

Avila Cal
April 5, 1942

Dear Nannie.

Time it is, that in spite of the length of time since I've written there is not much news. It seems as if most of the time I've been waiting for something to happen to me. (Not like you who have just jumped in and made things happen). Most of the while I've been sitting squawking on whatever you call it on my hermitage hilltop and not going very far from home (on account tires etc) to do water color Landscapes on which I'm concentrating now. I've been a couple of times to Santa Barbara once when I went ^{Jan 28} to the J. J. Mitchell Ranch (Rancho Juan y Lolita) and again last week when I took a picture down to the Spring group exhibition at the Museum. While talking to the Director he booked me up for a one man show at the Museum for the month of June before I had time to take my breath. However its no use making (and then breaking) plans in advance these days; just take things as they come. The Museum is a splendid place to show, its not large but as handsome and well arranged as the best, and located on the main street in the center of town. It has been open little more than a year but has had a record attendance: twice the population of the town! However lots of the rich old ladies are evacuating right now, so I'm not hoping for much financially. Due to the exodus two friends of mine were able to buy a \$100,000.00 brick and stone Tudor mansion, centrally located for \$5000! They are turning it into a select boarding house.

I stayed only ten days at the Mitchell ranch because Edmund suddenly decided that he couldn't stay away from Cal and he came back to Avila for two weeks and then went to L.A. where he now is. There has been so much less rain these months than at the same time last year that the winter has not been at all unpleasant even in this shack. I'm beginning to believe that Californians are not always liars about their climate. Of course it

Do you remember Oscar of Xmas 1938? He paid me a weeks visit in Jan. He is now a pharmacist in the Navy.
Cunt Emmy write from Va that she was on the way to see you.

is already Summer now and the beach is again littered with youth and beauty.

I never went back to making pictures of local defense activities (for the Office of Emergency Management) after I found how much suspicion I had aroused among the natives. I even had visits from F.B.I. agents. Every now and then I offer my services here and there where there may be a chance of using my special capacities. However it has not yet been discovered where I fit. The other day I joined the local First Aid class composed mostly of youngsters and old ladies - the latter already seem to know a lot about it. They take the course over and over just as a social activity.

My friend Gavin Arthur is diving deeper into politics. He now wants to run for Congress or Senator from this district. I am not welcome at the house when a political meeting is on. He knows my room of politicians and is terrified that I will drop a bomb. Last night I went there and had to stay in the kitchen.

Navy, infantry and artillery are now ~~so~~ accepted features of Ovila. The infantry are camped on the side of the hill opposite me but not a tent can be seen they are so well hidden under the thick live-oak trees. The artillery are most lucky because they are camp next to the hot sulphur swimming pool. and have the use of it. They soon will be replaced by a negro regiment battery. There's a subject for a defense picture: black negroes in sulphur-yellow water!

The one Japanese family of Ovila has left and their unique and picturesque establishment is close. It was a hash-house, bar, club room for fishermen, women, children babes and dogs. You could eat, or drink, or dance, or just sit or roll on the floor with the kids. If you couldn't pay for your meals you could do some work around the place.

Talking about work. while on your numerous defense jobs you might get wind of something up my alley. Of course

what I really want is something in connection with the Far East. I can't be a spy without Damages! Thanks for all the news. Keep it up. Love. Tom