

"Letter Number One."

October 23, 1942

Greetings to all you men in service!

I think that as you read along in this letter, which we hope to send out to all the men we have on our service list to date, you will easily surmise its purpose. The idea of this kind of a letter is not original with us. "Yours truly" was down visiting the Lutheran men located at the Houlton Air Base the other day. One of these men was Sgt. Anthony, a member of the Zion Lutheran Church located in Greensburg, Penn. He showed me what his pastor, the Rev. J.P. Harman, is sending out to his men. It is a dandy news letter, full of bristling chats, comments, etc. both from the local church as well as the men. I took home to New Sweden three copies of these letters and showed them to Merrita Anderson in Stockholm and Lorraine Anderson in New Sweden, our Service Secretaries in these two churches. The idea of these letters clicked at once with both of them and the result is that we are now going to try to send out to you something similar. Thanks a lot Rev. Harman for your suggestion! I hope there isn't a patent on this layout. If so, we are undone!

In this our first letter, I have asked Merrita and Lorraine to give a hand in jotting down what's going on in their respective towns and anything else that might be interesting. At this point I'll let them carry on. Suppose you start first, Lorraine! Go to it!

Hi, Fellers:

Pastor Nelson, Merrita and I are trying out a new idea to give you boys more news from home and more news about each other. It should work out swell if we all do our part.

As you already know, Ruth Ostlund has been your service secretary for the past months but she has now accepted a position in another Swedish settlement. Where? Why, all you boys must know. That's it! Worcester, Mass. I'm sure you have liked her letters and cards and I only hope I can come up to her standards.....

When you get a few hours pass and have a date, do you all rush to your barracks and shout: "Whoopee! Put me in a bag and call me Chase and Sanborn. I'm dated!"

Thursday.....

Did you all have a swell time last night with your girl friends? I hope you didn't make her peeved so she threw an axe at you and you thought you would split.... We see Alden Anderson quite frequently and certainly appreciate that.... I think Dad has been writing to you, hasn't he, Ernest? Would you like to hear more? Just let me know and I will get after him.... How do you like being a Staff Sgt., Elwin? The army must agree with you. I've been hearing some swell rumors concerning you, Eldon. Are they true? Please write, and good luck to you. Joyce and Anna left for Worcester last Wednesday morning.... Well, Buck, I'll bet you are sweating and slaving in the sun away down there in South Carolina. Remember when we used to sing, "They fly thru the air with the greatest of ease. Those daring young men on their pairs of waxed skis.".... Hi, Earl! Are you still baking bread? Boy, when you get back home for keeps I'll bet your wife will make use of you. Wouldn't blame her either. You must be an expert now.... Billy says thanks a lot for the nice card you sent him, Milton..... Season opened for deer today and many have already set out for the woods. The weather is perfect and all you need is a gun, a pal, some shots, grub, and something red.... A small fire started in back of Andrew Erickson's farm today. Sort of stirred up excitement. Nothing serious though.... Hi, Ray! How is the world treating you? Bill and Bud are just ready to take off somewhere. Sorry, can't tell you where. Nobody ever knows that.... How do you like flying Stan and Wes? So you went and got hitched, did you Wes? Lots of luck to you. I think Dad just wrote you in reply to your cards. Write soon both of you.... I wish all you boys I haven't mentioned would write and tell us all about yourselves so we can all get acquainted. Hurry and drop a line for our next paper. We want news about each one of you to print so the other fellows will have an idea what you are doing for Uncle Sam.

I came across a couple of good jokes the other day. Want to hear them? Come on over to the next page and I'll tell you.

Contributed to Maine Memory Network by the Stockholm Historical Society

Date: October 23, 1942

Description: Newsletter created by the Lutheran church service secretaries Lorraine Anderson of New Sweden and Merrita Anderson of Stockholm, under the direction of the Rev. Mallard L. Nelson for the benefit of the servicemen from these communities.

1. Private: What kind of pie is this?
Corporal: What's it taste like?
Private: Glue.
Corporal: Then it's apple. The pumpkin tastes like soap.
2. Sentry: Halt! Who goes there?
Voice: You wouldn't recognize me anyway. I'm new here.

This was the heading of an article I just read: "Honorable Mistake -- The Japanese Language".

Each Sunday we remember all you boys in a special prayer. I sincerely hope that each one of you has made a friend of the Chaplain in your camp. He is a wonderful fellow to know.
May God bless you and keep you.

Lorraine

That's O.K. Lorraine. Thanks a lot! Now, Merrita - it's your turn! Carry on!

Hello there -

Here I come with the Stockholm news. I'll skip the fact that Mrs. So-and-So in Westmanland had a birthday party last Sunday; that Mr. Etc. was in Caribou on business Tuesday; and that Mr. Jose was in town on Friday. Shall give you only events of national importance such as: Judith Anderson, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Frederick Anderson, is now two months old. Pastor Nelson said I could write about her and then said it was to be limited to a page. As if a page could begin to tell of her. She is very, very beautiful; eyes like mine, chin like Fred's, nose like a button, mouth like a bomb crater, and hair like Pastor Nelson's. She hopes to sing in the choir and practices faithfully; even now her vast mouth is open and !??*?! sounds are pouring forth. I know the censors will cross out all descriptions of her voice, so I won't bother to write any.

Our beautiful weather needs praise; it has been truly wonderful. Very often in the afternoon I have sat on the piazza without wraps. The nights, however, have been cold. Every night I wish I'd taken up the geraniums, but during the day I never think of them. I have only one eye half open in the early morning, but have noticed the white frost covering everything.

We had a surprise blackout last Friday that nearly proved my undoing. Fred, the policeman, dashed off to his station at the hall. I kept on feeding the baby. She seemed to be sleeping so I lifted the bottle to see if it were empty. Couldn't for the life of me find her mouth again in the darkness. I groped my way to the closet where I very uncomfortably stayed with the light on until she had finished the milk. Still the lights were off so I went to the window to survey the town. On the way I kicked a bowl of corn chowder which the dogs had rejected. I don't think I need continue the incident further!

But may be you don't like to hear about Me and Us. Perhaps you prefer a Winchell column like this: A certain sailor, now stationed in Philadelphia got quite a sendoff at the station by some very attractive young girls; Why was Verner Lind so anxious to get to Worcester? We hear the Army will teach Johnny Swenson how to pound a nail; A private didn't dare go back to the Lutheran Service Center because he had tried to date the very attractive girl who proved to be the Chaplain's wife.....But I don't know enough about you to write much more.

As for the town news of a general nature: the Albin Lawsons have moved into the Fraser house on Donworth Street which they have bought. A large number of houses have been torn down, and more families are leaving for work elsewhere. By the end of the war there will be just a few of us Andersons left. Come back and dig us out. Mrs. Bechard has twin girls, a blond and a brunette. The Paquins moved to Caribou. Howard Gessner bought Edwin Bossis's store. The Fogelin's gave a farewell party for Paul Cyr. John Anderson is leading his cows in, and Cole's Express is unloading at the store. We are very fortunate to have the H.S. principal sing with us in the choir, especially since he sings tenor. We were tenor-less for over a month and were on the point of petitioning F.D.R. or Stimson to send back Fernald or Melvin. Send me a card or note and tell me about yourselves for next month's letter.

We'll be remembering you! Don't forget us!

Goodbye,
Merrita

Good enough, Merrita and thanks much!

Personally, I wanted to mention three or four more things.

1. After you have read this letter will you just as soon sit down and write to one of us and tell us what your reaction is? Shall we send you more of these letters? How would every five or six weeks be? Have you any suggestions for its improvement?
2. Here is something we have in mind. Would you drop me a line or card or letter and give me a few words or some suggestion which I could insert here as personal news from you. For example:

Tivinan: Bill says, he is now working around steam. It fits him just right as he used to fire when working on the railroad.

Gunnerson: Melvin states, "I try to follow the service you have back home on Sundays....I really believe that mail is the important thing to a soldier".

Wessell: Linwood writes, "As you probably know I am in England. I like it here very much...I especially enjoy visiting the old cathedrals in the various cities."

Anderson: Ralph reports that he is in a very nice camp and very easy to get lost in. "One fellow was lost two days in this post."

Sjostedt: Reynold tells us that the southern folks are very hospitable. "They really go out of their way to make the soldiers feel at home."

Anderson: Thanks, Fernald, for your very generous contribution to your church before shipping out. Part of that money will go to purchasing two church flags, American and Christian. (Fernald has already landed overseas, but as yet we haven't learned exactly where.

P.S.-Just as we go to print we learn thru Astrid, who just received a letter, that he uses seven blankets at night. Now you guess where they do that.

The above comments were picked at random from my Service Men's letter file. I hope you men will forgive me for using you as "examples". By the way, as for the rest of you, if I am not mistaken, you all owe me a letter. If nothing else just scratch off a card with a "Hi, there". That will be O.K. I'll call that an answer.

3. The following may sound "preachy" but I hope you accept it in the same sincere spirit I want to give it. We are remembering you men regularly and faithfully in prayer, especially at our church services. Many of you are joining us before God and thus keeping faith. I also realize that there is plenty of chance to forget, yes, and even to "go wrong". Liquor, gambling, and loose women are very handy....All I say is this: There is someone back home who really loves you, yes, someone who truly loves you. There is also a God above who loves you with even a deeper love. Let's hear Him speak: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest thru the waters I will be with thee; and thru the rivers, thy shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest thru the fire, thou shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am Jehovah thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour". Isaiah 43:1-3 "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life". Revelation 2:10 This needs no comment. Men - let's keep faith!

4. Finally, if you have any spiritual problem which you think we could help you with, don't hesitate to write. All such correspondence will be kept strictly confidential.

To all you men, where-ever you are - may I just say in closing, God be with you!

Sincerely,
Rev. Mallard L. Nelson