

## Interesting Letter From New Guinea

New Guinea,

Dear Mr. Straus,

I am very much ashamed of the fact that I do not write more often, but there is one time of the year that I simply have to write you. That is after I receive one of your wonderful Christmas packages. How could you have known just the right thing to send a WAC in New Guinea? Of course, from reports you must have known that we are always hungry here, therefore anything in the form of food is more than welcome.

Since my last visit to Ecusta in April of last year, I have experienced the most eventful time of my entire life. I reported back to Camp McCoy only to find that I was on orders for "Extended Field Service" at Fort Oglethorpe. This meant training for overseas and at times during that training period, I felt like an infantry soldier. We had hikes, field trips, classes in everything from malaria control to map reading, with hardly enough time off for brushing our teeth.

### Boards Troop Train

Even this came to an end, however, and one bright Saturday morning found us boarding a troop train, bound for we knew not where. There was a lot of speculation as to our destination, but after St. Louis, Mo., we knew it was the west coast. This didn't help any, for the realization that we were bound for the South Pacific frightened us. We knew so little about this place and the fear of tropical diseases made us very unhappy. Then, too, there were rumors that the WACS in England were having a wonderful time, and we thought we might get a chance to see Paris if we went to England.

The trip across the continent was lovely. Accommodations on a troop train aren't exactly like the Challenger, but when we consider you poor tax-payers, we don't mind. We stopped in several cities, including Denver, Reno and Salt Lake City. This was my first chance to see the Great Salt Lake and I was very much impressed.

We were a weary group when we finally arrived at the port of embarkation on the West Coast, but after a day or two of rest, we discovered this camp to be the best ever. The food was wonderful, and I might add, plentiful. We had passes to visit San Francisco while there and saw many interesting sights in and around the city. We saw Port Chicago and the damage caused by the explosion.

On the 19th of August we left this camp and marched about two miles to where a ferry was waiting to take us to the troop ship. It was almost dark when we arrived there and the band was playing (not stirring, military music) but "Paper Doll" and "There'll Be a Hot Time In the Old Town Tonight." It was thrilling to march up the gang-plank and have everyone waving and the commanding officer shaking hands with each one of us and wishing us a pleasant trip. We were all crying a little and laughing a little, but having a perfectly marvelous time.

### Knew Ship's History

We came over on a ship whose entire history we knew before the trip was over. It must have been a beautiful ship before its conversion, but now it is just another battleship gray troop ship. The main ballroom is the hospital ward and the dining room is the offi-

cers' mess. The library is the only original thing intact and we were allowed to go there at certain times and get books to read.

We had music on deck all through the day and evening and since we were the first WACS to ever be on board this ship, they allowed us to go on the boat deck. It was lovely up there especially after we passed the equator and came into the tropical region. What they say or write about a tropical moon is true; it is so beautiful that it fairly takes your breath away.

When we disembarked we were brought ashore in ducks. These amphibious, motorized, shall I say, vehicles, appear quite awkward in the water, but once on land are quite at home.

We found nice quarters ready for us when we arrived and found that we had been expected for some time. We were assigned almost immediately, some of us even before we had time to unpack, and the men whom we replaced went either to the front or home on rotation, depending on their length of service here. My assignment was to the Transportation Corps, first in the Small Ships Section and then later in Depot Operations. The work in both places has been interesting.

Volumes could be written on New Guinea alone. I wish I had the time to give a more complete picture of the life here, but for the present I will simply touch the highlights.

### Work 10 Hours Daily

We work ten hours each day with one afternoon and two evenings off each week. This includes Saturday and Sunday (unlike Ecusta). However, we are allowed an hour off each Sunday morning for church attendance. I'll never forget the first time we attended services in the chapel.

These men had not seen women, some of them, in 20 or 30 months and they were even shy when we talked to them. One soldier came to me after the service and said, with tears in his eyes, "You can't imagine how good it sounds to hear a woman's voice in the choir again." Of course, being a woman I have to look at the sentimental side of the war, but many times I have been surprised to find such sentiment in men that it is almost unbelievable. This one statement from this man made all the hardships I had gone through seem as nothing, and showed me that we really are appreciated here; not just as a novelty, but because we were American girls like the girls they left at home.

I don't mean to boast about our work here but the girls have done well. They came and took over all the jobs as typists, telephone operators and clerks. They were well trained and capable of doing a fine job.

In addition to our working ten hours each day, we do our own laundry. This gives me one more qualification toward a civilian job. We wear khaki shirts, field shoes, woolen socks and fatigue trousers, therefore the laundry problem is not so bad. There is a SWPA order that no American woman, including nurses, Red Cross workers or WACS wear a skirt. We turned in all our skirts, and after 4 months of constant wear, we are quite accustomed to "wearing the pants."

### Pictures Of Natives Accurate

We have been allowed to visit

## WHO'S WHO

—BY STAFF WRITERS—

### RUBY LEE ALLISON



Above is a real 'old timer'. RUBY LEE ALLISON was employed on the first day of Champagne's operation. She worked in the Hand Booklet and Gumming departments and on a Repse machine in Champagne. In 1942, Rubye was transferred to the Inspection department of Ecusta. She is a member of the Five-Year club. A native of this county she attend Brevard high school. Elizabeth's father, brother and sister are employees of Ecusta. Rubye likes her work, bowling, movies and writing letters. She has one brother with the Army now in Germany.

### BILL ERWIN



The above is the likeness of a very familiar face in Champagne. Many Ecusta employees will recognize BILL ERWIN, a neat, friendly and efficient foreman in the Fine Paper division of Champagne. Bill has the distinction of being a Five-Year club member; his employment here began in March of 1940 in the Gumming department as an operator. After only one year as operator through merit he was promoted to foreman, and has recently been transferred to the new division in Hand Booklet. A native of Anderson, S. C., Bill with his family moved to Green River, N. C., where he obtained his grammar school training. He graduated from Brevard high school. Besides liking baseball—he's a member of the Duke's Mixture Ball team—he likes fishing. Bill lives in Brevard, is married and has three children, two boys and a girl.

### EILEEN NELSON



The popular forelady of the Fine Paper department of Champagne, EILEEN NELSON, is the possessor of ready wit and an imperturbable disposition. Eileen began life out West in Pueblo, Colo. Before starting to school, though, she moved to Columbia, Tenn., where she graduated from both grammar and high school. Seven years ago she moved to Brevard and began working in Champagne's Hand Booklet department. Cheatham Nelson, her husband, has been working as a machine tender in the Machine room since he returned from service with the Army in England. Eileen is an enthusiastic bowler and is captain of the Pin Setter's Delight team.

### MARY PRINCE



Attractive, brunette, athletic MARY PRINCE, above, is an inspector in the new Fine Paper department of Champagne. Although Mary was born in Cramerton, N. C., she received her early schooling in Fletcher, and Fairview, graduating from Etowah high school in 1943. She received her diploma one Friday and reported to work in Ecusta's Inspection department on a rewriter the next Friday. In October of 1943 Mary began her work for Champagne in the Hand Booklet department as a blocker. She has recently been transferred to the new Fine Paper division. Mary is active in sports, excelling in basketball, softball and bowling. Mary says another of her hobbies is swimming.

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