of a Lutheran Church, well naturally he gave him ours, and what do you know, on Sunday morning when he came to service he knew Pastor Nyholm from some time back - small world after all, isn't it? -- THANKS fellas, to all of you who have contributed such fine letters, which means about 47%, but what has happened to the other 53%????? We would really like to hear from some of you "pen-shy" boys. Tell you what - for our January issue, each and every one of you write and tell us where and how you spent Christmas - Howz about it? --- If you think we don't miss all you G.I.'s, well, take another think!!! Yes-sir - that reunion is really going to be SUPER!

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While putting the finishing touches to this issue, we received another letter from Bob Stephens, G.M. 2/C, and we decided you'd all be interested in what he had to say, so here it is - By the way, Bob, we don't envy you your job! "The last letter I wrote wasn't very interesting, I know, but I'll try to do a little better this time. I can't tell you anything about where I am, where I'm going or where I've been, except that I can mention a little about the invasion and Battle of the Philippines. I am on a Destroyer Mine Sweep. We went steaming into Leyte Bay to sweep out the mines, so that the big ships could come in. During our operation we underwent numerous attacks by the Japs. Also weathered a typhoon. Today is Thanksgiving Day, and believe me, I have plenty to be thankful for. We're mighty lucky to be in port. At least, we'll have some turkey for chow. That's more than some fellows will have. I'll have to close for now, but before I do, I want to thank you for the G.I. News. It sure brings back memories."

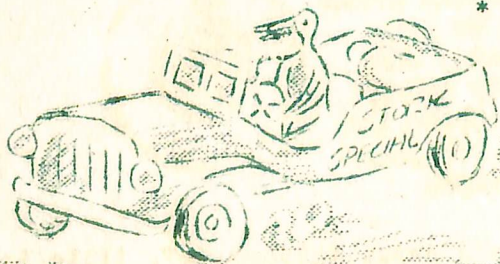
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A/C Ken Mangum, who is also waiting for his Medical Discharge papers to come back from Washington, writes to his Mom: "Please don't build your hopes too much about me coming home for Christmas - you know the papers haven't returned yet! The last G.I. was 'terrific' as all the rest of them are - Keep them coming!!!"

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It is now CORPORAL Bob Earle, who is still stationed in Hawaii. We hear, through his Mother, that "Bob enjoyed the last issue of the G.I. News, but he has been very busy lately as he was inspired to do better after becoming P.F.C., hence Corporal. He is at least thinking of you and the church." --- We're also thinking about you, Bob, now how about taking a few minutes off and tell us how you spent Christmas, eh?

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Tsk - Tsk - Tsk!!! If this keeps up we're going to start a "Baby" department! ROCK A BYE BABY IN THE TREE TOP is the Number One theme song at the Arthur Johnson's. A little package, all done up in pink, answering to the name of SANDRA DELORES, arrived November 15th.

Well, boys, here's the two addresses we promised you - do something about it now, will you?

Chaplain P. G. Rasmussen, 0512232
H E Q Det. 461 Bomb. Group
A.P.O. #520 - c/o Postmaster
New York, N.Y.

Cpl. Jessie Norman Stewart A-604581
Wac Detach.
A.P.O. #7836 - c/o Postmaster
New York, N.Y.

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And just as we're going to press, who should drop in on us but the Harold Andreassen's - medical discharge and all - Welcome back! At least for a while, as it seems they like California so well they are going to make their home out there.

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And now - we who concern ourselves with the making up of this little paper, take this opportunity of wishing you and yours A MERRY CHRISTMAS and A HAPPY NEW YEAR. Although we enjoy very much this little chore, it is our sincere wish that we will not have to make up another Christmas issue.

Pearl Mangum
Elvora Harris

Angie Olsen
Aage Johnson

