

May 30, 1943

JEFFERSON BARRACKS  
MISSOURI

The Seaman School  
El Monte, Cal

Dear Nannie -

Your Tuesday letter arrived before I did, Edmund bringing it in to S.A. when he came to meet me, and at that the train was only one hour late, pulling in at 10.30 Thursday morning.

The box of food was delicious. This was corroborated by the soldier who sat next to me and who would have eaten all of it if I had given him the chance, this in spite of his just having consumed a turkey dinner on the train which he said was excellent. Maybe I just struck an off day on the Jeffersonian diner going East.

I could easily have caught the train in Baltimore if I had left Wilmington an hour later and then I might have done better about straightening up odds and ends in my room. I have no excuse for leaving it all till the last minute, except the subconscious knowing that what I left undone you would do - which is very bad - you shouldn't let people depend on you - we all fall for it. Not intending to show any disrespect for that masterpiece of a sweater, may I admit that I don't really need it right now and it can go in the trunk. And the pencil which has a calendar on it is not necessary either since the school has a calendar which was not the case with the army.

The dried-egg-and-Fanny Farmer breakfast was consumed while crossing the sodden fields of Illinois. I've never seen anything look so wet. The heavy saturated

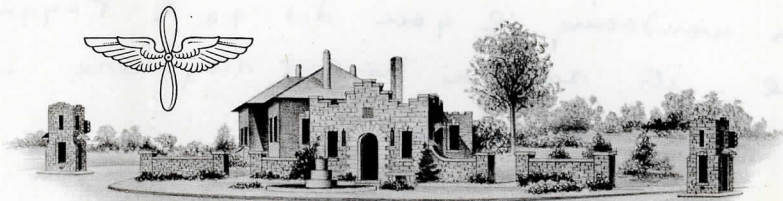
clouds were so low they touched the trees, and the rain which poured until we reached the Mississippi had little distance to fall. Some lower St. Louis streets were flooded and boats were floating on top of the levees which were completely submerged. The M.P.s on the train examined my discharge papers but did not question my travelling towards J.B. instead of away from it.

There was a mad stampede for the train to Kansas City the first real crowd I had encountered since barracks days; more people without seats than with - and no reservations; They squatted or stood in the aisles the whole length of the coaches. I fortunately got a stool at the bar and held it until dinner in the diner; then for a short hour before K.C. I perched on the arm of a seat. The sun was shining brightly, so it didn't seem as dismal as Illinois, but following the Missouri river, which at places almost touched the tracks, we saw much more of the havoc of the flood: groups of farm buildings far out - (sometimes a mile - more or less) in the whirling current of the stream, just sticking their roofs out of the expanse of water, or sometimes floating on their sides.

Changed trains in Kansas City. I sat on my baggage for an hour and a half at the gate to be sure to get a good seat which I did, and no change the rest of the way. It was not at all too uncomfortable or tiring and the round trip ticket (again a furlough one tho I doubt that I'd dare to use it back) was exactly \$50.81. There were a lot of bombardier lts. and gals who wouldn't be lonely, on the train and a good time was had by all. Scenically the high spot was Salt Lake as seen from the mountain slope after leaving Salt Lake City - with the snow covered mountains behind. We stopped at Las Vegas long enough to see that its Main St. was still more brightly lighted than Broadway.

California looks pretty dried up after your lush





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green of Wilmington and the Rambler roses at the school are badly blighted. Mrs. S. is unconcerned about that but I would have told her of your spray if I had remembered it, as the treatment here is just Black Leaf 40.

The dining table isn't suffering yet from rationing or shortages: more than all the coffee you can drink - whipped cream - and plenty of everything. Rationing stamps are not used as the school is classified as an "Involuntary Confinement" institution, with allowances as per capita last Dec. Quite a large area of the grounds is planted in vegetables and peanuts but thus far the best crop has been only beets. In spite of this achievement Edmund has just been reclassified again A1 so he doesn't know what to expect next.

I'm awfully glad that I planned my voyaging as I did (even tho it may have seemed without plan) and had that very pleasant 3+ weeks with you and Stan and reviewed all my past in those cupboards in the "studio". and to feel again what a well ordered home is like and I do value all the nice things you did for me. It may not be long before I'll be back for more, tho I haven't yet had any really brilliant idea about a dog in North Africa.

Take care of yourself which means take it easy and lots of thanks for everything.

I am wondering if you did go to Paggi today  
after all - its such a perfect day here it should  
be the same there too.

Love

Tom