
The Newletters: E. Gail Carpenter Describes Life on the Home Front Part IV

edited by Charles William Sloan, Jr.

NEWLETTER NUMBER THIRTY FIVE

January, 1945

Dear Gang:

One of these times you will be surprised to find that your letter has been written upon the scheduled third Sunday of the month. The last few days of 1944 and the first few weeks of 1945 have been so fully packed with a number of things that this present writing has already been too long delayed. First, there was the illness of my Mother which called me away just as the December Letter was being finished and which kept me in Pennsylvania for almost three weeks. Her condition during those three weeks was very alarming and it is good to be able to report that she is improving in health and we have reason to expect her complete recovery. Then there is this dry hole business which is the thorn in the flesh of the oil man. It is, of course, the business of a Geologist to see to it that wells are not dry. My associates are suggesting that I offer my services to my country (not as a Geologist) and they are already looking for a good healthy boy who knows how to use a witching stick. This last effort, the straw which broke the camel's back, was carried on under conditions which must have in minor details, at least, resembled most any fighting front. The mud was so deep that every bit of fuel and equipment which was moved to the location during the last two weeks was dragged in with a "cat." It differed from the fighting fronts in that we could go home when the hole was dry and there was no gunning for anyone except the Geologist.

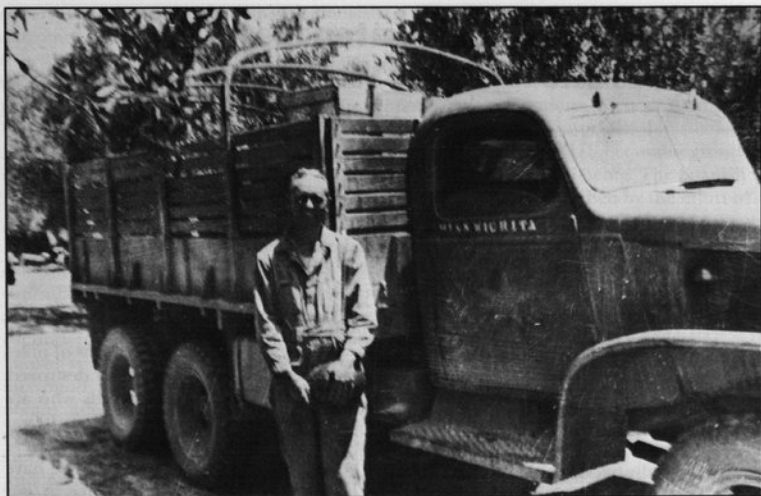
At my last writing our fighting men in the "Bulge" had absorbed the full force of [Gerd] von Rundstedt's gamble. Perhaps we of the Armchair Strategy Board will

never amount to much in a military way. It is very hard for us to measure a victory or a defeat in terms of miles gained or lost or in terms of materiel saved or destroyed. We think of a battle in terms of our friends who are fighting in the snow and in the mud. When it was revealed to us that Rundstedt was on the move we were not alarmed because of the military situation. We have faith in our leaders and complete confidence in our fighting men and we knew that our generals in planning their campaign must have foreseen a few of the inevitable reverses of war. We were worried for fear we had not done our job well enough and cold chills did run up and down our spines as we thought of those of you who were surely in the thick of it. War is a dirty business and we could not hope to have escaped without paying our share. Prepared as we are for such things, our hearts are heavy when we tell you that Paul Sayles is reported missing in action. We are sure that we are not inspiring false hope in the hearts of his parents and his brothers and sisters when we remind them that a large percentage of those reported as missing later turn up safe and sound, many of them as prisoners of war. It is our hope and our prayer that Paul is among those who were captured by the Germans. It is our hope, too, that the Germans are taking care of our men who have fallen into their hands, as luxuriously and as carefully as we are caring for their men who are enjoying our prison camps.

We are delighted to see that the Russians can put on a drive which compares favorably with our own drive through France and Belgium. It looks very much as if 1945 is to be the year of Victory in Europe. We have not forgotten The Fifth Army down there in "sunny" Italy. Bill Smith¹ and Dick Wellman have been maintaining

Charles William Sloan, Jr., a native of Wichita, received his B.A. and M.A. from Wichita State University. The home front newsletters presented here are the last of a four-part series.

1. Before entering military service, Bill Smith (1911-1945) was a real estate salesman.



Dick Wellman is shown with "Miss Wichita" in 1944. In January 1945, Wellman became company clerk and traded the truck for a typewriter.

the status Quo (as the colored man defined it, "The mess we is in") until Bill Miller gets back from his furlough. The Newell gals are a bit worried because Dick was willing to trade "Miss Wichita" for a typewriter.² We are keeping track of things in the Pacific, too. Out there MacArthur seems to be doing pretty well on Luzon even though his north flank seems to be practically undefended since Roby, Allison, King and Richey are no longer in Alaska.

The ten P. M. news broadcast last Friday, January 26th, listed a number of men who had been cited for building a B-29 base in record time. Among them was Clarence Newman.³ Mother and baby are no doubt very proud of Papa Newman as are we all. Sunday, January 14, about three in the afternoon, Gordon Frazier⁴ broadcast from some place in Belgium after having spent the day with the Third (Spearhead) Division which was engaged in

wiping out the bulge. That's Bob Tanner's outfit, and they have certainly carved out a name for themselves.

Lawrence Wulfmeyer has been writing from a hospital in England. His letters are the very soul of wit, so much so that the teacher can hardly get the class settled down for a lesson after they have been convulsed by his good natured and highly commendable outlook upon life in a hospital. Says Willa, "I wish that we could write letters which would do as much for the boys as Lawrence's letters do for us." We still do not know what the exact nature of his trouble is. We do know that he chose some very bad weather for his initial combat experience and that fox holes filled with snow and mud and water are not kind to the feet. Lawrence tells us that jitterbugging and hop scotch are out for awhile. Slayton Ermeys is back in this country although Uncle Sam almost forgot to drop him on the home sod. He is in a hospital on the West Coast. They have recently put a boot cast on his leg so that he is able to move around on his own

2. Carpenter's inside joke about Wellman trading "Miss Wichita" for a typewriter provides an opportunity to note the problems of editing letters, even when the author is still living. Carpenter could not remember what the joke meant, nor could any Newellites, and Wellman's whereabouts was unknown. Since the servicemen's letters to Carpenter are in the archives of First Presbyterian Church, Wellman's file was examined. In January 1945 he wrote that he was no longer a truck driver, that he was now company clerk. That explained the typewriter, but not "Miss Wichita." More important, however, the letters revealed that his full name is Richard T. Wellman; and his final letter, written in September 1945, stated that he had taken a job in Chicago. Though nearly half a century had passed, the Chicago

telephone directories were examined, and in Oak Park there was one R. T. Wellman! And who was "Miss Wichita"? Wellman's truck! He explains that he and his partner, a native of Oklahoma City, had driven their truck through North Africa and Italy. And so on one door they painted "Miss Oklahoma City" and on the other, "Miss Wichita."

3. No information on the whereabouts of Clarence Newman has been found.

4. Gordon Frazier was a news correspondent.

power. His wife and baby⁵ are on their way to pay him a visit. Garnet Mason wrote to Frances telling of his Christmas in the firing line.⁶ He enjoyed a splendid turkey dinner - took it standing up in the mud and cold of some of France's most unpleasant weather. His note was written during a brief rest period while a relief crew manned the guns. I had intended to tell you that they don't serve butter after eleven A. M. in the Coffee Shop at the Palmer House in Chicago. Guess I'll save that one until the war is over. Joe and Myrabelle Schreiner have

moved back to the old home town.⁷ Joe is being careful to select a job which will not aggravate his very sensitive epidermis.

NEWELLETTER NUMBER THIRTY SIX

February, 1945

Dear Gang:

A glance at the number in the heading of this letter will remind you that your correspondent is celebrating some kind of an anniversary. Like most of you, he started something three years ago which he thought might be for a matter of a few months, and he is shocked to realize that not months but years have passed. How was he to

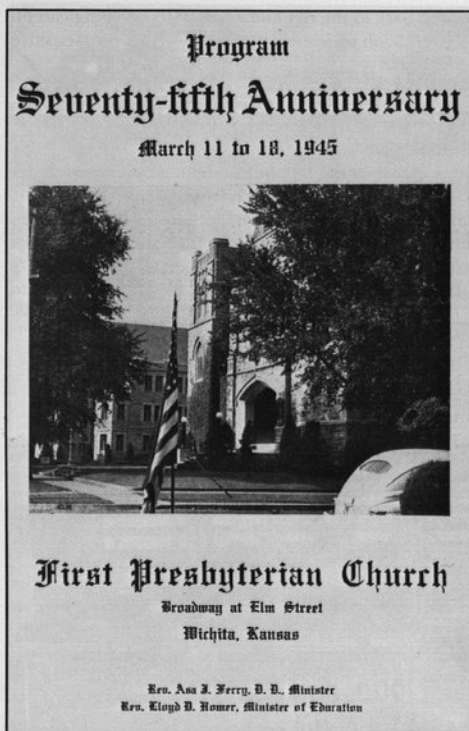
5. Erney's "baby" is Sally Russell (1944-) of Hutchinson.

6. Garnet Mason (1911-1978) was an insurance broker and a member of First Presbyterian Church. His widow, Frances (1915-), is a retired secretary and a member of First Presbyterian Church.

7. Myrabelle, the widow of Joe Schreiner, lives in Dallas.



The 1000th B-29 and the 10,346th Kaydet trainer produced at Wichita's Boeing plant were presented to the Army Air Force in a ceremony on February 14, 1945. Attached to the B-29 is a coat of money—\$10,000 contributed by Boeing employees to the Infantile Paralysis Foundation.



For his readers, Carpenter faithfully recorded the events of First Presbyterian Church's seventy-fifth anniversary. At right is the cover for the program of activities; at left is a photograph of the Rev. Asa Ferry, church pastor, and his wife, Alice. Of the anniversary's social aspects, Carpenter wrote that "the most outstanding feature of the entire occasion was Mrs. Ferry's bustle."

know that a little nonsense designed for the pleasure of a few men in the service would develop into one of the richest experiences of his life. How was he to know that every battle front was to become not a news item, not a date in history, but the place where his friends are fighting a deadly enemy in mud and cold and heat and where the rain is a rain of steel. Maybe we who are at home have neglected to tell you that we are grateful. The members of the Newell Class have learned something of war. We know what you have given up. We know something of your struggles and of the things which you have suffered. We also know something of the spirit in which you accept things as they are, and knowing how magnificent you are through it all, we are humble and grateful. We know too that the Newell Class is a little

but accurate cross section of the heartfelt gratitude of your great Homeland. All evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, ours is a great country. Underneath the frothy exterior there is solid substance. Now that I have tried to do the impossible let me say that it has been a joy to receive your letters. There are always just enough to give us a little atmosphere each month from most of the major theatres of operations. You have contributed to a document which several thousand years hence will be much sought after by historians of that utopian day, as a document revealing something about the warlike habits of the Ancient Nationalistic States. It is with the fervent hope that we can soon write of the reaction of the home folks to Victory that we conclude the third year of NEWELLETTTERS.

We blush to mention a few of the goings on at home just now. Lew Lehr's Monkeys are the craziest people finally begins to make sense.⁸ We have serious shortages in some of the strangest things and it develops that the staff of life is not bread as we have always been taught, but cigarettes. You will no doubt remember the day when one smoker would offer another a cigarette. It wasn't a matter of life or death if the offer was accepted. Now sports use dummy packs when they wish to make a show of generosity. This cigarette game looks like a lot of fun. They are now having snake dances in front of all of the drug stores whenever the harassed proprietors get a few cartons. The grapevine carries the news like wildfire and within a few seconds the line will be wound around all of the counters, out into the lobby and even out into the street. In the line this morning I noticed a young mother and her very small baby making their way with the line toward that precious package of cigarettes. I suppose that poor baby just had to have its cigarettes! To give you some idea of the seriousness of the situation there was a very nicely dressed lady near the business end of a cigarette line at one of the Drug Stores the other day. All of the cigarettes were out on the counter. They were going fast. The lady cocked her head around the shoulder of the fellow in front of her and watched as the packs disappeared one by one. Then a greedy little feminine hand grabbed the last package of Luckies. At that point the nicely dressed, sweet young thing who didn't quite make it, let loose with, "Oh, Hell!" An elderly man who was also among the disappointed looked at her with a bit of shock written in his face. She got his meaning right away for a bit tearfully she said, "Well, that's just the way I feel." Maybe you think that is silly. I happened to be in a small town the other day when the cigarette truck came in. It stopped at the pool hall. The man I was with quickly assembled his non-smoking friends and away we went. A crowd quickly gathered and we cleaned the pool hall out of cigarettes in nothing flat. The truck went to another pool hall, two cafes, and a filling station with the crowd in hot pursuit. As the truck drove out of town each little citizen took stock of his catch and those who got none went home to inventory their hoard for they had been first the last time the truck was in town. Then there is the curfew on night spots and hot spots. To hear the groans you would think that the strip tease was an essential industry. It seems now that most of the morale on the home front is built up between midnight and morning. Any war worker

who would attempt to work all day without having spent the morning in a night club would certainly not be able to maintain production at full capacity. There are rumors that the night life will go underground and that their battle cry is "The curfew shall not ring tonight!"

We have other little problems which are given front page attention such as whether to seat or not to seat Henry Wallace. It looks as if he should be given some place to sit because they are certainly not going to give him anything to do.⁹ They are still bickering over the fight, jail, or join the union bill. They have removed the go to jail clause and they are about to remove the fight clause. As soon as it becomes simply join the union it will be passed by Congress and signed by the President.¹⁰ Somewhere in a little country paper a few lines were devoted to a relatively minor story to the effect that the Boeing Plant in Wichita has produced one thousand B-29s. You can dig out a hundred great little stories like that if you care to look on the inside pages of our newspapers. That's what I mean when I say that you are fighting for a Country which is solid underneath the foam. Without the foam it just wouldn't be the USA.

NEWELLETTER NUMBER THIRTY SEVEN

March, 1945

Dear Gang:

It approaches that time when every man going out into his back yard should search his heart to see whether or not he really is "The good neighbor." There is no way to foresee the far reaching results of such a simple act as spading a lettuce bed, removing the straw from the shrubs, or picking the first dandelion. Tonight ten husbands slouched in their easy chairs with newspaper, slippers, and pipe will be apprised of the fact that Vigoro Jones has already spaded his Victory Garden. A dozen sharply barbed hints will be dropped suggesting very plainly that our back yard would look every bit as nice as

9. President Roosevelt promised former Vice-President Henry Wallace his choice of posts after the 1944 election. Wallace chose secretary of commerce. F.D.R. therefore dismissed Jesse Jones, who had kept his Reconstruction Finance Corporation chairmanship by taking it to the Commerce Department when he succeeded Harry Hopkins. The "reactionaries" in the Senate did not want "that madman" Wallace having control over the RFC, so the confirmation was made conditional on the passage of a bill to make the RFC an independent agency. In the end, F.D.R. was forced to agree to the ultimatum.

10. Because of the setback in the Battle of the Bulge, a greater national effort seemed necessary. President Roosevelt therefore asked for a national war service law, which was promptly called a "work or fight" bill. Carpenter refers here to the fact that after passing in the House of Representatives, the bill "slowly bled to death" in the Senate as victories in Europe lessened the emergency.

8. Lew Lehr was a vaudevillian famous for saying, "Monkeys are the craziest people."

V. Jones's back yard if someone around our house would work as hard in our yard as V. Jones does in his. Tomorrow night ten reluctant yard men will be raking leaves, pruning rose bushes, and repairing the trellis which failed to survive the football season. This very evening Mother Nature got down her garden hose and while the robins chirped encouragement from the K.G. & E. [Kansas Gas and Electric] power lines, she bathed the swollen buds, drenched the dusty limbs and trunks, and watered the roots of the trees. Lightning flashed and the thunder rumbled by shaking the windows as it passed. The sidewalks and streets were slobbered clean and Wichita is like a freshly washed child awaiting the pageantry of Spring. We blush. But after all it is Spring, the sap is coming up in the family tree, and we might as well get all such things out of our system at the same time so here goes -

SPRING POEM

"Hi, Bud."
Said the Blade
As he lifted his green head.
"Long time. No see.
Gee, ain't this place dead?"
"Hi, Sprout."
Replied the Leaflet
And he seemed a trifle green.
"Long time. No see.
Where in heck have you guys been?"
"What's cookin'?"
Piped Spy Reah
As he turned more white than pale
"Surely somethin' must be doin'
In this deserted vale."
Well, I seed
By grapevine winchell
That a shower is contemplated—
It's for Sythia and for John Quill
Who're expecting, so 'tis stated.

We see by the papers that there is considerable of a war going on in various places. It is rumored that [Japanese Emperor] Hirohito has taken up the violin so that he will have some honorable thing to do while Tokio burns. And they do say that Herr [Joseph] Goebbels has advised his unfortunate people to wait until the Yanks get tired and then will come Victory. As the Crime Doctor of the radio says, he omitted one little detail which proves beyond a doubt that he is the murderer. He neglected to tell his people who are to be the Victors. John L. Lewis like a naughty kid tickling the feet of his brother who is slugging it out with the neighborhood bully, is again taking advantage of our war time need for coal. He has dreamed up eighteen new demands and is about to call his unthinking col-

laborationists out on strike.¹¹ According to the Movie Magazines the Movie Industry is also being tied up by a rapidly spreading strike.¹² Now that is one of the strikes which we would most like to be tied up with. In fact it might be quite a boon to mankind if the movie strike could be made a permanent institution. And of course we have quite a generous supply of misinformation which has its origin in civilian buttle skut and tureen gossip. There was, for instance, the rumor started by the Sunday School Teacher who raced up and down the corridors of the Union National Bank Building shouting, "The war is over! The war is over!" When ice had been applied to his fevered brow it was discovered that an automobile repair man had agreed to take his ailing car into the shop the very next morning.

The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of your church was fittingly celebrated the week of March 11-18.¹³ The many folks who planned and took part in the festivities have made this special birthday one which will long be remembered. The Sunday morning service was a very impressive one. Dr. Ferry presided with his customary grace and dignity and thereby set the pitch for the entire celebration. Dr. Harrison Ray Anderson preached

11. When the War Labor Board issued a report saying that the cost of living was going up faster than wages, John L. Lewis demanded eighteen financial and nonfinancial "adjustments" from the coal producers since union contracts were expiring on March 30 and April 30. He wanted premium pay for late shifts; free explosives, fuses, rubber boots, and other materials; and better sanitary facilities. Also, he demanded that the producers pay the union a royalty of ten cents for every ton of coal mined. The royalty, he said, would enable the union to provide modern medical services, hospitalization, insurance, rehabilitation, and economic protection. Naturally the producers balked.

The War Labor Board issued an interim order on April 20, which it reaffirmed on May 1, requiring uninterrupted production of coal under the contract provisions formerly in effect until differences between the union and the producers could be resolved. Because the union ignored the order and struck, Pres. Harry Truman ordered the Interior Department to take possession of the mines. A week later, much to the displeasure of the coal producers, the government gave in to the union demands, including a five cent—rather than ten cent—royalty on every ton of coal produced.

12. The strike in the motion picture industry was nothing more than a jurisdictional dispute involving about fifty set decorators, but it lasted 233 days. Movie production continued, however, because the stagehands' union, one of the parties in the dispute, provided substitute workers.

13. First Presbyterian is Wichita's oldest church. In October 1869 the Rev. Wilberforce K. Boggs arrived in the new town to organize a church. He conducted worship services in an abandoned military dugout, and on March 13, 1870, First Presbyterian Church was formally organized with thirteen charter members. On May 4, 1870, it received the first charter granted by the State of Kansas to an organization in Wichita.

On April 30, 1988, E. Gail Carpenter was honored by First Presbyterian Church, and the church's archives, which had their beginning with Carpenter's interest in preserving the records and artifacts of the church, were named for him. Attending the festivities were former Newell Class members, shown here with Carpenter and his wife, Jean (front row, center).



Photographed with Carpenter on April 30, 1988, were some of the Second World War veterans who received the Newelletters: front row, left to right, Floyd Roby, Ed Lyon, Bill Mierau, Carpenter, and Walt Trombold; second row, left to right, Phil McVey, Slayton Erney, Bruce McVey, Lawrence Wulfmeyer, Dave Moore, and Bob Tanner. On the following pages, these veterans are shown in photographs taken while they were in the service.



Bruce and Phillip "Phil" McVey



*Slayton Erney
(with wife, Alice, and daughter, Sally)*



Floyd Roby



Edward P. "Ed" Lyon



Lawrence Wulfmeyer



David "Dave" Moore



Robert "Bob" Tanner



William C. "Bill" Mierau



Walter "Walt" Trombold



In many of the Newellletters, Carpenter referred to class breakfasts at Linwood Park where news was shared of those in the military. In this photograph, Carpenter can be seen standing at back and far left.

the Anniversary Sermon.¹⁴ Recalling the question which Christ put to the man at the Pool of Bethesda who had been thirty-eight years a cripple, "Wilt thou be made whole?", Dr. Anderson threw that same challenge into the teeth of a sick world which is not sure that it wants to be made whole. At the Vesper service anniversary greetings were brought to the First Presbyterian Church from the City of Wichita, The Council of Churches, the Minister's Association, and the Presbytery of Wichita. Dr. Ferry responded to the greetings and Dr. Anderson again preached. Sunday was a day of Praise and Thanksgiving - a day of recalling the past and remembering the present. In every prayer and in every thought expressed there was a place for our men and women scattered all over the world and in every heart there was the sincere regret that you could not be here. The climax of the celebration was the Historical Pageant and Open House held the night of the 13th, the actual anniversary date. Again the atmosphere was deeply religious and even

though the four episodes depicted were delightfully instructive and entertaining there was no applause. There were lots of light hearts in the audience and here and there a smile cracked wide open as the story of the First Church unfolded in hoop skirts and whiskers. The entire Church Plant was dressed for the Open House. The Newell Class bulletin boards were dusted off and a beautiful worship center shed its light upon the visitors who were made welcome by a fine group of Newellites. For some strange reason most of the folks sooner or later made their way to the Ladies Parlor. The refreshments which were served there may have had something to do with it. The punch bowls were presided over by a group of ladies who were dressed in the very latest 1870 styles. There were hats which looked very much like this Spring's version, high collars, mutton leg sleeves, corsets, voluminous skirts and high shoes with points (not ration points). Since this type of reporting is not exactly down the alley of your correspondent perhaps the whole affair could be summed up by saying that the most outstanding feature of the entire occasion was Mrs. Ferry's¹⁵ bustle.

14. The Rev. Harrison Ray Anderson was pastor of First Presbyterian Church from 1921 until he assumed the pastorate of Chicago's prestigious Fourth Presbyterian Church in 1928. Interestingly, not only did he preach on First Presbyterian Church's seventy-fifth anniversary, he also preached on its one hundredth in 1970.

15. Mrs. Ferry's Christian name was Alice.

NEWELLETTER NUMBER THIRTY EIGHT

April, 1945

Dear Gang:

It has been said that Kansas is the only place in the world where the wind blows from all directions at the same time. Meteorologists who use delicate barometers, thermometers, hygrometers, and anemometers, rain gauges and toy balloons to tell what the weather is like, would scoff at our homely weather vane. The young elm tree which grows by our back porch speaks to us of the rain, the sunshine and the wind. This Spring it has had a tale to tell. First it stretched and yawned and went back to sleep. Then it yawned again and came awake as the sun pulled the skimpy blanket of snow from its feet. Under the caress of the gentle breezes and warm rain our elm tree put forth her blossoms and every twig was raised heavenward because it at last was Spring. Of a sudden, the skies darkened, the lightning flashed and the winds blew and our elm tree bent low, whipped this way and that by the awful power of the unseen. We watched from our window, wondering if our young elm tree could withstand the violence of the winds which blew from all directions. The storm passed; a new day dawned, and sure enough, there stands our elm tree tried, erect and proud.

It is doubtful if we shall ever see more soul stirring days than those through which we have just passed. The winds of destiny have truly played upon our emotions from all directions. Our armed forces have piled success upon success in the Pacific, in Europe and in Italy until the prize seems to be within sight in Germany. The President has died. A new President has quietly stepped into the place left vacant. And all of us in our own small circle have been gladdened by the news that Paul Sayles is a prisoner of war. It is our prayer now that he is not the victim of the disgraceful maltreatment which has been the lot of some of those who have fallen into the hands of the enemy.

The event which has stirred us the most deeply because of the tragic suddenness with which it came upon us was the death of President Roosevelt. It is no secret that millions of his countrymen were sincerely opposed to many of the political principles and methods for which Franklin D. Roosevelt stood. And it is a sign of the true greatness of the man and of the fairness and the generosity of the American people that at his death not only his friends but those who had opposed him were bowed in grief. The air has been filled with all of the fine words which could possibly be spoken to honor any man - all of the great and lovely music has been produced in his memory - and men and women of all races and creeds throughout our whole land have stood with bowed heads and with hearts filled with sorrow

and minds filled with that universal expression of awe in the presence of the mysterious working of God among men, "How marvelous and how beyond the understanding of mere men, are thy works, O Lord!"

A quiet untried man from Missouri turned pale as he contemplated the burden which fate was about to place upon his shoulders. Like a true American he tightened his belt, threw back his shoulders and stepped into the breach in the ranks of World Leadership. He called upon his Lord for strength and wisdom and upon his people for support. He has spoken plainly and sincerely without oratory and beautifully turned phrases. Our enemies are not comforted, our friends are assured, and the world has seen a free people more united in sympathy and understanding and loyalty than any controlled nation could ever hope to be.

We have been fascinated by the spectacular progress of our armies in Germany. It is true that we have hoped for several weeks that each day would be the last day of organized resistance. We have the studied opinion of those who know that the mopping up operation will be prolonged and costly. Perhaps we cannot be blamed too much for hoping that something will happen to shorten the length of that last foolish stand. Even the most insane of our enemies admit that the issue has been decided - that the United Nations have won the war.

Just as it is hard to put into words the sorrow which we feel when bad news comes from the battle front, it is hard to express our joy when good news comes. If we can imagine our own happiness at the good news about Paul Sayles multiplied by a mother's love, a father's love and the love of brothers and sisters we might get some idea of the joy which fills the Sayles home. We trust that even as we write, Paul is already among those who have been freed by our Victorious Armies.¹⁶

In glancing back over the Newelletters it is surprising to learn that every year about this time Wichita is either flooded or threatened with a flood. This year again the flood is a reality. The Little River has gone on a rampage and North Wichita and Riverside are once more under water. As was the case last year, most of the damage is from flooded basements. An elaborate flood control program has been worked out and it is hoped that it will be put into effect immediately.

16. This was the last good news received about Paul Sayles (1916-1945). He never returned home. One soldier who did return told Sayles' family that he had seen Sayles a few days before they were both to return home, and that he expected to be greeted by Sayles in Wichita. What happened to Sayles remains a mystery.

NEWELLETTER NUMBER THIRTY NINE

May, 1945

Dear Gang:

Almost two weeks have passed since the end of the shooting in Europe. It has been very plain all along that this is not a cheering and shouting war which we have been fighting. Now it is clear that V-E day was not to be the day of whooping it up for Victory. One of the defeated generals who has spent years planning and executing the German project of world conquest and mass murder has suggested that the game is over. Now the teams, good sportsmen all, should shake and make up. One does not feel like a participant in a sporting event when he has cleaned out a nest of rattlesnakes especially if there is another to be cleaned out before the job is finished. We are glad in a way which cannot be measured in pints and quarts that the end of the war in Europe has come. We are proud of your achievements and we are very humble when we consider what many of you have been thru and what the cost of V-E day has really been. You who are a part of the Newell Class have served in many places and in many different circumstances always with unselfishness and with honor. We are especially proud of you.

Our joy for the most part has been expressed in a feeling of sincere gratitude to God who giveth the Victory - a feeling which comes from deep inside. The little changes which here and there are already quite noticeable remind us each day to give thanks that the first half is over. There are no more stories of sweeping gains by [George S.] Patton, [Courtney H.] Hodges, [Omar] Bradley, [Mark] Clark and all of the rest. The radio commentators are having a hard time of it because the commonplace lacks the spice and the excitement of a good fight. All eyes are now upon the Pacific where the bitterest kind of fighting is in progress and where the Japs have nothing to look forward to but defeat. Everyone is wondering whose son or husband or sweetheart will get home when and for how long and how many points does he have. There is no let down on B-29 production here. Everyone wants to get the job finished and that right soon.

The following paragraphs were written May 7th and May 8th to try to preserve for you if possible a little of the flavor of V-E Day at home.

May 7th, 1945 - It is V-E Day - we think. The fact of the matter seems to be that the actual instrument of surrender was signed at 8:41 p.m. May 6, 1945, Wichita time. Therefore, all announcements to the contrary notwithstanding, May 6th 1945 was V-E Day. About 8:30 this morning the local announcer broke into a radio program then in progress to broadcast an AP bulletin which stated that Germany had unconditionally surrendered

to the representatives of the Allies including Russia. The bulletin gave many of the details including the names of those who represented each nation. It is now evening. We have listened to our radios all day for an official announcement of Germany's surrender. The German radio has announced their capitulation. London has announced that Churchill will make an important announcement at 8 a.m., May 8 and that the King will speak later in the day. It has also been announced from London that May 8 will be V-E Day and that May 9 will also be a holiday. It is also rumored that Truman and Churchill were ready to make an announcement at 11 a.m. today but that Joe [Stalin] wasn't ready. Truman has announced that he has agreed to keep something, presumably the surrender of Germany, a secret so that it can be announced simultaneously to a surprised and patiently waiting world by all three governments. It is hard for Americans to understand why the world has to be full of stuffed shirts who fancy that they can juggle the facts and dates of history to suit themselves.

May 8th, 1945 - This is the long hoped for and prayed for and the long awaited day of Victory over Germany. It is almost noon and Wichita is very calm. Small groups of school children, liberated temporarily from the drudgery of classes, are strolling along the street, flags in hand, looking expectantly this way and that for the first sign of excitement. The fife and drum corps of the Sons of the American Legion marches proudly and noisily up Douglas Avenue. A small drizzle of paper commences to fall from the windows of the Union National Bank Building. As the flag passes by men in uniform snap to attention, civilians reverently remove their hats and today they instinctively bow their heads; a poorly dressed man glances about him not knowing for sure whether to salute, stand at attention, or place his hand over his heart, pulls his battered hat from his head and stands uncovered until the flag has passed by. About half of the offices are closed. Business seems to be of secondary importance in those which remain open. The girls at their typewriters smile as their fingers race thru the motions of typing while their minds and hearts are a thousand miles away. One would be celebrant said, "It's wonderful to think that the War in Europe is over, but I just don't feel like jumping up and down and shouting." This is a solemn moment in History and "joy unconfined" seems quite out of place. Only a few minutes ago an elevator filled with happy and mildly excited people stopped upon our floor. The door opened and a handful of light hearted men stepped off. Among them was a man who did not seem to share their joy in quite the same way. He had his soft hat pulled down to cover his eyes which have been sad for many months now. He almost scurried to his office followed by the

understanding glances of a few of us who knew what was on his heart this day of Victory. He was thinking of Glenn who paid his full share of the price of Victory.¹⁷ We went to Church this evening. The Sanctuary was filled with those who chose in that way to give thanks. As we sang hymns of praise, as we listened to the reading of the Scriptures, as we listened to the voice of Dr. Ferry in his prayer of thanksgiving and in his warning of the tragedy of a Godless Peace, and as we honored silently those who will not return, it seemed to me that here at last was the real celebration of V-E Day in Europe.

One of our lesser war poets has celebrated V-E Day with an opus which expresses in its musical lines the hopes and aspirations of the American People:

Poem Without Words

V-E, V-J;

V - O P A.

NEWELLETTER NUMBER FORTY

June, 1945

Dear Gang:

This month of June, 1945, has been the month of General homecomings. There have been parades, demonstrations, banquets, and speeches. The Celebration to top them all came pretty close to the "old home town" in that it was staged at Abilene.¹⁸ We have watched them under fire on the home front through the papers and the radio, and it seems to us that you have reason to be proud of your Generals even as we are. As we look back over this month when the American People have "let down" enough to line the streets and cheer themselves hoarse it seems that the Spirit of V-E has been brought home to us by at least three types of leadership best represented perhaps, by Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley.

Gen. Bradley more than the others seems to carry the emblem of Victory for the run of the mill GI. In him we saw the infantryman - the guy who played in the line, plugging holes and opening holes, slogging through the mud, shivering in the cold, with very little recognition from the bleachers. You through Bradley were most enthusiastically applauded and he for you received the expression of our gratitude in a most becoming manner.

17. Carpenter states that the name of the father has long been forgotten.

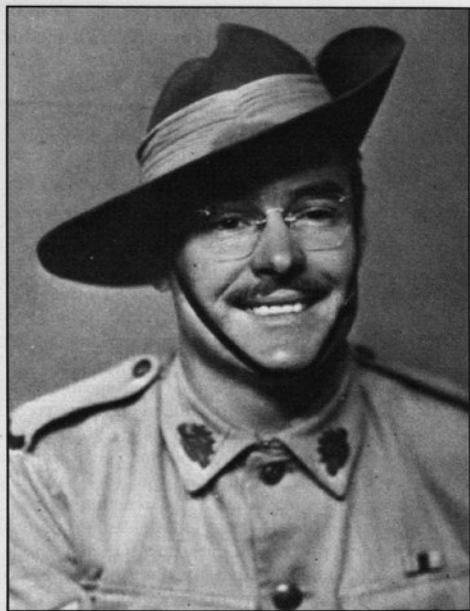
18. On June 22, 1945, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower returned home to Abilene to be greeted by 25,000 people. There was a parade and a reunion with his eighty-three-year-old mother, Ida, and his four brothers: Arthur, Milton, Edgar, and Earl. Of his hometown, Eisenhower said, "I have wandered far, but never have I forgotten Abilene.... The proudest thing I can say today is that I'm from Abilene."

Gen. Patton ripped his way through the home front as only he could do it. His helmet was polished and his stars were gleaming; his six guns were ready; and he strutted and waved and expanded his chest. His glare and his frown were wiped off with smiles; and his speech bristled with oaths carefully selected and toned down for the home folks. Without his showmanship it would not have been Patton. The audience loved it. We are glad that in this man's army all of the generals are not Pattons, but we are extremely thankful that in this man's army there is at least one. Patton has already become a legend. His very presence in the Pacific would be a blow to Japanese morale. When the names of other fine generals of this war have been forgotten, "Blood and Guts" will be strutting through the pages of folk lore at the side of "Old Hickory."

In Eisenhower we have watched the reluctant hero. He has always appeared to give full credit where credit was due. I am sure that those who cheered him had a feeling that they were cheering not a man but a symbol. He has not conducted himself as one who has conquered but as one who has purchased something of great value at a great price. He accepted the demonstrations of our gratitude not only in the name of the GI who is soon to come home but also in the name of the GI who will never come home. Eisenhower went through the ordeal of his homecoming with dignity, modesty, and grace. "Ike" is something more than a five star General who has coordinated the Allied Armies and led them to Victory, he is a new and shining example of the small-town-boy-makes-good story. His career should be an inspiration to all young men and women who are inclined to feel that this is no longer a land of opportunity for common people who lack pull and influence. We shall always remember that you and "Ike" have done more than your share to keep the United States of America a land of opportunity.

Wichita is rapidly adjusting herself to the War in the Pacific. The apron leading from the Boeing Plant is overflowing with bad news for Japan. Cessna and Beech contracts have evidently been curtailed. This is suggested by the fact that a number of folks have been dismissed and by the fact that the two firms have just merged into one with Beech evidently in control.¹⁹

19. Obviously Beech and Cessna did not merge. Because the companies wanted to survive in the post-war world, Beech director and financial advisor Thomas D. Neelands brought the companies together to discuss a merger in which Beech would trade 233,000 shares worth \$3.5 million for a \$5 million stake in Cessna. When the boards of directors met, however, nothing could be agreed upon, and by the end of August the companies had decided to go their separate ways.



Alan Thomas, an Australian, had come to Wichita in 1937, spending several months at the Coleman Company's headquarters. Thomas was a member of the Newell Class while in Wichita, and Carpenter therefore included him in Newelletter mailings.

The merger has been followed by the usual period of uncertainty and realignment for the employees and for the public as well.

The City Fathers have decided to give the home folks a taste of the destruction which has come to so many of the cities of Europe. Electric drills, rippers and mechanized shovels are making a shambles of Douglas Avenue in the shopping area. Gray, sleek, noisy paving machines are moving in to repair the damage and to change the pitch and the quality of the terrific din of depaving.

The weather man has been unusually generous this June. The days and the nights have been so cool and comfortable that we are not going to need that vacation trip which we may have to postpone until after the Japs admit that they are licked.

NEWELLETTER NUMBER FORTY ONE

July, 1945

Dear Gang:

For an hour or more my pencil has been poised to record in my own illegible handwriting the little things

which every GI would want to know about life on the home front this warm Sunday afternoon in July. The post Sunday-dinner kitchen noises have given way to the silence of sleeping cooks and dish washers. Don has gone off to hunt crawdads in the creek just east of the city limits.²⁰ Boots, in her heat resisting fur coat, is stretched at full length upon the floor of the porch. A woodpecker is hanging by his toes from the trunk of our elm tree where he is making a few preliminary pecks before digging in. The Shasta Daisies and the roses which were picked fresh last night have reacted to the weather by drooping their wilted heads over the rims of their bowls. A casting rod stands erect in the corner bringing to mind the fact that the Newell Class has granted its teacher a few weeks vacation from teaching in order that he may spend several Saturday afternoons exclusively in developing the fine art of being a chummy father to his son who is a devotee of the Sports and whose father has almost insurmountable shortcomings in that department.

Only yesterday we took our fishing tackle with us on a business trip to Barton and Rice Counties. The day commenced when the alarm shattered the cool quiet of the morning; and by the time the sun was peeking over the eastern horizon we were almost to McPherson. The business end of the trip was soon out of the way and shortly after noon we were ready to go fishing.

Angling, as it is practiced in Kansas, falls naturally into several steps which must be taken in their proper sequence. There is first the problem of locating a promising fishing hole. The most likely leads are obtained through a vigorous cross examination of the members of the local Spit and Whittle Club. Their unanimous declaration that there ain't no fish in any of these streams around here, is conclusive proof that there is good fishing not too far away. We soon discover fresh fish sign - the trail left from dragging a fish, too heavy to be carried, over the dusty road and it isn't long until we have located a bridge with a muddy little stream flowing underneath and with a canopy of leafy branches overhead. Next, comes the opening of the tackle boxes, the assembling of the rods and the untangling of the lines and hooks and sinkers and plugs. When the proverbial hook, line and sinker have been made fast to its little red bobber we are ready for the bait. We discover, to our disappointment, that the skinny little worms have devoured all of the big fat worms so that we are hard pressed to conceal the hook. We are ready for the cast. The arm is drawn back and all of the weight of a boy's husky body is thrown into the effort. The reel

20. The creek, a block east of Edgemoor, is lined by houses today and well within the city limits of Wichita.

spins as the deceptive lure hurls through space. There is a sharp rustling of leaves as the line wraps itself around an overhanging branch. There is an exclamation of surprise and pain as the hook finds its mark in the seat of a boy's pants. It is not easy for a layman to remove a fishing hook from two layers of epidermis, one layer of shorts, and one layer of blue jeans without disturbing the bait. When the boy has fallen into the stream while trying to rescue his line from the overhanging branch, and when he has been pulled out, and when the mud has been poured out of his shoes it is time to go home. The score reads, one strike, one Carp (commonly referred to in the parlance of the fishermen as one sucker) and no fish.

Since you have already been told, in the letters which were written there, about the good pre-war breakfast which the Newellites attended at Linwood Park this morning, it is possible that my pencil is really poised to tell you of the Service Men who have returned to us since the writing of my last letter. Bill Chapman came home by way of a demobilization center where he exchanged a whole flock of points for an honorable discharge. Our pleasure in having Bill with us again is but a taste of the joy which will be ours in that great day not too far away when you will all be home again. Last Sunday Dave Moore, Marshall Ross, and Bill Miller were in class. It is even rumored that some of the folks forgot to go to church. This morning Marshall Ross, Bill Miller, and Sid Lawson and his wife, Ruth, were at the breakfast. During the week Ed and Lois Dorsett and the little Dorsett called at the office. Other callers were Bill and Elaine Small, without the small Small. They are on their way to Denver where Bill is to put the finishing touches on some of the B-29s.²¹

Since the first half of the war is over, and now that the big shift is on, it might be well to give you a Sunday School Teacher's Summary of the record of the Newell Class in the Service as seen through the Newelletter-

Total number to have been on the mailing list	65
Total number of Service Men and Women to have been on the mailing list	59
Number of Civilians on the mailing list	6
Number to have been dropped from the mailing list	8
Number now on the mailing list	57

21. Since the publication of Part I, Sid Lawson's whereabouts has been found. Sid (1918-) and Ruth (1922-) Lawson live in Escondido, California, where he is a retired Methodist clergyman. Lois (1917-), the widow of Ed Dorsett, lives in Wichita and is a member of First Presbyterian Church. "The little Dorsett" is Ray (1943-), owner of Harvest Communications in Wichita. Bill (1915-) and Elaine (1914-) Small live in Ferguson, Missouri, where he is a retired chemist. "The small Small" is Susan Long (1944-), a Presbyterian clergyman's wife in Brockport, New York.

Branches of the Service represented	
Army	43
Navy	13
WAC	2
Australian Army ²²	1
Commissioned Officers	19
Greatest number from one family to have been on the mailing list (Sayles)	5
Number having seen service over seas	41
Number having been in combat	21
Number having served in two theaters of war	10
Number having served in three theaters of war	1
Killed in action	1
Wounded	2
Disabled in action	1
Present distribution of Service Men and Women	
Europe	10
Pacific	11
USA or on the way home	29
Australia	1
Honorably discharged	5
Percentage of the members of the Newell Class who are very proud of the record of their service men and women and who are anxious for them all to be home again	100%

An indelicate, short, shortage poem which attempts to define the longest shortage resulting from the Second World War -

The Longest Shortage

This is a depressing report, sort of
Because it speaks mostly of what the civilian is short of.
There is, first of all, the serious shortage of shorts
Which certainly reduces a man to the bare essentials
and gets him all out of sorts.
Then there is the little matter of a shortage of meats
Which hurts Mr. Civilian most, where he eats -
Add to the shortage of shorts and meats, an acute
shortage of soaps,
A shortage of sugar, butter, cigarettes, and El Ropes.
And finally, there is another shortage which perhaps
should not be mentioned in poem,
But plenty of which is a part of the essential equipment
of every well ordered home -
In the opinion of many thoughtful civilians, the
longest shortage of all
Is the one, yards and yards of which are missing from
the bathroom wall.
How we miss you,
Soft Northern Tissue!

22. Why an Australian? In 1937 Alan Thomas (1916-), the son of the Coleman distributor in Australia, spent several months in Wichita at Coleman headquarters and attended the Newell Class. He is now retired in Ashmore, Queensland.

NEWELLETTER NUMBER FORTY TWO

August, 1945

Dear Gang:

It is V-J Day plus six and the world, particularly the old home town, appears to have embarked upon the long hard journey back. The home front, agitated by the imagination of the news broadcaster, passed through several very jittery days during which it was very hard to know for sure whether we were at war or not. Then at 6:00 P.M. Wichita time August 14, 1945, came the White House announcement that the Japs had accepted the Potsdam ultimatum.²³ Everyone old enough to understand the significance of the announcement immediately felt welling up within him the desire to do something to celebrate. Shouts of joy went up from the neighborhood kids. The air was soon filled with the continuous beeping of auto horns as drivers commenced to express themselves. Tin cans on a string were hurriedly tied to bikes and the big night was under way.

We had planned to go to see Jack Benny in *The Horn Blows at Midnight*, but after a family conference we decided that a show wouldn't quite express that which we felt in our hearts, knowing as we do what the end of the war means to you and to your families and loved ones, and to the millions of others just like you. We decided to go to church first of all; and there, with far too few others, we gave thanks to God for the dawn of a new period of Peace. The songs of praise, the prayer of thanksgiving, and the very fitting remarks of Dr. Homer²⁴ arose against a noisy background of far more worldly activities.

When the service was over we parked our car several blocks from the main drag and made our way toward the hub of celebration which we assumed to be at Douglas and Broadway. Our far-sighted and wise Police Department had made preparations for just such an occasion; Douglas was closed to traffic from St. Francis to Waco. An effervescent crowd which seemed to include most of Wichita had congregated in the middle of the street which was littered with the waste paper thrown from the windows earlier in the evening. It was a happy, milling mob of citizens all feeling the urge to do something and not knowing exactly what to do.

There was the shouting and laughing which we have all longed to hear. Here and there a snake dance formed to be broken up after a few brave wiggles. Gangs of teen

aged boys joined hands and crashed the crowd knocking willing bobby soxers head over heels. Two kids tried to ride another on a rail. A large group had gathered many rows deep around some kind of a band which added its discords in four-four time to the pandemonium. A soldier with a glamorous, scantily clad blonde on his shoulders plowed through the crowd with a pack of drooling wolves at his heels. Many of the more enthusiastic celebrants were men in uniform. Some of them like butterflies flitting from flower to flower, went from one smudge of lipstick to another. Others bore the kissing which they had rather than fly to thrills they knew not of. There was a flourishing alley trade. It is reported that liquor of any kind sold for any price. One GI, drunk with joy, no doubt, emerged unsteadily from the shadows and started upon a round of uninhibited osculation. He stole several kisses with considerable satisfaction to himself and honor to his outfit. Then he saw a very tempting morsel standing all unsuspecting by the side of her very protective husband. So interested was the GI in his business of spreading joy and bacteria that he didn't see the husband. He made one pass at the wrong set of lips. There was a quick movement and a resounding smack not unlike the sound of a kiss. Once again it was demonstrated that crime does not pay and the stealer of kisses lost all interest in the celebration which had suddenly taken such a painful turn. It was a big night in Wichita. Now it is all over. It is the beginning of the proverbial "morning after." The airplane factories have started to curtail their production. Today there was a line a block long leading into the United States Employment Office.

These are great days in the Newell Class. One of the penalties for taking a vacation from teaching is missing the excitement of the homecomings which are so frequent. We have looked forward to this very time for many months. We regret that the days immediately ahead will probably be very long days for a few of you. The time erasing strain of battle is past. We hope that the period of "sweating it out" will not be too tedious. Uncle Sam has done a marvellous job of getting you to your stations quickly and he certainly can be counted upon to return you to your homes in the same efficient manner. The unfortunate part of the situation is that you cannot all be moved at the same time. We trust that ALL HOME DAY can be celebrated in the Newell Class very soon.

Perhaps you would like to hear the sequel to my little ditty on "the longest shortage" which was a part of Newelletter 41. Upon a Sunday evening shortly after the letter had gone forth, a goodly company of Newellites gathered at 240 N. Pincrest to see Bill Miller's Kodachrome Slides of pictures taken in Italy. In passing, let

23. Carpenter refers here to the Potsdam Declaration of July 26, 1945, which demanded the unconditional surrender of Japan and the creation of a democratic Japan.

24. The Rev. Lloyd Homer was minister of education in First Presbyterian Church from 1942-1945.

[illegible]

The Beacon's photographs, "taken between 2:30 and 4 a.m. in downtown Wichita," illustrated the celebrations that occurred as V-J Day became a reality. Carpenter and his family first celebrated by attending church; they later joined "an effervescent crowd which seemed to include most of Wichita" in the city's downtown area.

me remark that the slides are beautiful and Bill's remarks are most instructive and entertaining. The refreshments had been served, the committee had gone, and the hankies and handbags had been collected for the lost and found department. We were about to retire when upon our dressing table we noticed a very beautifully wrapped package. Since all of this took place in the safe and sane days before the atomic bomb we approached the package not only with uncontrolled curiosity but also with confidence and faith. Imagine our surprise to uncover one complete roll of Northern Tissue. The attached card read as follows - "Dear Teacher: Oh, the beauties of advertising - now once again those yards and yards of softness may grace thy wall!" This poetry racket has its points. It is being considered as a full time job.

This month brings us to the end of the SECOND WORLD WAR. It also seems to be the proper place to conclude this series of letters which has followed you all

over the world. In bringing this series to its conclusion I would like to thank you for the many many letters which you have written to make this exchange possible. If I remember correctly it is the suggestion of Bruce McVey which has made the MAIL BAG²⁵ the heart of the letter. It has been a very great privilege to have been your home front correspondent. We thank God that so many of you are to return safely to us, and it is our prayer that we may be worthy of the sacrifice which those who will not come back have made for us. It is our prayer too that War shall never come again. May the day soon come when the wisdom of men shall be the expression of the Will of God; for in that day we shall have Peace. (KH)

25. The Newletters consisted of three parts: Carpenter's essay, "The Mail Bag," and "A Bit of This and That." Only the essays have been printed here. "The Mail Bag" summarized the letters Carpenter received from the servicemen, and "A Bit of This and That" offered some concluding remarks about class or church activities.