

The Soldiers Wife

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9

News of Arthur and Oscar did not reach home for weeks. Pito kept writing to Arthur but letters from home took longer to reach him because of his whereabouts.

July 12, 1944

My dearest husband:

We are leaving Eagle Pass today for San Antonio and as soon as we arrive I will write to you again. Nana gave me that picture of you with the whole Co. K 9th Inf. taken while in Wisconsin. I'm surely proud of it darling and you came out so good at the top almost in the middle of the row.

The children are fine. Do not worry, dearest, we are getting along okay. Didn't go out here much as it is very hot. Took Jimmy across the border and he enjoyed it very much. He bought a big sombrero and sandals. Also bought Nana some things that she needed. Take care of yourself sweetheart and do not worry about anything. Love from everyone here and God Bless you.

*Your wife forever,
Pito*

Mama Lupita's house on Goliad Street was quite small for the family so she decided to buy a larger house in a nearby neighborhood. It needed a little work but was a good bargain.

July 15, 1944

My dearest husband:

Received your letter dated June 29 and you just can't imagine how happy I was to hear that you are doing alright. Dearest, I know the Lord is answering my prayers and keeping you safe. I noticed in your return address you wrote Sgt in front of your name. Sweetheart, when were you made Sgt.?

Now that I am back home we are surely working hard on the house mother bought here. We are even painting the floors and woodwork ourselves as you can hardly get carpenters or painters. We want to move by Aug. 1st if possible.

The children are fine and Cookie just loves to play with Rose Lee. Do not worry about Nana or the rest of the family as they are all well and feel better since they heard from you and Oscar after D-Day. Take care of yourself, my darling, and remember we love you very much and are waiting for you.

Your wife forever,

Pito

July 26, 1944

My dear husband:

It will not be long now and we will be living in our new residence, 120 Callaghan Ave. It's a bigger house than the one we live in now. Has 4 big rooms, 2 halls, 2 small rooms and big bathroom and a pretty good size room upstairs; with a big porch out front and a small one in the back, and a good garage. Very good location and a better neighborhood.

Hope that by now you are getting my letters as I write to you every day. That is the best and only thing there is to do to keep in touch with you. We are all fine and my heart tells me that you are doing well. Sweetheart, you take care of yourself and do not worry about us. I can feel all over me that we will see each other soon. Goodnight my darling and God Bless You.

Your wife forever,

Pito

The quaint house on Callaghan Ave. with clapboard siding and a metal roof was close to downtown. The front porch had a railing and chairs where the family would often sit and visit for hours. The children also had plenty of room to play outside.

July 28, 1944

My dearest husband, Arthur:

Sweetheart, hope you are getting along alright. Haven't heard from you in quite a while but I know you are very busy. I pray every night for the Guardian Angel to keep you safe as well as the rest of our brave fighting men and women. Some day soon we will see each other if it's God's will.

Your wife forever, Pito

July 31, 1944

My dearest husband:

Honey, I felt so tired today that after the house work I fell asleep without praying. I woke up very suddenly to pray when Jimmy reminded me I had to write you before going to bed. Right now he is praying for our fighting men and women and for a quick victory and your return to us. Rose Lee is fast asleep as it's about 11:30 PM Sunday night. Guess she took after you as she likes ice cream very much. I buy Jimmy a cone every day and I have to get her one too otherwise she leaves Jimmy with none. Hope you have received some pictures of her with the doll you sent her from Ireland. Well, honey, good night wherever you are and God Bless You.

Your wife forever, Pito

It was the end of July when Nana received the dreaded telegram and official notice of Oscar's death; the pain of losing her son was immense and she wept profusely.

Mrs. Ester Backus
Box #164
Eagle Pass, Texas

Dear Mrs. Backus:

It is with regret that I am writing to confirm the recent telegram informing you of the death of your son, Private Oscar V. Backus, 18,013,230, Infantry, who was killed in action on 3 July 1944 in France.

I fully understand your desire to learn as much as possible regarding the circumstances leading to his death and I wish that there were more information available to give you. Unfortunately, reports of this nature contain only the briefest details as they are prepared under battle conditions and the means of transmission are limited.

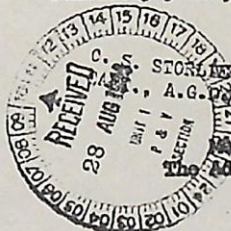
I know the sorrow this message has brought you and it is my hope that in time the knowledge of his heroic service to his country, even unto death, may be of sustaining comfort to you.

I extend to you my deepest sympathy.

Sincerely yours,



1 Inclosure
Bulletin of Information.



DEATH CASE SEND TO
CERTIFICATION SECTION
CASUALTY BRANCH

Cas Br K6

The sad news of Oscar was relayed to Pito via telegram from Tete's husband, Chato. Upon hearing the news from Pito, Cookie cried and cried and cried; they all cried.



Oscar was buried at the American Cemetery at St. Laurent sur Mer on July 4, 1944.

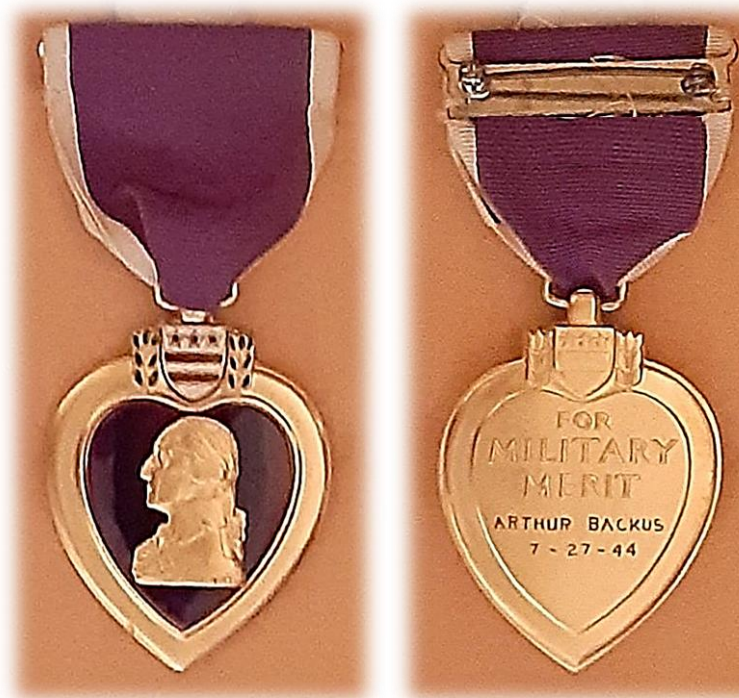


Many years later he would be brought home to his final resting place of Honor:
Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery



After being stabilized at the aid station on the front lines, Arthur was transported back to the Normandy beachhead. There he was boarded onto a troop ship with other wounded soldiers and sailed back to England. He arrived at the U.S. Army Hospital Plant 4143 at Oxford on July 29, 1944.

Arthur was awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in action. He would have the medal sent home to Pito.





In early August Mary and her boys were visiting Pito in San Antonio. Pito and Mary took their boys to the Alamo and then to the Zoo at Brackenridge Park to see the animals. The Alamo was always a fascinating place of Texas history that boys looked forward to visiting. It made them proud to be Texans. Mary stayed for a week and then Pito and Rose Lee returned to Eagle Pass with them to visit for a short while.

Aug. 14, 1944

My dearest husband, Arthur:

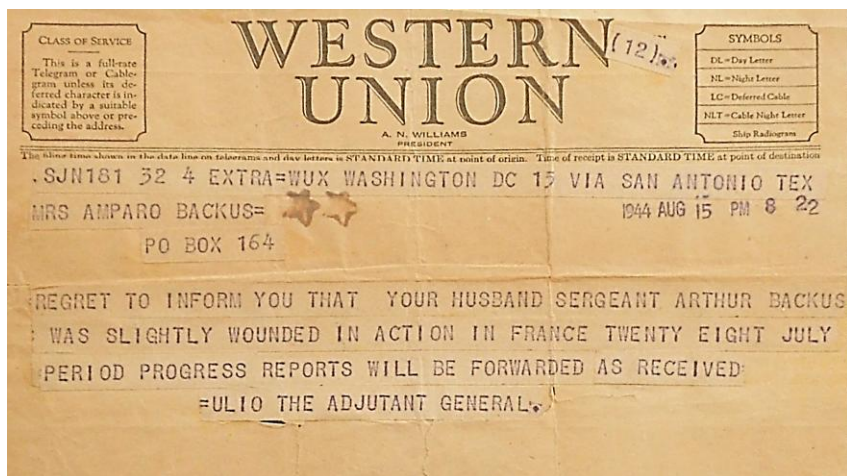
Rose Lee and I are here in Eagle Pass again but only for a week. Jimmy stayed home with mother to prepare for school. He asked me to bring him a guitar from across the border. He liked Eagle Pass very much and said he was going to write Uncle Sam to let you come home so as to have a ranch.

Nana and Joe surely were happy to see Rose Lee again. Honey, do not worry about us; we are all fine and everybody here in Eagle Pass are okay. Do not worry about Nana; she is fine. Well, my darling, good night wherever you are and God Bless You.

Your wife forever,

Pito

Pito had not received a letter from Arthur in some time and didn't know if he was receiving her letters, but she felt in her heart that the Lord was keeping him safe. Then the telegram came in mid-August.....



When she got to the 'SLIGHTLY WOUNDED' part she was relieved; thanked God that he was alive; and cried.



Arthur remained in the Hospital at Oxford, England recovering from his wounds through the end of August, during which he had more time to write home. He also hoped for letters from home to catch up with him.

U.S.A Hosp. Plant 4143 24 Aug. 1944

Somewhere in England

My dearest Wife,

Hello honey, Hope each and everyone at home is in the best of health. I haven't heard from you or mother or anybody else for some time. I was getting your letters in France. Maybe one of these days I will get all my back mail. How is Jimmy and Rose Lee? I would sure like to see Rose Lee. I bet she is very pretty.

Honey, please write Mother that I am okay. Hope you have been getting my letters. I will write you more often now. Hope you had a good time while you stayed with mother. I miss you all very much. Well honey, by the time you receive this letter I think I'll be back in France; I hope.

Give my Best of Love to all, Arthur

U.S.A Hosp. Plant 4143 25 Aug. 1944

Somewhere in England

My dearest Pito:

Honey, I haven't heard from you for some time. I hope that you are still writing to me. Don't worry about me, I am doing alright and will go back to France soon. Please write when you can. Miss you very much and am always thinking of you.

Give my Love to all, Arthur

Delays in receiving letters was partly due to the fact that the whereabouts of Arthur wasn't known by those back home and they continued to address them to the 2nd Division. The Division would then have to re-route the letters to the Hospital. Arthur did not receive back mail for several weeks; even months.



Aug. 28, 1944

My dearest husband, Arthur:

Sweetheart, it's been a month today since you were wounded. I hope and pray that you are on the road to recovery, and that you will be sent to Fort Sam like many others have been. The children are fine and Rose Lee is trying so hard to cut teeth that she bites everything she gets a hold of. She is very healthy and a very good baby. Do not worry about us and keep your chin up. Hope to hear from you soon, darling. I'm dying to hear from you. If you are able to write, let me know where you are if possible. We are proud of you, sweetheart, and love you very much.

God Bless You

*Your wife forever,
Pito*

Sept. 6, 1944

My dearest husband, Arthur:

Sweetheart, happy tears rolled down my cheeks when I received your letter from the hospital dated Aug. 24, almost a month from the date you were wounded. But, dearest, while you are hoping to be back in France by the time I would get your letter, I am hoping and praying the opposite. You are a born soldier and I am proud of you. I write to you every day and hope you are getting my letters by now together with some of Rose Lee's pictures. Let me know when you do. The baby and Jimmy are fine. Everybody here was so happy and glad to hear from you. The Lord has been answering my prayers and hope He continues to do so. Am writing Nana about hearing from you as soon as I finish this letter. I miss you too, sweetheart, but the Lord will look over us and soon we will be together again.

All my love and kisses Your wife forever,
Pito

Pito did not know for several weeks that Arthur was returned to duty on August 28. The 2nd ID had advanced farther into France and Arthur was ready to rejoin his comrades of the 9th Regiment on the front lines.