THIS I SAW IN KOREA

"There never was a generation like this one," Commanding General James Van Fleet told the Assistant Secretary of Defense during her front-line tour. And she very much agrees

By ANNA ROSENBERG
with JAMES C. DERIEUX

I WENT to Korea to see man power, and I saw the power of man. I saw the power of man and the power of spirit as I never had before. There were men—they'd be boys over here—who for days and weeks and months had slugged it out with a mean enemy and beaten him back. I saw groups coming down the road from the fighting, weary and dirty and perhaps even wounded, and always there were some helping others along. A boy not able to make it alone would be leaning on the shoulder of a stronger or less seriously wounded buddy, and the stronger one would have his arm around the other one, like a brother taking a brother home. Maybe you read the story about two jet pilots who slipped their plane wings under those of another plane that was flying crazily because its pilot had blacked out, and how they brought him in safely.

No matter what happens, they bring one another through. No matter how tired. No matter how much they hurt.

The fighting was hard when I was there last fall, and all the time there was a lump in my throat. I prayed to God that my eyes would not cloud over and stop me from seeing what our boys were doing. General James Van Fleet, who is a great and tough soldier, has the same feeling about those boys that I do. As he showed me around—and I'll always thank him for not trying to spare me from the facts of war—he would point to a soldier and say, "Look at that boy! Did you ever see a finer youngster? I'd like to have him for a son."

After he pointed out I don't know how many boys, saying he would like to have each one for his son, I told him that from what he said, he would like at least a couple of thousand sons. And he didn't think that funny at all.

"I *would* like them all for my sons," he said. "They're wonderful kids."

One night back in Seoul he and I were talking again about the quality of these American boys.

"There never was a generation like this one," he said. "I used to think my generation pretty good, but it wasn't the equal of these fellows out here. They're the finest youngsters I've ever seen."

You can't know what Korea is like and you can't know what our men are like and what they are doing unless you see for yourself. Korea is the most rugged place I have ever seen. Every ridge is a heartbreak. We used to think, during World War II, that the mountains in Italy were tough. Well, in Korea it's one mountain after the other, just bleak, sharp-edged cliffs.

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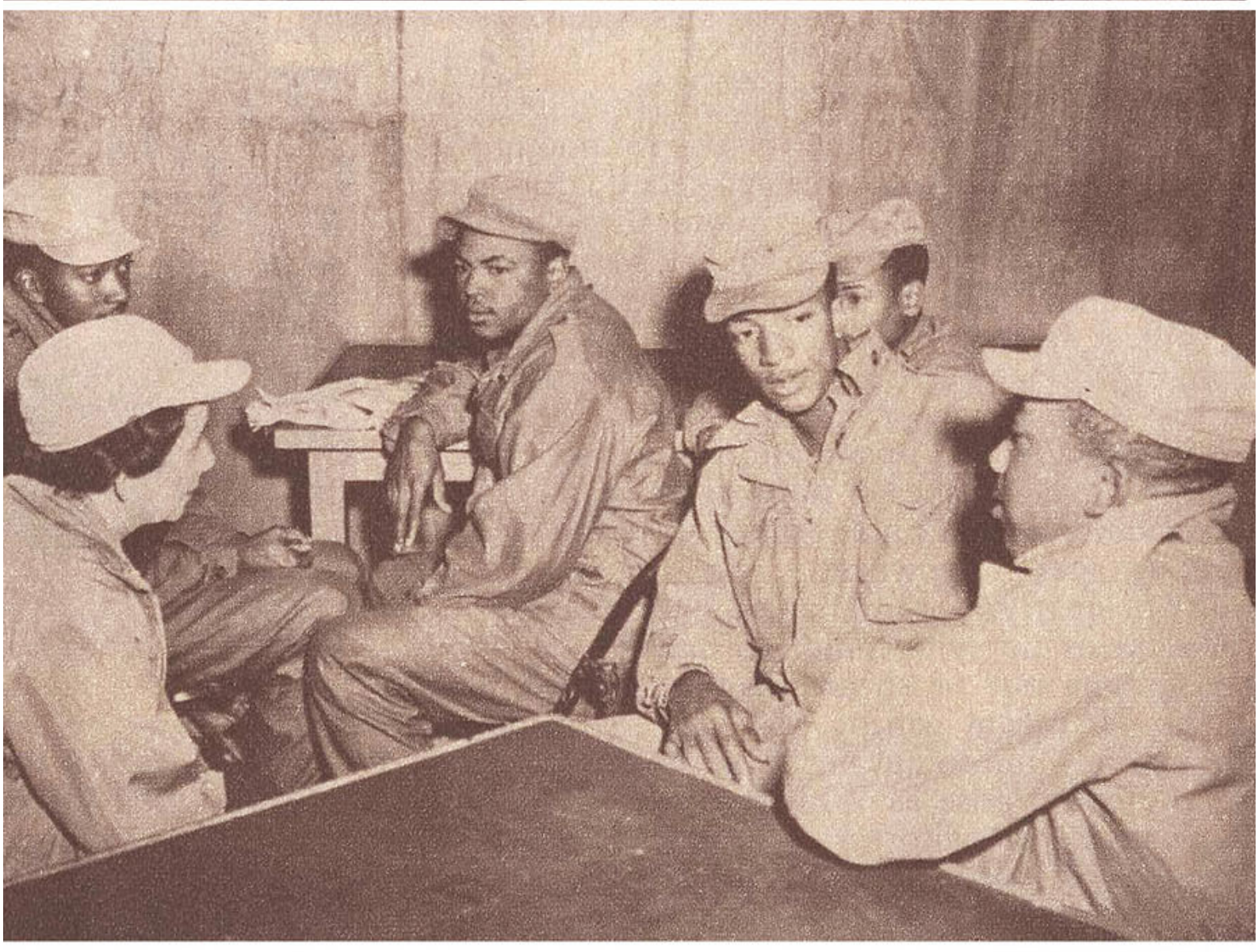

At the front Mrs. Rosenberg chats with troops. "I wanted to be certain," she says, "that everything that can be done for our men is being done . . . The men got a kick out of my going to places that had not been prepared for my inspection . . . There is nothing I found missing"

It's hard to imagine that men can fight and live in those mountains, especially when you recall that these same men a few months ago were the people you met in your daily life in America. Some were lawyers, some were clerks, some were farmers. Many were boys in school, to whom exercise was something they engaged in for fun. Boys from the Bronx, who used to complain that the subway was four long blocks away; or from the level farms of the Midwest, or from an ice-cream-soda existence anywhere. But all of them took those hills like men who had been born, reared and trained in them.

Reporting to a Soldier's Mother

One day up at the front a boy asked me if I was from New York, and I said yes. He wondered if I got home often, and I knew what was on his mind.

"You want me to call up somebody at home?" I asked him.

"I wish you would call my mother and my sister, if it's not too much." (The boy's name is John R. Brienza, and his mother, Mrs. Angela Brienza, lives in Brooklyn.)

The day after I returned, I called his mother and sister. "What does my little boy look like now?" his mother asked.

"If I hadn't known he was from a city," I told her, "I would have thought he came from the Texas cow country. He looks that conditioned and tanned."

The men in Korea look fit. They look as if they can take anything. And what they take sometimes is

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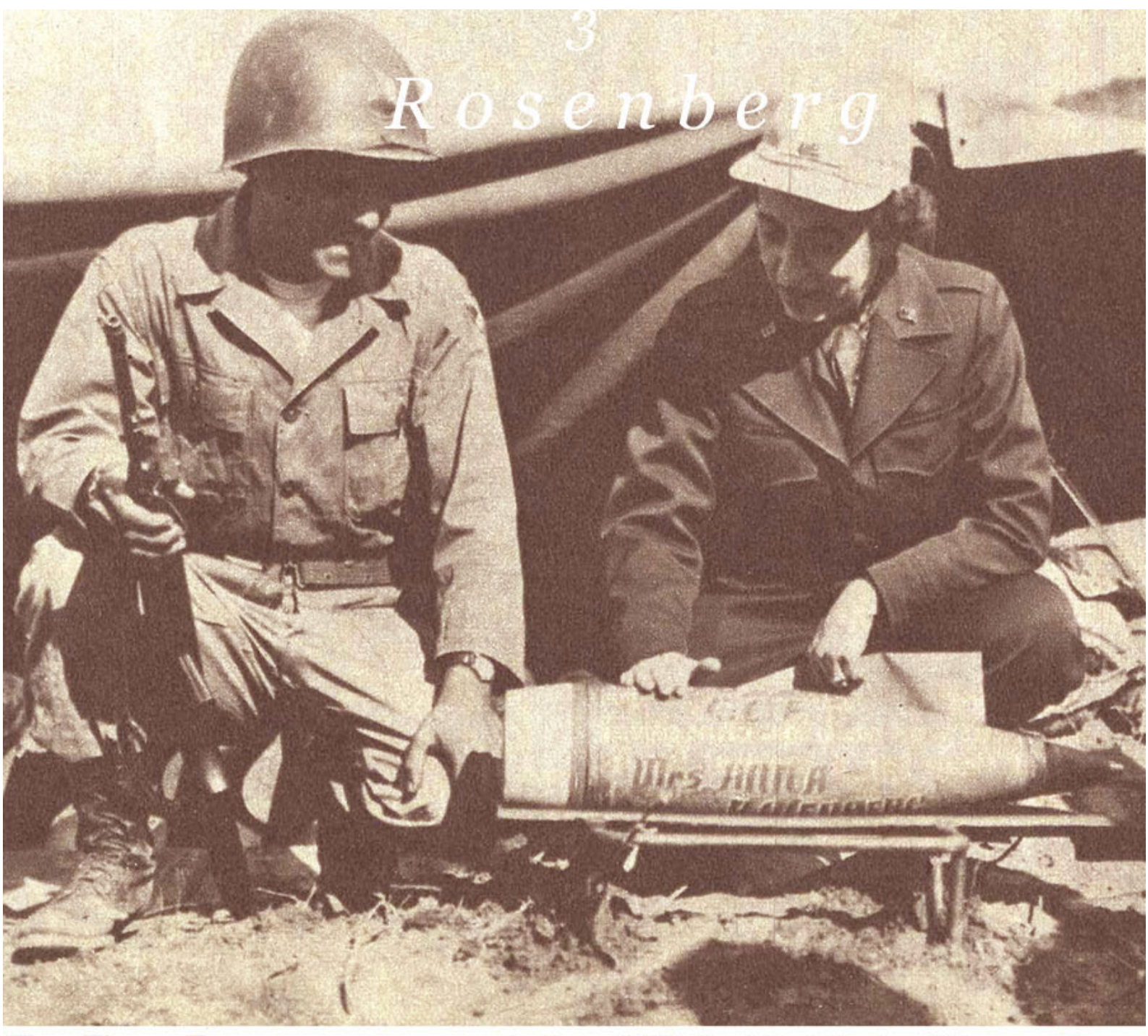

In her honor, men of the 955th Field Artillery Battalion (represented by Sfc John R. Brienza) fired this yellow shell at Reds. It carried Mrs. Rosenberg's "compliments"

pretty tough. I saw men who had gone through the hardest fighting and were just back from the front. They had that look you see only in the faces of men who have been there. It's a look I saw during the last war. Then, a few minutes after we spoke to them, the look was gone and they smiled.

There's something marvelous about American boys. I don't know what it is. But somehow or other we don't see it here at home as easily as in Korea. There is a selflessness about these men. There is to me —and this may sound corny—a nobility of spirit about them. The way they look after each other! The way they treat you when you get up there!

One of the things that always got me was the fact that they thanked me for visiting them. They would say, "We're grateful to you for coming up to see us." Grateful to someone who comes up and spends a day or two! If a boy of eighteen or nineteen, who hasn't lived even half a life, can go to such places to serve his country, certainly a woman of my age can take the chance.

Outside of the wisecracks, there is very little bitterness in Korea. Maybe some of the men were angry when they were first taken into the service. Some of the reservists felt, and many of them rightfully, that it wasn't fair to call them back again, that it should have been younger men who were called up. But now that they're out there, all that seems to have fallen by the wayside.

Every division you go to will tell you that you happen to be with the greatest division not just in Korea —that's too small—but in the world; that the outfit is made up of the swellest, greatest guys anywhere. They have pride, not only in themselves, but in one another; and there is a reason. It comes from every man knowing that he can rely on the man next to him. If he runs short of cigarettes and the guy next to him in the foxhole has only two, one is his. And if he has only one, he'll halve it. Whether fighting or sharing, these men don't let one another down.

One day I saw a group of about 80 men who had just been brought out of a Communist trap by a young first lieutenant, Stephen J. Patrick, from Bridgeport, Connecticut. He and his executive were the only officers in his outfit not killed or wounded. As he stood there talking to me, I could *(Continued on page 66)* see the look of pride on the faces of his men. He was only a youngster and probably never had been in such a tight fix before, but he had what it takes to make a leader; and those men looking up to him—I could see it in their faces—would go through anything for him.

Korea is a land that many of our boys didn't know existed, until the fighting broke out. But they have fought there with fine courage, and I didn't hear any doubts expressed by them as to why they were fighting. They knew they were there to do a job and they were doing it. They've got the guts and stamina to see anything through.

Griping Is a Normal Habit

That doesn't mean they're not griping.

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Awaiting evacuation, an injured soldier gets comforting word from Mrs. Rosenberg who found, "There aren't enough nurses, but wounded men never suffer from lack of care"

Sure there are complaints. If I ever came across a group of American boys who didn't gripe about something or other, I'd think that something was seriously wrong.

You visit one division and a man, maybe from New Hampshire, will tell you that the vegetables are not fit to eat. Then you find out they were cooked with fat meat because most of the men in the outfit are Southerners and the cooks are, too. They cook their greens that way down South. Then you come to a group from the Southwest who will not eat lamb. They will take an oath that they're being served goat meat and it isn't fit to eat. One boy will tell you, "It isn't the North Koreans I want to shoot; I want to shoot the cook. He doesn't know what seasoning is." And right next to him will be another one: "What do you mean? He ruins the stuff with seasoning."

No army of any country in any war ever before has been fed like ours in Korea. I was up front several places, with the guns going so loud I had to bend near to hear what people said to me. The enemy might be only 1,500 yards from us, but our cooks were frying chickens. There were fresh vegetables, too, and apples and oranges. Even celery and lettuce. For dessert there were canned peaches. The food varies just as much as it does at home, where one woman cooks better than another. At first, a lot of boys just out of Army cooking

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schools may have cooked as if they were mechanics, as the boys said; and maybe they *had* been mechanics.

Of course, the men up front have to live on C rations sometimes. I was with the boys of the 23d Infantry who took Heartbreak Ridge after 30 days of hard fighting. Many of them ate C rations most of that time. When they came down, everyone was given a complete change of fresh clothing. Portable shower baths were waiting for them. They cleaned up and dressed up, and when I saw them next day, they were having steak and fried chicken for lunch and dinner. The first night back they had a movie, and they all had their mail. This Army of ours knows how to fight and how to take care of its men. And not the Army only, but the Air Force, Navy and the Marines.

Of course, even noncombat life in Korea is far from the peaceful life at home. For one thing, there are no girls for the boys to whistle at—and how those boys would like to see some nice American girls! Everywhere, they'd ask me when we were going to send some USO girl shows over. "You know the kind, sweater girls," they'd say, and they'd begin kidding me.

"It must be a terrible disappointment to you," I'd say, "that only an old lady came out to see you."

"That's better than nothing," came the quick answer.

With helmets on their heads, guns in their hands and artillery banging away so that you could hardly hear anything else, they chatted as if they were back home in America and talking to friends on a street corner or in a drugstore.

One day we went to an evacuation strip and a boy was brought in by helicopter just 20 minutes after he was wounded. It was a bleak, rocky little field on which the helicopter stopped. The boy was pretty badly hurt and they were ready to give him blood. As they were bringing him in, I thought how proud somebody back home would be if he could have seen that boy, who was almost finished, and knew the blood he had given was going to save this young soldier's life. I went over to his stretcher and found he was conscious. He looked up and grinned. "I know who you are," he mumbled.

I thought he might be delirious and I bent over him.

"I know who you are," he repeated. "You're Anna Rosenberg. I read in Stars and Stripes that you were here. He owes me a quarter."

"Who owes you a quarter?" I asked.

"I told my buddy I'd see you. I told him, wherever I am, the women follow." And with that he was unconscious. He couldn't have been more than nineteen or twenty years old. But, he had been determined to get that wisecrack off. He wasn't going to show that he was in pain and, besides, perhaps he saw in my face some of the heartache I couldn't hide, and he wanted to put me at ease. When I talked to him later, he told me he was from Los Angeles.

"Is there someone you want me to call when I get home?" I asked.

"I'll be home before you," he said; "I'll be home in three days."

And he *was* back in the States in three days. On my return by way of Honolulu, I

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checked at Tripler hospital there to find out about him. He had cleared Tripler and was already in California.

I wish you could see the boys who lift the stretcher cases. They are so gentle, so careful not to jar the wounded. You can see their faces strain in the attempt to avoid jolts that might bring pain to the men they are carrying. And those nurses in Korea come nearer being angels than anybody else I've ever seen. Hours are nothing, exhaustion is nothing, work is nothing.

There aren't enough nurses, but wounded men never suffer from lack of care. Nurses and doctors and medical corpsmen work day and night. When I saw these fine people treating and handling the wounded, I felt that they were giving all that could be given in kindness, in tenderness, in care and love; and I wished all the anxious fathers and mothers could know this. If your boy has been hurt in Korea, these people have done the best they can to take your place at his side.

Everywhere I went in Korea the boys asked me a great many questions. "Are we going to get a raise?" "Are we going to have a G.I. Bill of Rights?" "Are the girls going to give us a break when we get home?" Some of the questions were serious, some in fun. When I told one boy the new G.I. Bill probably would not include dancing classes, as the last one did, he pretended to be disappointed. "That's too bad," he said. "Just look at the leg muscles I got climbing those hills. Now you tell me I've done all that climbing for nothing."

One day we went up to the 17th Infantry Regiment of the 7th Division—they called themselves "the Buffaloes." They had made up a certificate, duly certified by the Adjutant General, making me an honorary "Buffalo" because I came up to see them. In this regiment they all grow mustaches, and they want you to know that "this is the toughest outfit in Korea." That was said with conviction by the colonel himself, who, in behalf of the regiment, handed me my certificate, and by the men, who were busy digging foxholes because they had just moved into their position and night was coming. They had to have good, deep foxholes. And believe me, they had some grand mustaches, too.

I saw one very young boy and went over to talk to him. He was standing in his hole, digging deeper.

"How long have you been in the outfit, son?" I asked him. He put his hand to his lip as if embarrassed.

"I've been here quite a while," he said; then added, "but I can't grow a mustache in this climate." I doubt very much whether he could have in any climate. I saw twinkles in the eyes of other men as the youngster without a mustache turned back to continue his energetic digging.

I thought the 17th was an outfit whose men hailed from one part of the country, but I found they came from all over—from Georgia, from Michigan (the boy who couldn't grow a mustache in Korea's climate was from Michigan), from Arkansas, from New York, from everywhere. I said to a young lieutenant, "How do you get them this tough?"

"You know what we do when they're assigned to us?" he replied. "We drain their blood and substitute buffalo blood. That's

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what makes them this way." He grinned mischievously.

We visited the 955th Field Artillery Battalion and I went from one gun emplacement to another. We were late and General Van Fleet said, "Let's move on. We've got to go." I was preparing to leave when a lieutenant came up.

"Haven't you time, Mrs. Rosenberg, to visit one more gun?"

"I'd like to, but please tell the boys it's impossible in such short time to go to every one of them," I told him. Then I saw his disappointment. There were two men with him—two privates. I saw disappointment in their faces, too, and I told General Van Fleet I'd not take long. "Come on, boys, double time. We'll make it!"

I started to run with them. General Van Fleet and the others came along too. When we reached the emplacement, the boys were grinning from ear to ear, going right on with their job—shooting their 155s. But on the ground was one shell painted yellow, with a message printed on it: "To the Chinese Communists—Compliments of Anna Rosenberg." They wanted me present when they fired that one, and I'm glad I was there.

Another time a group of soldiers came up just as we were leaving the Heartbreak Ridge area. There were two youngsters in front, looking sheepish as they prepared to act as a delegation. They had their hands behind their backs. I heard one of them speak to the other. "You say it. You talk better than I do."

The boys in back were nudging him: "Talk, will you."

Finally, one cleared his throat and said, "We came down from Heartbreak Ridge yesterday and we are so grateful to you for coming up to see us, and we're so happy to see you, that we wanted to give you something. But we didn't have anything to give. So we went out this morning and shot these for you."

I remember thinking: Don't tell me that they're going to pull a North Korean from behind their backs. What else can you shoot up here? And then they pulled out four pheasants.

Moved by Sincerity of Gift

If I had been able to, I'd have repaid them with the stars, the moon, everything in the world. They had nothing else to give after 30 bitter days on Heartbreak Ridge, so they went out at six in the morning and shot four pheasants for me! General Van Fleet had the pheasants iced, and I was determined to bring them home; but by the time we got to Honolulu there was no ice, and sentimental though I am, the pheasants had to go.

As I was leaving another place in the line, riding in a jeep with General Van Fleet, a great big, tough-looking sergeant came up to me with an armful of flowers. All the men grinned as he practically dumped them on me, saying, "These are from us to you." I brought some of those flowers home with me and pressed them. They're important to me.

I can't say which experience, of so many stirring ones, impressed me most. A lot of them I'll never forget, never get over. One occurred at an air base some distance be-

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hind the lines. The sun was shining and it seemed so peaceful. Then a fighter mission went out, and I got that feeling of tenseness that lasts from the time you see combat planes take off until they appear overhead again and you've counted those who have returned. When it's time for them to come back, the very air seems to stand still. Everything, everybody is waiting. The ground crews go on about their business, but the way they keep looking up into the sky you can see they're waiting, too. All the while you wait, you almost hold your breath.

Three times at this one airfield I saw planes go out on missions—short missions because, forbidden to cross into Manchuria, they couldn't fly far. Once I was in the air myself when a mission returned and I heard my pilot receive instructions that our plane was to stay up a while; a bomber had been hit and would have to land at our fighter field because it was unable to make it back to the bomber base. So we circled and circled to give that riddled bomber the right of way.

It came in and landed all right, and my plane was right behind it. I noted the damage the MIGs had done to it. Only good flying could have brought it back at all. Then the bomber's door opened and the men began to climb out. Several of them were wounded, and they were helping one another out. But they brought their plane in!

I wish everybody in America could really know what our boys are going through and what they are doing. There aren't adjectives enough to describe it, because Korea is a terrible place. It's so beautiful when you fly over it and the colors of the sunset are just wonderful. But when you have to climb those ridges and get out in the snow and cold, it's like no place a boy of yours ever dreamed he would have to endure.

No feeling of pride is too great when you think of the boys in Korea, or those on desolate Adak in the Aleutians, where we stopped briefly during a storm that blew like mad; or those who are stationed at a place as isolated as Murphy's Dome in Alaska. Up there near Murphy's Dome is a place some sardonic person has named Utopia. The boys there sent word that if we couldn't stop, to fly over and wave anyway. We couldn't stop because the weather was too terrible, but we flew as low as we could without taking the top of the mountain off, and we waved. And the men standing outside their Quonset huts waved back to us with both arms.

In isolated places like these we've got bases, and the young Americans in all of them are doing a real, an important, job.

Wherever I went, the men had received their winter clothing in good time. I remember one newspaper reported that I crawled into pup tents to check up. Well, I did, because I wanted to see whether they had sleeping bags and everything else they needed.

In Japan, Alaska, Adak, Honolulu, I went through the kitchens and looked in the stoves and checked the iceboxes and sampled the food. I inspected the showers and the latrines, because that's the way to find out how places are being run. I wanted to be certain that everything that can be done for our men is being done. A clean barracks is good, but not everything. The men got a

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big kick out of my going to places that had not been prepared for my inspection.

She Asked the Right Questions

One of them wrote to his mother, and she sent the letter along to me: "We watched her go right across the way to a barracks they didn't expect her to go in," he wrote. "She did the same in the kitchen. She never went to the mess hall where they were expecting her . . . Sometime in her life, Mom, she must have been an enlisted man, because she knew just what to ask and what might be troubling us."

I consider that the highest praise and a wonderful compliment.

On the way home, in Hawaii, I went down in a submarine, the Pickerel, whose skipper is Lieutenant Commander Henry B. Sweitzer, of Honolulu. And there, too, I found the men proud of their group and their commander. They showed me all the complicated equipment, each man explaining his part in making it run, as if it were the simplest thing in the world to understand. The only device I saw whose function was clear was a pencil sharpener I spotted myself.

But machinery wasn't all those boys bragged about. One of them nearly knocked me over by saying, "Did you know we had twins!" Then they all seemed to talk at once. After a while I caught on—the skipper's wife had had twins; he had just got the news that day and the whole crew was celebrating with him. Every man had a big cigar.

That kind of team spirit, pride in one another, you can't beat.

I have talked so much about the men in the ranks that I almost forgot to mention the officers and how fine they are. General Matthew Ridgway has everything it takes to make a great soldier, leader and diplomat; the kind of man in public service every American can be proud of. And General Van Fleet is just unbelievable. He's big and confident and kind, and such a leader that his very presence makes the boys swagger a little with pride. They know a real soldier when they see one.

Away over there in Korea we have made as great an army as the world ever knew, an army that may already have determined the fate of the world by its courageous fight to stop Communist aggression. It stands for all the best qualities of America. It proves what Americans can do when there is need to do it.

There is nothing I found missing—in spirit, in health, in morale, in food, in clothing, in loyalty or leadership. I had the feeling as I flew home that if all the water I passed over were ink, and every blade of grass a pen, I still could not write enough to tell of the magnificence of our fighting men.

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