



News of Books

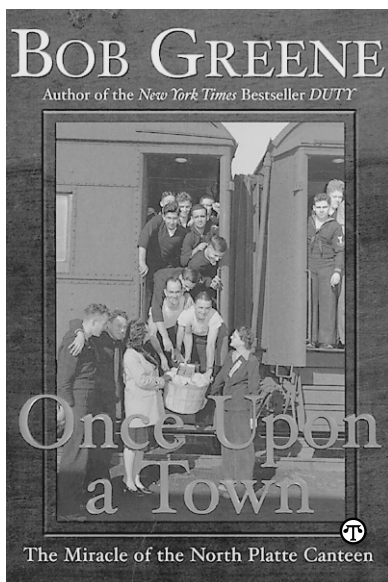
The Best America There Ever Was

(NAPSA)—When *New York Times* bestselling author and award-winning columnist Bob Greene went searching for “the best America there ever was,” he found it in North Platte, Nebraska, a small town where—60 years ago—a miracle happened in the form of a train station turned glorious and inspiring World War II beacon.

Greene’s book, *Once Upon A Town* (William Morrow, \$24.95) is the story of the miracle of the North Platte canteen. The canteen was started by women of all ages—teenage girls and their younger sisters, wives and mothers who’d sent their own husbands and sons to war—gathered from counties all over Nebraska with loads of provisions to greet the trains.

Homemade sandwiches, cakes, fresh fruit, coffee, candy, cigarettes, and magazines lined the counters inside the station, where soldiers received kind words, and maybe a dance as those who could played the piano and rallied the group in song. Bright young girls carried baskets to the trains for men who couldn’t debark. And every group received a birthday cake. Overseas, men asked each other if they’d spent time in North Platte. On the way toward the town, seasoned soldiers told new men about the ritual: the sprint toward the station and 10 minutes later the dash back as the train began to roll.

Each day of the war, from five in the morning to midnight, the women served, replenishing the coffers with food and treats—homegrown, homebaked and supported by private donations—at a



The poignant and heartwarming story of a small Nebraska town and the soldiers on the way to war who stopped there.

time when rationing and shortages were a way of life. Over six million soldiers passed through North Platte between 1941-45; some 8,000 each day toward the end of the war. The Canteen women made their ten minutes count and the men never forgot.

In a poignant and heartwarming narrative, based on interviews with North Platte residents and GIs who enjoyed their hospitality, Bob Greene reports how this amazing community of only 12,000 people made a difference to millions and represented the rest of a grateful country in cheering the bravery of its fighting force.

Once Upon a Town is available at bookstores everywhere.