

# News From Former Employees In Service

## COMMANDER WRITES TO WESLEY KEELS' FATHER

The following is a letter from Lt. I. Wesley Keels' commander to his father:—

"My Dear Mr. Keels:

It is with great sadness and deepest sympathy that I write to tell you that your son is missing in action. This is tragic news for you and I wish there was something I could say that would lighten the burden of your grief. Unfortunately all I can do is pass on to you the meager information that we have and join you in heartfelt hope that by some miracle Isaac is alive and will return.

Isaac took off from our carrier yesterday morning as one of a 16-plane fighter formation to attack enemy-held airfields. Over their target, the formation encountered heavy anti-aircraft fire and large numbers of enemy aircraft. A terrific battle ensued during which our fighter planes shot down numerous enemy planes and inflicted great damage to ground installations. Decisive though this victory was, it carried with it losses that are the sad consequence of these engagements; many of our planes were hit, and three of them failed to return. Isaac was one of our pilots who did not get back. We have questioned all pilots that were on the flight but none of them can add anything to what I have written above.

There is a possibility that Isaac was able to make an emergency landing in enemy territory or at sea and because of this possibility I have reported him missing in action rather than killed in action. It is my opinion that there is only a very slight chance that he escaped. Isaac was a conscientious and aggressive fighter pilot, and when last seen, he was engaging enemy aircraft that greatly outnumbered him; the chances are overwhelming that he gave his life courageously carrying out his duty in the finest tradition of the Navy. I am reluctant to write this but I feel it would be unfair to you to hold out any but the slimmest hope of his survival.

The Protestant chaplain will conduct special prayers for Isaac and his family at his next service and will write you. Three of our officers, designated by Isaac will inventory and pack his personal belongings and they will be shipped to you in accordance with his wishes. If there is anything further that I or any of us can do, please let me know.

Every officer in our squadron is keenly aware of our loss and greatly saddened by it. Isaac's perpetual cheerfulness and good nature made him one of our most popular officers and we will find our daily tasks more arduous with him absent. We have lost a fine officer and an excellent pilot and are resolved to fight the harder to exterminate the enemy and to avenge this added crime. Again deepest sympathy to you from all of us in this hour of trial.

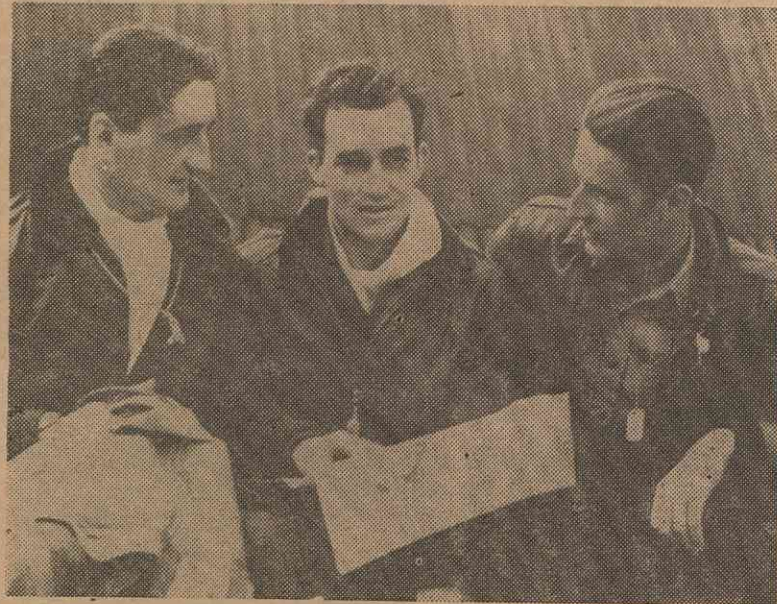
Sincerely,

E. J. Murphy,  
Lt. Comdr., UNS  
Commanding.

## GOING ON A "SHAKEDOWN"

J. E. Mims, F 1-c, writes of change of address, saying, "We came aboard our ship Tuesday. It will go into commission tomorrow, and we will go on the shakedown shortly. Best regards."

## HEATON SAVED LIFE OF COLONEL



Here are Lt. William "Mac" Heaton, (center), former Ecusta employee who was killed in action over Germany on September 5th., looking over some maps with Colonel Gabreski, left, whose life he saved while on a flight over Germany. Another pal is on the right. "Mac's" father and brother work here now.

## Lt. 'Mac' Heaton Killed In Action

The War department recently announced that Lt. William "Mac" Heaton, fighter pilot in the famous "Zemke Wolf Pack," highest scoring outfit in the European Theatre, was killed in action over Germany September 5th.

Lt. Heaton achieved fame in newspaper articles and later in the December issue of "True" magazine for saving the life of Col. Gabreski, America's leading flying ace on last July 6th. As told in "True," Col Gabreski was leading a flight of P-47's over Germany and had just shot down his 26th plane, when he discovered a German fighter plane on his tail pouring it on. He called for help over the radio and Heaton came to his rescue. Gabreski said "Boy, was I glad when my pal Heaton dived on the 109 and chased him down to deck. I'm sure I owe my life to that boy Heaton."

Lt. Heaton had been awarded the Air Medal and at least three Oak Leaf clusters, and his group had been awarded a Presidential Citation for extraordinary heroism in action.

A flier from this same group recently visited Ecusta and said that "Mac's" last act before being shot down in flames was to blow up a German locomotive. Truly this was a hero's death.

"Mac" was a Machine Tender at Ecusta before going into the Air Force. His father, William Heaton, works in our Maintenance department, and his brother, Haskell, is a Machine Tender. His wife, Drama Gibbs Heaton, formerly worked in the Stitching department at Champagne.

## SENDS BEST WISHES

Pvt. Robert S. Pearce is beginning his training at Ft. Knox, Ky., and writes that he and two other men were sent in a private stateroom on the train, by a process of substitution. He sends best wishes to all his friends.

dinner, so he wont lose any weight. Edna wants four new tires for her boy friend's little blue Ford so he can come and see her. And also a cob pipe since cigarettes are scarce. Guffee wants some chewing gum so he won't be slipping anyone else's. Edward P. wants Elouise or one just like her. Since he's undergone an appendix operation, couldn't you grant his only wish? Helen wants something to give her an appetite. Lila wants a discharge from the Navy for her boy friend—so he can come to see her. Henry wants a stepladder so he can reach the top of the machine. Geneva and I want our boy friends back. Since we're short of help we'd all like a few new ones in here. Santa, we're sure you'll understand our situation and fill our stockings real full. Ironing department (B. G.)

Fritz and Beecher want some girls in Endless Belt who won't break their machines. We didn't hear Dick mention a thing he wanted.

Mary Sue and Mr. Goepfert want us to work like we have in the past, and a little better.

We all wish the service men a Merry Christmas and hope next year they'll be with us.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## Employees Enjoyed Nice Turkey Dinner

Over 1200 Ecustans, through the courtesy of the Company, enjoyed a turkey dinner, with all the trimmings, for Thanksgiving.

Hundreds of pounds of turkey were served free to all shifts. It was offered to all employees working in the plant over a period of 24 hours, beginning at 8 a. m. Thursday.

Mr. Straus has received many letters of thanks and appreciation from the employees over the entire plant. Among these was a "round robin" letter from the Finishing department, bearing the signatures of all employees of that department. Mr. Straus takes this opportunity to express his appreciation.

A special party was given Thanksgiving evening under the direction of the Recreation department, featuring a special movie, refreshments and a square dance. Several hundred Ecustans and their families attended and enjoyed a delightful evening.

## WANTS MORE LETTERS

Cpl. John Mullenax sends regards to boys in the Refining Room and wants letters from them. He writes, "I have traveled over quite a bit of France, but there is nothing like the N. C. mountains."

## SENDS XMAS GREETINGS

Pfc. Robert W. Jackson, overseas, sends regards to boys in Refining Room, Shift "C", and expresses thanks for Christmas package. Wishes all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

## HOPES TO BE BACK

Pvt. Tom Brown writes from overseas that Ecusta couldn't have sent a better gift for where he is this Christmas. Hopes that it won't be long before he can be back at Ecusta.

## MISSES THE MOUNTAINS

Pvt. Ivan V. Galloway writes from Camp Blanding, Fla., "I am in the infantry in a heavy weapons company, and it's not so bad, but I sure do miss those mountains."

## Endless Chatter

By EDNA ALLISON

Here everyone is trying to be good since Santa is just around the corner. But I've snooped around, and found out what a few of them want for Christmas. They have different ideas too.

Let's see, they say:

"Dear Santa: We would be happy if you brought us (1) box of Hershey bars, (2) four sailors to help us eat them.

The Combers.

Dear Santa: We hope you won't think we're selfish, really we aren't. Since we four are all single, we would like our boy friends home for Christmas.

The Warp Carriers.

Dear Santa: We all want you to wish us luck for the New Year, in helping us make more belts. We all need that.

The Weavers.

Dear Santa: Will you please leave about five new pencils on the examiner's table. We have been very good all year and would appreciate it very much.

The Examiners.

Dear Santa: Bring us all a bright colored thimble. We all like red ones. You might have to pay a nickle more to get them all red.

The Finishers.

Dear Santa: Bring us each a bell to put on our spool of thread so when the thread gets out we can have the bell fixed so it will ring. We will have to think up how we'll fix it.

The Warpers.

The hook-pullers didn't write a letter but two of them, Mildred and Elizabeth, sure want you to tell their soldiers in France and England "Hello" for them. Bet the soldiers know who they are. So don't miss these boys, Santa.

Dear Santa: Just a little from one of the ironing department employees speaking for the whole outfit. As you already know we're looking forward to a full stocking this year.

Our little Jackie Boy's wish is that he'll have a big Christmas