

## *Soldier 3,000 Miles from Home Gets Birthday Cake Here*



A birthday cake at a USO dance in the Y. M. C. A. is something to arouse interest. Pvt. Raymond Bracken of Edmonds, Wash., has received the cake, but his mother, Mrs. Margie Nelson, who made the long distance arrangement, might have been surprised if she knew how many were present to help her son dispose of it—there were at least 750 including hostesses and some 500 soldiers.

# Mother Sends Money for Gift, USO and Officers Plan Party

A soldier 3,000 miles away from home expects to spend his birthday in a lonesome way, but that didn't happen to Pvt. Raymond H. Bracken of Edmonds, Wash.

Private Bracken celebrated his 31st birthday in a scene of gaiety at the USO dance in the Y. M. C. A.—and there was the traditional birthday cake, provided by his widowed mother, who's waiting for him back there on a little farm.

When Private Bracken came to Youngstown Saturday from his station at the Shenango Personnel Replacement Center at Transfer, Pa., he was under orders to report to the Y. M. C. A. at 10 p. m. This he did.

But when he reported it was a birthday cake, a telephone call from

mother, Mrs. Margie Nelson, and a crowd of young people, soldiers and hostesses that greeted him.

Private Bracken, who has been at Shenango two months, wrote to his mother some time ago about the enjoyable time he spent in Youngstown. So his mother wrote to the Y. M. C. A. canteen committee at the Y. M. C. A. here, enclosing money for a cake.

The committee arranged with Col. George H. Cherrington, commanding officer at Shenango, to have Private Bracken here.

Sitting at the "Y" Saturday night, Private Bracken thought back to birthdays he had spent a faraway Washington.

But, he decided, this is about the biggest surprise.

Bracken was a janitor foreman in an air field hospital near home before he entered the army, and on the side he raised hogs on his farm.

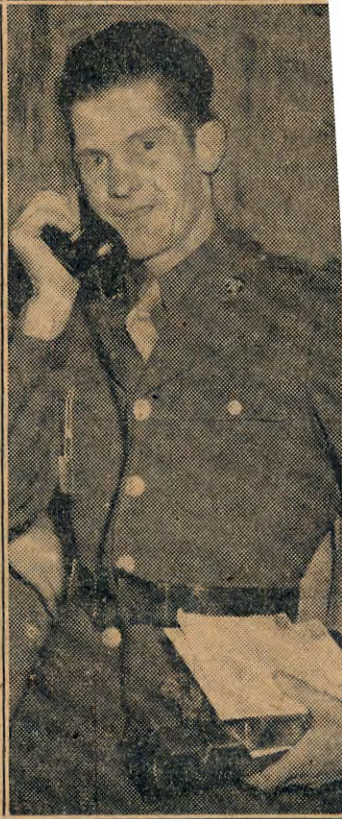
His one interest is to get the war over—now that he has a USO birthday party to remember.

## Record Number of Soldiers

Youngstown was visited by the greatest number of soldiers Saturday night since the war began. More than 500 crowded into the USO center at the Y. M. C. A. before 10:30 p. m. and they packed other affairs in the city. The downtown section was a virtual sea of khaki.

Soldier events in Youngstown Saturday night included a roller-skating party at First Baptist Temple's gymnasium, a dance given by the Mahoning County Italian-American Women's Political Club at Polish Hall, the USO dance at the Y. M. C. A., and a party at Trinity Methodist Church.

The Sunday schedule includes breakfast at St. Columba's Church from 9:30 a. m. to noon and social hour from 2 to 5 p. m., the Y. M. C. A. social hour and informal dancing from 2 to 5 p. m. and open house at First Baptist Temple from 2:30 to 8 p. m. Women of Brown Memorial Methodist Church will supply refreshments at the Y. M. C. A. social period.



Private Bracken is shown talking to his mother over long distance just after receiving the cake. Bill Richards and Al Getchey and their Y. M. C. A. canteen committee arranged the program.