

PART OF A LETTER FROM VIRGINIA RYMAN TO HER MOTHER -

(Miss Ryman is in the Recreation Department of the Red Cross and is located somewhere in North Africa).

..... I have a tale I want to tell you and will you call Mrs. John T. Jones - I think that they live on Montrose Boulevard (he is Jesse Jones brother) Perhaps she has heard the story many times - but I'm sure that she couldn't hear it too much. I should write directly to her but I'm not sure of the address and I want you to hear it too. I couldly hardly believe that I was the one listening. When Lt. Warren Thresher heard I was from Houston, he could hardly wait to know if I knew John Jones, Jr - as he said the "darndest swell guy I ever met". When I told him that I had seen him around the Chronicle - he and Jesse Gibson were good friends - and that I know his nephew, Frank Bobo, he was so pleased that he had found someone who at least knew John and could tell again the story of his "far far beyong the line of duty" heroism. Warren told me the battle, I can't remember - and perhaps I shouldn't be allowed to say if I remembered, but the story goes as I remember, that in the battle in the Tunisian campaign, John and Herbert Hillendahl were commanding 8 tanks I believe, with 40 men and things were going hard and it wasn't all a one sided battle with us on the winning side. Warren said that time after time he saw John and Herbert (I'm sure Mrs. Jones will know the one - if I have a name confused - I think Warren said that he was commanding John's company today.) go out under terriffic fire and bring back their men - over and over and that because of their true devotion to their men and their heroic disregard of self that they were able to see all of their men safe, except three. And then the most dramatic part of the story - Warren was as excited telling me about it again as I was to hear about it. He said that at the last John and Herbert were caught behind their tanks - or at least that was the impression I got from the story and the Germans had a direct target on them. Warren said that he saw with his own eyes the German gunner in the tank shoot first to the right and then to the left and over them and at their feet and Warren says that he is positive that the German could have blasted them with one twirk of the wrist, that it was harder to miss them than to hit them. And he said that it was as plain as if he'd heard the German say "They're such true soldiers - such brave boys and such grand sports that they shall have a chance". He said that it was really the most dramatic episode that he has seen and he said that he couldn't love a brother more than he does John "That is a man" he'd say over and over. I'm sure the campaigns are full of such stories - and the Germans do respect us for our courage. It is a grand story and I wish that I could tell it in Warren's absorbing way.-----

