

Seaman School  
El Monte Cal  
Dec. 29, 1943

Dear Mammie -

I was a good boy and didn't open your Xmas boxes until the 25<sup>th</sup>. The suspense was not long however as they arrived only the day before. The socks - handkerchiefs - tie - all most needed accessories, and the tie such quality material - it is the first of my new collection: as you know all my beautiful ties were stolen of Sept 13 1942, except the one I had on, and I've not bought a new one since, having been wearing some old ones of Edmunds out here. The tribute from garden and kitchen at 604, I regret to say, was not too well packed; one jar, peach and pineapple marmalade was smashed to smithereens and half the grape contents of one glass was trickling over the outside of the package, but the rest will be so much more precious treasure and cautiously removed out.

I hope your Christmas was not as gay as ours. We are still licking our wounds, caused, we insist, not by our quiet but by the ignoring of the flu epidemic which was sweeping over us. Our play "Little Infant Jesus in the Manger" as stated by our local press, was not only a great success, but supremely beautiful and emotionally moving. For several days beforehand when I began to realize how good it was going to be I could not sleep for excitement. The set was very attractive, lighting effects had many surprises, the costumes were strange fantastic, and our Virgin (Daisy Brown -

Richard Bennett's cousin) had all the style of a Byzantine painting. Bennett directed the music and did most of the costumes. I did all the rest and it was a big labor, but the result was as impressive as anything of its kind could be. After the pageant we had the Tree and Santa and loads of presents for the boys. Percy Brown (Maurice jr) came down AWOH from Camp Cook for the occasion and Mrs S. and some of the<sup>us</sup> staff went out drinking and dancing until 2 A.M. Xmas eve

The next night, Richard, and our primary teacher Miss Hatch, visited Daisy and I got terrifically spifflicated on vodka. We whooped it up around at the neighbors again until 2 A.M. On Christmas day Richard and I went to a 2 o'clock turkey dinner at the Remi Stones' (Idella Purnell) in Sierra Madre, then to an 8 o'clock dinner in Glendale at the home of a sister of Daisy. Four sisters in the family each more witty and attractive than the other, with brothers in laws and beautiful daughters and a handsome old mother (all Irish) all so sympathetic to each other. It was a rare treat indeed to witness such an unusual family. Like something from fiction *ie* Little Women. Again more heavy drinking again until 2 A.M. Our program has been rather disrupted this week as a result. The weather of those days was the most lovely of the year after the heavy rains of a week and two before.

I have received a letter the Union and New Haven Trust Co. of Dec 13<sup>th</sup>. and I am thinking that perhaps I should not so frankly express my opinion regarding grave stones. The amount is so tiny, that perhaps it is under the circumstances the most practical way out if it is preferred by the others to cremation. tho I insisted there is nothing more pathetic than an unvisited little grave. It is not a memorial at all, and if the family are really interested in a memorial. I am in favor of putting eight times that amount into it and doing something <sup>else as previously suggested</sup> that the family can look at without embarrassment.

Could you let me know who is going to provide the information for the affidavit as to heirs? It doesn't seem necessary for each of us to do it. Perhaps it has already been done by Hunter and Raley.

Since you have one \$25<sup>00</sup> bond from Edmund (he wrote me nothing about it) I am sending you herewith 3 more which he left with me which you will please put in safe deposit box:

2 Bonds, War Savings	@	\$50 <sup>00</sup>
1 Bond	" "	@ 25

Total \$125<sup>00</sup>

I didn't get any other Xmas presents except a couple of handkerchiefs from the boys and a book from Aunt Emmy. which is just as well as it will be that much easier to take flight

when the propitious moment arrives. With the Christmas festivities over I feel that another chapter is ended. What next?

Here I've almost forgotten to thank you for your formal greetings by card. Mine as you will notice by the license plate, is more than a year old, taken at Laguna just before I was inducted. However I never saw a print of it until a month or so ago.

Our garden has recently been replanted and carrots cabbages cauliflower beets lettuce, mustard chard, are shooting out of the ground. Our calla lilies are just coming into full bloom - a large crop of them. And the marisipi have been out for weeks! Visit California!

As for Grammie dress, I think it perfect for Aunt Florie to have it. While your writing her about heirlooms I wish you'd ask her if she ever came across two letters of Fletcher Shera which I think have been missing from the collection since she borrowed it.

Cousin Washington might get quite a kick out of visiting our institution and lots of the boys from "desert training" pass by on the highway only a mile from us on their way to L.A.

Send him my address and tell him to drop in or phone Badlong 85249 El Monte. We can promise him a good meal & bed at least! Lots of luck wishes for the new year to both Tom