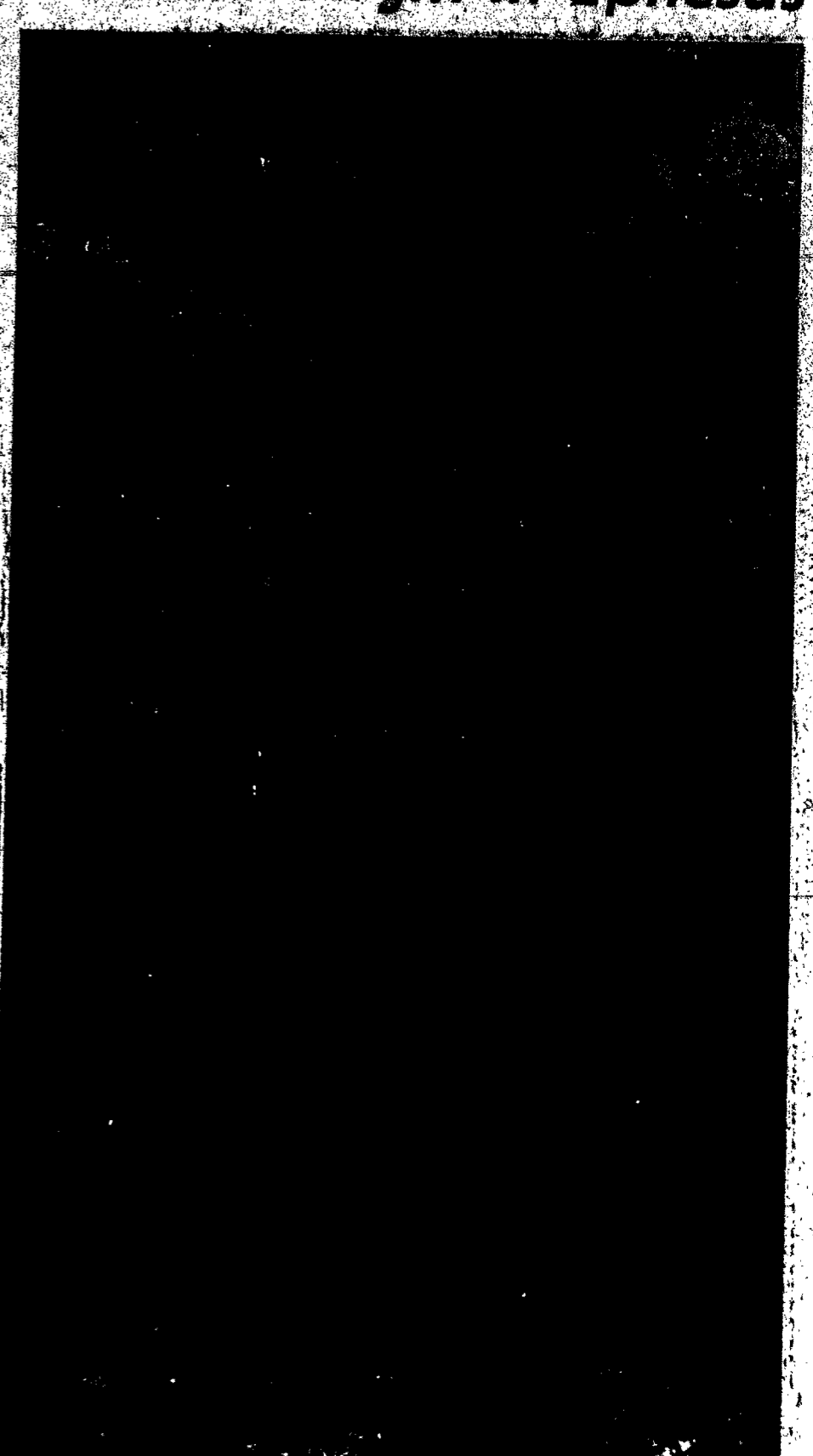


# Rochester Air Force Sergeant Visits House of Blessed Virgin in Ephesus



High on a cool and shady hillside above ancient Ephesus is the House of Mary. This is a recent reconstruction of a church once built on the site where the Blessed Virgin Mary spent her last days on earth. Sergeant John D. Shafer of St. Theodore's parish, Rochester, at right, views the shrine with Air Force companion Junlon J. Fender.



Rochester's Sergeant John D. Shafer of the U.S. Air Force at NATO headquarters in Turkey takes a picture of Roman statue at Ephesus.



Mrs. John D. Shafer, the former Jean M. Alcock, leaves tomorrow with Thomas, John and Robin to join her husband, Air Force Sergeant John D. Shafer at NATO headquarters in Izmir, Turkey.

Would you ever think you'd visit the home of the Blessed Virgin Mary?

A Rochester Air Force Sergeant didn't — but he did!

John D. Shafer, a 14 year veteran, little dreamed when he enlisted for his winged service in 1950 that his assignment would take him to the same area where the Mother of God lived her last years on earth.

Shafer's wife, Jean and their three children, Thomas, 8; John, 4; and Robin, 2, leave tomorrow to join him in Izmir, Turkey, near Ephesus, where our Lady lived after the death of her divine Son.

Sergeant Shafer's parents are Mr. and Mrs. Joseph W. Shafer of 776 Howard Rd. They attend St. Theodore's Church. The Sergeant and his wife are both graduates of Spencerport High School.

He arrived in Izmir a month ago to begin duty at NATO's Sixth Allied Tactical Air Force headquarters. He works with airmen of Italy, Greece, Turkey, the United Kingdom as well as of the United States.

These photos from SIXTAP show Sergeant Shafer's recent tour of historic Ephesus.

For centuries one of the most important cities of the ancient world, Ephesus is now the main tourist attraction of southeast Turkey. It offers something for everyone — the camera fan, the Bible student, the amateur archeologist and the average person who just wants to see something different and spectacular.

NATO visitors are always impressed by the number and size of the ruins spread out between the rugged Turkish hills and the Aegean Sea. Paved marble streets are crowded with temples, palaces, baths, homes and public buildings in what appears to be a complete city.

Yet only about five percent of ancient Ephesus has been uncovered since digging started 70 years ago. The work is still going on, and experts make new discoveries almost every day. They now think the city held a population of 300,000—probably the largest city of its time.

A major seaport for over 1,000 years, Ephesus is now separated by eight miles of land from the Aegean Sea that used to fill its harbor. Amazons, Hittites and possibly Minoans from Crete lived here centuries before the coming of the Greeks in the 13th century B.C.

Immense warehouses lined the waterfront in Greek and Roman times handling much of the trade between Europe and Asia. Its marble streets and public buildings were thronged with merchants and travelers from many lands. Cheering crowds greeted all the best-known figures of their day — Xerxes, Hannibal, Julius Caesar and those famous lovers, Marc Antony and Cleopatra, who spent the winter here together in 33 B.C.

NATO visitors find Ephesus of special interest because of its continuing importance in the religions of all the different peoples that once lived there — pagan, Christian and Moslem. In pagan times, much of its fame and economic life

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centered around the Great Temple of Artemis (Diana of the Ephesians), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Work stopped in the city for a month each year for celebrations in honor of the goddess, attended by visitors from the whole Mediterranean world. Jewellers made fortunes selling statues of the many-breasted goddess, actually a form of the earth goddess Cybele. The world's first bank was operated in the Temple, adding to the city's wealth and power. The building was destroyed after the final victory of Christianity, and little remains to mark the spot.

Another chapter in the religious life of Ephesus opened early in the first century A.D. When St. Paul came to Ephesus in the year 53, he found a small band of Christians already there. These were the Ephesians of Paul's letter in the Bible, one of the original Seven Churches of the New Testament.

Because Ephesus was one of the main centers of religion in the ancient world, Paul spent three years in the city, the longest time he spent in any career.

Those days seem very close to Bible readers who climb to the Great Theater, a huge open-

air amphitheater that rises on the hillside behind the city. This was the scene of the two-hour demonstration against St. Paul by the makers of the images of Diana, described in Chapter 19 of the Acts of the Apostles. Sitting on the rocky slope above the ruined stage, the visitor can almost hear the image-makers' cry of, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" and the answering speech of the city official who quelled the demonstration.

Two other important New Testament figures are also linked to Ephesus. Both St. John the Apostle and the Virgin Mary are said to have made their homes here after the Crucifixion. St. John was buried on a hilltop near the ancient city and his tomb attracted pilgrims from all Christian countries for hundreds of years.

Many were drawn by the belief that the dust from the tomb had miraculous healing powers.

Islam came to Ephesus with the Seljuk Turks, who first took the area from the Byzantines in 1080 A.D. Ephesus became an official Turkish possession in the 14th century A.D. when its new rulers built many mosques, schools and baths in the new town that had grown up above the ancient city. Still standing are the walls and one minaret of the large Mosque of Izbey, with its elaborate carved gateway overlooking the plain and the sea.

The most recent place of pilgrimage is known as the House of Mary, said to be the home of the mother of Christ during her last days on earth. The small stone building is actually a modern reconstruction of an ancient church built over the site where the Blessed Virgin Mary spent her last days on earth.

NATO visitors can see evidence of the Moslem visits in the form of small pieces of cloth and paper tied to the bushes outside the church. These are made by Moslems when they make a wish or prayer at a holy place.

Visitors of all faiths also drink the water from the fountain below the church, said to have miraculous curative powers. It is, at least, effective in a modern reconstruction of an ancient church built over the site where the Blessed Virgin Mary spent her last days on earth.

The Catholic Church declared this site a shrine in 1898, and Pope John XXIII made it an official place of pilgrimage for members of that faith. Resident chaplains now hold services here regularly. Many other Christians also visit the shrine, as well as Moslems who consider holy places of all religions to be sacred.

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Father Francis Allen of Long Island says Mass at House of Mary in Ephesus. Serving is Sergeant John D. Shafer of Rochester. Crutches, canes and photographs testify to miracles said to have occurred at the shrine.

Sergeant Shafer looks up to hill over Ephesus amid ancient Roman ruins where trade capital once flourished.