

HELLO FROM HOME--

(A News Letter for the Men and Women in Service)

The following is an article written by Pat Taylor on **October 21, 1944**

Warm Welcome for Wacs Arriving at Northern Base

WHITEHORSE, Y.T., Oct. 16- (Delayed)- First contingent of the Woman's Army corps to be sent north by the Alaskan division, air transport command, has arrived at the Whitehorse army air base. The final flight arrived here at 2 p.m. Monday and was met by Lt. Col. Ralph J. Gibbons of Portland, Ore., base commander, and Lt. Comdr. Gordon T Steves, wing commander of the R.C.A.F. base here.

All along the route north from Edmonton we were greeted with the word that the "Wacs were here" and there was every evidence of delight that they had arrived. Some found the 1,300-mile journey from their former base at Great Falls a bit rugged, but others came through in fine shape, stepping from the plane in their northern issue clothing and wearing happy grins.

Lt. Gladys Bauer of Chicago, commanding officer of the contingent, presented the detachment at the plane today to the two commanders as the girls piled out of their C-47 sky train.

Unofficial greetings at the field this afternoon was first given by one of the base mascots, a Husky who hangs around the field. He climbed the ramp to poke his nose into the plane. Another group of enthusiastic welcomers who poured down to the field for the last flight from Great Falls was a team of dogs hitched to their summer training "sled on wheels."

Pvt. Jennie Milosevich of St. Louis, one of the earlier arrivals who had spent the morning orientating themselves around the base, was on hand to greet her fellow "G.I. Janes" and rushed to one at the ramp to say, "Gee, we have swell quarters!"

The Wac quarters are "swell," much fancier than the girls thought they would be after listening to tales of the far north filtering through the division to Great Falls. Four oil heaters in the one we inspected threw too much heat, and a bright sun beating down on the roof added to the warmth. The Wacs, most of them in their alpaca-lined fatigue pants and jackets, wool shirts, stocking caps and heavy sox and shoes, were busy unpacking and settling their belongings.

First to be unpacked, of course, was writing paper, and Wac reports on the warm welcome received in this "cold" country will be on the way home soon, just as this report of their arrival is flying down to Great Falls, their former army home.

Many of the girls are southern, and Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia and Missouri accents mingled with the greetings and exclamations.

An elaborate program of welcome is planned, including a circus carnival and dance Thursday night at the theater-recreation hall. There will be special decorations and a "merry-go-

round” bar in the center of the floor will serve soft drinks. Music for dancing will be by the Whitehorse Airmen, the base’s own orchestra. A considerate gesture, one which shows how complete the base is in its plans for Wac comfort, is a tea Friday to which civilian women in Whitehorse are invited to meet the Wacs. Special service is being assisted at the tea to be held at the Air Base club, by Betty Cooper, Red Cross worker, who assists in recreational activities at the base. Her staff of volunteer workers from the town will be on hand to help the Wacs.

Wacs will have the same privileges at the club as the first three graders among the men. Their quarters will include two-day rooms, one for women alone and one in which to greet dates. Another evidence of the delight at their arrival was noted at the mess hall, where the news bulletin led off, in capital letters, “WELCOME WACS!”

This first contingent of Wacs, assignment of which is still another proof that the division is licking the far north, includes the first group to be assigned outside the United States with the army airways communication system.

Duties of the Wacs at Whitehorse will include assignment as clerk typists, radio operators, teletype operators, telephone operators, postal clerks, car drivers, Link trainer operators and air operations specialists.

If they were at all worried about their welcome to this base, the greeting at the plane this afternoon soon must have dispelled it. Photographers were on hand to record their arrival in the base’s history; informal salutes and big grins met them as they made their way to barracks; departments in which they have worked before are explained to them here, and every means possible has been taken to add to their comfort.

LeRoy Stahl, Great Falls’ KFB radioman on this trip, stuck the microphone at one as she stumbled down the steps with all her gear, but she backed away in alarm, saying into the live mike, “Oh, no, I’ve got false teeth!” The informality of the arrival is indicative of the feeling on this base, which some of the men who have been here some time have termed the “summer resort” of the division. But if cold weather comes the Wacs will be prepared for it as their northern issue equipment is of the best, and has been proven as the most efficient for this country.

The Whitehorse civilians are as eager to meet the Wacs as base personnel all the way from Edmonton were. And this community, packed with atmosphere held over from the famous Yukon gold rush days, will give them an old-time welcome, which will be added to by the welcome of a community which is now the center of war emergency activities.

The wonders of the Canadian Rockies; the swiftness of the Lewes river, main tributary of the Yukon; the colorful Mounties, and the river boats banked for the winter, the mysteries of the Alaskan highway unfolded in front of them- all are waiting for this contingent of Wacs whose arrival here is just another chapter in the story of the Alaskan division’s conquest over operational difficulties. (Courtesy of Pat Taylor)

1944 (undated)--The Hungry Norse dam is a postwar possibility and "in season and out Harry Kelly is carrying the hay for the Hungry Horse...Last week 4-H children were observing national mobilization week...Isn't it astonishing the food production record these kids have? ... Sgt. Henry Old Coyote Jr., first Crow Indian to volunteer, now is a tribal chief ...

1944 (undated)--Warner, Alta., stick carriers returned this week to whip Gore Field 11-9 in a bloody game ... The Fairfield Times last week thanked the residents of that community for postage donated to mail the home town "Blast" to those overseas ... Missoula fans are moving to rename the Garden city park for Doug Campbell, 'Marine lost on Tarawa...Col. Tom Campbell was home to inspect his "wheat factory" at Hardin ...

January 2, 1945 (It included a 1944 roundup)--

January--7,000 war prisoners to provide state farm labor ...

June--First Australian war bride comes home to Cascade ... Mexican workers, German prisoners of war and Japanese and Italian internees imported for farm labor ...

August --Helena-trained First Special Service force gains world-renown...First local news release on "Gateway to Alaska" activities at Great Falls army air base, Alaskan division, air transport command ...

December--Incendiary balloon bearing Jap characters found near Kalispell ...

January 8, 1945--Volunteer workers at the Great Falls USO have given 100,000 hours of service since the organization started in November, 1942 ... Senator Wheeler has advocated a federated states system for Europe ...

January 15, 1945--Scotty Stewart of Rosebud county flew in from the Marianas, where he is with the Seabees, to take his seat in the state senate (the state will not give him mileage for the trip) ... Pfc. Leo (Pop) Powers, 35, of Alder, a farmer once declared unfit for combat duty, received the congressional medal of honor...

January 22, 1945--Thirteen transports and cargo vessels are to be named by the navy for Montana counties and the Broadwater has already been completed ...

February 5, 1945--Newspaper headlines told the story; radio listeners awaited the reading of the list, and Montana joined the nation Thursday night rejoicing in the story of the dramatic rescue of Japanese-held Americans in the Luzon camp. Montana men listed as rescued were Dean W. Albee, Eureka; Pvt. Vincent A. Lemley, Livingston; Pvt. Norman E. Moen, Kalispell; Cpl. Richard Scott, Helena; Pfc. Jack C. Ostrom, Miles City; Cpl. Hugh E. Branch, Cut Bank, and Pvt. William E. Harrison, Bozeman ... The congressional medal of honor was awarded posthumously to Capt. Bill Galt, Great Falls hero, for gallantry at Villa Crocetta in May, 1944 ...

February 12, 1945--Pioneer Trails Association began groundwork on the celebration of the 140th anniversary of the Lewis & Clark expedition Governor Ford has protested strongly against General Hershey's interpretation of the selective service act and he asked local boards to disregard the order to draft essential farm workers ... Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet--or so it was until Ma lost her ration stamps ...

February (no date)--Mike Mansfield is urging a Falls-Alaska route to the orient because, among other reasons, the air transport command has used it ...

March 12, 1945--Pvt. Charles Bartlett, Belton cowboy, knocked out a German tank gun with a pitched grenade and helped corral 43 Nazis with an empty gun... Mrs. Donald Jackson, the former Helen Johnson of Great Falls, was released from the Los Banos international camp at Manila ... March issue of Wings magazine carried a picture of Col. Hub Zemke of Missoula, a Thunderbird pilot for the 56th fighter group now a prisoner of war ...

March 17, 1945--First navy unit citation goes to men of the light cruiser Helena lost in Kuen gulf July, 1943 ... The governor has signed the bill to build a memorial for veterans' groups and to house the state historical library...

March 26, 1945--If they honor the marines who planted the flag on Mount Suribachi (the ones who posed for what is probably the war's best news picture) by putting them on a postage stamp, a real Montana warrior will bring further glory to an illustrious name ... He was Pfc. Louis Charlo, grandson of Chief Charlo of Nez Perce war fame ...

April 2, 1945--Lt. Bailey Stortz of Forsyth now in the navy, has announced for congress ... The local Red Cross office added another unusual service to the list last week when it purchased an Easter hat for an aunt of a Chinook soldier now in Hawaii ...

April 9, 1945--Mrs. Lillian LaCroix of Chinook and in the army nurse corps whose husband is a B-17 pilot missing in action, is the first woman of World War 2 to enroll at Montana State University ...

April (no date)--All Montana joined the nation in mourning the untimely death of President Roosevelt and the shock here of the unexpected event was best expressed by a little girl at a Great Falls news stand who sobbed "it isn't true" when the first flash came over the radio ... Senators Wheeler and Murray have introduced a bill for an Alaskan road which would connect the Pacific northwest with British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Yukon and Alaska ...

April (no date)--Labor camps are to be constructed in the sugar beet areas for Mexican nationals here to help us ...

April 23, 1945-- Just after the country recovered from the shock of the untimely death of President Roosevelt last week, those who had followed your battles through Ernie Pyle's columns were shocked by the report that he was killed by enemy fire at Ie Shima island... JOE LOUIS WAS IN TOWN and refereed an amateur card at the civic center...He called on the CYC boxers at the Heisey and appeared before men at the Great Falls Army Air base ... The A.C.M. Co.'s Great Falls plant won the army-navy E award for the fifth time ...

April 30, 1945--Col. Walter Johnson of Missoula reports through war correspondents' columns that he is too busy for battle as he is running the town of Magdelburg ... The local clothing drive resulted in a pile of clothes one block long, 10 feet high and 20 feet wide for war refugees ...

May 7, 1945--Last week was a long week of watchful waiting, of prayers that V-E day would come momentarily, of reading avidly about European events, of turning to the Pacific hoping that the campaign could fold soon ... It was a long week filled with tremendous news, excitement, hope and anticipation mixed with the regular routine of doing the job at home, methodically and loyally--It was an anxious week with a tinge of sadness... It was a peculiar week, quiet with waiting under a hot May sun... But there were happenings around the state we thought you would want to hear about ... A Butte priest, Chaplain John Sheehan, was awarded the silver star for gallantry at Bastogne ... Volunteer women, wives of army officers living here, have affiliated with the National AAF women ...

May 14, 1945--"It's V-E Day--The War Is over in Germany--Victory!"-The words tumbled out of mouths of excited radio announcers--spread across the banners of Montana papers... Every church held special services; a few sirens rang Tuesday

following the President's early morning radio address; small parades started but did not last; schools held short services; papers issued extra and V-E editions and radio voices hammered constantly at anxious ears ... But regular life went on and jobs were continued in war-essential offices and plants ...

July 3, 1945--Wednesday is the Fourth of July and, while workers in essential industries will not knock off for the day, most communities are planning celebrations from rodeos to parades and picnics ... Baseball games, cowboy races and speeches are also on the program ... No fireworks, however, because the ban is still on ... Lt. Max Miller, former Montanan, was a principal speaker at the launching of the troopship Ernie Pyle last week ... Max, author and newspaper man, now is in the navy... Montana's thimbleful of soil is enroute to the Philippines to join that from other states in the navy's "Homesick Hill"... United Nations conferees from San Francisco stopped at Glacier park over the weekend for a powwow with Browning Indians ...

July 30, 1945--109 nurses from Montana have joined the army or navy nurse corps since January, according to a report from the state nurses' association ... Pvt. Frank Flaherty, home on furlough from the Timberwolf division, reports seeing Montana Yogo diamonds in the jewel room of the Kaiser's Palace in Germany ...

August 13, 1945--The stunning effect of military news releases on the atomic bomb blasts at Japan had everyone in terrific suspense ... Montana has 11,015 discharged veterans of this war, the veterans' administration has reported ...

August 20, 1944--Where were YOU at 5 pm (our time) Tuesday afternoon Aug. 14, 1945? ... We can tell you where most of Great Falls was from then until the next morning--on Central avenue waving flags, congratulating soldiers, streaming in and out of bars, snake dancing, honking horns in the most exuberant, unplanned celebration we ever saw!...Peace, it's wonderful ... Cut Bank JayCees have sent Admiral Halsey a 10-gallon hat to wear when he rides the Emperor's white horse ... It will fit right in with the silver-trimmed western saddle sent to him by the Reno Chamber of Commerce ... Mrs. Betty Clague, women's physical education director at Montana State University now in the WAC, has been awarded the bronze medal.

September 10, 1945--Discharge papers fill the courthouse reporter's notebook ... Capt. Marvin Anderson of Valier, a chaplain with the 75th infantry, received the silver star for action in Belgium, his third decoration ... Montana's Brig. Gen. Lawson (Sandy) Sanderson, professional baseball player and Montana state

University football star, was on hand as the marine air commander to see the Stars and Stripes fly over Wake island...

October 15, 1945--The Billing's infantile paralysis epidemic has eased somewhat and during the worst scare the city was completely closed by strict quarantine ... "To Hell With Hirohito compliments of Dave Hobbs of Roundup", was the inscription on a bomb dropped on Japan by Lt. (JG) Norman Corett of Miles City--typical of the information reaching home now that censorship is off ... \

November 5, 1945--The 8th victory loan drive opened Monday with six counties already over the top ... Broadwater county high school closed for 12 days so that the students could help harvest a bumper spud crop ...

November 12, 1945--Hal G. Stearns, publisher of the Harlowton Times and recently returned from Seabee duty, is the new president of the Montana Press Association... The ROTC has been reinstated at Montana State University... North Dakota was leading Montana for the first time in Victory bond sales ... We liked the announcement a Bozeman woman received from her soldier son: Name, Stripes, Corporal. Arrived 10-31-45. Weight, \$12.50 worth. Parents, Uncle (and Aunt) Sam ...

November 26, 1945--"Gifts for Yanks Who Gave" is a new venture of the American Legion Auxiliary in Montana and the gals will donate Christmas presents to all veterans in hospitals ... Lt. Col Byron Armstrong, one of five original officers left with Montana's 163d in the Pacific, has returned ... The army reports that 8,645 aircraft and 5,590,000 pounds of cargo, passengers and mail passed through the east base and Gore field, but we'll be darned we will tell you how much of that weight was ours when we flew on one of their planes ...

December 3, 1945--Hallelujah, our re-conversion has arrived ... Nylon hose hit town last week ... And Ma threw out all ration books except No. 4 which will be needed for some time for sugar...Meat and fats went off the ration lists, and the Butte clubs turned their slot machines to the wall last weekend because they did not trust their customers who might want to celebrate with red tokens which are the size of a dime, you know ... Col. Floyd Evans, retiring commanding officer at Gore Field, advised establishment of a state aeronautics commission to coordinate all aviation development in the state ... He was discharged Wednesday at east base separation center which closed its doors Friday...

December, 1945 (no date)--A Montana air force man in the C.D.I. gave us our honorable discharge some time ago and politely said he would miss us ... We have

been waiting for our certification from the boss and found it under the office Christmas tree ... So, it is with regret we close this department with wishes for a speedy return home for all of you and herewith we give you the year's roundup as our last message ... (It ends with: So long, kids, see you in civvies...")