

Bomb Training Center
A.P.O. 525 - % Postmaster N.Y.C.
Sunday - June 6, 1943 (I think)

Hello Folks.

I'll try out my new pen on you! - A new pen? - Yes. - I lost my Parker yesterday and was fortunate enough to find one in the PX in town. For awhile I thought I was going to have to write you a letter asking you to send me one - but now, - guess everything is under control. - I didn't mind losing it so much for the pen itself, tho it was a good one. It's just that in Africa you can't run down to the corner drug store and replace it. How I was ever lucky enough to find one, I don't know, - but as long as I did, - well, - I won't go around asking questions! For 75 francs (\$.50) it can't be too good, - but tis foolish to have an expensive one anyhow - as I found out.

Gee, - was I lucky. Thursday I received 10 letters - ! Regular ones and V mail ones. - Guess I rate, huh? - Even got one from Ma - written on the 23rd of May making a 10 day delivery! That was the first one I'd received addressed directly to me here. Friday & yesterday I got some V mails from Sister written on the 24th & 25th - so I'm really offa operating in "high blower". Among the others I got were a few from Henry & Phyllis. They are pretty old - the latter part of April. - The reason is, they were V mail - and came thru as regular mail the same as some of your earlier ones. - It wasn't until comparatively recent we were equipped to handle the photographic facilities in this theater.

Things here run about the same. - To set schedule & mostly everything is better sketched. - Only for a few days I was Ass't Armament & Ass't Communications Officer - so now you can well imagine how they run here! - I'm being checked out again as a 1st pilot which means nothing. - Its just their rules that's all - cause over here everyone is considered a 1st pilot

2) and you take regular turns in the pilot's seat. - But enough of that - I'm trudging on thin ice - so best return to something not so liable to be censored out!

Our chores for the day are over - that is - tent sides rolled up, beds (?) made up, - and teeth scrubbed out of the water from our canteen! - My list of choice possessions is already cutting down. - I'm learning fast that little things like a canteen, mess kit, and bed roll are worth lots more than a lot of the stuff I treasured & deemed necessary back in the States. - Then you see what you have to have to get along over here - all you have to do is consider what you couldn't do without. -

What a collection of pets we have around these parts. - Fellows have been picking up things ever since we left the States. South American puppies, monkeys, parrots, - Good ol' U. S. dogs ranging from cocker Spaniels & scotties to heaven only knows what. This morning we found a baby porcupine (what would you call it, "a porcupinette"?) and if it wasn't for the darn quills - think I'd probably try to make a pet out of it. - The little fellow is at present asleep in my tent. - but as soon as night comes - I expect he will "shore off" on his way. - He's just about 6 or 8 inches long - and whenever anyone comes near it, - he rolls all up into a ball, just like an Armadillo, - with all the little quills sticking straight out! - The quills are only about 2 inches long at the most, but stiff & sharp, nevertheless! - Its face is about like a pig's would be, reduced to the same size - snout & all! - (What am I getting to be, - a naturalist?). And then - every day, - living so close to the ground, we can't help but observe the ants in their work. - The African vanity - the smallest about the size of the largest ones home - form large trains extending for 50 to 100 feet, and actually wear paths with their convoys! Guess I'm going to have to break down and get my hair cut even shorter than usual. - Bugs, - you guessed it!

3. Don't know just what they are - they are real small, but don't bite - just crawl. - They are in the wood, in our blankets - everywhere so it's impossible to keep them off. - All you can do is reach down and pick it off if you see or feel one crawling! - Some fellows say they are sand fleas - but that's not so. - Sand fleas are bigger & bite. - These are more on the order of oats bugs - if you know what I mean! - And what do I know about oats bugs? - Well, the Army is broadening in lots of ways!

And by the way - what are you doing to those poor miners back home? - Don't you want those poor boys to be able to live. - After all - they are only making more than they ever did in their lives. - Course now, way over here, we don't know the exact details - but from what I know - I think I know how I'd treat them. - and it wouldn't be to increase their wages! - I thought there was some sort of an anti-strike clause in effect for the duration?

It sounds as though Brother is in for quite a big promotion. How come he must travel around so much? - What's he to be - an assistant district Manager or sumptin? - Maybe he will have to get a plane to get around in and maybe I can hit him for a job as pilot? - I can make a good one. I've flown the Atlantic & I'm sure I can get proper certifications - and I'll promise to not do more than 1 slow roll, - 3 snap rolls - 2 loops & 1 Immelman on each trip - unless he wants to do away with the loops & Immelmans, for which I'll gladly substitute 1 "cuban 8" and 2 pull offs!

I'm glad you had such a good time with Janet. - It's hard to believe all the tales you tell about her. - I probably won't even recognize my own niece next time I see her. - With her being a WAAC now - wonder if she will salute me?

Speaking of Saluting reminds me of our last trip to town. About 5 of us were standing talking when this sergeant interrupted

4 us! - We were unaware of his presence until he spoke and we looked around. - There he was - standing at a salute - and so drunk he was weaving all around. He said, "God Damn it, gentlemen, at least I rate a salute". - We of course all returned it and he brought his hand down saying, "thank you, gentlemen," and walked away! About 5 minutes later we passed him sitting on the steps of some building - holding a bottle in one hand & shooting a local native girl away! - You can never tell what the American soldiers will do next. - There he was - having his own private drunk - and not bothering a soul. - I wonder what the natives think of us?

Don't know how long we will stay here at B.T.C. - of course we never know that anywhere we are stationed. - The other day I happened to think that in the 21 months I've been in the Army - I've never been at any one place more than 3 months at the very most! - Anyways, I'll of course let you know our new A.P.O. for our nest will be supposedly a permanent one and we will be doing what we came over here to do.

Yes, Sister, - I know you can send a small package overseas. - As to what I need. - I don't know. - Nothing right now as I have a pen. - We brought chewing gum over with us, and have been able to get enough along the way to meet current needs so we still have that we brought to fall back on. - The same applies to about everything I can think of. Sometimes in a letter you might enclose a few pieces of ~~own~~ sharp pencil lead or something cause I have no supply of that. - Only a couple of pieces that are in my pencil.

- Gee - I have rambled. - All about army & everything. - Guess I'd better hush up for awhile & give both of us a rest. By the way, - so you won't feel so self conscious (or have you gotten over it?) I don't believe mail leaving the States for Army camps overseas is censored. - I've seen no markings which they are compelled to put on it, if opened. - Well, - bye for now and have a Happy 4th anniversary on the 24th folks. - Sleep in comin. - Lots of love.
Frank
P.S. Do you get tired of reading this crap?