



THE AVON PARK BOMBING RANGE
AVON PARK, FLORIDA

Saturday morning
Jan. 9 (?), 1943

Hello Folks,

I'll at least start a letter to ya, - but know I won't get to finish it. -

I finally got assigned to permanent quarters yesterday so I'm still living out of suitcases, barrack bags, and stuff. - I've just finished unpacking the radio Henry gave me - so I'm enjoying a little music along at this point. Don't know when I'll ever feel settled. - This post is really primitive and rough in lots of ways - and as yet there are no signs of any foot-lockers to be had. - so guess a suitcase will have to do till something better comes along. You can't leave things out, just laying around. - tho you have to with some stuff like clothes. - The atmosphere is so damp that ~~that~~ even inside everything feels like a wet rag. Your towel, for instance, just never gets a chance to dry out.

But the climate is nice, - I suppose. I just haven't been much in the mood to appreciate it.

Besides there being no organization about the way they run things around here. - I've been fighting an awful cold. - or somethin'! - a continuation of what I had in Washington. - I honestly think it's been a touch of the flu or gripe or what have you. - Several nights I ran a fever & mild chills - have lost all appetite for food, and have "enjoyed" an upset stomach! What I should have done, without a doubt, is to have gone to the "flight surgeon" - but you know me - I'll try to stick it out without using my noodle. -

Anyhow - I feel that I'm on the up grade now and if I get to go to town tonight - I'll get some medicine - get a good cleaning out - and feel like my old self again.

Our work here is interesting in its way. - As I said before - the lack of organization gets under your skin. We have spent practically the whole week just pawing around the plane on the ground. - We have to learn the whys & where's of every nut & bolt (or should I say "rivets") It is our job, as pilots and commanders of the ship to know every little detail, both about the ship and its equipment, and the jobs & duties of each man aboard. - So you can see - with such a large ship, and an assortment of stuff on it. - that alone is a vast job. -

I was scheduled to fly last night - but even tho I used up the whole evening, I didn't even get off the ground. - So guess I'll go up today now. At least that's the schedule. - It takes quite some



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time to check out on the B-26 after you get around to actually get at the controls.

_____ Sunday noon _____

Hell. - I finally got off the ground again yesterday afternoon! - The first time in just about a month to the day, I think. It seemed real nice for a change - but ye gods. - what a big plane! Eight of us went up as a crew for it, - and she went on up as if no one were in it. - Of course with no bombs or anything it was very lightly loaded - so we weren't really worrying about it. Three pilots went along with the senior pilot, and while he stayed in the pilot's seat, we all took turns at the controls in the copilot's seat. - See - just that little bit makes you realize how little you do know about the plane. 'Course, - that's been the case all along, each time we'd get to a heavier plane, but they've made so much fuss over this one - we are more conscious of it. - All in all - it will be a very nice plane to fly - she handles swell. We saw the Atlantic Ocean yesterday, too. - the

first time for me in awful long time, and the first time ever from the air! - Everything was so nice & blue - and there's just as much water out there as it looks to be from the beach! I had to laugh coming back. - It must be about 50 miles - from the shore line to Avon, - and ten minutes after we left the ocean behind, we were lowering down to the traffic pattern of our field! - It just didn't seem possible that we could be covering the ground so fast! - Now I can understand why they call our flying area - the State of Florida! - Guess I'll have to change my name over to "Mercury" - John Freeman has referred to the ships as rockets - so already he has become known as "Buck" - (After Buck Rogers)

Sorry it took you all so long to get my letter. - I don't know why it should have taken 3 days, 'cause I usually get yours in 2. - Maybe our "out going" system isn't so hot?

Glad too you got a new battery out of Western Auto. - Now maybe it will last you through the winter without any more "alley episodes". But from what I gather on the radio - you're just going to jack automobiles up and forget them till after the war. - Sometimes I get so darn mad when I think of all the misery a few people with a lust for power has caused the rest of us in the world. - But today is Sunday and I must have a Christian spirit, they tell me! Oh, well!



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I don't know whether I told you or not - I had a whole slew of cards awaiting for me when I got back. also several packages - one of candy from Mrs. Manger, and another with a tobacco pouch from Mr. Hirschman. - It seems to me there was another, too, - but I can't recall it at present.

Sister, if you can get the tires recapped - you'd better do it - as for the wheels being out of line - I think you'll find they are out of balance, instead. After you get the tires fixed, - you can get the wheels balanced - but the point is - the wheels must be balanced with the tire on it. - After the balance is done - the tire must always be placed on the wheel exactly the same way, or you have a different balance. - That probably accounts for my never having it done - too much bother - but then rubber wasn't scarce then, - savvy?

Did I tell you some-one caught a baby alligator behind our barrack last week? - a little one about eighteen inches long. - We've had our eyes peeled in case mamma or pappa come looking for junior - but no signs yet. - Maybe in "alligator season" when one reaches 18 inches - you are on your own!

Also we watch puppies play with these turtles
they occasionally run out. - the one the other
day must have been most a foot in half in dia.
across his shell! - I forgot to tell that our
barracks are right along a big lake - about 30 ft
from the water itself - but as you can gather
from the above - it's pretty primitive!

Well. - am writ out so will knock off. - we are
supposed to be flying today but I wasn't scheduled
so didn't fool around long. - My cold or flu is no
better and if after today with my "castor oil" I'm no
better - off to the Docs I go - but here's hoping!
It's not really that bad.

Write when you can.

Love,
Frank.

P.S. - Last night we walked all over Avon Park. - Both
squares of it!