

SEND ME A PICTURE

Captain Fred C. Baldwin's Letters Home
from the 306th Bombardment Group,
Thurleigh, 1942-1944

*As Well, The Curious Story of That Letter He Wrote To
Be Sent Off If He Never Came Back From a Mission He
Didn't Go On But Which Letter Got Sent Home Anyways
And His Understandably Agonized Regrets About That*

Edited by Jeffery FC Dalzell

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for Isabel, Arthur and Lee

Editor's Note

Two years after the close of World War II, Captain Fred Baldwin of the 8th USAAF, 306th Bombardment Group (Heavy), found himself safely returned to Shaker Heights, to his three children, and to—as he addressed her in every war letter— “My Darlingest.” He was home. But he was not done with the war. The lawyer who had given up a safe seat on the sidelines of his era’s great and singularly terrible event decided in 1947 that he would sit down and re-visit, transcribing long excerpts from the trove of correspondence he had sent home to his wife, Antoinette “Pat” Baldwin. The task he gave himself was not small: on average, Fred had written to Pat once every 1½ days of their separation. Re-reading through the stack, he evidently liked enough of what he had originally written that he began a transcription of excerpts that would become 240 closely spaced, legal pages. That transcription stops short of D-Day, by which time his daughter Isabel had stepped up to the project. Fred’s sudden death in 1952 may have moved her to undertake this work. Isabel looks to have taken up the project again, probably several decades later, on a computer and dot matrix printer, in an effort to capture the remainder—full letters this time—which took Fred’s story up to December 6, 1944, nearly six months after he had been stationed stateside. The entire initial transcription runs over 300 pages.

Whatever the timing or cause for the project’s hand-off from father to daughter, Fred was very clear about his own purposes as he set out. The transcription was to be for himself, for his memory of names and events, and for—he emphasizes—his grandchildren. The typing out certainly helped make the letters more accessible: Fred Baldwin’s longhand was angled, jabbing, and tight-looped. Also welcoming is Fred’s cheerful heading for each page, “FREDDIE AND WORLD WAR II.” In a survey of the grandchildren for whom Fred and Isabel transcribed, however, it seems that few have actually read the typed pages. So my purpose here is to do our generation a service. For this re-transcription, a further boiling down—by about half—of Fred’s sustained act of correspondence, I set out to find dead-weight that could be jettisoned. In the end, I found fewer paragraphs un-bolted to the core of Fred’s experience than I had hoped. Still, some repetitiveness in Fred’s routine, details about friends he is trying to connect with, and ritualized protestations of love for Pat were successfully eased out the hatch. My goal has been to keep everything

wonderful in the letters, without consigning cousins to a POW-for-the-duration status. Above all, this transcription is an attempt to repair a singularly broken acquaintance. Fred Baldwin imagined his grandchildren: he imagined us riding his knee and subjecting him to questions that these letters might partially answer. Please climb aboard.

In service to readers I have also introduced into this transcription something that Fred and Isabel had not gotten to. At the time he was writing, Fred could not say anything about immediate military matters—nothing about locations, strategies, or results as they pertained to the European Bombing Campaign or to his particular Bombardment Group. So I inject context into the letter flow, generally derived from the scholarship since the war and from the 423rd's Combat Diary (declassified now), which Fred was responsible for writing during his first year at Thurleigh. Unable to lay off active engagement with a man I find so recognizable, I also intersperse occasional commentary. Interjections are in italics. Spelling has been corrected in most instances, but some idiosyncrasies have been retained from the originals. There has been some attempt to regularize the spellings of names. Throughout this transcription process, Fred Dalzell and Virginia Soybel have provided indispensable help as coaches and editors. Omissions, errors, and presumptions are my own. What is here, is for you. Enjoy.

*Jeffery Dalzell,
Somerville, MA, 2018*

Preface

Fred Chambers Baldwin was born in 1905 to a world of comfortable privilege and commensurate responsibility. On his mother's side, the Williamses had established their place among the city's industrial elite by founding Sherwin Williams, the paint company. On his father's side, Fred's Baldwin ancestors had traveled to Hawaii as missionaries in the early 1800s and subsequently colonized the islands as sugar planters. Moving from Hawaii to Cleveland, Fred's father had smoothly entered the ranks of the city's civic leadership and country club set, establishing a well-connected law practice and moving his family into "Brightwood" a large house in the exclusive, lake-facing neighborhood of Bratenahl.

These were defining circumstances, and Fred followed the lead they set. He inherited something of both the missionary and planter in his character and outlook. Cast in the role of scion, Fred behaved as one nearly all his life. He attended Bratenahl School, then University School and Hotchkiss, then Yale (class of 1928), where he captained the Yale polo team his senior year. He was the kind of youth who, in a diary he kept during his years at Hotchkiss, cheerfully tracked a busy schedule of high school activities (Football, Opera Club, Choir, Orchestra, piano, violin), and upbraided himself when his study habits lagged: "Today was one of the poorest-spent days that I have had yet this term. Although there was every need of hard work, I loafed nearly all the day."

He approached adulthood in the same conscientious and agreeable spirit. "Mother and I after doing a good deal of Christmas shopping ate a lunch at the Union Club," he wrote in another diary entry a few months later, while visiting home during the holiday break. "After lunch we both went up into Daddy's office and had a very nice chat with him. Did I mention that I was keen for everything that I did and believed it to be what I liked best? Well I got enthused over being a lawyer more than ever when Daddy told me a bit about it." And he kept to this course, entering Yale Law School, graduating in 1931, and joining Garfield, Baldwin, Jamison, Hope & Ulrich, his father's law firm in Cleveland.

The timing was not auspicious. At the very outset of this career, the nation had tipped into the Great Depression. Nevertheless, sheltered by luck of birth and circumstance from the economic catastrophe that engulfed so many, Fred expanded the family of his

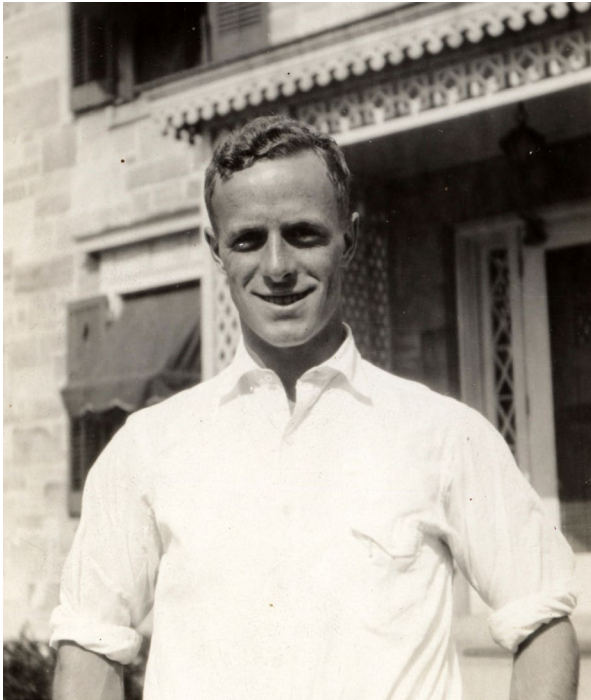
own that he had begun by marrying Smith graduate Antoinette (Pat) Dodge in 1928. By 1938 that family included a daughter Isabel, a son Arthur, and a second daughter Lee, and Fred had moved them from a starter home in the trolley-car suburb of Cleveland Heights to a larger house of white-washed bricks on upscale Wadsworth Road.

A Williams, a Baldwin, a Hotchkiss boy, a Yale man, a young corporate lawyer, a husband and father: those were the essential elements of Fred's biography up to 1941. They combined to describe a life that, on the surface of things, might have appeared accomplished, expected, dutiful. But they also became deeply felt aspects of the man's life. For Fred was not only conscientious, but kind. Not only agreeable, but thoughtful. Not only dutiful, but deeply sensitive and instinctively warm-hearted.



His mother picked up on these qualities very early in Fred's life. In August 1908, when the boy was three years old, she observed: "he seems to me to be built in quite a different plan than the other children. He does such a lot of thinking, and sits quiet and absorbed while others talk and he pursues the even tenure of his own way while other children play together." Fred was less demonstrative, less demanding than his brothers and sisters, but she detected depths in the child. "If you draw Fred out," she wrote, "you can discern a great deal hidden just underneath the surface." Similar impressions struck her in 1914, as the boy finished second grade. Fred, she recorded, exhibited "a

decided mixture of shyness and reserve. I sometimes wonder if anyone will ever know what thoughts lie within his head. I know that only gentleness and kindness come out. He is full of dreams about himself.”



What dreams filled this quiet boy? Which ones did he still harbor, this reserved, gentle man, as he himself became a junior partner in his father’s law firm and a full partner in his own young marriage? One wonders whether we might ever have known all there was to know about Fred Chambers Baldwin, if his life had remained one at peace. But then, it did not. Fred Baldwin was 36 years old when the attack on Pearl Harbor drew the United States into World War II.

He was about to embark on the great adventure of his life.

Frederick Arthur Baldwin Dalzell
Newton, Massachusetts,
November 2018



FREDDIE AND WORLD WAR II (1947)

The following extracts from my letters are purely for my own satisfaction and amusement. Something to help me remember names and places in times to come. A bit of proof, perhaps, when my grandchildren say, "Grandpop, what did you do in the war?" (Which war, I wonder.)

Just prior to Pearl Harbor, when I knew that we were bound to get into it, I tried to have reinstated my old 2nd Lts. Commission in the Field Artillery which had expired in 1933. No luck. Washington wasn't interested. But I kept my eyes open just the same. The first part of February I heard that "they" were interested in men of officer material to be immediately commissioned into the air corps. That looked like my chance, and I gave it a go. I had to wait until April 10 before getting my commission and on May 21, 1942, I left Cleveland as a 1st Lt. to report to the Air Corps Intelligence School at Harrisburg, PA. It was from there that I wrote my first letters...as follows:

May 24, 1942 My Darlingest, I have quite a bit to tell you. I hope I remember it all. To be sure rumors are rife, but I think I have some facts for you too.

The air intelligence school is situated on the shore of the river about four miles north of Harrisburg. It is a beautiful spot, about five buildings, a tennis court, swimming pool, lots of nice green trees and all. Most of the school boys have gone home, but the graduating class is staying until June 1st. At that time, a couple of hundred officers are coming up from Miami. I understand, on that point that the hundred or so who received the highest recommendations came directly here.

Certain it is, at any rate, that, myself excepted, those already here are a great bunch. There is no one I ever knew before but I have naturally met many of them already.

I am rooming, in the dormitory, with a newspaper reporter from Omaha who knew Spike Kennedy, a Lt. William (Bill) Graham, and a Lt. Dick Taylor who spent the first twelve years of his life in China and has never lived anywhere very long. There is a Major whose son is flying in England. Another Major who was a World War I ace who was shot down behind German lines after shooting down five German planes in one engagement. There is a Filipino. They are all elegant - the tops.

As to our schedule. That is as yet uncertain. This is the second class of the school. The first took six weeks. I understand ours will take one or two weeks less. Part of this will be made up by

concentrating the work but part by the fact that having gone through it once they will make things to work out more smoothly the second time. We get up in time for exercises before breakfast, have morning and afternoon classes and are expected to do about three hours of studying the rest of the day. On Saturdays we get off at three in the afternoon and have time off until seven P.M. Sunday. That means that if you could come on we could have a real visit, but it also means that unless I could get plane reservations which would stick (I get no priorities except on government business) my trips home are out of the question.

Yesterday (Saturday) I came right out to the school and spent the whole day being "signed in." I think I filled out ten to fifteen kinds of papers for payrolls, travel vouchers, uniform allowances, etc. I was finger-printed, photographed. I was vaccinated and given a tetanus shot. Today they shot me with typhoid and some time before I leave I will have to have the rest of the tetanus and typhoid and also one for Yellow Fever.

Our eventual job will be that of Intelligence Officer for a squadron (17 planes). We will be what is known as "S-2". We get reports from all sources including G-2 (Intelligence Officer for the larger area), our own flying personnel, prisoners, etc. Then, if we plan to bomb Tokyo, our squadron leader asks us where and how we can most safely approach our target, what fighting planes we will need for protection, what resistance will be encountered, to all of which we are supposed to be able to give answers. Naturally, if we are wrong, terrible things can happen.

Oh yes, we are paying for our meals here. \$1.25 a day. Also for room service—but not much. I find the C.O. here prescribes chino outfits for wear around the school, so it is a good thing I brought mine.

I hope you found you were right when you said things would be easier once I was actually gone. You have been a perfect brick about it all and I am very proud of you.

(page 1, in entirety)

Note: The USAAF VIII, still in operation today as the Eighth Air Force, was first activated in early January of 1942, one month before Fred heard that a new force was looking for men. The VIII Bomber Command was specifically formed to attack strategic targets in Europe from bases in eastern England using heavy, four-engined bombers. A European bombing campaign was a sort of down payment—by Americans, to Russians--on the promise of an eventual ground landing to open a western front, which planners calculated would take two

years to fully prepare. The bombing campaign turned out to be an expensive down payment: in the course of the European campaign, over 600,000 served in the Eighth Air Force. Of the 210,000 air crewmen, 26,000 were killed—a mortality rate of 12.38 percent (comparative mortality rates: Marines 3.29 percent, US Army 2.25 percent and the Navy 0.41 percent). And this is not including the 21,000 airmen who became POWs. Among those flying in 1942-43, only 35 percent survived. (Gerald Astor, p. 420) In the beginning especially—and Fred was in place by September, just two weeks after the Eighth launched its first raids—bullish commanders set out with acute over-confidence about conditions they faced and the technological prowess of their planes. B-17 “Flying Fortresses”, bristling with guns, gunners and Norden bombsights flew daytime raids into European skies dense with clouds. Many missions were scrubbed due to weather. On the cloudless days when missions were a go, flak and Luftwaffe fighters were thrown into the air—in screaming, explosive force—to meet the Fortresses.

May 26, 1942 ... We have just completed tests covering our military knowledge. I found I was quite ignorant. But I believe that they like that for I am sure to show improvement when I get through, and, of course, such showing will speak well for the instructors.

There were about seventy in the first class. We make up another seventy. On June 1st about a hundred more will come up from Miami and then when we leave they will have three hundred fifty in the next class. If you want to do some figuring, we are supposed to be squadron intelligence officers. One squadron of 17 planes. In the last war, America had 30 squadrons in Europe. Soon after we graduate there will be 140 ready for service, or about five times the entire fighting force in the last war, and in a couple of months it will be about 15 times what it was. This will jump so that before the end of the year there will be an unbelievable number....

May 28, 1942 Just a week and two days until I will see you.-----

Note: *As Fred types, he uses strings of dashes to denote the passages omitted from his original letters. Where I omit portions Fred (and later Isabel) had typed, I use dots.*

Our work so far, has been largely fundamental. Drill, military law, duties of an officer, customs of the army, organization of the army and of the air forces, how to write military letters, lectures on the

safeguarding of secret documents and so forth. We start tomorrow on maps and some of the more technical details. We have had some instructive and enlightening talks on other matters as well. So far we have been scheduled from 6:30 in the morning until supper and in the evening we have studied about two to three hours.

As far as I can tell, the Penn Harris is the best hotel to stay at. A bit more expensive than some others, but it's the one I want for you.--
-----Love to all the family. I keep your pictures in my pocket. They are a great comfort. It will be grand to see you.

June 1, 1942 We had some interesting lectures today. The science and art of war; propaganda; counter espionage; the organization of an air base; and the moot court trial. (I was assistant defense counsel for the last.) The defendant was convicted, but that had to be because we had to show the class the procedure that followed conviction. If he had been guilty, the defendant should have been shot. As it was, he got ten years. I think if the student body had voted we might have got an acquittal.

It was good to have you here last weekend. ----- We have all kinds of interesting stuff to learn this next week. Foreign uniforms, aircraft spotting, (this last by Squadron Leader Priestley of the RAF who knows several of the boys in "Target for Tonight"), Naval identification, Navigation, organization discussions, drills, etc.

June 7, 1942 I have just glanced at a Sunday paper. The news from Midway looks very good, doesn't it? I hope it is all true and that our own losses are not too great....

June 15, 1942 ---I must take out time to say once more what a wonderful week-end this last one has been. It was so grand to have Isabel and Arthur here. I will always remember the time when mother took Henry, Louis and me to Long Island to spend a couple of days with Dad during the last war. I hope the children will have the same kind of memories in respect to this last visit.-----Today has been perfect. The sun has been out all day, yet it has remained cool and invigorating. Bill (Graham) and I played tennis after work stopped at four-thirty.----We had a very interesting time this afternoon learning lots of stuff about the German air forces.----

I went to a meeting this afternoon. They were interested in finding out who would stay on for the photo-intelligence course. Before being admitted I would have to pass a very severe eye test,

which would probably let me out, but I feel that we need all the training we can squeeze in and that I would be a better S-2 after this course.

June 21, 1942 We have just finished the active part of another Sunday.....Yesterday was particularly busy. It really started on Friday after supper when we were called together and were given a set of maps each together with the "situation." Along with the rest, I spent until about two in the morning, translating the military "situation" onto maps and studying the latter so that on Saturday I would know quickly where all the important places were. Then on Saturday, we reported in the gymnasium with our maps all ready and we spent the whole day just like at an air base. Messages of all kinds came in every 3 minutes or so. We organized reconnaissance patrols, reported suspicious happenings to higher command. Did nothing at all when the "priority" message read, "Lt. Smith's wife says his lunch is getting cold" and then, after staving off a large scale invasion of our west coast by the Japs (on paper) we quit at supper time, thoroughly exhausted. But many of us, by that time, were too keyed up for bed, so Dick Taylor, Bill Graham, Seth Terry and a couple of others, went to town and did the rounds of the bars.

I had Sunday noon dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Ross Hickox at their lovely old house near the State Capitol, with a Major Whitridge who was a member of the first class here and has been retained as a member of the faculty. Before the war he was a Professor at Yale.

After dinner, we picked up Bill Graham and Major Hendrick, the World War I ace that I told you about who shot down all those planes before he himself was knocked down by flak, and then drove out to Col. Fleming's. We played golf on the lawn, swam in their pond, shot at targets with a twenty-two, and then, after a couple of Tom Collins (which went very well), we had a lovely picnic supper. Life in the army is very hard!---

June 23, 1942 Still no word about what is to happen to any of us next week. There are rumors running all over the place, but no one knows anything at all. Our work is progressively difficult, but at the same time progressively interesting.....

Despite the really intensive work and the relatively late hours I am in great shape. I miss you and the children a great deal. It would be nice to be able to be with you at all hours. But that is not to be in these times. Aside from that desire, I am glad to be where I am. We are all agreed up here that we have one of the most fascinating jobs

that the armed forces offer and that we are very fortunate to be in Combat intelligence.

June 24, 1942 I have just received your letter.-----Congratulations on the honor of being elected President of the Junior League. I was very glad to get the clipping and I cannot tell you how very proud I am of my darlingest.

This darn army! It is hard not to have any idea of when or where you are going, what you will have a chance to do or who you will have a chance to see. For the past couple of days we have been expecting to hear something any minute.....

F.B. Insert, 1947. (On Friday I was told to report to the replacement pool at Salt Lake City Air Base. That gave me from Sunday morning until Wednesday night at home. I flew out to St. Lake leaving home at two A.M. Thursday morning.)

July 3, 1942 Much has happened since I left you three days ago.....The plane from Cleveland to Chicago was an hour late...(in Chicago after a wait) I finally got a plane in the middle of the morning. But I didn't enjoy it. The trip was very rough, especially west of Omaha, and I am afraid I was sick most of the way.

We landed at Salt Lake in the evening....they gave me a bed....This morning I filled out all the many forms one has to fill out when reporting....I was assigned to Wendover. I left on a bus just one hour after...The bus ride was a dusty hot affair lasting about 4 hours. Four hours over the salt flats of Utah. If I didn't love you so much I might suggest you try it someday. The ride, however, was enlivened by a traveling companion—a Sgt., three sheets to the wind, returning from a leave. He regaled me for most of the trip about what a horrible place I was getting into.....

I am in the 306th Bomb Group, you know. Tomorrow I expect to be assigned to one of the four heavy bomb squadrons. Flying Forts....(This) is no place for you or anyone else to visit. It is terribly hot and windy and sandy and salty and everyone says that it is very disagreeable indeed. There are about 50-100 people in town, and one hotel, which I understand is a wide-open gambling joint....

July 5, 1942 We are definitely on the salt flats, about 120 miles from Salt Lake City....They have put about six inches of sandy gravel on top of the salt to protect the rubber, but it is still pretty tough on my shoes. The salt works up through the dust and gravel, especially when it rains

and seems to literally grind into your shoe leather....It is hot here without question. 105 degrees yesterday and 110 today. It often gets to 120. On the other hand, it is a very dry heat....The food here...isn't bad and there is lots of it. And the breakfasts which I have always said was the most important meal of the day, are really something....Outside of work (and there is plenty of that) there is nothing to do except go to the State-Line hotel and have a drink in the evening. This hotel is the only place around and is filled up with officers' wives who in nearly every case have doubled up in order to get any place at all to sleep. The hotel is making a mint of money. They are charging plenty, believe me. But I suppose it is a case of now or never....

All of the S-2's have not arrived yet. We are a bit unorganized. But I am finding much to do. Right now, Lt Shube Owen and I are making out a course of instruction which we are planning to give. Owen, by the way, is a great big Nordic type from Minneapolis. Used to teach school. I shall room with him in all likelihood. We are also busy with situation maps, showing what is happening on all fronts or wherever there is activity. There is a lot of paperwork also.

It is fun being on an actual air base—to see great big giants of planes on the field and in the air—the continual roar of engines warming up and especially when they are revved up before take-off—to hear bombardiers talk about their training scores, their runs; pilots talk of their flights, gunners of their most recent shooting. It is just as interesting and exciting as I expected and of course, when we get to the real thing, will become even more so.

As you know, I am in the 423rd Bomb Squadron which of course is the best of the four squadrons of the group. The squadron C.O. is Major James W. Wilson who in March was a first Lieutenant. The operations officer, who has a desk right opposite me is Lt. "Willie" Williams, a former music teacher from Michigan. Then there are many others of whom I will no doubt write. But I must stop now and get ready for my first lecture to Combat Crews. I wonder how they will take it.-----

July 9, 1942 I see that the Utah papers have mentioned a plane crash here. So I guess I can mention it. It is the first casualty of the group. Everyone was killed and no one yet knows what it was all about, but several of us have been told to look into the matter. It wasn't from the 423rd Squadron so I didn't know any of the boys.

July 11, 1942 -----I have been wondering if you had considered taking the children east for a few weeks toward the first part of August. I haven't any definite place in mind, but perhaps you know of some place near Westover, Mass. It might prove worthwhile....

July 12, 1942 Just a routine day and not much to write about. But maybe you are interested in knowing what a routine day is like.... each morning I get up at four in the dark and walk up to the mess hall where I give those crews that are on hand a talk, either on aircraft identification, history of the German Air Force, the Jap army, navel recognition, how to escape if shot down or something of the sort. And considering the fact that this talk comes between four-thirty and five-thirty and before breakfast, I think I am doing a pretty good job of it. Shube Owen works with me on this.

At five thirty comes breakfast of fruit juice, cold cereal, eggs, toast, and coffee. The next thing on the program is the squadron meeting at eight. This is conducted by the squadron commander, Major Wilson. He takes up all matters of interest to the squadron, discusses their problems, outlines the plans for the day, bawls out any one upon whom his eye happens to light and so forth. Then the engineering officer will tell the pilots about the shape that the planes are in and what to be careful of. Then Shube and I talk about the news of the day using our home-made situation maps as a basis. After the meeting we hold a ten minute "recognition" class. There is then one more class, generally, during the day. The rest of the day Shube and I spend organizing the office, getting our three enlisted men trained, studying up for next day's classes and eating. Then most evenings I just go to my bunk and write letters or go to sleep. But once in a while I go up to the State-Line for a drink and put a couple of dimes in the slot machines. So that, my darling, is what I call a routine day.

We have been ordered to give 24 hours of courses to the squadron on the subjects that we were taught at school. I myself must give two talks tomorrow. One on the Egyptian front, and the other on our S-2 school. As you know, I've never done much teaching and am surprised that the boys stay awake in spite of the hour and in spite of the fact that many have been up in the air a good long time. Captain Jack Wright, from Harrisburg has been put in charge of the S-2 work for the squadron....

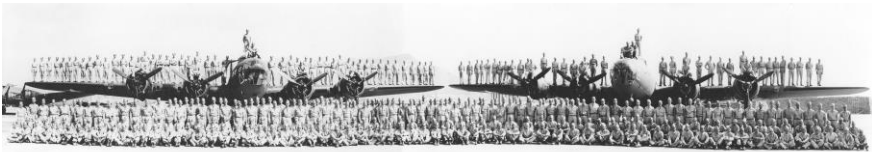
I had a wonderful idea today. I wonder what the possibility would be of your taking Isabel and Arthur to visit Emily and (if he is there) Allan Osborn in Litchfield. That is such a lovely country and it should be such a lovely spot during the hot days of August. I don't

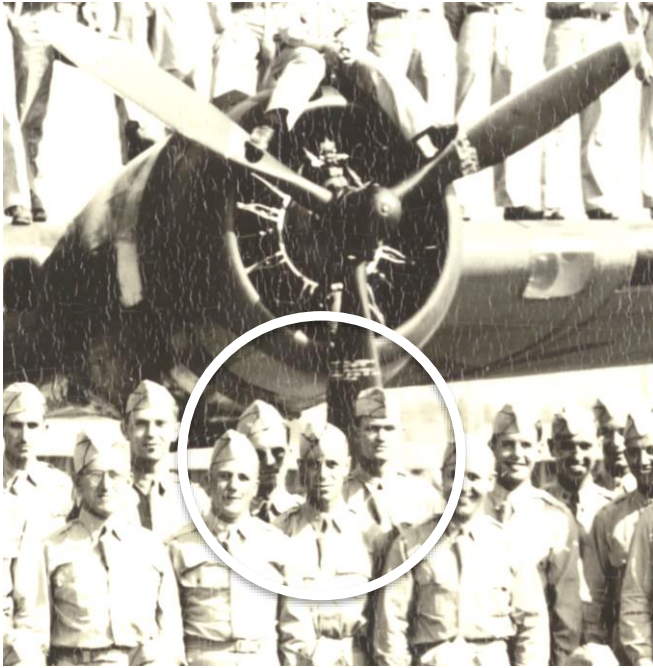
know when to advise this trip but if it looks like a hot spell coming along I could probably write you in time. Don't make any definite plans that would tie you down. August might be cool throughout and Litchfield might be hot, in which case you would want to go elsewhere. But you might ascertain possibilities. If you did go it would be grand for the whole family, I am sure.-----

July 15, 1942 I have just received your wire (suggesting that you come out here) and I went right up to Base Headquarters to reply.....I am hoping that my wire was not too gruff and that you appreciate why I don't want you to come. For one thing, though, I think that some time around the first week in August we will move to a spot very close to where you went to college and that we will probably be there about two weeks. Our visit would be postponed a couple of weeks but it would be so much nicer for both of us in the east. It would cost less and you might be able to bring the children on. Here, since there are no rooms, we could only visit at public bars. In the east you could probably get a room somewhere and we could have some privacy. In the east, even if I was busy all day, you would have something to do. Walks in New England are always fun.....

July 18, 1942 Dear Isabel, I have just received and read your very nice letter. You certainly know how to write just the kind of letters that I like to get...

.... I was also very glad to get the very good news about your gaining so much weight. You know how I feel about the defense stamps which you bought. I think that splendid. You are a very patriotic citizen. I hope, darling, that you will always remain a patriotic citizen. This country is the very best country to live in and belong to in the whole world. I hope it will remain so. I know that unless I do all that I possibly can and you and all the rest at home do all that you possibly can, we may not have anywhere near as nice a place to live in or to belong to. I am glad that you realize this too.... Your very loving father,
Dad





July 18, 1942 We are having an exciting time right now. I think I told you yesterday that we are planning a raid on San Antonio. We have been working on this for the past twenty-four hours. We have simulated an enemy situation as near as we can get it to the real thing. We have been receiving new "information" all day about our enemy, and higher headquarters has come through with beautifully conflicting orders. (I guess they need training as much as we do.) However we got through our briefing and the giant flying fortresses have just now taken off on their "mission." When the planes get back we will interrogate the crews just as we would after a real raid. The S-2 department is now on a twenty-four hour basis. That means that someone must be here at headquarters all the time. I am staying up tonight....---The S-2 section of the 423rd has been especially complimented three times within the last two days by Group headquarters. In two of the occasions I was the originator of the idea that brought the compliment. This sets me up quite a bit.---

July 20, 1942 Military information is not shown on commercial maps. It may be that the place I talked about having you visit is not shown. However, I have been told that it is very close to Northampton and

Springfield. Perhaps one of those places would be nice for you to stay in. I like the idea of you going east with the kids-----Yesterday I had my first ride in one of our giant planes. It was lots of fun and very instructive.... It took between four and a half to five hours. The boys said it was a bit rough, but I thought that it was so much smoother than my commercial flight out here that it isn't funny. I wandered all over the plane, spending time with the waist gunners, the radio man, up with the pilot, but most of the time with the bombardier and the navigator who are right in the nose and have much the best view of the passing terrain. It was a beautiful day with clouds at 1800 feet. We flew most of the way at about ten thousand and fourteen thousand over mountains. The boys were most solicitous of my comfort and well being, insisting that I use oxygen when over the ten thousand mark. Not that you really need it unless you stay up there a long time, but they told me I would be apt to be tired when I got out if I did not.

When we got back at about eight, I learned of another night mission so we worked hard until eleven or so, setting up maps, marking the enemy situation on our overlay paper and finally briefing the crews. By the way, my pilot earlier today was Lt. Check.-----

July 22, 1942 It is a good thing that you didn't come out here, for we will be leaving just about the same time you would have got here. A sign has been posted saying that we are individually liable for any military information given to others by our wives, families, and friends, so don't tell any one except the immediate family anything you may know.

F.B. Insert, 1947. There is a gap in my letters at this point. I didn't take the train east after all, but flew with a crew that later went down in the middle of the Atlantic. We stopped at Chanute Field near Chicago and the next night at Washington. From there to Westover Field in Mass., where my family was waiting. There we had a lovely visit of about two weeks. I got off every night and could take the bus to Holyoke.

Dad came for a couple of days and Major Jack Humphrey, the Group S-2 officer took all of us to Northampton. But in two weeks a bunch of us were suddenly transferred from the air echelon to the ground echelon and I was sent to Dix. Pat and the family went on to the coast.



Fred and Lee in Holyoke.
Considerable emotion under the brim of that hat. When he came home two years later she did not recognize him and turned away crying.

At Dix we acquired such necessary items as gas masks, warm clothing, steel helmets, dog tags, etc. and were ready to go.

Shortly before leaving Dix, I wrote home the following: Who do you suppose I have a date with? None other than Polly Royal.* I'm looking forward to a grand time with her. Some time we must spend a week with her together. (*The Queen Mary).----This is a perfectly tremendous



camp. I don't know the size in miles, or the number of people that are quartered here. It is the first time I have been absolutely aghast at the size of the war effort. There is one place where twenty rows of tents stretch out as far as you can see. But that is only a fraction of the whole thing.----Darlingest, take awful good care of yourself while I am gone. I want above all things to have you go out just as much as you feel like, especially in mixed crowds. I would feel badly if I heard that you were not going to dances, parties of the gang and such. Also get a spree with Sal or Dotty in New York-----

Note: On September 4th, the 16 officers and 233 men of the squadron ground echelon made their way from Fort Dix to Hoboken, where they were ferried to the HMS Queen Mary for embarkation.

September, 1942 (Aboard the Mary) I hope you can read this. My hands are cold and stiff. I have just come down from the deck where I was checking the well-being of the men. Captain Wahl who was supposed to be in charge of our squadron during the voyage tripped and fell while getting off the train at Hoboken and has been in the ship's hospital ever since. That left Shube Owen and me to take charge of things. The trip has for the most part been pleasant and unexciting. It is crowded. Over 17000 on a boat with a peacetime capacity of 3500. Our radar picked up a pack of U Boats the other day, but this boat is so

fast that they can't catch us. All we did was turn around and then head north. That is why it is so cold now.



Note: The ground echelon made landfall in Greenock, Scotland on September 11th. From there they boarded a train for their ultimate destination, Thurleigh in Bedfordshire, where the young airfield's runways had just been expanded. Eight B-17s with the air echelon arrived on September 11th as well. As Fred noted in his 1947 telling, during the air crossing, a 423rd plane and its 10-person crew went down in flames for unknown reason off the coast of Scotland. Originally, Fred was to have traveled to England by plane, with the crew that went down.



September 13, 1942 ----Strict censorship has started, so there is not much I can write about. I am now somewhere in England. I am in a delightful English countryside with thatched roofed houses and small farms all around. The English officers that I have met so far are very nice indeed and most cooperative. They are really putting themselves out to be helpful and cordial. I am rooming with Shube Owen and of course am pleased with that arrangement—I find it very cold at night here. Three blankets are a necessity. ----I have just heard that the Germans have claimed to have sunk our ship. That is all the bunk, as I am here. Don't ever believe that kind of propaganda.

September 21, 1942Since I last wrote I have been at an R.A.F. station somewhere in England (Sneath, F.B. 1947). It was most interesting as they were in operation. We were royally treated by the RAF officers. You would have thought I was at least a Colonel. You would love it here, darling. It isn't much different in the country than when we were here together. There is hay and cabbages in the fields, cows and sheep in the meadows and peace in the air. The cities that I have happened to see have little signs of bomb damage and are only different in that they are blacked out at night. The London papers advertise a great number of movies and musical shows and plays. There seem to be plenty of trains to get you where you want to go and they all seem to run on time.

September 25, 1942 I think I told you that Shube Owen has been transferred to the 369th squadron. We will still work and eat together so that his transfer only meant that I lost a roommate. Tonight I have gained a new one. Lt. Beasley has joined the squadron as a pilot and as I had an extra bed he has been sent in with me. ----- After supper tonight, Shube and I took our bikes and rode all over the countryside. I guess we covered a good ten miles.... I have the unpleasant job of censoring letters. I don't like it a bit....

F.B. Insert, 1947. October 9, 1942. No letter written, but this was the day of our first actual raid. At this stage (some five years later) most of the details are hazy. We sent out twelve planes. Major Wilson led the squadron. The target was a factory at Lille. German FW 190's struck us just after we dropped our bombs. The 423rd came back intact as far as personnel was concerned, though several ships were badly hit. (We later counted 127 bullet holes in Lt. Warner's plane.) The 369th lost Captain Adams and his crew. The papers reported that our entire force of some sixty planes had shot down 48 German fighters.



Note: The Squadron Combat Diary (which F.B. authored at the end of each month for the duration of his time with the 423rd) records for the Lille raid that as the bombers approached the target, the squadron was attacked by “swarms of enemy fighters.” Squadron CO Wilson lost an engine which slowed the 423rd’s return, exposing it to 30 minutes of concentrated attack. The squadron’s five planes shot down “6 certain and 8 probables” and returned with shot up fortresses, but no casualties on this inaugural run.

Fred’s 1947 insert above follows the Combat Diary closely enough that it appears he was using a copy he may have retained for reference. If this is the case, it seems curious that Fred says “most of the details are hazy.” Perhaps the Diary was not yet declassified so he did not wish to cite it overtly. Curious also, the Diary cites 168 bullet holes in Lt. Warner’s plane, though Fred’s account here notes 127.

Fred closes his note citing the 48 downed German fighters reported in the papers. This is a good moment to raise the issue of enemy aircraft casualty claims. As the successful downing of enemy aircraft was a critical measure of effectiveness for the entire daylight bombing campaign, correctly counting results was a matter of great importance. And the count was a vital part of an S-2’s job, gleaned from the careful interviews of returning crews. Historical analysis has

shown that squadrons markedly exaggerated air combat success. Understanding this, central headquarters found it necessary to apply corrective formulas to results reported by squadron S-2s.

Finally, it seems possible that Shube and Fred missed the squadron's first raid on Oct. 9th, for on Oct. 11th Fred writes:

October 11, 1942 I have just been on leave. It was all spent in London. Shube and I were together. We got a room at the Savoy which is on the Strand and not far from the Victoria where you and I stayed fourteen years ago. We got tickets for a show right away and went to see "Full Swing." It was a real good show, good looking girls, clever comedians, gorgeous costumes, good music and dancing.... Our rooms were quite luxurious. We had a large double room with a bath. I haven't seen a bath like that since our last stay in New York together. Shube and I both took two baths a day. And the sheets were the real soft silky kind.---- The next morning....we went out to breakfast....then we really started strolling. We walked down to Trafalgar Square, then down Pall Mall, past all those government buildings, St. James Place, Buckingham. Then Shube and I went over to Whitehall, all around the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. It all brought back wonderful remembrances. Then up to Piccadilly Hotel and to another show in the afternoon. The Belle of New York. The next morning, I tried to get something for you for Christmas, but no luck. Then the noon train back here to the base,-----

Note: The Combat Diary relates that for the rest of October, bad weather conspired to ground the group and scrub missions. And also that on the 14th, the squadron was "restricted to the post for an indefinite period, until we can learn to be militarily courteous." The restriction was lifted ten days later and "nearly all went at last at least as far as Bedford and probably did little good after being in camp so long."

October 24th, 1942 So, first let me say a word about your picture. This morning, as is my custom, I shined my flashlight the very first thing, even before getting out of bed, on your picture. (I do that the last thing at night and the first in the morning.) Well, this morning you were very gay, unusually so. Which leads me up (slowly as usual) to the point. I have decided that it is a very unusual picture, my darling. Your moods seem to change every time I look at it. Sometimes I see your gay mood and then it looks as though you were remembering one of Howard's jokes, or as though you had one to tell me. Then

sometimes you look very very brave, darlingest, and then I feel as though I want to be with you and pet you on the back and kiss away all those fears. Then again I can see “purpose” in your expression. Maybe that is not quite the word, but it is the best I can think of at the time. And there are other moods and expressions. That is one reason I like the picture. Just as in real life, you are a little different each day and each time I look at you, in fact. It is really a very unusual picture and just the one that I want.

From now to the end of the month I will be working among other things on the squadron history. I guess I told you that I had been assigned to that job. I had brought it up to date before and am now working on the monthly basis. That is, toward the end of each month I write it up for the last thirty or so days. At first I wasn't sure I would like that kind of a job, but now that I have gotten into it, I think it is lots of fun.

Well, darling, tomorrow I may have more to say. I am happy and well—slept ten solid hours last night. I love you tremendously. Your devotedest, Fred

October 28th, 1942 Happy birthday (in reverse)! It ain't much of a birthday, certainly without loved ones around. That shows up when you are over here in the army. No matter how many times I mention the matter, I don't seem to be able to get anyone really interested in the fact that it is my birthday. Strange, isn't it. I had my party, by the way, this noon. I had all of the officers of the B mess present. I had told all three hundred officers that they really shouldn't get me anything and they didn't. These flying officers believe everything we intelligence officers tell them....

Well, Princess Mary did come yesterday. I was in the library where we do most of our work, and the Colonel brought her in for about five minutes or so. She wasn't introduced but was quite interested in what we had there. She is an elderly lady, I should say in her late seventies. She was charming, at least she had a charming smile which she freely bestowed on us Lts. She left and that was all there was to it. Oh yes, you'll be interested in what she wore, I know. It was a light blue suit (wool). How's that!

When and if E.R. comes I will try to remember what she wore also....

Will stop now darlingest girl, as I really must get to my work. All my love to my darlingest wife. I love you just as much as last year, even if I am now as old again as you are. Your devotedest husband, Fred



Note: On November 7th a mission to Brest, France got as far as the target but 10/10s cloud cover forced them to return with all of their bombs. On November 9th, however, the squadron bombed U-boat facilities at Nazaire, France. Heavy flak was encountered by every plane, and two planes crashed just beyond the target. Of the 20 men who crewed the downed planes, it was thought that as many as 12 bailing parachutes could be seen. Fred's Combat Diary entry notes: "We bombed hell out of target without much question. That's

something by way of consolation. We landed in Portreath in Cornwall where, after a standup interrogation, we all relaxed in a big way. Our future welcome at Portreath is somewhat in doubt." In fact, a damage complaint was lodged—most of it concerning smashed glassware--and a \$200 check had to be sent to the RAF.

November 10, 1942 My very own darlinest, there is so much that I would like to write about. Details of things, you know. But I can't of course. But I can tell you that I have been away for a couple of days and that I have been just about all over the country where we spent our honeymoon. So many places that I recognized, so many wonderful memories were brought back. I had only an hour's notice of the trip, but from that time until I was on my way I certainly looked forward to it.....

Note: Cornwall would become home to Isabel, her three children and some nine great grandchildren of Fred Baldwin. When he sensed adventure to look forward (and backwards) to in that direction, he wrote truer than he knew.

November 14, 1942 I am O.D. again today. That means Officer of the Day and is both a hard and a simple job, all at the same time. It really means you act for the commanding officer when he isn't available or doesn't want to be bothered. Of course the C.O. is nearly always available, except at night, so there isn't a heck of a lot to do. But I have as much authority as he has and as a matter of fact have just finished stopping a couple of superior officers and keeping them from using jeeps for private trips to town....I've also told the officers of "A" mess off, because their blackout wasn't perfect. It's lots of fun. I have a jeep all to myself, and since this is the first time that I have driven one of these things I am having a lot of fun with it. Of course if there should be any trouble then my work would begin for I would be in charge of the whole works until the Colonel showed up....

Did I tell you about the visit we had the other day....We were told that there would be distinguished visitors arriving. No one knew who it would be. The best bet seemed to be some General or maybe Eleanor. Well, it turned out to be the King himself and several American and English Generals. It had been kept secret because he did not want a fuss made, and he insisted that he would not come if any change was made in our regular schedule of work. And it must have worked out to his liking, for aside from the staff which met him in front of Group Headquarters, there was only me and two other Lieutenants who saw

him arrive. I was within about five paces of him. I thought him a very good looking man indeed. He had on a light blue R.A.F. uniform with stripes all the way up his sleeve almost to the shoulder. The R.A.F. you know, show rank by the number of stripes on their left arm. After a couple of minutes of conversation with the Colonel he drove off to inspect the planes. I did not follow them around, but much to his apparent delight some of the crews didn't even look up from their work when he came up. At least that is the story I was told. He stayed about an hour or so and then drove off again. That is the big news....

There isn't much more. The powers that be have decided not to have the officers eat together in the new mess hall. Someone doesn't think it proper for us to eat in the same area with the enlisted men. It makes me sick. I suppose they would be a bad influence on us or something of the sort. So I will stay eating in the "B" mess hall....I am naturally very disappointed because we haven't any decent place to spend the evening in. The "A" mess is filled up with majors and colonels and we are not any too welcome there, and the "B" mess is so cold in both temperature and atmosphere that you might just as well hang out on the roads outside as stay around in there. Well, darling, that is just a case of blowing off steam....

November 18, 1942This has been a busy month, and these are busy times as you undoubtedly can gather from the newspapers. So there is very little time that I have available for mischief....Well, my social activities of the week consisted of a grand bridge game with Allan Richardson and myself playing against Shube Owen and Mr. Korman (**Note:** newspaperman from Chicago Tribune)....Well it was grand fun....we all play just about the same kind of bridge.

I don't think, as a matter of fact, I am sure I am not violating any security rules if I tell you what a pilot (good friend of mine) said immediately on getting out of his plane after one of our toughest raids. I was there and he turned to me and asked, "Well, Baldwin, anything exciting happen while I was gone?" You would naturally have to know the fellow (which you don't) to fully appreciate it. He's a great guy and so are the others. I will certainly have many stories to tell you some day....

Well, my darlingest, I miss you very, very much, indeed. I long for affection. I'd give almost anything just for an evening together. I'd love to lie down (on something warm) with my head in your lap and with you idly letting your fingers wander over my face and hair. My eyes might close, but I would have a perpetual, contented grin. Every once in a while you would lean down and kiss me ever so gently and I

would reach up and hold you to me. Well, I must shake myself and get back to realities. But it is good to have vivid dreams like that and I often indulge myself. It helps a lot really....

Note: The 423rd's Combat Diary states that on November 21, the squadron was declared non-operational "because of losses of both personnel and planes." Fred and his colleagues got busy with ground school. On November 25th "Three crews left today to get new planes for the group and, incidentally, to look over the feminine situation in Scotland." On the 27th, "The crews returned today with three planes, but only one for this squadron, and no girls for anyone."

November 26, 1942 This is Thanksgiving Day and I have been thinking of how lucky I am and how thankful I should be. First of all, I have a darling wife and her picture right in front of me. She is wonderful and I love her so much....

I have been away from the station all of today. I visited another station where they have several captured German planes. I had a chance to crawl all over them and you can perhaps imagine how interesting it was. Heinkel III's, Mess. 110's, and 109's, Folk Wolf's, JU 88's and others. We had dinner at a nearby American station where I met several officers who I had known at Harrisburg. For lunch we had roast pork, sweet potatoes, applesauce, beets and plum pudding. There were five of us who made the trip including Shube Owen and Jerry Sullivan...Last night I received two tins of Nescafe from Dad and Carl Hope....

December 2, 1942 Yesterday I had the day off. So, I went with Al Richardson to London. The main purpose was to get some warm underwear and a muffler which can be got at the Quartermaster's Supply there. We got in about 12:30, had lunch, and then did our shopping. Then we went calling on some Colonels to whom he claimed relationship. At four we went to the Windmill Theater and saw quite a show. I enclose a program. It was a sort of an Earl Carroll affair with emphasis on nudity, but all done with quite a bit of beauty and skill. The jokes were clean and good, the dancing clever, and the girls were very good-looking. I don't think my long absence from contact with things feminine has warped my judgment in this respect. The "almost nudes" were in the form of tableaux and the music instead of being "hot-cha" as it probably would be in the States was Chopin, etc. We both thoroughly enjoyed it and I am willing to admit that to the world at large. The jokes... (1) It seems there was a girl in the Land Army

over here....who...had been to a real party the night before, and she had a terrible hangover and just felt rotten at four in the morning when she went out to milk the cows. She picked out a nice cow to begin with, however, and slumped down on her stool and had just about made up her mind to start in and get it over with when the cow turned around, saw her condition, took pity on her and said, "That's all right, girlie, you just hold on and I'll jump up and down."....

December 3, 1942 Not much exciting to tell you. I played bridge again last night with Shube and against a couple of navigators....

Yesterday noon as we were eating our lunch, Lt. Bill Berkley (from Boston) walked in with six beautiful English girls. It created quite a stir. They sat at the next table to where I was sitting, which was very fortunate because I found I could sell the rest of the seats at my table for as high as three shillings apiece. The three shilling seats were, of course, those that were closest or that gave the best view of the pulchritude. Well, it seems that they came up from London to arrange for a dance. There are to be twenty-five girls (mostly clothes models) and they are not to dance with us. We are to pick 25 aerial gunners, enlisted men, and they are to be the fortunate ones. I was almost persuaded to resign my commission when I heard about it. Oh well, better luck next time.



December 13, 1942 By the way, I think I sent you a couple of clippings about a fellow named Casey (Wild Bill Casey). His story may have appeared in U.S. papers.

Note: On November 17, 396th pilot Casey left his formation to give cover for a damaged and lagging plane of the 423rd. Crew members of the assisted plane suffered casualties, but the plane made it home. Interestingly—this sort of cover for fellow-pilots in distress was pointed out as an object lesson in the film “Twelve O’Clock High”—an example of the sort of sentimental call that a good pilot avoids because it ultimately weakens the defensive integrity of the larger formation. In fairness to Casey, the strategic importance of tight formations was a truth that the 8th Air Force was only groping its way towards in December of 1942.

I understand he broadcast to America the other day. I thought you would be interested in knowing that I was the one to interrogate him. He is quite a boy. But there are plenty of others too. He was the one reporters happened to hear about; so he was the one to get his name in the papers.-----You say Arthur saw the big Case-Reserve football game. We have our own games here which are very important. In the biggest game of all our squadron leads at this point by a score of 27 to 2. (F.B. 1947 Note: Meaning that we had lost 2 planes while shooting down 27 German fighters.)

December 20, 1942 My darling daughter Isabel, Yesterday I received two of the nicest letters I have ever received I my lifetime. Really it was three letters. One of these came from Mommy. The other two were the ones you had mommy mail for you...

You are quite right, darlingest, in being thankful that you are an American. I have seen several English children about your age. They are fine children and you would never know to talk to them, at first at least, that they have been living anything but a normal life. But so many of them have now lived near here for two years and more. Some of them have homes in London. Many of them had homes in London but don’t have any real homes any more. So very many of them have lost their fathers and some of their mothers too. It is very sad to me, especially when I think of how much we all mean to one another.

December 25, 1942 My very own darlingest Pat, Merry Christmas, Darling. I know it will take anywhere from ten days to three weeks for my voice to carry across the Atlantic, but just the same I do have to

start this day in the only proper way to start Christmas. So Merry Christmas to you and Merry Christmas to Isabel, Arthur, and Lee.

And now, as to how I am spending the day. Really the holiday came on Christmas Eve. Just before supper, when Shube and I had finished our work and were washing up, we decided to bring out one of his two bottles of bourbon and drink a few toasts. At the same time, between toasts, we would open up our presents. This we did; so you see, our Christmas really came yesterday. And this is the long list of the loot I found. From Dad and Carl Hope, a can of Nescafe. From Henry and his family a box containing about a carton of Chesterfields, some bars of chocolate, a bottle of specially prepared nuts, and some bars of pine soap. You would love the last as it smells just like pine trees. You should smell me sometime. From Mother a box with four pair warm wool sox and an equal number of khaki handkerchiefs (both very welcome). And last but by no means least, three large packages from my darling family. These included the sweater which I had already seen and told you about, a tin of hard candy and another tin of chocolate candies, another tin of Nescafe, and wrapped up in Christmas paper, a wonderfully soft and warm wool scarf, a portfolio of pigskin which will hold all my letter paper and unanswered letters and addresses and so forth. It was or is a very beautiful folder, darling, and will really be very useful. I loved all my presents and so, before doing anything else, I want to send you all collectively and individually a kiss of thanks. I wish I was home so that I could deliver it in person. You will have to take it by proxy though.

Well, after opening our packages, Shube and I, I am afraid, proceeded to "tie one on". At least that must have been the case, because while I know I wasn't particularly hungry this morning before breakfast, I can't for the life of me remember having had any supper. We actually must have eaten, though. I can remember heading for the mess hall, and I can remember jousting with a couple of practice bombs (thoroughly unloaded). I can remember calling all Captains that I saw Colonels. I can remember leaving telephone messages from General Eisenhower to several offices, and lastly I can remember going back to the B.O.C. ahead of Shube and with the bomb under my arm and putting it in Shube's bed. But I still can't remember what I had for supper....

I shall be thinking a great deal about all of you today. I shall try to follow you around in my imagination as you wake up, take down your stockings, have breakfast and then the tree, dinner, and then the evening party at Brightwood. And then too, of course, the nap or the walk in the afternoon in order to get "unfilled" between dinners. Right now, of course, you are all sound asleep. It is after midnight, so Santa

has already come and gone.....Here in England there is an apparent cheer. Everyone appears to be so happy. Even when their husbands or brothers or sons are very far off. They have had many more such Christmases than we have. And they know that it is the only way to do. It is one way of "carrying on". It is really quite wonderful to see them....

December 26, 1942. This is the day after Christmas. It is what they call here "Boxing Day" and apparently is just about as important a day as Christmas itself....

In my letter yesterday, I didn't tell you about the wonderful dinner we had. It was all quite grand. To begin with, the tables were...arranged as...one great big "U" shaped table so that we could all sit together. Then, just before we started to eat, Alan Richardson proposed a toast to those who are no longer with us and then he gave a prayer for England and America, for those at home and this was followed by everyone saying the Lord's Prayer. We then sat down to tomato juice, soup, a really good, tender turkey, mashed potatoes, fresh peas, celery, plum pudding and chocolate cake. I topped it off with two cups of coffee. It almost ruined me, I was so full but it was loads of fun and very good....

December 29, 1942 I left the station in the afternoon of the day I wrote my last letter and arrived in London that evening. Spent the night at the officer's club. Also, had a late supper there.... After supper I wandered into the lounge of the club and spied on the table there five New Yorkers, so naturally I didn't "go out" that night. I just read New Yorkers, and then about ten o'clock went up to my room. The rooms by the way are very nice. You get one of two beds in a double room for five shillings. You also have a bath. The bathtub itself is not made of that real smooth shiny material that you get in hotels and the sheets are not as silky soft as those at the Savoy, but after all you are spending five instead of twenty shillings. A good many boys still prefer the hotels because you can't take guests into the Officers Club. That does not worry me at all, from now on, the officers' club is the place for me.



January 1, 1943 This is supposed to be my day off. But it is raining outside...and there are...six hours of lectures and classes which are to be given to the infantry outfit which is guarding the field. We are to teach them how to tell which planes they are firing at if they should ever have the opportunity....It just so happens that these classes are to come just after the first expert leaves and just before the second one gets back here. So I'm it, for a week or so. I am certainly not objecting. As a matter of fact I am looking forward to the chance. This plane identification is something you have to keep up all the time. Just like music or drawing....

And now I suppose you would like to hear about last night. We had a party here....We were, as many of us who knew any one in town, asked to bring partners. To those girls were added about 20 WAAF officers from a nearby post. I think I have told you about meeting a girl in town, although I may not have told you her name. It is Doreen Dennis, I have found out. I met her at a dance we had way back in Sept. or October, I can't remember which. She is blond (just to reassure you), about 25 years old, and not bad looking. Lots of fun especially for one reason which most of the other boys don't seem to "see" at all. She is madly in love and engaged to an R.A.F. officer with the result that there are absolutely no problems of whether or not one would offend her by kissing her or whether she would be more offended if you didn't

try. All that is absolutely out from the beginning, though I must admit that at twelve o'clock after singing Old Lang (how the devil do you spell the last word of that song) we did welcome in the new year in the proper method....All was fun until the party broke up about one thirty or so. The rest is a long sad story. In the first place we in our party (the ones who had come out together) had trouble getting another recon to take us to town so it was about three before we actually left. In the second place, and this is the real tragedy, though it has its funnier side I must admit, it was very muddy outside and Miss Daniels (as I call her) had no overshoes. Therefore she needs must be carried about a quarter mile to where the recons were supposed to be waiting. That wouldn't have been so bad for, my precious, she is no heavier than you. But....I was on my way to where the recons were supposed to be when suddenly and without warning....my cargo and I both caved in and landed right in the middle of a mud puddle. It was awful and I was so chagrined. But there was nothing I could do about it. The deed was done. I did persuade her to let me pay for the cleaning of her dress, but that was as far as I could get. Fortunately I had to deal with a girl who can take it and who (apparently) saw the funny side of it. But my gosh, it was a terrible moment....

January 5, 1943 Shube is still away. I don't suppose he'll be back here until the weather clears a bit. He will probably have a great deal to say when he does come back. Mostly about disagreeable things.

I myself am getting rather bitter about our enemies. Heretofore I have been fighting for more or less abstract ideals. I heard atrocity stories and read about them in the papers, but even over here they were remote. But when these are given you first hand and concerning some of your best friends it makes you change your mind. I can't of course give you any details. Wish I could. (**F.B. 1947 Note:** The interrogations disclosed that "German fighters were shooting at our boys who had parachuted out over France.")

January 7, 1943 I presume you know that about 75% of the combat crews seem to come from the South. I have consequently thought it healthful to keep my mouth reasonably well closed. We have had a bit of troubles here due to colored troops going out with white girls and when a South Carolinian sees the couple on the street or dance hall you can imagine the reaction. We try to get these dyed-in-the-wool Southerners to realize that it isn't their business and for the most part are successful though not always.

I am glad to hear that everyone is taking the privations which have come with the war so very well. I knew they would....

One more comment about your letter. You just referred to the "White Christmas" song. The variation of that in the Solomons, New Guinea, and Africa as you may have heard is to substitute "mistress" for "Christmas". It works pretty well too....

.....My job has turned out to be just about as I expected it to be. In the long run I am not quite as busy as I expected, but there are times when I work for 36 hours at a stretch and in between times there is much that can be done. Close contact with combat crews is interesting and thrilling at times. As a matter of fact too thrilling often. I have a batch of stories now which should be interesting to the most blasé. Others that are rather horrifying. Some to make you terribly proud of our boys. All kinds in fact. And speaking of the boys, they are a grand bunch. Personally I don't see how many of them stand up under it all but they do. There is one thing sure though. They are living at the rate of about a year for each month. It is no snap as the papers might lead you to believe. I myself am living in comfort and ease. With a comfortable bed in an unheated hut. We do not have enough coal for one fire a week and it is cold otherwise, and my washing water, in a pail under my bed, is frozen over nearly morning, but the mess hall and our "officers" are warm and as long as there is a warm place to go to it is comfortable as I said before. In addition, we have been getting good food and lots of it. No eggs and milk...but it has been good and the lack of milk can always be made up with calcium tablets which I take every day....



January 10, 1943 So much for news and comments, my precious darling. Now's the time when in my imagination I put down my paints and come across to you in our little library and wake you from your sound sleep. And I sit down beside you and take you in my arms so that you are all curled up facing me—and my lips touch yours and we have a long and a very sweet kiss before turning out the lights and walking arm in arm upstairs to bed. So precious come here and let me kiss you and then once again on the eyes, before we turn in. Yes, that's fine, so now goodnight my precious. Sweet dreams. I'll be with you in the morning. Your devotedest, Freddie

January 11, 1943I've been busier than on most days.... It really started in a meeting this morning...of all officers in this particular department. A couple of directives were read calling for a very heavy teaching schedule. The....last thing that was decided upon was that I would give a class in aircraft recognition to the rest of the S-2 staff. Now they are really in the same boat as I am. I mean, they are at least supposed to know just about as much as I do about the subject, so naturally in the next few hours I had to plan a class and at the same time make myself more proficient than the others. I can tell you I worked fast between the time the meeting ended and the class itself which was held at 3. I have just now come out of the class, somewhat tired, but, I am thankful to say, quite happy about the whole thing and the way it went off. Captain O'Sullivan remarked on the way out of the classroom, "Well, Fred, you certainly know your subject." I sure fooled him! I hope I fooled the rest as well.

January 13, 1943 My darling girl, Jan. 13th. I have always thought that 13 was a lucky number, though so many people think of it as unlucky. I hope for the sake of our boys who have left us it will be lucky. But I won't know for at least a couple of hours....

Note: From the Combat Diary, "Maj. James W. Wilson (with Lt. William H. Warner's crew), Capt. Mack McKay, Capt. Maurice Salada and Lt. Warren George with their own crews, bombed Lille today for the third time. Once again, we were in luck. Our only casualty being Sgt. William T. Johnson who returned with a frozen chin. Flak was comparatively light and inaccurate. Nearly all fighters observed, staying well out beyond range of either their or our guns. Our bombing was again considered the best of all groups participating, and all in all it was a breeze."

January 15, 1943There is another matter of interest, though, come to think of it. As you know, I have been defense counsel or rather assistant defense counsel almost from the beginning. We haven't had many trials fortunately but even with those that we have had, I have had little more to do than sit back and listen. The defendants were all ably represented by Phil Haberman who as you will remember had been a very successful New York trial lawyer before coming into the army. Well, Phil is being transferred upstairs and will be leaving in the morning. So that from this point on it will be my job to try and keep the boys out of jail if I can. And it will now be my sole responsibility. I kind of like the idea. For though I never did care for trial work as such, it should be a good experience. My first case as defense counsel will be this coming Tuesday, by the way....

January 16, 1943 I have been quite busy during the past few days, and when I am busy, I am naturally happier, yesterday excepted. I said something about the Tuesday trial in my last letter....I am at present digging into a complicated set of facts. I don't yet know what the correct story is as I don't altogether trust my own client. But by Tuesday we will have the case in hand and I will let you know more about it....

January 17, 1943One of my very good friends returned yesterday. He had spent the last 2 ½ months in the Hospital. A shell from a Heinie fighter had exploded in his face. He is still grounded and much to his regret is to be sent home for some plastic work which will probably take another couple of months, but it is certainly grand to see him. He's a good boy, reminds me of Sandy a good deal what with wavy dark hair and a charm that hits you from the start. He was very good looking, too. I hope the surgeons can do a good job with him. It is remarkable to me how anxious some of these boys are to get back and let the Huns take another crack at them, but that is the case so often....

January 19, 1943 This day which is drawing to its close is without question one of the very happiest days that I have had since leaving you at Holyoke. Everything that is good seems to have happened. The day started off with the delivery of your letters....that gave me in one fell swoop, the entire account of the family Christmas. It was so graphic that I could see it just as well as though I were there right with you. I could see Arth dive for the parachute doll, Isabel gasp and later when she had collected herself, model the lovely evening dress and Lee with

her doll, particularly the part about throwing the doll's laundry down the chute. All the rest of it was so perfectly described. I was glad you went to the bother to tell me just where everyone's toys were set up. I was glad that you had the time that you did except, of course, for the blue moments which do come every once in a while, don't they?....Those four letters were all just grand and have set me up really no end.

In addition, I have finished up with this particular court martial affair about which I have been writing. I came out of it all right, and I think so did the prisoner which some people might think more important. He was charged with absence without leave from his duties and from his station from Dec. 13 to Jan 2. The story was that he couldn't be found during that time. The rumors were that he was in London part of the time, in Scotland part of the time, that he was seen in civilian clothes and all that sort of stuff. The facts, however, were that he was ducking work, he slept where he couldn't have in far corners of this wide-spreading and scattered station, went to town frequently without a pass and didn't ever look at the bulletin boards to see if he was supposed to report anywhere and that he caused a bunch of bother. The facts behind the facts were that he had originally been a good soldier but when his boss visited Davy Jones on the way over here he took it pretty hard. He was not so good and was consequently busted by those who, of course, did not "have the time" to look for reasons. Then he really started to duck work. The heart was taken out of him and he did fail to report to a couple of assignments. Well, at the trial I kept out all the rumors about civil clothes and I got in the facts behind the facts and then I think I put up a pretty good argument. I forgot to say that at the start I had him plead guilty to the charge provided. The court would listen to the testimony as to the degree of guilt and the reasons behind it all. The court was persuaded that he could be a good soldier again and punishing him by confining him to station for 60 days and taking away 2/3 of his pay for a like time. Of course you are not used to the severity of military punishments, but that is really light. He was pleased and bucked up a lot. Some of his friends came up later and they were pleased too and I do think I did a pretty fair job for him. So that is another reason why I am happy.

January 21, 1943 A close of another day. Not a very exciting day. A day given over to giving one class and preparing for a couple of other classes. When you give a new class every day in the week it takes quite a bit of work. Especially when you are trying to teach these boys who are pilots and co-pilots etc. what different kinds of planes are like.

Planes are their business, their food and drink....I can still tell these boys things, though, but it takes a lot more work to get ready for a class. But when they start asking me if certain planes have two-speed or turbo superchargers I am still at a loss. I try to get all the dope I can about every plane that I teach, the kind of motor, the number of cylinders, the horse power at different altitudes, the armament or bomb load, speed, rate of climb, maximum altitude in addition, of course to the shape when viewed from different angles and how to recognize it when it is but a speck in the sky, but when I have, that they are sure to ask if it has counter balances in its wings and if it has, then which German planes have this and which don't and why don't we and questions like that. It certainly keeps me jumping....

January 22, 1943 Pat, darling, I haven't yet answered your question about Arth and the Doc he is going to. I am all for it if you are sold on the idea, my precious. It really is time we were talking about that kind of step and I heartily approve of the six months trial idea....I mean, I should think that a good man should be able to show quite a bit of improvement in 6 months. I take it, from his price, that he is a good man. A good man is worth the price and much more. Yes, my darling I am all for it.....Go for it. I will be very anxious to hear some reports, though, so, when there is anything to tell, don't forget to include it in your letter. I know you have it in mind, but I suggest at the same time that you keep a fairly close scrutiny of Arth's reactions to the whole thing. Must stop in a hurry again.

Note: In some respects, Arthur was a challenge to his parents, as he certainly was for his teachers. He stammered badly. He was also hyperactive, an inveterate prankster who delighted in resisting authority.

January 25, 1943 You may have heard of some of the recent reprisal raids they have had over here. The only thing I know about them is what I read in the paper myself. So don't ever think of worrying on that score. The situation is altogether different than what it was during the blitz. The Germans haven't the planes they had then, certainly not on this front. And we are so much better set up to stop them before they get anywhere....No we are almost as safe as you are....You know the accident rate in the army is less than civilian life. You remember, I used to tell you that golf was more dangerous than polo and maybe this sounds like an argument of that nature, but this time it just about is true (as far as we on the ground are concerned).

Note: Fred, a polo player, who had captained his Yale team, in fact died playing golf.

January 27, 1943 This is certainly a historic day, is it not? What with Roosevelt's and Churchill's meeting in Africa announced in all of the papers and, if you notice, what we are doing here.... The other news of the day will be in the papers of Jan. 28. I won't mention it here because you can read about it. But we are more thrilled personally with our news.... We are very proud. At least I feel that way. I shall probably get quite tight starting in about half an hour from now. I wish you were here to share my joy....How I'd like now to kiss you and laugh with you and cheer with you. Do I make my mood clear? I feel just like when Yale makes a last minute touchdown to win a big game. If you were here I would take you in my arms and jump up and down and kiss you thousands of times and yell between each kiss-----Freddie.

Note: From the Combat Diary of the 27th: "Today was one always to be remembered by every member of the 423rd. For this was the day of the first all-American raid on Germany proper. Our group was chosen to lead all other 8th AF groups on this most significant mission. 423rd pilots and their crews participating in this raid were: Maj. James W. Wilson, and Lts. William H. Warner, Raymond J. Check, Ralph W. Jones and Warren George, Jr. Though the significance of this mission was known to all, it was nevertheless taken right in stride....our man in the lead ship dropped the bombs with generally good effect. All kinds of fighters were met on this mission, including FW 190s, ME 109s,, ME 109F's, JU 88s, ME 110s, and even some ME 210s. It was quite noticeable, however, that these pilots were not in the same class with those whom we have met in the vicinity of Lille or the Brest Peninsula. Many of the enemy pilots actually seemed amateurish in comparison. There was a running fight, however, until we were a good half way across the North Sea on our return journey. The 423rd returned with all personnel in good spirits."

January 28, 1943 Last night was, well, last night. Perhaps it would be just as well not to bring up the matter at all. But regardless, I intend to tell you about it even though I am not particularly enjoying myself this morning. As I told you in my last letter, it was my intention, just as soon as I had tucked away my pen, to proceed to the B mess hall and then proceed to get tight. Well, all of my plans succeeded beyond my fondest expectations. I mean, I really did get tight! So did a lot of us. It

was all very grand and fun. I felt all late afternoon and evening just like I used to after Yale made a touchdown. Not only for what was done yesterday but the way it was done.....

.... Last night.... It was just a case of sitting around first the B mess and then the A mess drinking scotch and singing. We have an army song book. I think we sang every song in the book at least twice and some of them 3 times. Then we sang every other song anyone could think of. Some of the boys had to be escorted home. You might be interested to know that I managed to navigate my own way on bicycle without incident. But this morning when I awoke (alack-a-day) I realized that at some point during the evening I must have spent considerable time chewing on some dirty old rugs. At least I still had the taste in my mouth....

February 5, 1943 I have been really busy---What with the daily hour-long lectures which I am giving, preparation for those lectures, an hour each day to censoring mail, keeping up with current events and especially events which it is necessary for the S-2 to know, keeping up the squadron diary, preparing and trying cases in our court martials, keeping track of the disposition of the German Air Force which is my particular specialty and then getting ready for missions from time to time, some of which happen and many of which don't but all of which takes a great deal of time, with all this my nose is kept pretty close to the old grindstone. There isn't any of it I don't enjoy, though. It is still fascinating as ever—as a matter of fact it gets better all the time, I still think I have the best job that any one not trained as a pilot could have. Especially I have the best job offered to us civilians by the Air Force....

February 8, 1943 I read a little squib in December Esquire the other day....told how we over here would fly over enemy territory at 35,000 feet not giving a damn about flak, knocking over one German fighter after another and dropping our bombs on any particular building or part thereof that we wanted to. We all laughed rather bitterly at that slush. I hope that isn't what is being fed you back home. We are doing a good and worthwhile job here but we are doing it the hard way. We have the highest respect for German opposition, both fighter and flak. After all, only 1/3 of the Wendover boys are still here. That tells the story about as well as words can. Actually the percentage is 34. If the papers give you a different impression don't believe them. It may be colorful elsewhere but no more grueling and no more necessary in my mind, anywhere.....



Airplane recognition class...though not of a squadron in 306th group

February 10, 1943 Shube is back from Aircraft Recognition School and I presume the dog will now try to tell me things about planes and I will have to listen. He seems to be bubbling over with enthusiasm and I suspect will keep telling of his "experiences" –he had some—until I am bored stiff. I shall have to start thinking up ways and means of shutting him up when he gets too enthusiastic, persistent, or dogmatic. Seriously, though, it is good to get him back here with us. (Someone to open the window and turn out the light and that sort of thing, you know.)....

Did I tell you that I am giving the squadron a talk every other day, provided we are not otherwise engaged, on some front or other. I have given one on the African Front and will hit the Russians tomorrow. Then Saturday I will try out the Far East. It's fun. I cover the latest developments and then hit off into the potentialities of the case. Lots of fun. Just like a bull session only since I am giving the talk I can say most anything and the rest all have to listen to me. Its great fun to make plans on a large scale for Spain, Turkey, Italy, the Balkans and whatnot-----

February 10, 1943 I have been busier than ever before.... I have been giving classes each day to combat crew members. Rather amusing, don't you think? I mean, me who never got close to a plane until about 8 months ago, teaching these boys a subject they have been practically eating and sleeping, many of them for years. Surprisingly it works out. And I keep them interested by throwing a nude on the screen every once in a while. For some reason, which I am sure I can't explain, they seem to like that.

We are planning a squadron party here for this coming Sat. evening. It should be fun. There will be an importation of WAAFs, WRENS, and American Nurses as well as some civilian ladies, all of course to give the feminine touch to the proceedings. I for one am looking forward to the affair. I haven't really been social since New Year's Eve.

Note: In his book about American airmen in England, Gerald Astor observes, "Along with sexual release, many airmen pursued the oblivion granted by the period's drug of choice, alcohol....Drinking was encouraged with shots issued as rewards after missions. (Airman) Prager notes, 'When we weren't flying, we were either dead drunk—I'd never been drunk before the war—or in bed with some girl, any girl. Each of us had his own girl in the local village, and we were welcome there because we had access to booze, coffee, butter...' " (The Mighty Eighth, page 433). Fred and his intelligence colleagues were not 20 year-olds facing daily, mortal peril but Fred's letters attest to the desire for--and pull towards--promiscuous escape that American servicemen experienced as they marked time, and gains, and losses in stations like Thurleigh.

February 13, 1943 Isabel enclosed in her letter three snaps....I will, of course, write to her myself and very soon too, but my letter may be delayed and I want her to know without waiting any longer than is necessary what a grand, thoughtful daughter I think her to be....

.....Taking up Arthur in the first place. I was very glad that he is actually going to the Doc and quite proud that he is able to make the trips by himself. I think that this relaxing idea of the Doc's, if it can be put across, will do Arthur a world of good in many other ways than just his speech. It should affect his health in the long run to a considerable extent. As to the disappearance when he was with Mother, that is one of the many things that can be explained if not condoned. I wouldn't be at all surprised if I did that sort of thing as a kid. I know I frequently sneaked off in the evenings and went to the movies. I would say that it

is quite boyish. On the other hand, it was all thoughtless and selfish and should not be entirely let drop at all for little boys, I think, are not naturally thoughtful but that quality must somehow be instilled or forced into them. I imagine at this late date, that all disciplinary methods required under the circumstances have been employed so I have no suggestions at all. I know you handled the whole affair with your usual wonderful judgment and understanding, my precious....

The pain of many of our early losses has been considerably aswaged (is that the word and how you spell it?) since we have heard recently that several of our more intimate friends are now safely if not comfortably in the heart of naziland. It is very comforting as you can imagine. When things happened we naturally first thought the worst. Now we are getting a few pleasant surprises. It is like finding a five dollar bill in a pocket of the pants that you hung up last week. Not enough to make you rich, but very pleasant just the same. Wish we could hear some more news like that.

Note: Fred is referring to news that specific men from downed aircraft are being confirmed as POWs. It becomes an ongoing gripe among Fred's colleagues that news identifying POWs only makes it back to Thurleigh by roundabout ways. News of possible evadees—parachutists who evade capture—was more uncommon still, usually arriving only when the evadee himself suddenly showed up back in England.

.... I know you feel blue on occasion. I do too....it helps to know that what I am doing along with the rest of the army is so vitally important for all of the rest of our lives and it helps to know that we are really starting to come out on top. That doesn't, however, do away with the longing and yearning that we frequently can't help but have, to return to our accustomed and normal lives. All we can do is keep our chins way up in the air when these periods come over us and start digging all the harder until they pass off. For right or wrong, that is our lot, my precious. I still think, under all the circumstances, it is the right lot for us. I never did go into this thing as a vacation or just to have a year of excitement. My ideas of army life have never changed since college days. As a matter of fact, I grow more and more convinced that as a peacetime occupation it is one of the worst imaginable. But we are not at peace, and of course we are not even in just an ordinary war. So that is why our present lot is all for the best.

But I do love you tremendously, my darling. And I send all of that love with this letter. It's a good thing that love doesn't weigh anything. Think of the extra postage. Your devotedest, Freddie

February 14, 1943 This is the tag end of Sunday.... Last night... the 423rd had a party for the officers of the squadron and a few Majors and Colonels etc. from Group, who of course had to be asked. It was a real bang up party with music furnished by the Savoy Hotel (London) dance band. We had hoarded a few bottles of scotch for the past month or so, and it was good scotch, and that lent tone to the party or rather tempo, to use two musical terms. There was, at that, less drinking, if you can believe it, than at most Fork and Fiddle dances at home. The boys had to stay sober because they had serious business to do in the morning. That really added to the pleasure that we all had. The party lasted until about 3 o'clock and was good all the way through the night....There were some thirty girls, nearly all American nurses, who came to the party. Some of them had their blue uniforms on, but some, bless their souls, had evening dresses. I find they look very lovely, and if I hadn't so truly loved you, my darling, I might have fallen with each and every one of them.

Well, I no sooner got back to my quarters when I found I was elected to come up to headquarters and prepare the serious business just referred to above. So I didn't get to bed at all. However, I did sleep this morning while the boys were away (from 7:30 to about 11). Here we come to the only part of the story which in any respect resembles a Sunday at home. We had fried chicken for dinner. It wasn't up to the chicken we get at home, but of course that is just not to be expected....

This afternoon I have been working busily on two or three different phases of our work. Getting a new room set up with maps and furniture for briefing crews, and some other work that I can't mention at all, but it has kept me buzzing up until now when it is just about time for supper.



Note: On a mission to Bremen on the 14th, all planes had to return without dropping their bombs. On the 16th, they set out for a 6th mission to St. Nazaire. From the Combat Diary,

"Capts. Maurice Salada and Robert W. Smith and Lts. William H. Warner, Raymond J. Check, Pervis Youree, and Ralph Jones were assigned to fly...Every ship in the squadron was hit by the very first bursts of flak....In spite of this, we dropped our bombs and did the best bombing, according to higher headquarters, that had been done by the American forces to date. The pictures later showed how the bombs of the 423rd literally 'walked through' the target....Uncle Bill Warner had been hurt worse by flak than the rest, and the Jerries were not long in finding this out. They pounced on him in numbers. He was last seen headed for a cloud, in

apparent control of his plane, though it had two engines out and six FWs on his tail....Let's hope we hear again from Uncle Bill and his crew."

In fact, Lt. Warner and his entire crew were killed in action on this mission.



One other thing of great excitement, happened today. An Englishman whom I have met asked me the other day if I could get some cigars for him at our post exchange. I promised to get them for him and gave them to him today....He gave me (5) fresh eggs. You know I haven't had one since the first of September. I shall take one of these to the mess hall tomorrow morning and the chef will cook it for me individually. I shall have it fried, I believe. I am going to be very generous and give Shube two of them. I may eat all my three, or I may send one on to Wing and give it to them in exchange for a decoration or a promotion or something of the sort. That last I haven't decided. A promotion would, of course be nice, but it could hardly compare with a boiled egg right at this point. I think I probably shall eat all three myself....

It is now time for supper. I suspect it will be spam again. By the way, did I tell you to get rid of all the spam in the house before I get home? If you don't, I might not stop off in Cleveland after all this is over. Anyway, darlingest, I want to tell you before I am again diverted by unpleasant subjects, that I love you very very dearly. Proof of that is that those lovely girls in evening dresses last night only gave my heart a mild murmur.

February 18, 1943 I was asked to take a detail to the theater and the area surrounding it to clean it up and get it ready for the general. It was a mess....However it was cleaned up in time....Then this afternoon the General came and presented to the group a hundred and twelve different medals varying from DFC to the Purple Heart....Well after that, there was another meeting to say goodbye to our Squadron Commander, Major Wilson, who moves up to Group Air Executive Officer and welcome our new C.O.

Our new C.O. is new to the Squadron, though most of us have known him from the beginning. Capt. Lambert was at one time on the Group staff and then flight commander in another squadron. We have a policy in this group of selecting squadron commanders from the personnel of other squadrons or from the group rather than from the particular squadron itself....The reasoning is simple and sound, I think. In any squadron there grow into existence cliques and favorites. Taking a man from the outside tends to counteract this tendency and is altogether healthy. At any rate, I think nearly everyone is well satisfied that as long as there must be a change, we have done well.

February 21, 1943 We had a group officers' party last night that was great fun...I didn't have too much and behaved myself admirably except a couple of times when I was with the boys alone when I let the bars down somewhat....Toward the end, some of the few of us still remaining from those who were at Wendover went into the other mess hall and drank a toast to the last ones to "leave" us, smashing the glasses against the wall and then standing silent for a minute or two. Very impressive little ceremony.



Note: From the February 25th Combat Diary, "By order of VIII Bomber Command, we now are to have reveille every morning at 0615, and there is to be a Squadron Officer of the Day. We are fast falling in love with Bomber Command."

February 25, 1943 I had planned to write a very special letter to you today...I did think that somehow I might be able to make the old stuff a little more interesting. And then when I got down to headquarters I found a whole batch of letters to censor and then after reading over one dull letter after another for some two hours I lost most of my zeal. This censorship job, which is foisted upon S-2 is the worst job there is....

I understand the flying fortress is taking quite a beating publicity-wise in the States right now and that people are questioning the value on this front. I would like to be able to give a long, long talk on that subject. Most of the stories I have heard evidently arise from a lack of understanding on just what we are doing over here and what we have accomplished. They base their claims all on the bombing results of the few of us who are here. The boys have done good bombing, but I can agree that based on that alone without consideration of all other factors might prove a case for the opposition. But there is so much more to be considered.... among other things we are taking part in the most glorious experiment of the war and one which I think we have proved and if others up above agree, will be one of the biggest things in this war. I think we have proved that if we had some more of these fortresses over here, we could sweep the skies of enemy planes and have more or less clear sledding with a second front. That is all in addition to our bombing. On other fronts the fortress is proving itself from a purely bombing standpoint. We here are proving it is not only a bomber but one that doesn't need fighters to help it out and one can combine the bomber and the fighter uses to the nth degree. Like all experiments, this is costing lives and planes, but I have the utmost faith that the case is already proved and we are ready to go if furnished with enough planes and crews. Another use we are serving is in keeping the German fighters busy right here when they are so badly needed elsewhere, and it is here I would like to quote figures to you but of course I can't. I personally think that our being here is justified from any one of these standpoints standing alone. When you combine them you get a pretty big total. This talk of night bombing being better than day bombing or vice versa is all pretty silly. We have to do both. One compliments the other. The R.A.F. have some elegant planes for night bombing. The fortress is the best thing yet for day

bombing, and we need day bombing and night bombing too unless we plan to lose millions and millions of men winning this war. All this is naturally opinion and not fact so I don't think it should violate any rules. However, maybe it would be a good idea to talk of this letter without reading it too, generally assuming you are apt to read some of my letters pretty generally.

I have been wondering quite a bit recently about the health and wellbeing of my friend, A. I have also been pestered by her boyfriend who has a swelled head if ever there was one, to find out news from these sources. So if you find out anything new, please let me know. In the meantime, my darling, please give my love to Isabel and Arthur and Lee and then a big bunch of love to yourself. Your devotedest, Freddie.

Note: Fred and Pat apparently ascribed pet names to their respective anatomies: "Annex", or "A," for Fred's and "Annexia," also "A," for Pat's. Fred now and then makes mention of a letter that "A" receives (or is due) from "A", hinting perhaps at a personal correspondence left out of his "Freddie and World War II" transcription. Censors did not read inbound mail.

Regarding Fred's case for the 8th Air Force in early '43, his lawyerly sense that they faced a forceful opposition argument was on target. As military historian Gerald Astor has noted about this phase of the campaign, "With operations averaging an 8 percent casualty rate per outing, few airmen could expect to finish the prescribed twenty-five-mission tour. Churchill, still unconvinced of the U.S. strategy, wrote in a memorandum to Portal, 'the real question is not whether the American heavy bombers can penetrate into Germany by day without prohibitive losses, but how often they can do it and what weight of bombs they can discharge for the vast amounts of ground personnel and (materiel) involved.' With the handful of bomber groups hard pressed to get 100 ships off the ground at a time, the U.S. Air Corps contrasted poorly with the 1,000-plane efforts of the RAF. The prime minister's criticisms, and those of others of the Allied command vexed the American leadership." (The Mighty Eighth, p. 98)



February 28, 1943 Alan Richardson is again in the hospital. I don't know just what is wrong with him... However, he must be a pretty sick boy, from his looks at least. He was always rather frail, as you know, and even at Wendover had periods when he would go back to his bunk feeling pretty badly. Since coming over here he has had four periods of a couple of days or two weeks spent in the hospital, sometimes with a fever, sometimes just all washed out. He is an artistic boy, with an artist's temperament. He is terribly sensitive and "feels" almost everything very strongly. Combine a not too strong body with this sensitivity and a bit of homesickness and I think you have his trouble, or the reason for it, diagnosed.... He just hasn't the temperament or strength to take it. I know, for instance, that every time he loses a particular friend, he goes back to his quarters and cries half the night. Well, that is wearing as the devil and you can't let yourself do that if you want to do a good job—even if you feel like it. Not in the air corps anyway.... The docs in the hospital where they have taken him (for rest and observation) may find what is wrong and cure it right up. But in any event what I have said is opinion and not necessarily fact and for that reason I urge you not to pass it on to Mrs. Richardson....

February 28, 1943 Your letters filled in some gaps that I was glad to hear about---such as New Year's parties for one thing and more details about Arfkins for another. What you have to say about his need for a feeling of security is most interesting. I don't know that I ever quite

thought about it along those lines. Perhaps having been born and raised with the way paved so smoothly for me, I took security myself pretty much for granted until all this came along. One, of course, is apt to recognize only the troubles one has himself experienced as being important and I have never had to bother very much about this idea of security. Undoubtedly my going away has not, temporarily, been good for him from this standpoint. But as you know, I didn't come here or join the army for the thrill of it. I saw, or thought I saw, the vital need of everyone of us doing his utmost if we were to enjoy any sort of security for the next 25-50 years and I felt that with my lack of mechanical training the best and utmost I could do was the kind of a job that I now have. That is why I joined up, and in spite of the heart breaks and wrenchings that it has brought to our family, I still think that it was the thing to do. And as far as Arfkins is concerned, I think that he would suffer more later on from lack of security if we had lost this war than he will from my being separated from my family during these times. This, in other words is the less of two evils, my precious. As for our present feeling of security, I think now that if we keep our hearts and our souls in this business of war, we are absolutely sure to win out in the end. If we keep pitching, it will take a miracle for the Germans to win out. In other words, I myself feel very certain of the eventual outcome. The only possible question left, as far as I am concerned, is the time and cost. I hope you agree with me in all this because I think then you have a reason for your suffering. It's like cutting out smoking. I can't do it just to cut it out. I bet, though, that if a Doctor told me I'd have a 50/50 chance of dying or becoming an invalid or losing my mind or something of the sort, I would have a strong enough reason to want to cut it out enough to actually cut it out. Perhaps that is a silly parallel but...I think you will get what I mean...Give a kiss to darling Isabel, my dear son Arthur and precious little Lee, and then this evening when you have put the rest to bed, come to me in the library and give me a kiss. Your devotedest, Freddie

March 2, 1943 I think the censor will allow me to tell you about the checker tournament that we are about to have here at the post.... I guess I have told you before that I enjoy the game a whole lot. There is a whole lot more to it than I knew as a child. I bet I play an average of 5 games a day. During the past couple of months, since Capt. Wahl left and Rich was so often unavailable, checkers has taken the place of bridge in my social life. I don't suppose I will be able to get you interested in the game when I get back, but maybe the kids will take it up and then I can take them on....

March 9, 1943 Another 2 glorious letters from you. Combine that with the natural satisfaction one derives from having received a promotion and it is not strange why I am happy today....

A little more detail about my Captaincy. You remember I told you that Capt. Wahl left us a while back. That was somewhere around the first part of Feb. Well, that left the post of Squadron Intelligence Officer open. It was a case of Shube or me, I guess, and they gave the job to me. But anyway, that job according to the T.O. (Table of Organization) calls for a Captaincy. And I was put in for a promotion way back then. I didn't tell you about it because that was always a chance it wouldn't go through and that some one higher up might have

a different idea about what was right and proper. But now all that is past and the story, such as it is, can be told.

.... Just received your V letter of Feb. 25. And that told me about Lee cutting her hair. My gosh! I wonder what she thinks about it now. I bet a few days at school will be all the scolding she needs....



March 10, 1943 My Darlingest.... look closely in the upper left or upper right corners of this letter.... In addition to the Captaincy I am now Intelligence Officer of the squadron instead of Assistant. As a matter of fact the two went along together. I was told about it on my return late yesterday from a trip to South Western England....



Note: From the February 6 Combat Diary, "Today was the first of the really exceptionally fine bombing missions of the month. The target was Lorient, France... Immediately after leaving the target we had a 10-15 minute fight with the Yellow Noses, a crack GAF squadron of FW 190s. The group lost 2 crews on this mission, but once again the 423rd went unscathed.... Because of the distance covered on this trip, the group landed at Exeter and Chivenor on return. Those landing at Exeter found the field already overcrowded and so had to spend the night at a post some 10 miles away, sleeping on wooden benches with much too little blanket coverage. Those at Chivenor, including nearly all of the 423rd, had all the comforts of home, including fresh eggs for breakfast. We spent most of the morning waiting for the weather to clear sufficiently for us to make the trip back home. This occurred about noon. Lt. Fred Baldwin, squadron S-2, found his captaincy awaiting him when he got off the plane."

March 12, 1943 I expect to hear that you have received – at the bank - \$100 which I wired home 2-3 weeks ago....Also my Captaincy will bring a little extra and I have signed up to send you an extra \$50 per month starting with May 1. I can't do it sooner because it takes some time to get these things through to the States. This may mean that your check for May may come a couple of weeks late so don't get "caught short".

March 13, 1943. Received your letter of the 14th, my precious. You spoke of seeing "Flying Fortresses" in the movies. I didn't see it myself so perhaps I should say nothing at all about it. I hate to disillusion you but I know some of the boys could only stand about 15 minutes of it. I think the part that got them was where a fire broke out in the No. 3 engine and it was put out by someone climbing out and stuffing a pillow in the hole....

March 14, 1943.Well my darlingest, I have only space and time left now to tell you a little about the love I'm sending you. I have often sent you "all my love". That of course if taken literally, is not true, because I love Arthur, Isabel, Lee and several other members of our family. I also have love for both your and my friends. I love horses and the practice of law. But all those loves are very different from the particular kind I have for you. That kind, the love of a man for a woman, the kind occurring in ideal marriages, the tender love of a man for a recently subdued mistress, the love that makes you grit your teeth and makes you feel like you have sworn off cigarettes for 3 days – that kind

of love I send only to you, and I send every bit of it that I have got. Devotedly, Freddie

March 17, 1943 I have a new job now.... In addition to others I have been doing..... The most important court is the general court where the most serious cases are tried. There is practically no limit to what this court can do. Well the new job is assistant-defense counsel for this general court....It is not much fun because you are “playing” for pretty high stakes. Also, I don’t particularly care for the defense counsel himself.... Very frankly he is a good trial lawyer when he wants to be, but apparently he frequently goes on a tear the last minute.... If he is going to incapacitate himself the night before an important trial I don’t know what will happen. I definitely don’t like the situation that puts me in. Try and get out of it, however....

Note: The free flow of alcohol among Americans serving with the 8th Air Force in England has been mentioned. In Fred’s letters home, he probably gives the issue less play than warranted, for which he might have had his reasons. Three of Fred’s four brothers suffered from alcoholism—the disease that would in the long run kill each. One younger brother was arrested for running five lights on a drunken peal down a Cleveland boulevard. Family legend maintains that this brother’s strident, courtroom defense for the transgression was that it would have been impossible for the arresting officer to know that the lights he ran were red because he had shot out each one with a gun as he passed. To Pat, Fred seems careful to account for the events and the amounts involved when he drinks.

March 22, 1943The papers...tell of our raid on Vegesek. There was 1 building there that the powers that be wanted to put out. We put it out all right with just a few bombs. We did practically no residential damage. Now, of course the R.A.F. could have put the same building out at night. But to be sure that they had done so would have required a big raid with tons of bombs all over the area. I am not against area bombing. It has its place. If we are to break German morale, that is the way to do it. However, when you want a particular job done, you must do it in daylight so that you can see what you are doing.... Anyway, our bombing is now good. Our losses are within bounds and it is not like it was 2-4 months ago.

I love you my precious beautiful wife more than any words can possibly tell. You know the song “My Devotion”? It sends shivers up

and down my back every time I hear it. Very good applicable words too. Only even those words don't express it empathetically enough....

March 24, 1943. I am real sorry, my darlingest, that I can't always write letters like the one I wrote to Dad about the boys returning. That one, even I think, was a fairly good letter. I was sorry right after I sent it that I hadn't spent a little more time with it because I think I might have made something fairly good out of it. The trouble is, there are not a whole lot of dramatic situations here on the ground.... Of course I could probably do what some of the other boys have tried to do. (I censor their letters so I know—and cut it all out.) But I am surprised at the number of “office boys” that try and impress their loved ones with the “danger” of it all and even go to the extent of throwing in references to missions that they have, it is assumed, taken part in.

I don't believe in doing that. It wouldn't accomplish much. Maybe Arf would be able to tell his friends that his Dad was a hero or something of the sort but I doubt whether you would like it very much. For a while I thought I might, as a matter of fact, go on a mission. Then I found out what the boys think of such a thing. A passenger is very much in the way. As one boy put it to me, “Did you ever get into a situation where your neck depended on someone who was untrained and in whom you had no confidence. It is not a pleasant situation to be in.” That is the way a good many of them feel about it all and for that reason, I have never even made the suggestion that I should be allowed to go along. It isn't fair to them. So, I won't have any of that sort of tale to tell you. Are you sorry?

The best thing, I can write about, my darling is about how very much I love you....

March 25, 1943 I am thinking seriously of trying to get to town tonight to see “Desert Victory”.... Maybe I'll make it.

I saw a movie at camp the other day. There was one thing rather interesting. The news reel showed a little British war orphan at an American air-corps post. It showed her arriving, being shown over a B-17, and then eating at a mess hall. It was interesting because it was one of our orphans at our post.... Incidentally I am not in it. I think I told you, talking about news reels that for the past few days they have been taking a picture here which is to show the whole picture of a raid, right from the time the original orders come in through the loading up, briefing the crews, maybe the trip itself and finally the interrogation at the end. They have taken all but the trip itself already. The last should come soon. If they do show the whole thing in Cleveland, it would be

worth a special trip. If not the whole thing, then I don't think it would be worth more than something to help you choose between two movies----

March 27, 1943. I see by the papers that about 2,000 bags of mail has gone to the bottom of the ocean. Alack-a-day! I had mail from you about 4 days ago...Maybe I will have a stretch right now without much mail.... Shube got a letter from his wife which said that you were one of the few to receive mail recently. I hope it keeps coming to you. I'll do my best to keep up this end.

In her letter to Shube (I was only shown this part), she told of a WAAC at home who jumped over a fire and got deferred. Had you heard of that case?



March 29, 1943 I had a chance to see how this country looked from about 5 miles in the air. Naturally, I took the chance. I also wanted to see what the physical effect was of that sort of altitude. I found that as far as I was concerned, there was no "effect" at all. I don't know quite how to describe what it looked like.... The air was crystal clear and the sun was very very bright. It must have been very cold outside the plane—as a matter of fact it was 40 degrees below—but it was very warm inside. The only way I noticed the cold was that I had to continuously scrape the frost off the window glass. All in all, if one expected a thrill one would I think be disappointed....I was very much interested in all I could see (mostly beautiful clouds) and such, and the navigator, an old hand, had many interesting little items to tell me and things which I would have missed entirely if he hadn't pointed them out. I was very, very glad, indeed that I went along---Don't think, just because I did this, that I have any other ideas in my head. I want to

come back to you, at the end of this war too badly, my darling, to get any silly ideas about such things.

March 31 1943 Last night came your letter of Mar. 5 in which you enclosed the large snaps of the family....The most satisfactory I have ever had. Isabel is darling in her white formal with her silver sandals and the red sash. Art is grand in his sweat shirt. I like to have him that way because that is the way he is – 9/10s of the time anyway. And Lee, still with her lovely hair. Lee by the way has a pronounced expression. Either the sun was in her eyes, or she is a little cross at being made to pose by Sabel and Ruthie, or she is already considering ways and means of accomplishing a change of sex. I suspect I was right the first time or rather with the first of these alternatives. She is darling however and I think it one of the best pictures of her I have seen for some time.

....I am really glad you are taking this trip with Isabel.... I only wish I could join you. I wouldn't mind a week or two of sunlight and the wearing of swimming trunks. I wouldn't very much mind being with you and Isabel either. But I'd rather be with you longer. A week or shorter time would be wonderful but it would be hell at the same time, wouldn't it. Holyoke was that way. Do you remember. Will you ever forget. Especially that last morning. It was really terrible. But so very vivid still. Both of us "hanging on to ourselves" for all we were worth. Well, let's change the subject, n'est pas? – I often go through those last minutes, though, so very often.

April 2, 1943 I actually took a day off yesterday and went to London. I say "actually" not only because it is a very common English expression but because that was the first day off I have taken in over 3 months. So – it was quite an experience!.... I shopped at 4 stores, ate 2 meals, did some sight seeing, had my picture taken, saw 2 stage shows and 2 movies all in one day – not bad for a lazy brute like me. One last thing that I forgot to mention was that I browsed around in 3 separate bookstores in London, and that takes time.... Now for a little more on the detailed side....

..... The shows I saw would not have been chosen by you. I saw the Windmill show and another at Whitehall. Good entertainment though. Both are short, Earl Carroll types. Good looking and clever girls without much on. Nothing foul about them. I could have taken you to see them without qualm. The movies that I saw back here were really just to spend the time I had to wait for transport....

April 5, 1943 This was a typical day----I was called at 5 this morning because there were plans to be made for the day and I had to help make these plans and be ready to explain them to the boys right after their breakfast. I myself only had time for a cup of coffee at 8. I got them the first part all right finishing my little speech along with other little speeches about an hour later. Then I got busy immediately on these Court Martial cases which I had to try right after lunch. Witnesses had to have a last minute going over, and I had to ensure their presence at the trial and then get out my best pressed outfit so that I would look real nice and sweet when I appeared in court. The trials themselves went off well and while all three were guilty of crimes, I persuaded the court to find 2 of the boys "not guilty" on half of the charges against them. And to give them no more than a month in the guard house – and to recommend to our C.O. that he consider the month that they had already served while awaiting trial as applying to their "time". In all I got every point across that I tried for and so feel pretty well pleased.

Well, immediately after the trial, planes started to arrive home and I dashed back to ask the boys the usual questions. Then there were reports to be made out and filed. So many reports! And I have been doing that – or helping with it until about an hour ago. I then went to the mess hall. It was too late for supper but I found a boy who had just lost his roommate and I've been having a chat with him. That, I consider is all part of the job. I mean that last. The boys are so apt to turn to at least some of us older men on such occasions. I personally let them do most of the talking and don't actively do much good. But in a passive sort of way, by letting them talk, I think we do a bit of good.

----- This is the first letter I have written for some time in my quarters.---- I kind of like writing here too. If I look straight up from this page I see a "pin-up" picture of you. If I look over my shoulder I see 2 pictures of Sandy in uniform and 14 maps pinned in a row into the wall. It is nice surroundings I have here, I can tell you.

No letters today but I did get a copy of the University School news of Feb. 19, 1943. Nice to have. I noticed one "block" which had a list of Alumni in the armed forces. A.A. Baldwin ex '28, Lewis W. Baldwin ex '32 were mentioned. You know I don't care myself one way or the other but I thought that Arthur might like to see my name there along with the rest. I was ex '24. If you think it would make any difference to him, why don't you call them up some time. -----

April 10, 1943 How is my dear friend, Annexia. It has been so very long since I've seen her, I almost forget whether she is blond or brunette. Of course I don't really forget, because, if you want to know, a picture of

her is stamped indelibly on my mind, and I frequently bring this picture out, figuratively speaking, and study it. It's lots of fun. But if you see her, tell her my darlingest, that I would like to hear again from her, and I still would like a snap of her to pin up with my other snaps on the wall beside my bed.

.....I have been watching the map of Africa with great glee lately, my darling and out to the edges of my vision I have been keeping a map of Europe. For every mile that our armies take over in Africa means that we are that much closer to becoming once more a complete family. And every time we have a successful raid means the same thing....

April 11, 1943 Some time ago, I think it was before Christmas, I wrote about an article that might appear in the Saturday Evening Post and which, when it left here was called "Ten Men". I have now been told that the story is in the Mar. 27th issue and that the name is something like "I Raid the U-Boat Pens". You might be interested---- Those boys are some of my best friends, especially Robert Williams and Emmett Ford. Shively has gone back to the States for some plastic surgery but the rest are all okay. They are a swell bunch....

April 14, 1943 There has recently been a bit of a let up in our particular work and so, day before yesterday, when Major Wright suggested at breakfast that he and I go to London for the day, it seemed like a "jolly good" idea as "we" say over here. So yesterday I shaved and showered and put on my best "pinks" and off we set....Do you remember how we used to watch the people in Paris and how we noted that they came from every part of the globe. Well that is the case with London these days. Any large gathering such as a restaurant or hotel or theater will have several people in uniform from every continent there is. What set the Mirabelle off as different from other places were the class of women accompanying the men. - To be frank there were two nifties in particular (both escorted by bigger men than either Major Wright or me) who set our heads buzzing.

After lunch we went over to the quartermaster to do some shopping. I bought some badly needed shirts and ties and shoes while Major Wright was tending to his wants. Then a window shopping trip to Peels, and errand done for Major Wilson at a uniform store, a look-see at Liberty's and Selfridges and we found we had an hour before train time. So we hired a cab and drove through Trafalgar, Pall Mall to Buckingham Palace, over to Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament and then up the Thames to the Tower. Kind of a trip like

we had in Rome if you remember. Then back to St. Pancras to the train. All in all it was quite a trip.....



April 15, 1943 My very own darlingest, This is one of those “in case” letters. It is not an easy letter to compose. There are so many things to say, or a least that could be said. But first, let me say what it is all about.

Tomorrow morning, some time, I am going on a mission. That is something, I’ll admit, that I had not intended doing. What I want you to know now, is that I have really given this a great deal of thought and consideration and most definitely, I am not doing this to “get a thrill”. I have had all of the thrills I want in this life. No, it is not that. I am convinced, however, from several angles, that I will be able to do a much better job as an intelligence officer if I actually partake in an actual raid. The reasons are probably as obvious to you as they are to me. So I wouldn’t go into them except to say that I came here with the idea of doing my very best and that is the only reason why I am taking this step. Since you will only be getting this letter if I don’t show up with the rest of the boys when they come back, I am afraid that it will mean that I made a mistake. But right now, I think that what is to be gained is well worth the risk. And when I talk of risk I am thinking of

you and the children, my darling. Please always believe me, though, when I say I am not just selfishly seeking a thrill. Darlingest, after the thrill of having your love, anything else is just anti-climax.

Now, one warning. You remember how long it was before anyone heard from John Morley. We have been months here waiting for news of some of our boys. We heard just the other day from some who had been missing since the first part of November. What I am trying to drive at is that you may get a card that I am missing. If so, have courage, my precious. The chances are about two to one that I am safe and sound. I may have trouble getting in touch with you but I hope not. Don't give up hope, though, until the whole darn show is over and done with. I've always been lucky, as you know, and no matter what happens to the others I know that somehow I will be there when the boys come home.

There is little else to say, my very own. I would like to be there with you to comfort you. That I can't do. At least for a while, but I'll probably be back as soon as I would have anyway. So all you will miss will be my regular letters. I won't be able to give you such advice as I have so far, but even then, that has already proved to be rather unsatisfactory, hasn't it. You don't really need any advice anyway darling. At least your decisions have always been the same as mine or better ones. So just go ahead as you have been doing since I left you.

You might tell the children that I will expect as much from all of them as I would have if I had been here all the time to write to them every so often. I expect, when I see them next, to have grown older and better and finer.

Well, that is about all, my darlingest one. My love to you and to all the children. I shall be thinking of you even when I am flying – in the service of our country – over Germany tomorrow. Wish I had time for a book, but there is much to do. Your devotedest, now and always, Freddie

Note: On April 16th, the day Fred wanted Pat to picture him flying over Germany, the 423rd was not included in a Group raid to Lorient. The Combat Diary laments, "Maybe we should have been, for the group did not do one of its best jobs." Apparently, Fred still looked forward to going on a mission, so he tucked his "in case" letter away into a dresser drawer. The letter, a kind of unexploded ordinance, went off some time over the following weeks, traveling all the way to Cleveland. The stunned family went into action, sending telegrams seeking verification of the tragic, wholly unexpected news that Fred—who was supposed to have been safely on the ground bicycling between mess

halls and briefing rooms—had gone down in a plane. A telegram eventually got to Fred at the Thurleigh station, and he scrambles to correct the misinformation. The snafu became a famous, family story—the one story I had heard as a child about Fred Baldwin's service. And Fred includes this letter, in sequence, in his "Freddie and World War II" transcription.

I think circumstances of this event—Fred's decision to go on a mission, his fantasy of survival as a POW who eventually returns home as an "older, better, finer" man, and finally the fact that the letter got posted—is fascinating. In subsequent letters, Fred "sweats out" how the posting could possibly have happened. But he, of course, is a likely suspect. Did Fred's subconscious urge a fuller engagement, a consummation of his desire to enter what the boys around him were going through? As the story came down to me as a boy, this was a mission "so dangerous that your Grandfather did not feel he could send others without going himself." Was the story I heard such a distortion, really? Isn't it reasonable to suppose that this romantic, empathic man—burdened by survivor's-guilt—wanted his family to know something more about himself than that he missed them dearly and could be counted on to faithfully write?

Certainly the trauma around Fred Baldwin was considerable through this period. Ten days before Fred pens his letter, a close friend, Capt. Robert Salitrnik, returns severely wounded from a mission. Fred travels to the hospital in order to give blood for his friend but is turned away, his blood apparently the wrong type. At first the prognosis looks good, but on April 16th, the same day Fred's mission opportunity is cancelled, news comes down that Robert has died. On the following day, the full Group raids Bremen, Germany, and loses ten planes—100 men. Ten of these men are from the 423rd. Russell Strong writes of the Bremen raid aftermath, "As the toll exacted of the 306th became evident, the waiting officers and enlisted men of Thurleigh were stunned. With four crews lost on 5 April, and now another 10 on 17 April, morale on the base was devastated. New crews had arrived this month, but it was the loss of old familiar faces which caused the deep, aching feeling." (Strong, p. 92) Fred's Combat Diary of April 18th notes, "Because of our large recent losses, the group was made non-operational in order to give us time to train our new crews and to lick our wounds." But Fred is not given much of a break. "The balance of this month was spent receiving newly-arrived members of the 94th, and teaching them as well as our new crews, morning, noon, and night. Classes begin at 8 in the morning and run until 10 at night, seven days a week."

April 17, 1943perhaps we should make a change in the way we are handling our taxes, or rather my taxes. I hear over here a rumor to the effect that taxes for those in foreign service may eventually be excused entirely. This as a kind of bonus after it is all over. That is something not to be counted on. As a matter of fact I certainly don't approve of the idea, because we should pay tax as much as anyone else. But I don't want to pay if no one else is going to (which is a possibility not a probability). To get to the point, tax bonds are only good as turned on taxes. On the other hand, baby bonds are supposed to be redeemable for cash. It is my idea that you should still figure the amount of taxes that I will owe, but instead of putting that money into tax bonds, put it into baby bonds which will give better interest and which I will be able to use whether or not I must pay tax when I get back. I think it would be a darn good idea to speak to Howard and to Dad about this. I heard of the rumor through Major Wright who has some Wall St. friends....



April 21, 1943 My darlingest, I went to London yesterday, but it was not the kind of trip that you might expect. As a matter of fact I was only there for lunch and then went on to Brookwood Cemetary where American soldiers are buried. It was for the funeral of my friend, concerning whom I have recently written.

I drove down there with Capt. Frank Yaussi, the former roommate. It was a lovely day and the cemetery was a very beautiful one....Soldiers from the last war are also there and that part is particularly beautiful. The cemetery is quite thickly wooded mostly with pine trees and evergreen shrubs. Down the center of the American section there is a wide gravel path on both sides of which are a row of, I think, peach trees. Right now they are all in blossom, with a lovely pink flower. On either side of this row of trees are rows and rows of plain but very nice marble crosses with names, ranks, dates and home towns inscribed thereon. On the right, as you walk down this path is a hedge and across the hedge there is a plot of land which they are using for soldiers of this war. This part is rather bare right now, but they are seeding it just about as fast as they fill it up.

The ceremony is dignified and simple and I should imagine, conformed to the usual standard of military funerals. We all marched two abreast down the gravel path and then over to the spot where they were having services for eight men one of whom was my friend. We lined up facing the graves at attention. A protestant prayer was followed by a Latin prayer. (I judged it to be Catholic.) Then, as a non-com walked or marched from one grave to the next and saluted each coffin, the boys' names were read off. This was followed by taps on the bugle and then off in the distance came an answering taps from another bugler. With that we marched off.

After the ceremony, Yaussi and I went back and found where some of the other boys from this outfit were buried and then we drove back here. Not the pleasantest way to spend a day, but I thought you might like to know what it is like.

Note: The funeral was for Captain Salitnik, who had been navigating on 5 April in the lead group, piloted by Col. Wilson. Brig. Gen. Frank Armstrong (played by Gregory Peck in the movie "12 O'Clock High" about Armstrong's leadership of the 306th) was along as an observer and in fact the General assisted in giving first aid to Salitnik after exploding shell cartridges tore into the navigator's leg. Salitnik was able to give Wilson the correct heading for home before he passed out. It was a source of some eye-rolling among members of the 306th in later years that the General was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for his participation in the raid—though he never touched the plane's controls. Two months after burying his roommate, bombardier Capt. Frank Yaussi would complete his 25th mission and be discharged home. Fred would continue training men, sending them up, and listening to their stories upon return for another full year beyond that.



Gen. Armstrong and Col. Wilson on left, Capt. Salitnik 4th from left.

.....Tomorrow, darlingest, is your birthday. I ordered flowers for the occasion. I ordered them in what should have been plenty of time. They were to come through Kents. Please let me know if you got them because I certainly want to raise a fuss if you didn't. Also, if they came too soon or too late, I should want to know.

In the next few days, I shall send you a little piece of jewelry. Nothing much, but it is my own idea. I had it made up here for you thinking that you might like it. It is a captain's bars with the air-corps wings set right across....

April 22, 1943 SECRET CONFIDENTIAL SECRET My very darlingest, a very, very happy birthday to you, my precious. Though I can't be there to celebrate it with you in person, I am certainly with you all day long in my thoughts....

This being a special occasion, I am going to take the liberty of thinking a little about the time when I will be coming home. It is all very well to plan not to think of that time. It is better that we don't for the most part because it is for so many reasons agony to do so. But let us on a few special occasions, such as this, enjoy some of this agony.

I presume, when I come home—and I have an idea or rather a hope that this may be some time between the time when we lick the Germans and the time we start to really mop up the Japs—I will land in the terminal. If this is the case I want you to get yourself all ready first. I will permit you to wear 2 stockings (rolled at the knee) if stockings are necessary. You can also put on 2 shoes, one on each foot. But if you wear shoes, be sure they are not lace shoes. Laces can get tangled up in knots and knots take time to undo. I would advise against a hat. We might forget to take that off in our hurry and it might get messed up. I am afraid, since you will be meeting me down town, at the terminal, that a dress will be necessary. If you decide to wear one be sure that it can be washed and pressed at home. I am not at all sure that I will have time to take it off and even if we do we might carelessly throw it in the back of the car where the children might step on it. And it would be too bad to do that to a real nice dress, wouldn't it. Under no circumstances must you wear anything at all under that dress, if any. All those things are entirely unnecessary, a terrible nuisance and worst of all might give me a permanent injury because, I assure you they would be entirely disregarded. The bed at home will, naturally, be all ready. Sheets turned down, springs oiled and reinforced and all that. The rest is up to you, my darlingest. I might warn you, though that I won't give you time to wait for little odds and ends. Consequently I should advise that pessaries be already in place. You know, we may very well not have time to wait till we get out to Shaker Heights. Perhaps Isabel, in the mean time, could be taught to drive the car. If so that would be a good idea, because intercourse while driving is really extremely difficult to say the least. Of course I expect to be able to wait until we get home, but I am warning you about these things because there is a considerable chance that I won't quite be able to. Well, I think that covers the essentials. If you think it advisable, you might save a lot of trouble by reserving a room at the Cleveland. I will leave that to you.

So much for that. Needless to say Annex sends his love and assures me he is quite in accord with these plans. He expects when the time comes to enjoy himself in a big way. Your devotedest.....

April 25, 1943 ... You might also like to know that Shube has been put in for a Captaincy. I wouldn't let Janet Owen hear about it if I were you. So many things can happen and if it didn't work out, she might be disappointed. I know. Major Wright, though he was an Intelligence Officer for this group, was "put in" 3 times before it clicked, and someone along the line put the kibosh on me the first time I was

suggested. And so it goes. So you see, it isn't a sure thing at all yet. The only thing that has happened is that his recommendation has gone up the line. -----

April 26, 1943 ... A story I heard the other day which I thought pretty good. Perhaps you have heard it, especially as it seems to me to be a dressed up version of an old, old story. Anyway it appeared that Sambo, a little colored boy was not doing well at school. As a matter of fact he had trouble with all of his teachers. So they called his mother down for a conference. First one teacher said that Sambo was a little liar, that he couldn't tell the truth if he tried to. The mother said, yes'm, jes' like his father. Then another teacher said she thought he was the laziest boy around and again the mother said, "Jes' like his pa. I sho is glad I never did marry dat man."

So much for humor such as it is....

Note: For Pat's enjoyment, Fred often relayed jokes that were making the rounds. Most often jokes with a sexual punch line. Not usually vulgar by 21st century standards, but some close to that edge. Race jokes were rarer.

....Another unimportant little item, that is, unimportant as far as winning the war is concerned, is the affair of the stolen bicycle. It is a tragic affair. That's because the bike belongs to me, or rather it did 2 weeks ago. I've been doing a lot of walking since that time. I have tried to get the C.O. to move the field closer to the mess hall and the headquarters closer to my quarters, but somehow they don't think that I have given them sufficient reason. In the meantime I walk some 5-6 miles a day anyway. I sure get my exercise though, and that is something. If the guy who did the dirty deed is found I shall enjoy "defending" him before the court martial.



May 2, 1943 Plenty of work this weekend. I can't tell you just what we have been doing except that our teaching has doubled recently. This...in addition to everything else we are doing. For news I will send you a couple of clippings with this letter. They will tell the story pretty well. That is what is going on....

Note: On a St. Nazaire raid the day before, the 423rd lost two planes (20 men) to heavy flak. A fire in a 3rd plane is described in the Combat Diary: "The back of the plane was enveloped in flames, which grew so intense that (three men) bailed out to almost certain death in the Channel....Sgt. Maynard H. Smith, ball turret, disregarding his own safety, wrapped a towel around his head and fought his way through flames and exploding .50 cal machine gun shells to the radio room where he heroically fought the flames, and was largely responsible for the safe return of the a/c. On later inspection, engineers marveled at the safe landing made by Lt. Johnson in S.W. England. It was Johnson's 25th and final mission." Smith would receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism. Fred probably played a part in getting Smith's remarkable story out. Andy Rooney—later of "60 Minutes" fame—reported Smith's story first hand in Stars & Stripes, and Smith's medal would be presented at Thurleigh by the Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson. The two planes that did not return on May 2nd would be the last full crews the 423rd would lose in May, their busiest bombing

month to date. In this month, the squadron would be credited with destroying 21 enemy fighters.

.... My court martial cases now average between 1 and 2 a week. That is a little more than I would like especially as it is all extra non-intelligence work. But, I suppose, it may stand me in good stead some day. I presume Arthur will be about thru with the first phase of his regular trips to the Doctor by the time you get this. I hope it has all been very satisfactory and worthwhile. I hope too that you will be able to carry on from this point. Because that really is a burden to you financially.

May 3, 1943 Heard a couple of jokes which I'll pass on. Have you heard the definition of a psychiatrist? Well, he is a man who spends his time trying to find out if a child has more fun in infancy than an adult has in adultery.....

Your letters stated many pleasing things. I was sorry to hear of Lee's ear but I guess that it worked out all right in the end. The news of Arthur and the grand progress he is making is so very satisfactory! And the flowers apparently arrived on time and were all right. Maybe I'll try it again sometime so long as it worked out so well.

May 5, 1943 We are still busy here teaching, teaching every day. Our teaching has been doubled and I hope it continues that way because I'm all for anything to quicken the coming of the final reckoning. We of course are by this time quite the old timers with the experience and I must say the pupils listen sort of ga-ga to anything we have to say..... Other than that I have had a very quiet life. That is, no social life for a while. My "social life", consists of going to town to the movies, attending a dance here at the post or maybe a shopping trip to London. So when I say I have no social life that's what I mean - just in case you are interested....

May 5, 1943 ----- In one of your last letters you mentioned that the last 5 of my letters have been censored. Has there been any let-up? Not that there is any military information that I would wish to "get through" but it would be a shame to let a stranger know what a naughty mind my precious has. Also, some of the very naughty things I sometimes feel like telling you. So, my dear, if you let me know----at least I would write with considerably less embarrassment.

.... Your B letter last night...stated that I was making my debut in the news reels. If so, I certainly didn't know it at the time. I saw the movie

camera, but I also saw a couple of generals at the same time and when I saw them I gave up all hope of breaking into the movies. I paid no attention to the camera in to which I had theretofore been staring for some time. I do know that while I was so staring into the front of the camera there was no one around to start it going....

Shube got a crick in his back this morning as he was getting on his bike and unfortunately fell at the same time which didn't make it any better. I am trying to persuade him to take a bit of treatment, for it isn't very comfortable....

May 7, 1943 My day has been rather busy though not too much so. This morning I gave a class and then put the finishing touches on my preparation for my latest court martial.... I must say that all in all my particular job is distasteful to me. I have always thought that criminal law was not a very nice branch to be in. I think even less of it after my military court experiences. For instance, I know quite a bit about the accused in the case today. I didn't like him and as a matter of fact, I shall always feel he "let me down" just a short time ago. I was personally convinced that he was guilty and I have some reason to believe that his story was not the truth. Yet I am not the one to judge the truth or falsity of a prisoner's statements. That is the province of the court. And I am not the one to judge whether the prisoner is a good or bad individual. That too is for the court. As I see it, whether I like it or not, I should bring out into the case anything that can be said for the prisoner. And the same goes for my argument after trial. Also, I am there to see that nothing irrelevant or prejudicial gets into the case. Well I did those things well enough today to gain oral approval of members of the court, but I didn't like anything about it actually. I suppose it is good for us to do things we don't like once in a while. If so, I should be a greatly improved individual when this war gets over because I personally don't see where I am going to be relieved of these present duties for a long long time to come.

Last night, after an early supper here at camp I went to town. I stopped in, about 6:30 with the Dennis family of whom I have told you. They had just finished "high tea" as a substitute for supper. We sat around for a while discussing Africa and then went to the County Theater to a show. It wasn't too hot actually (Say I, thus mixing up my American with my newly acquired English). It was what they call a review, but what I would call a very old time vaudeville. But after all, it isn't London and one can't expect to get too good a show here any more than you would at Elyria. I myself prefer the movies. The Dennis's, however, like to get away from it all and the movies are often

sad and about things they know of too well to be funny. I didn't have time to go back to their home with them as my transport left almost as soon as the show was out. But the evening as whole was really quite enjoyable....



May 8, 1943 TELEGRAM: Terrible mistake made someone found letter and mailed it for me am well as ever love,
Fred C. Baldwin

May 8, 1943 My very own darlingest, I received cables this afternoon from you and Dad. Needless to say I am very, very upset. As soon as I received them I went as fast as my bike would carry me to the post office and sent off a cable and now have just returned here and naturally won't do another thing until I try, if I can, to tell you just what happened.

As I stated in my cable, it was a terrible mistake. I did write the letter, I must admit, in good faith. Then I put it in my top Bureau drawer after sealing it up and getting it all ready. My thoughts were that if anything should happen, Shube would go through the drawer, find and mail the letter. Well, nothing did happen, as you can see by the fact that I am writing this and using the same address as I always did, but someone must have seen the letter and with the idea of doing

me a favor, probably, took it upon himself to mail it for me. That is the only way I can figure it out. I didn't go that day and so I didn't destroy the letter at that time. The only thing I can say now, is that I am really terribly sorry, my precious. It must have been a terrible shock to you. I could kick myself all over the lot for not destroying it and writing another at a later time, or at least checking to see whether it was still in place. If I had done that I might at least have cabled you to disregard the letter or destroy it without reading.

I have also received today your letter of Apr 29. You had been, apparently, several times to the Colony Theater. I don't know what sort of shot it was. From your letter, I gather I shook hands with some Colonel or other. It might have been any one of several. I am very good, I think, at shaking hands with Colonels. But anyway, my darling, I hope, whatever it was, that it was to some extent satisfactory. If they gave you a piece of the film, it should be no trouble getting enlargements made. In the meantime, I am still searching for someone with a camera. Haven't found one yet. But I have a couple of lines out...

Darlingest, I love you so very much. I can't possibly tell you how very much. But it makes me feel all the worse for the ghastly mistake I made leaving that horrible letter around. Because that was so very cruel to you my precious. I so wish I could comfort you right now in the usual manner and ask for your forgiveness....A thousand kisses, my darling. Your devotedest, but very much ashamed husband, Freddie.

May 8, 1943 I have just finished sending you a cable and a V letter. I want you to get some news in a great hurry and the only way to make anywhere sure of that is to use all possible means of communication at the same time. So before doing anything else, I am also writing air mail. I am well. Physically I am fine. Mentally, not so good. But that is only because of the ghastly mistake that has been made and which called forth cables from you and Dad.

I am not absolutely sure what happened. But this much I can tell you. I wrote the letter on the evening of the date shown thereon. It was my intention (after several weeks of careful thought) to do what was suggested in the letter....Well, the next morning things were called off as far as I was concerned. But you see it was my intention to wait for the next opportunity. I consequently did not destroy the letter but let it stay where it was. Now here is where I am a bit uncertain. But I think some one, somehow found it and, perhaps all with perfectly good intentions and thinking that they were doing me a service, mailed it for me....I could kick myself all over the lot for not destroying it in the first place. It was a foul dirty trick, and darlingest, I am very sorry. I wish I

could be there to ask for your forgiveness in our accustomed manner. Being so very far apart makes me feel so terribly hopeless in a situation like this. But what can I say or do to make it up to you. I am afraid you have a very cruel husband, my darling one. I wonder that you believe me when I tell you how terribly I love you. The trouble is, this great love makes everything so much worse rather than better.

.....So please forgive my ghastly mistake darlingest. I am so very sorry it happened. But what can I do now. It is too late, isn't it? I can reassure you once more, if it is any comfort at all that you have a husband who has many, many faults but who is wholly and completely in love with you and with you only. I'd give anything if it were only possible to get that letter back here where I could burn it and then tear up the charred pieces. But that is beyond recall. My love, though still burns. More brightly, and it hurts more right now than, I think, ever before, if that is possible. If only you had married a man who didn't make such terrible mistakes!! All my love darlingest, and a thousand kisses. Your devotedest but very ashamed husband, Freddie

Note: Of course the repetition of Fred's appeal for forgiveness for his mistake is amplified in the correspondence because he could not be sure any one letter would make it through, so sent several. But the note of anxiety that Fred strikes almost makes one wonder if his imagination was rehearsing another sort of apology. That is, Fred's letters sometimes have the sound of a husband professing his fidelity a little too much. It is about this time that Fred starts spending more time with Bedford families like the Dennises.

May 8, 1943 I think I was a fool to write that darn letter in the first place. A greater fool to let it stay put (as I thought). But the very worst has happened. My darling wonderful wife has been given a cruel sock in the jaw and all I can do to comfort her is to say in my puny sort of way that I'm sorry. How inadequate!!...

But I always get back to the thought that I am hopeless. That there is nothing I can do to undo the damage already done. God knows you have all too often had to forgive me for some crazy stunt. But I never pulled anything like this before. I'm sure I'll never do anything near as bad again!!!

Oh darling how I do love you. And worship you. How I wish I could be with you now to tell you in my own words how sorry and ashamed I was and to kiss those tears all away. Why is it that I've let you down so when you are the only one I truly and wholly love. You do know that, at least, don't you, my precious. Please realize that in

spite of everything else that could ever happen. If only I could really and truly express myself!!! Your devotedest, Fred

May 8, 1943 Today we hear in the papers and over the radio that Tunis and Bizerta have fallen.....All that would be joyful news indeed if it wasn't for that D__ letter that I should never have written. I still haven't been able to find out just what happened to the letter, but I guess since it was sent off anyway and since you got it, all that doesn't matter. What does matter is that I have stabbed you in the back and hurt and shocked you and can't do anything about it except write letters which are probably very little consolation. I feel very low and very helpless about it all....

May 7, 1943 RECD Telegram to Mr. A T Colwell, vice president Thompson Prods Corp from the Adj Genl : Pleased to inform you casualty reports received War Dept. to date do not contain name 1st Lt. Fred C. Baldwin. In every case casualty emergency addressee notified immediately upon receipt such report.

May 10, 1943 Letter from A.T. Colwell to Capt. C.O. Neely, office of Adj. Gen. War Dept. Washington: It is difficult to express how much we appreciated your wire in the case of Capt. Fred C. Baldwin. It was gratifying to have your office act so promptly in such a touching case as this. A cable has been received from Capt. Baldwin, stating that he is all right. We are at loss to know the circumstances of this case, but it will probably be cleared up eventually. May I extend to you the appreciation of Mrs. Baldwin for your help on this occasion. Sincerely, Yours....

May 12, 1943 The news in the paper and radio is better every day. We are so very excited and pleased with it all. I heard this morning, for instance, that Churchill is in Washington. Whether or not that turns out to be true, it is "good medicine" isn't it. Whatever they decide, I have the feeling that bigger things are going to happen this summer that we have yet seen during this war with the exception, perhaps of some of the things that have happened in Russia....

May 12, 1943 Earlier today, I wrote a "V" letter to you. But those letters, while they are all right if you haven't got any other way of writing, or unless you want to get something across the boundless ocean in a great big hurry, are really not very satisfactory, it seems to me. To a certain extent they are like the old penny postcard and even

knowing that these will be read at headquarters by the base censor, still there is a far more intimate feeling about a letter that you can seal up and not show to any one who wants to read it----

Heard an old, old story today, but it is still good enough, I think to put in about this point. It all happened in the Hill country of the Carolinas or Kentucky or some such spot. At any rate, the census taker was going the rounds. At almost every house for miles and miles he found there was at least 1 child in the family using the last name of Smith. Finally he came to one house and was met by the old man of the hills who apparently could just hobble about. As you have already suspected, it was soon disclosed that the name of this man was John Smith and not only that, but he also admitted that he was the father of all those children that the census taker had already met. The man of the government was naturally surprised and a bit awe struck and asked the old man "How the devil did you do it." The old man with a shrug said, "Oh, that's easy. I have a bicycle."





May 14, 1943 I didn't write yesterday. I was really too busy. However, no news is good news and this time I think I have what you would like to hear. I am afraid I will have to refer you to my most unfortunate letter of April 15. If, as I planned, I still had that letter here I would now have most definitely torn it up because the little job that I was considering has now been fully accomplished, and accomplished quite satisfactorily. And the reason that is good news is that it is all over and you don't need to worry any more if you did....



Note: The Combat Diary of May 13 reads in full, "The target today was the air frame factory at Meaulte, France. With a clear day, Spitfire and P-47 protection and no flak, it was clear sledding. The whole trip and the bombing were superb. Capt. Raymond J. Check led the squadron, with Capts. Pervis Youree and Maurice Salada, and Lts. Ralph W. Jones, Thomas E. Logan and James E. Hopkins." Fred might have been permitted to go on this run because it had fighter support. He flew in Capt. Check's lead plane. It was a milk run. And it was France, not Germany. But Fred had now joined the fraternity of soldiers who had exposed themselves to the potential of enemy fire: he had flown a mission, a thing no one could take away from him (a thing, in other words, unlike a bicycle).

Something else of excitement. Shube Owen yesterday, while I was gone, crashed through with his Captaincy. Very excited about it naturally and I made him buy me a couple of drinks last night. You know, cigars are very hard to get around here and so instead of handing out cigars as we used to do in the states when we had a baby or promotion, we now buy everyone drinks. It's very expensive too I can tell you. What we call a double scotch, but what is actually a full jigger of whiskey, costs 50 cents approximately—really 2 and 6. I don't know how much it cost Shube, but it cost me a little over 30 bucks (if that is the term you still use.) But it's fun just the same, and after the initial cost it's all to the good....

May 16, 1943 (Shube) is now S-2 of another squadron but still here and still my roommate. And he will continue to be my roommate unless either his or my adjutant decides suddenly that he should bunk with his own men. So far they have either been too lazy to tell him to move, haven't thought of it, or have given it full consideration and come to the conclusion that they didn't care very much. Anyway, he will now increase his allotment by \$50 as I have done. Maybe you didn't know that, but you will the first of June or thereabouts. By the way, while I am on that subject...(my) check when it does come, should be for \$225.00....

I mentioned taking a little trip the other day. It was on business and so I can't tell you any details about it. But I might say that it was a nice comfortable little trip, I saw lots of places I had hoped but didn't expect to see this year anyway, and I have fully accomplished the purpose for which I made the trip. I shouldn't think I would have to make another. I certainly don't plan to. I am quite convinced that I did the right thing, except of course, that I should never have written any letters during the middle of last month....

.... Wonder what is in store for both of us for the next 3 months. You, I imagine, will have your increased problems. I certainly don't see them lightening up any on these rationing things. And if I am unfortunately right, that means there is only one way to go and that is for stricter and stricter rationing. That, of course, with a few exceptions, has been the history over here.

Well, I hope, in spite of it all, my precious, that this summer will prove to be a happy one. I hope you will be able to get away for a while, spend some time on the farm and all of that. It is twice as important now that you all keep in excellent health. Just as important as it is for me.

I myself am in very good health. I get plenty of sleep, even though I spend many nights working. I still have time to catch up. I bet

I have averaged 8-9 hours since I have been here. And with very few exceptions I have slept soundly every night. (I guess that shows a clear conscience or something of the sort.) I get plenty of exercise too. I have told you the distances that I have to cover each day. I imagine it is somewhere between 5 and 10 miles in all. This is covered either by walking or bicycling....

May 19, 1943 I've been busy by any standards of late. 2 hours sleep night before last. None last night. But I did get a 3 hour nap after breakfast this morning. I've got a new job in addition to the others. This is defense counsel for the General Court Martial. I had been assistant defense counsel. Had 2 cases yesterday. My first in the new job. Both fellows caught asleep on sentry duty. Not nice cases to handle especially as both fellows insisted on lying (I'm sure). But I did a pretty good job and they got off pretty easily. (6 mos. apiece and loss of pay). My next case is a week from today (for the General Court) and sometime between now and then for the Special Court. With all that I might seem to be losing my identity as squadron intelligence officer but that is where the night work comes in. It's fun working like the devil, when you can almost see Italy cracking and the d---- Nazis in the dithers. When the boys go out and come back and plaster just what you tell them to and when you see more and more of them doing just that.... It all makes you think that maybe it won't be a matter of years at all.



.... Today I have moved. I think I told you in my last letter that I had been told I would have to move. So did Shube. We have met and passed the parting of the ways. Shube has gone to his squadron and I am now living,

for the first time since arriving in England, in the "site" where the 423rd combat crews are situated. Better than that I have been terribly lucky in the matter of rooms. My new roommate is Robert Williams whom

you have read about in the Saturday Evening Post and who is now a Major. I guess that is lucky all right! He is a grand fellow....He is doing a grand job here. One of the very best done by anyone. I mean, when he is there, "Operations", probably the most important job in the camp, runs smoothly and efficiently and it is easy and pleasant to work with "ops" at those times. Also then, and only then, everyone can rely on Ops. We will be given prior notice of lectures to be given; the trucks will be there to take the boys from the planes to the interrogation rooms, and all that sort of thing. I have always thought that "Willie" would be one of those whom I would like to know better and whose friendship might well last on. He comes from Michigan by the way. So we should be able to see him and his wife at not too infrequent intervals when this is over....

May 21, 1943 Yesterday I had the day off. Rather unusual at that. So I went to London for the day....I went over to the Post Exchange where I met Shube. He had spent the time after lunch getting some theater tickets. He bought some clothes here.... I did get some cigarettes and candy....Then a bit of window shopping...Then a taxi to the theater itself. We got there about a half hour early. That, of course, is all right here because they have bars in the lounges of theaters, nearly all of them. Shube and I had a couple of very, very weak scotches. So weak that I never did feel the slightest effect and then went up into the stalls where we spent the next two and a half hours, thoroughly enjoying "Strike a New Note."

It was a review. Nearly all new names and new faces. That was the idea of it. But there was real good music. Good looking (and fully clothed) girls. All young and peppy. It was one of the fastest moving shows I have ever seen. One of the best songs was "I'm going to get lit up when the lights go up in London". Sometime I hope to be able to get the words to this one.

At any rate we both thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, and then when it was all over, we made a dash for the tubes....we arrived in the station just in time to see the 5:25 pull out. Fortunately there was another train in 7 minutes, but this second train was a "stopping" train and took 2 hours to do what the earlier train did in an hour and 10 minutes.

Well we finally, at long last got back here. So that was "My Day". Heard a story yesterday. It seemed that a WRNS was accused of sitting on the lap of the Admiral. The interesting part was that she openly admitted it.-----loads of love and kisses, and all the love this envelope will hold.

May 25, 1943 I have just received your V letter of May 12 and Dad's V letter of the same date. They bring up a very sad subject. One that I don't like to think about too much. But one that I can't help thinking about quite a bit. I am glad I got them though. Particularly because now I know how long it took for you to get the news that I was all right...4 days is very much too long, but at least it is somewhat better than I had feared. I guess I'd better be on my good behavior for more reason than one from now on. Be that as it may, it is my intention to do just that. I mean, be on my good behavior. As I told you in my recent letter tho, I've made my trip. It's over and done with.....

.....Dad says that you insisted on being cheerful and hopeful, at least outwardly. I know you would, darlingest. And thank you too for keeping it from the children until it was all over, the right way. You certainly did use your head there. And a slip of the tongue at that point when you were undoubtedly emotionally upset might have caused quite a bit of damage—particularly to Arthur, I think. I am very grateful about this, my darlingest.

.... I have a rather Desperate (from the defense standpoint) court martial tomorrow morning. The fellow didn't like his particular squadron and was trying to get himself transferred. It is a case similar to the fellow who was so desperate that he committed burglary so that he would be sent to jail. This fellow, tho he may not have realized it at the time, committed enough offenses to put him in the hoosegow for several years.-----

May 28, 1943 Had a rather interesting time yesterday. Major Williams and I made a good-will call on a nearby RAF station.....We had some drinks on the lawn beside the headquarters, which is an old abbey....after dinner in the Officer's Mess we were driven around the place, went to an Ensa show (Ensa is the British U.S.O.) and then sat down to plan an aerial show in which we will participate to help them with their particular "Wings for Victory" week. It was a good time we had and I'll write more about it in my next letter....

May 29, 1943 ----a little more about my visit to the RAF station, the other evening. It was a place maybe about 15 miles from here. I didn't know what I was getting into. Major (Willie) Williams came breezing into the mess hall just as I was about to order a cocktail after having bathed and shaved. He said, "Fred, you're coming with me." Now I don't question a Major so without asking him what it was all about, I breezed out with Willie and climbed with him aboard his Recon. Once

seated and on our way, I asked him what it was all about. He said, "we're going to liaison Hell out of the RAF." ...and (he) told me that these people were in the midst of their "Wings for Victory" week, that they wanted to put on a show and had asked if we would send a squadron of Forts over as part of this show. Plans had to be made since other squadrons with other types of planes were to do the same thing and naturally we didn't want any bloody noses or anything like that.... At any rate we were treated royally by the RAF and since they seemed to like us too, Willie and I decided on the way back that we had in truth "liaisoned hell out of them" We got back at midnight, worked til 2 before we found or were told that everything was scrubbed for the morrow. So then we went to bed.

The next day I went along with the rest as part of the show. We buzzed the RAF station 3 times at treetop level. Buzzing means just about that. It means coming as close as possible to something without actually hitting it. Rather exciting at times. At one time we came closer than we expected to a big tree. So the pilot, Lt. Jones, or Jonesie came back hard against the stick. He went almost straight up in the air and then after he got above it he straightened out rather quickly. So quickly, indeed that I and the other boys, for a couple of seconds were actually suspended in the air. We didn't hit the top nor could we touch the bottom. It was one of the funniest feelings I have ever felt.

Note: Five weeks after buzzing the trees at the RAF station, Ralph "Jonesie" Jones flew his 25th mission, completing his tour of duty.

.... I guess your weather and ours have got all mixed up this year. We've had some beautiful grand warm days here. I've been sunbathing myself today and some of the others have been at it for almost a month. Everyone says, including the English, that it is almost unheard of and much too good to be true.

I don't especially like to hear you suggest doing housework yourself, darlingest. I think you have too many things to do anyway. Have you written to Vic about what the chances are for another girl like Maymia.

.... White with printed red and yellow roses, all on silk sounds very intriguing, especially when fashioned into the shape of a negligee. I am very anxious to see it, my darlingest. That will have to be the subject for a picture pretty soon. But if you do grant my wish and have such a picture taken, darlingest, don't slip the negligee on over a whole bunch of other things, if you get what I mean. If you don't get what I mean, I'll explain. I would like a sort of "Jane Russell" Esquireish sort of picture

of you. I know I have asked for such several times before but I'm still hoping.

.... Tom Sargent is a grand guy as you say. Glad to hear you're stepping out with him and not drying up at home, darling. I guess you have learned from him more about himself than I can tell you. I mean I don't need to introduce you and all that sort of thing....

There is a group party here tonight. However, as I am Officer for the Day and have, in addition, other work which will keep me busy until 11:30 and since I shouldn't get soused while O.D. (I mean it wouldn't look too good) I think I won't put in an appearance...

May 31, 1943 I didn't write to you yesterday. I had a day off and I was able to take it.... I called on the Corfield family in town. I have known these people for some time but have never really told you much about them. The father used to run, and own, a skating rink, a theater and a sports arena in town. These, the first and the last have been taken over by the government which will pay Mr. Corfield after the war, if that time ever comes. He is now working in a factory. I should judge his age to be about 65. He started in on lathes and such, but now I believe has a considerably more important job. However, I have been a bit reticent about asking him just what it is for fear he might be embarrassed about it all. At any rate, I have to hand it to him for pitching in when he was suddenly confronted with a complete loss of income without any present reparation. The theater, by the way, was not making money, and he sold it not so long ago, for not very much. The father was born in America of English parents. He has always considered himself an Englishman, however, though both he and his wife have spent several years right near the United States, especially in New Brunswick. The wife is or was something in the way of an artist in her younger days. She hasn't done anything for many years, though. I've seen a lot of her pictures on the walls of all the rooms in her house. Then there used to be a son named Jimmy. He went down somewhere in the battle of Britain. Hasn't been heard of since. He is probably lost, though Mrs. Corfield still has faith that he will appear some day. Next in line in the family came a daughter whose picture I have seen but who died suddenly a couple of months before her brother Jimmie was lost. Rather tragic, don't you think. Next in line comes a daughter named Mary. Mary is quite chubby and hardly could be said to be good looking, but she has a great deal more sense than most girls of 25 have. She has a grand sense of humor and it is lots of fun to be where she is. Next comes son, Bill. Bill is chubby like Mary, now spending most of his days on a farm getting in shape for the army. He leaves soon as a

fledgling in the RAF. (Mary, by the way, works 6 nights a week at a very important factory. She has the most important job in the family.) The last member of the family is a daughter named Joan. Chubby like the rest, she is about 14-15 years old. When young she had a touch of spinal meningitis and was told by the docs to spend a lot of time in the open. So at an early age she took up horseback riding. She still keeps it up. As a matter of fact I don't recall ever seeing her in anything but riding clothes.

Well, that is a bit on the details of the family. The main thing is that it is a real family. Each kid comes home in the afternoon and says, "Mom, I've asked Tom and Dick to have supper with us." And Mom takes it right in stride. Reminds me very much of the way we used to treat Mother. Another thing, like home, is that anywhere from 1 to 20 people drop in every afternoon whether invited or not. It is a type of house and family which attracts friends and callers.

Well, that is where I spent yesterday afternoon and evening. I dropped in about 2 in the afternoon. After sitting around for an hour or so with Mrs. Corfield and Mary, the latter and I got out on our bikes and rode over to the other end of town and called on an elderly lady whom Mary wanted to see about something that she was doing for her. Mary, by the way, might be called by some a "sucker". I mean by that, she is always doing something for someone else and is one of those persons whom every one comes to with their troubles and really, I think, is terribly imposed upon. But she can't help herself. She is like that. Anyway, this lady, a Mrs. Drew has a lovely place on the banks of the river. Sometime Shube and I may go swimming there if we can both get off at the same time. Mrs. Drew's house used at one time to be a small monastery. Not much of the old is left. However, as a little item of interest, there is a small bell on the roof and a bell rope comes down to every room in the house so that any one, anywhere inside can ring the bell. Mary and I stayed there for tea and then paddled back to the Corfield house. The evening was spent chatting with the whole family and a couple of friends of the family who dropped in. It was all very enjoyable, though not too exciting. Oh, yes, Mary, Bill and I did go out for about an hour to a nearby pub for a couple of beers.

June 2, 1943 My love to Isabel, Arthur, and Lee. Spank them all for me just in case they have been naughty, then kiss them all over for me, for the good things they have done. You might spank yourself very gently, not because you have been naughty but just because I always thought that to be lots of fun. Then kiss yourself because that is even more fun. Your devotedest, Freddie

June 6, 1943. Must tell you about last night. It was spent in town. Shube and I took the truck in....we joined a party at the house of Mrs. Drew. I've told you of her. She owns a large house by the river which used to be a monastery....Naturally she was there. Also included in the party were Doreen Dennis (the blond I generally dump in the mud) with her fiancée from the RAF, Joe something or other. Mary Corfield was there and probably best and last of all, a Mr. and Mrs. Luis Stevens. Luis Stevens is a real character. He is 1st violinist in the BBC concert orchestra, and frequently its conductor. In every imaginable way, including looks, the fire in his eye, and grand sense of humor, he reminds me of Wiggs Williams. We had beer and a little whiskey to drink and later on Stevens brought out some 1865 cognac which was a true delight to all. At 1 point in the evening he took out his violin. The first thing he did was to take the bow apart, snap it around the fiddle and in that manner, playing on all 4 strings at the same time, he really "swung" it. He is a great mimic also. The only Englishman I have yet heard who could really tell a Southern negro story in dialect....Later in the evening the doorbell rang. Someone said "I bet it's the police" whereupon Stevens jumped to his feet, clicked his heels together, put an English penny in his eye, like a monocle, and in a very guttural broken German, he loudly protested as to how his Fuhrer's agents were always being disturbed by doorbells. Well when the door was opened, there outside were 6 (no less) policemen much to everyone's amusement. It appeared that a light was shining thru one of the Steven's windows. Anyway, we had more fun than I have had since I left the States. I didn't get back to camp until 2:30 in the morning. And I don't regret it. So you can imagine what a time I had.

May 2 (?), 1943 (except for the party at Mrs. Drew's) my time has been entirely spent with my nose to the proverbial grind stone, except for eating and sleeping. Haven't been to the camp movies for quite some time. Oh, in a way, I guess I have had some "fun on the side" but if you can understand it, as I suspect you can, it is all "in the line of duty". I am talking now of how many of my evenings are spent. Playing ping pong, cards or checkers and drinking highballs, talking and singing with the boys. That is all part of the job from several angles.

You see, being 15 years older than these boys with whom we are working, being ground personnel (ground hogs or keewies is the usual expression), all this, tends to set us off from the rest. And it is of great importance that we do what we can to be "one of the boys". At the same time we must do it all in a dignified sort of way. I mean this, if I

can explain it. We must have the complete confidence of the boys at all times. We must be their father confessor but at the same time be one of them. Personally, I don't think that that situation is a hard one to handle, any more than it is for a girl to be a good sport and yet keep the boys in line. But that is where several of the men in this department have, I think, failed. Either they have been so much of a boy with the boys themselves that the combat crews don't take everything they have to say at its absolute face value. Or else they are too "distant". It's all a game, but one that keeps you on your toes and with your wits about you at all times....



June 8, 1943I had an interesting day yesterday.....that called for a liaison trip and Sugg was the pilot.... On the way back here, instead of travelling in the bombardier's compartment as I usually do, I stood right behind Sugg. When we reached the altitude desired, he motioned for me to take his place. So I did and tho I had never touched a throttle or any other part of the controls, I flew the Fort back all the way to our field. It really is a very simple matter to do just that. Sugg was right behind me and a copilot to my right and the speed was all set. All I had to do was keep it straight and that is almost as easy, in the calm weather, providing everything else is taken care of, in a fort as it is to steer a boat. But its ease did in no way take anything away from the thrill that I got. I turned it to the left and right and sent it slightly down and up just to get the feel of it but for the most part just flew steadily

along until I saw our field on our left. Then I made a sharper turn losing a little altitude at the same time and brought the plane directly over the main runway. Then of course I had to turn it back to Lt. Sugg to make the landing. All in all it was a highly successful day.

.... Sorry Arthur must keep on with the Doc but I heartily approve of the idea of keeping on with it just to make sure. It's like the third week of a summer vacation, you know. Sort of drives the nail home.

.... ----I always think of you for a while in bed before going to sleep. Lots of other times too but always then. Those are very sacred moments for me. Just like the last kiss always was when we were together. So take thousands and thousands of kisses, my love.----

June 11, 1943 I was glad to hear the report of Arthur. I mean his G for effort and what the teachers said. Also very pleased to hear he planned to help you with painting the summer furniture. Rather mixed feelings about Isabel's date. I had suspected that would happen before I got back but I was surprised nevertheless. Wish I could have sat up with you. For more reasons than one....Anyway I trust she had a real good time.

I should go out now darlingest as it is time to stand outside and look off into the distant skies and count what I can see. I love you like nothing or nobody else. You are my precious own. I'd like so much to have you at my side and my arm around your waist as I look off into the distance and wait—and wait. Your devotedest, ----

June 14, 1943 By the way, you have asked me about my pay....here is how I figure it all out. I get base pay of \$200. I get \$20 extra for foreign duty. Then \$90 for your support and \$42 for food. Of this there is deducted and I never see \$21 for my food over here. Now as I understand the deal, the office was to meet the difference between my salary there (\$375) and my total pay and allowances less that I never saw as pay for my food in the army. That means, \$375 less \$331 or \$44 which should be the amount that they pay you each month. Now my commission dates from March 7, if I remember correctly. I couldn't send you the extra money right away, precious, for 2 reasons. In the 1st place I found that many of my clothes needed replacing. I spent a little over \$100 on just this alone.... I do realize that my promotion doesn't help you a bit from a financial standpoint. I only wish it were in the cards for me to get another. I am afraid not though, unless I should entirely change my job and I don't want to do that, at least not yet...



June 19, 1943 I went to town to that Wings for Victory party last night. It was a good party. The ladies of the town were all dressed in evening dresses. Perhaps that may not sound unusual to you, but to me it was like going to a show in London. Nearly everyone you see around generally is wearing some uniform or other. Even when you go to town this is true. And when they are not in uniform they are wearing a suit several years old. This is the second time since I have been here that I have seen them blossom out in evening dresses and believe me they all looked very lovely indeed. I always did enjoy seeing women's shoulders but I have found now that I never did appreciate them nearly enough. When I come home I want you to cut the shoulders off all your dresses so that I can always see your shoulders too.

The dance was really a formal ball. There was a good orchestra provided by the RAF and they could really play the kind of music that made you want to dance. The dances were broken up by frequent auctions and they did this in a new sort of way. Someone would give a bottle of whiskey, a plane model, a bicycle, or something of the sort to be auctioned off. Anything paid went to buy war bonds so that actually it was all investment and the object was really just thrown in. So people might bid as high as a thousand pounds for a bottle of whiskey. As a matter of fact one bottle of scotch brought 700 pounds and was

then donated by the winner and brought 1000 the second time, which makes it a pretty expensive headache the day after it was drunk up. At any rate, I had a really good time and got back here at camp about 2:30. And that brings me up to today. Today I have come to the realization that while such parties are a great deal of fun, it is just as well that there are not too many of them. Otherwise we might not lick these Heinies as quickly as we would like to!

June 20, 1943 So now in these minutes before going to bed, my darlingest, I am thinking very very much of you....our old schedule....Let's see. As I remember, about this time we were wondering if Arthur should hear Charlie McCarthy or some other program. If he was good he could. Maybe he can now anyway. So from this time on we would be more or less alone. In the library. Are you there tonight precious. I am. Can you feel my presence even if you can't see me. I'm there with you. I have been sitting in the corner across from the radio and you are curled up on the sofa already nodding over a book. This time, tho, I don't just go on reading like I often did. This time I get up very quietly and come over to you and kiss you ever so gently right on the lips. And you wake up. And look at me and hold out your arms to me. And I sit down beside you and then our arms are about one another and we have a long kiss, without saying a word. And then, still without saying anything we know it is time for bed so we turn out the lights, lock the doors and go upstairs together. The rest is for us alone, darlingest. No need, is there, for any one else, even a censor to know. But all that is really happening tonight whether or not you see me there my precious. I love you very very much.----
Freddie

June 27, 1943 Sunday it is. More like Sunday in some ways than most. In the first place, I find my hat is somewhat too small this morning. It is the same with many of us and so there is an aura of relaxation in these parts. There was, of course, an officer's party. There always is plenty to drink at such affairs. But this time one of my best friends who was to finish his tour of duty yesterday was hit in the neck with an exploding cannon shot that had his head blown completely off. All very horrible. I had a couple of extra drinks. Today is another day and life goes on. And the war goes on too.



Captain Raymond Check

Note: Because the June 26 mission disaster fell upon two close friends, Ray Check and the 423rd's original C.O., James Wilson, Fred's break from his tradition of leaving mission casualty details out of his letters is understandable. A description of what unfolded in Check's plane, recounted in Gerald Astor's "The Mighty Eighth" is worth quoting at length as Fred's own Combat Diary version is dutifully buttoned up. Astor also provides context, noting that RAF and US Air Force strategy officially changed on June 10. The new goal—a reversal from the position that bombing could be precise enough to justify a high casualty rate—was now to go directly after the German fighter forces and the industries upon which they depend. The new operation was christened "Pointblank."

From Astor, "...the 306th Bomb Group headed for Tricqueville, a German air base in France. It was only a short hop across the Channel and James Wilson, although now serving as the group's executive officer, arranged to fly with his old squadron in honor of Capt. Raymond Check, an original pilot under Wilson, for whom this would be his twenty-fifth and final mission. Wilson took the left hand command seat while Check acted as co-pilot. The ship's regular co-

pilot, Lt. William Cassedy, decided he could profit from a milk run and flew as one of the waist gunners.

The nineteen effectives from the 306th began to unload on the airdrome. Suddenly, a German fighter attacked Wilson and Check's ship from out of the sun. The Americans never saw the enemy, whose shells smashed into the cockpit during the bomb run. The explosion of shrapnel killed Check instantly and seriously wounded Wilson. A flash fire enveloped the cock-pit....

Wilson rang the alarm bell, and the bombardier bailed out before any further signal. The engineer, Sgt. James A. Bobbet, descended from his turret and was injured when he grabbed an extinguisher to put out the blaze. According to Wilson, Bobbet laced him with morphine to dull the pain of his wounds and burns while he continued to pilot the aircraft. A history of the 306th states that Cassedy left his waist-gunner post and extricated the body of Check while Wilson, who had been operating the controls with his elbows because the skin from his hands was hanging in long strands, climbed down to the nose of the plane. There the pilot received emergency medical treatment from a flight surgeon who had gone along for the ride.

Patched up for the moment, Wilson went back to his post while Cassedy continued to fly the B-17. With all communications systems out and their flares for signaling distress consumed by the fire, Cassedy headed for the Thurleigh home base where he believed the wounded could get the quickest and best medical attention. To add to the co-pilot's distress, he was aware that the dead man was to be married to a nurse the next day, and she would be at the end of the runway with a welcoming party to greet her fiancé as he completed his combat tour. Cassedy set the plane down against the flow of traffic and pulled off the runway away from the crowd. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Wilson received a Distinguished Service Cross for carrying on despite his 'excruciating pain.' Indeed, the West Pointer endured nine months of hospitalization and treatment both in the United Kingdom and the U.S. before he could return to duty." (pp. 132-134)



June 28, 1943 Just received one of the very loveliest letters I have ever got. It was your letter of June 18..... you were just about to work out the league budget for the next year. And that was just about to finish up your league business until Sept. I guess you will be pretty glad to get a bit of rest from this job. You most certainly deserve a rest.

You ask whether I have changed. I sent (yesterday) a photo of myself so that you should know all about me by the time you get this. For the most part, however, I don't think I have changed very much. I have acquired no end of army language which I use around here but so far I have it under control so that none of it has slipped out when it shouldn't. I have as much hair as I ever did and none of it has turned grey yet. At least no more of it than a year or two ago. Of course I have lost several front teeth (I am now on a milk diet, or would be if I could ever lay my hands on some milk). But I still have freckles and bumps all over my face. My disposition is no better than it ever was, and every so often, just as always, I have a fleeting thought that maybe I should cut down on coffee and smoking. On the latter, as a matter of fact, we can only get 7 packs a week so at least I am not averaging more than a pack a day. I still dance just like Fred Astaire, the only difference being that I move faster when I dance and I fall down more often than he does. When I got your letter, I looked at myself in the mirror to see if I had changed and what I saw set me off laughing. The fact that I laughed isn't the point of course, but the reason I tell you about it is that I noticed that whereas I used to grin more or less from ear to ear (in

spite of my small mouth), now my grin goes way past my ears and sort of gets tangled up at the back of my head. This doesn't bother me much unless I am smoking. Then I don't know which side of my head to stick the cigarette in and it is all pretty confusing until I can reestablish my normal melancholia. My spelling and handwriting and disposition and looks are all just as bad as they ever were. So I guess I haven't changed even for the better.

Sorry to hear that Tom Sargent is being transferred to Washington just as you were getting to know him too. Stags even in peacetime were none too available and that looked to me a perfect setup.

.... It's true that just about every family I've known here has a daughter in it. But that is quite natural. In the first place all the men have gone to the services, especially from the better homes. Then, too the best place to meet people is at dances either here or at the post, or in town. I have been to town dances twice now. I am not apt to meet any more men at dances than you would women. Frankly, one of the main reasons, though, is that I like families with daughters. When you stay in camp for 10 days at a stretch with lots and lots of men around and only men and then get off for the evening or maybe for an afternoon as well, you look for a change of diet, something different. That is after all what a day off is for. I mean, to give you a change. What I have been doing so far except for those 3 day leaves I took in October and December, is go to town for the afternoon twice but generally after supper. I guess about two thirds of those times I have gone to the movies. The other times just visited or perhaps gone with the family to the movies. Anyways the status remains just as you suggested. I mean, I have kept my enthusiasm for the other sex but I have also restrained it.

Sorry to hear that Lee has impetigo. Hope it is gone by the time you get this. But I am very glad to hear that her hair has once more grown out. Seems to me I ought really to have a new snap of her which will show her hair.

June 29, 1943We are supposed to have a dance here for all of the officers this evening. As far as I can make out at this sitting, however, your dearly beloved husband is going to be sitting up here at the office madly reporting on all sorts of important and unimportant things until the dance is just about over. So I don't expect to see much of it.

Another item---I dreamed of you last night, my darlingest. It was a very lovely dream. We were picnicking on the Hana side of Maui just

as we did 3 years ago. I blush at some of the details so won't publish them in this letter but I assure you it was a very lovely dream indeed....

July 1, 1943 Yesterday being our 15th anniversary I can't help but look back a bit on those 15 years. I have been so lucky. What is there that I haven't had? You my darlingest have been such a perfect wife. You have understood my faults and have forgiven them. Some you have been able to cure, others not, but nevertheless you have always stood by me throughout everything. You have fit my every mood. At times a backbone of strength. At times soft and tender. We have had children, wonderful children and watched them grow and develop into grand characters. We have traveled by ourselves and with our families to Hawaii, to Europe, Canada, Maine, almost wherever we wanted to go. You have been my true wife when rich or poor, in sickness or in health, it has made no difference. I loved you when I asked you if you would be my wife. I loved you more when we were wed. I love you now more than ever before, my precious. I feel as though I have had everything there is that is good in this life and it is all because I am married to you. And we still have years and years ahead of us when all this is through. That is why I say, "I have been so lucky!" All my love my precious, Freddie



July 2, 1943. grand news about Arthur. Tell him I am very proud of him and the way he is cooperating with you and the doctor. Tell him that from what I heard he certainly earned those bars that Tom gave

him. Also most anxious to see a picture of Lee. I suspect all the children have changed a great deal since I last saw them, but Lee has probably changed the most. Isabel is probably swiftly developing a poise which comes to all elderly persons. And Arthur is apparently developing a sense of responsibility. All to the good. I wish I were there to watch them through these days. What a surprise I will get when I get home.....

July 3, 1943 We have a new recruit on our staff. He seems a very fine person indeed....His name, incidentally is Beekman Pool.... Lives in New York....he was I guess quite a lawyer. In case you are interested (or even if you are not) I found out his salary which was about 6 times mine. He was also a National Squash champion for 3 years. All these things I have found out through indirect means. I being his boss had to find some of them out naturally. But what pleases me most is that he is perfect for the job. A most pleasing personality. A good mixer. Lots of poise. A quick clear thinking brain. It takes no time at all to tell that you can place the utmost confidence in most anything he does or says. I am terribly pleased to have him here with me.

July 4, 1943 My friend, Lt. Pool is more eager than I was. He is also married and has 2 children. But he is already going through the throes of weighing the pros and cons of taking a trip such as I did. I have advised him to wait until later on when he will, through experience, be able to tell more clearly himself whether or not it is justified. I personally am glad I did it and was absolutely convinced it was the only thing to do, entirely aside from any idea of thrill, sensation, or other selfish motives. I imagine he will come to the same conclusions, but he should make up his own mind and only after he has had time to see for himself. He will know later on more about what he wants to keep his eyes open for, too....

July 9, 1943 I have just finished three full days of trying 6 cases before the General Courts Martial. On the whole I think I did as well as could be expected. One boy was acquitted (most unusual) and in 2 cases I obtained not guilty findings on specific charges. And (what I consider my job primarily) the sentences were reasonable under the circumstances and none of the boys can claim that he didn't have a fair trial.

One case, the worst, involved a boy named Taylor. Last September he had been tried and convicted of stealing a civilian's bicycle. He "got out" in December and then in May having got into deeper trouble, was given company punishment. He got tired of this

one night, left it, took a reconnaissance car without permission, stole a pistol, drove to town to an improper place, got drunk and on the way out he parked the car and fired at it with the pistol several times. He was tried almost 3 weeks ago and given a 3 year sentence. Well this time he broke out of jail, stole the colonel's car, drove into town and told his girlfriend that he was leaving the country and would be back when the war was over. He was found and arrested in Scotland in still another stolen car. He was tried this time for breaking jail, stealing the first car and desertion. He was given 10 years but what could you do with a fellow like that.

.... And now I am thru for probably at least a week. And I'm glad of it because it takes so much time from my main work. I guess I've told you that I'm trying to get off the court. I don't like that kind of responsibility. Also I have served on this court just twice as long as any one else. For some reason tho they seem to think that there are not many lawyers around! If they would look they could certainly find plenty. We have at least 20 in this organization alone....

July 10, 1943 This is my 200th letter to you and that calls for a celebration. – In the usual manner. – I hope you remember how we used to celebrate the 10,000 mile mark on our various cars. This letter is of similar import. Therefore let us pause right now until I get a taste of those sweet, soft, loving lips and please don't tell me to wait until we get past all this traffic....

I am glad Ted Williams thought I was enthusiastic. I really am, though I may not have showed it in all my letters. Of course these are discouraging times. There are times after you lose a batch of friends when one is pretty much let down for a while. Then there are times, when directives come down to us requiring the filling out of long, complicated and seemingly senseless reports when we stew and curse. But these are only occasions. On the whole I am terribly happy, satisfied and enthusiastic. My job is to my mind far and away the most interesting one for which I am qualified....

.... And now here is a riddle which should be easy but which I will solve for you in my next letter. First take a place to sleep. Then take our first car. When you have got into it (at the farm) travel straight to the lake. (Erie) And what have you? Well, this is something to work on until I write again....

July 13, 1943 In my last letter, I posed a riddle for you. I suppose it was so simple that you know all about it by the time you get this. At least you will know all about it if you have received the letter I am

talking about. But just in case there is any question at all in your mind, the answer to the riddle is "little me". Naturally the answer to the first 2 parts of the riddle is equally clear.

.... I received a grand letter from Mother today.... Mother told me so much about you and also the family. Many things that I wanted to know and that you probably wouldn't tell me. Among other things, how very wonderful my precious is.....

.... I must say the news of the children is most encouraging. Tell Arthur that I am very very pleased with the progress he is making. It certainly would be wonderful if he could get all cleaned up with the doc this year. He must be really working on it himself to show such improvement and I like that spirit ever so much. For it shows me he has ambition to make something of himself and that he has a sense of responsibility.

Isabel, dear girl, has, from what I hear, been a real help to you in so many ways. She too has a great sense of responsibility and in addition, a thoughtfulness of others and a good bit of your conscientiousness which I am glad to see come to the fore.

I must also thank Lee for her darling letter. There seemed to be some doubt in your mind whether or not I would understand just what she was saying. Tell her I understood every word of it and I'm glad she had such a nice birthday party. I hope though, that I won't have to miss any or many more of them.-----

July 16, 1943 Now everything has happened and I can tell you all about it. The purpose to the visit was to award the Congressional Medal of Honor to a boy named Smith. One of our gunners. Noteworthy because it is the first of such medals to be handed out in this theater of operations.... As I have intimated to you before, Smith's feat has been duplicated by others you may never hear from. He deserved the medal. But the reason "he" got it instead of any of a couple of dozen other boys, was a matter of timing as much as anything else.



At any rate, we had lots of stars and eagles yesterday. Wandering around the camp. Mr. Stimson came in a transport plane...we had an extra special good noon meal of steak, fresh peas, mashed potatoes, coffee and ice cream and then I went to the control tower where I had an elegant birds-eye view of the proceedings.

Note: Fred leaves unsaid, explicitly, something he certainly hopes Pat remembers from earlier letters: The reports generated by the Group's S-2 team would certainly have played its part in the chain of events that swept the medal-bearing Secretary of War towards Thurleigh. The award was unprecedented. Because there weren't even any Congressional Medals of Honor stocked in the European Theater, Secretary Stimson had to bring this one with him, in his personal luggage.



Right in front of me and to the right was a fortress. One of the veteran forts. (I noticed off to my left the plane that came back from our last raid with a good half its tail missing.) But right in front of this

fort were 3 microphones, on one side of which Mr. Stimson and several generals and our own C.O. On the other side, as white as a ghost, was little Smith with the color guard standing directly behind him. There were a couple of combat crews standing behind the plane and between the mikes and the plane itself were 2 tons of M.P.s Then off in the distance, some hundred yards away were 6 or 8 platoons made up of the various squadrons.

I couldn't hear anything said, but I could see everything. There was a lot said but we had no speaker system there—the mikes being purely for radio and recordings. But after the ribbon was pinned on the boy, the rest marched past in review and in my mind did a real good job especially when you consider that these boys are air corps and not too used to drilling and marching and so forth. As a matter of fact, we were complimented on the fine "show" that we put up both by the General Dears and H.S. himself.



The transport left right after the ceremony and that was all there was to it. We are now back to the usual grind much as though nothing had happened.

.... We have just had a visit from a recently arrived Captain....he had with him a couple of New Yorkers (magazine). They were May issues but very welcome since I hadn't seen any since October last. What a good magazine that is! We get Time and Life pretty regularly, and I am more and more appreciating the humor in Punch and other

English magazines, but it is good to see your and my favorite again just the same....

July 18, 1943 I was certainly thrilled to hear about Arthur's ride on Tangle. That is a big step for Arthur over and above what I would have let him do last year. I should think that Tangle was as much "horse" as any we have in the stable with the exception of Clockwork. Tangle, as you say, must be handled just right or you may have a miserable time. But handled right you can certainly get a wonderful ride out of him....

July 21, 1943 Since my last letter, the news from Sicily seems to be grand. It's half gone now and it looks as tho all but the North East quarter should be easy pickings. This last of course, will be tough unless we can make a landing in the toe or the arch in the ankle of the Italian foot and thus strike at their rear end. And that makes me think how very important is the "rear". Right from childhood it is important. First of all it is the rear which is the means by which we as children get our first sense of discipline and responsibility. Then one always speaks of "last but not least" and the "one who laughs last". That all has to do with "rear". Now the Allies may hit the Japs in the rear and win a big battle. For that is where they are vulnerable above all else. Of course the most important rear that I know of is that lovable, beautiful, precious, darling Piggly and Wiggly. Think what these two have meant to our lives darlingest. Personally I think that that is one of your vulnerable spots for when I got to know and appreciate them, you said you would be my wife. So you see what I mean....

July 23, 1943 My very darlingest, I sent you a whole batch of pictures in my last letter. Let me explain just a bit about them.... The one of "Willie" is a fairly old picture. He is my roommate now and is a major. It is the same Willie that you read about in the Post last fall. Uncle Bill (another picture) was a good friend of mine and Willie's former roommate. He was killed some time ago but I want his picture kept if you find it convenient. Another friend is Bob. He is the one who I told you of who I hadn't seen for several months but who suddenly showed up out of the blue. With him came C.W.W. who had the same experience. Other pictures show some of my favorite crews who are not particularly interesting to you except that I came within an inch of taking the trip with Youree written up in one of the June Lives and I actually did take a trip with Check, who is no more....

Note: From the July 24 Combat Diary: "Today we made the longest battle trip we have ever taken, the target being the magnesium works at Heroya, Norway. Intelligence had learned that...this new plant was set to produce before the end of the month.... There were about 15 AA guns at the target, and we saw 15 fighters in all, most of which came from Denmark. We all returned and that is a place we will not have to go back to again, for it is no more."



July 25, 1943 I suppose you read the papers this morning. They may not mention it but it is interesting to note that we have now been the first group into two different countries. No more details tho as that would not be right!

July 26, 1943 Sorry [Tom] has left Cleveland but if Malcolm Chase is around, you will still have an escort. Malcolm was another upperclassman whom I knew. However, I am quite sure that he never knew me. I can remember about him that he used to be pretty darn good looking, in a blond sort of way. I should say he was more a man of the world than [Tom]. However, in both cases, I have no doubt that you know both much better than I ever did. In neither case would I worry too much about spending their money. I have a pretty good idea that both have plenty.

.... I understand we are planning another officers' party here a week from Sunday. I have been wondering whether I would make the effort to arrange for some particular gal to come as my partner or do as I did the past few times and wait to see what comes along. I have an idea that I shall do the latter....

The papers have shown pictures of the first 500 WAACs to get here. Their names and addresses were in the paper. I noticed several from Cleveland, but none of them was anyone I knew. So they might as well have come from Oshkosh. It is said, in a confidential sort of way, that we may be able to get a couple of these assigned to this station. I wonder. I rather hope not. 2 or 3 girls are out of place in a big station. Now if they sent 30 or 40 along then it would be different. But the girls should be properly supervised. It wouldn't be fair to them any other way, and there ought to be enough of them so that they could form their own social groups without having to resort to male company. My next picture that I send to you may be taken again at my desk but this time with something on my knee taking dictation.

Palermo has fallen into our hands. How well I remember Palermo. Do you remember. We only had a few hours there and went to the beach for a swim, and I only had swimming trunks with no top and they made me go back in and put on my undershirt. No question now but Italy has given up any idea of stemming the tide as far as Sicily is concerned....

Note: From the July 28 Combat Diary: "The aircraft component works at Kassel, Germany, was the target for today, even deeper into enemy territory than Hannover.... We had it very rough indeed. Flak hit every ship in the entire group and some were badly hit. Lts. Peck and Harris went down over Germany as a result of flak. The target was well bombed, but on the way out we met over 100 enemy fighters, which put up a severe battle until we reached the Dutch coast on the way home. Here we were met by P-47s, who took care of us across the Channel. Lt. Cassidy piloted one of 3 306th planes which crash landed on the English coast." And on July 29, "Today the squadron was made non-operational and for the rest of the month combat crews spent their days sleeping and their nights in the air, learning the intricacies of standard beam approach."

August 1, 1943 As usual I start off this letter by saying that I have been very busy of late. But that is true, believe it or not. As a matter of fact I have been so busy (except for yesterday) that I have had to use every

spare moment to get in 40 winks. A cursory reading of the papers should explain why.

Yesterday, however, was a different story. I had a full day off and what a day I had.... Well yesterday was a good day for sun bathing if ever there was one and as I had a more or less standing invitation to spend the day and swim at Mrs. Drew's, I decided that was the thing to do. So I got on my bike and off I went to town. I picked up Mary Corfield—just to ensure my welcome at Mrs. Drew's—and she put together some sandwiches, fruit, and coffee and we both then biked out to our destination....It's just outside the town and on the riverbank. She has a diving platform and the water is about 10 ft. deep at that point. When we got there we found Louis Stevens and several others. 3 of them were relations of Mrs. Drew—all wives—and all with one or more children. I couldn't help but think of Shadybrook and how people seemed to congregate there. It's the same at Mrs. Drew's and she loves it.

Anyway I got into my bathing trunks when we arrived about 11 in the morning and didn't get out of them until we left at about 6. We just swam a bit, slept in the sun a bit, visited a bit, and had a completely lazy restful day.

Louis Stevens by the way is leader of the BBC orchestra. A young fellow of about 34. Very natural, very clever. Everyone finds him or herself calling him Lou or Louis in no more than 5 minutes...

Well at 6 I took Mary home and then biked back to camp—too late for supper—but in time to shower shave and change my clothes before the most recent Officers' Dance, which also took place yesterday. It was a good party tho a touch on the "high" side. I had no one coming to look after me and so, as we say, I "wolfed it". There were the usual girls there, nurses, waves and what not. I started up a conversation with a nurse who didn't seem to be taken care of and we had a very jolly time of it. She was from Lancaster, PA and has been here longer than I have. She had heard of but not seen so many celebrities such as Clark Gable, Jimmy Stewart, etc. who are located somewhere in these isles and wondered if any of them were here. So that set the cue for the evening and from there I pointed out one person or another as Babe Ruth, Joe Dimaggio etc. etc. and I would introduce them as such. She knew all the time that I was kidding and pretended to be taken in by it all and would gush over those surprised boys and embarrass them and we kept that up all evening until the party came to an end. It all sounds very silly today but last night it was lots of fun.

August 2, 1943 Dad seems worried about my sleep. Actually, in the long run I get plenty—and that is what counts....

.... I had a call today from the Courts and Boards officer at Wing saying that he was recommending my release from the General Court. I shall probably continue on the special court as that can be “worked in” with everything else and also there isn’t quite the responsibility when you are dealing with a maximum punishment of 6 months as there is when the court can give anything up to and including the death penalty....

In the meantime, Jack Wright, my boss has moved up the ladder, leaving us today. His former assistant, Al Bairnsfather...is the new officer in charge of our section and I have been told that I am the new assistant and next in line. That’s a promotion in jobs but not in rank for me. We all hate to see Jack go. But it will be good for us to get a man in higher headquarters who has had actual experience on an operational station. At least we all expect it will. Undoubtedly Dad with his experience in the last war can tell us more about that.

August 2, 1943 My very darlingest.... I spent all day yesterday, trying a rather difficult case before the general court at Wing and did a pretty fair job of it. Although the victim must make his plans and arrangements to spend the next 2 years at hard labor, I told the fellow just before trial to expect about 5 years and he wasn’t too greatly shocked at the time. After it was over he was quite pleased with the result, at least as pleased as one could be who has to face that sort of life for 2 years.

.... I received in last night’s mail...your letter of 22, July. It was good to hear all the details of Edgartown, and the considerable number of friends you found there....Today though you have returned. You have probably found the mail box and the front door swamped with newspapers, advertisements, and, I hope, a few letters from me. There undoubtedly will be also a layer of dust on the floor and all the furniture, and the grass in the back and front yards will be some 6 inches long. Lots of work to face right after vacation—but that is always the case. And even with all that extra work it was worth while taking the trip and it is good to get back again.

Note: The squadron has its combat strength increased by adding men in the first days of August. On August 5, the Diary reads: “Weather still prevents missions. 1st Lt. Beekman H. Pool assigned to S-2 section. Capt. Fred C. Baldwin transferred to Hq., 306th Bomb Group.” From August onward, Beekman Pool would have taken over Fred’s job of

writing the 423rd's Combat Diary entries. Also in the beginning of August, Leroy Sugg—who had given Fred a turn at the controls of a B-17--completed his tour of 25 missions and is relieved to return home.

August 6, 1943 ----I was told this morning that at staff meeting it was decided that I would be relieved from my job as defense counsel on the special court.... And now if I can have the same action taken in connection with the general court, I will be happy indeed. I wouldn't mind sitting on one or the other of these 2 courts (not both) for a while. It would be interesting to see what carries the most weight with fellows you are arguing at. To date I have always had to guess and I have an idea that some of my guesses have been far from good guesses.

August 10, 1943 I am away on a more or less extended tour of duty to an RAF station somewhere in England....

I am here with Lt. Al Weld. As in the case of my visit to such a station almost a year ago, we are being treated royally. Quite like kings. We expect to learn a great deal about things which will be very useful to us in the future....

Just before I left I was able to pick up your letter of Aug. 2.... By the way, if Arthur is to continue his high diving, be sure that someone is around ready to dive after him. It is not dangerous if he takes care of himself but unless he keeps his hands right smack together (it's better to lock thumbs) he can get a real blow on his head when he hits the water. Also he can twist his back and then have a difficult time getting in. I don't want to scare you or spoil his fun but just to be on the safe side, you know. Anyway, I'm rather proud of his prowess.

Had breakfast this morning. Maybe that isn't unusual but it wasn't just the same. In the first place Al and I were waked up when a WAF (not too good looking – but feminine just the same) came to our room with a hot cup of tea which she placed on the table...Then she picked up our shoes to shine and our blouses to press. Now that is the way to get up.... cereal, fresh egg and sausage, toast, marmalade and English coffee. All very wonderful indeed, especially as it was my first egg in many months.

August 18, 1943 Here I am back at camp..... Got a letter from Arthur. Thank him for me. I may be able to write to him before another day rolls by. If not I will write as soon as I can. I owe letters to Isabel and Dad and Lee also-----your devotedest, Freddie

August 27, 1943 ---- The boys are due to return in a hour --- so and that gives me about half an hour as we are all prepared for them. In half an

hour I will go outside and “sweat them out”. I expect to see them all come back today, but you can never tell...

I have been told...that I have at last been relieved as defense counsel on both the general and the special courts.... I think I have learned a whole lot about trying cases. Little things like at times it is better to cut short a witness's story.... one boy was accused of being drunk at a football game and thus a disgrace to the army and all that. I was examining him as my last witness. I had about half of what I expected to get out of him when I asked him if he considered himself to have been drunk and he hesitated and then replied, “no more drunk than usual at a football game.” The court couldn't help but laugh and the boy, with that answer, won their sympathy at least to a certain extent. So when I saw that I immediately put a stop to my examination and rested my case.... Well that is all over now and I will be able to devote all my time to the fighting war.

August 29, 1943 ... I don't know if I have told you much of my new job. As you will have been able to see from the outside of the envelope that I have left the squadron and am now in group. I am now the assistant intelligence officer meaning that I am second in line. Al Bairnsfather runs the department. I help him and when he is not here I run it....Al Richardson has left for a teaching job and in the next day or so Jerry O'Sullivan is to leave us to help write the history of the 8th Air Force. I understand there is to be a book published about this history and that we are to have more space in this book than any other group. If so it is as it should be because after all we have been here the longest....we have several replacements.... The new boys aren't quite the class of the old gang. Most of them were former draftees who have risen from the ranks. But they are all in all a good bunch and will do very well. On the whole, I think we have a better working intelligence staff than we have ever had before and I was very pleased to learn that the C.O. called Bairnsfather aside the other day to tell him just that.

September 1, 1943 My very darlingest, Beginning today (he is at this moment down at our quarters working on it) I am to have a new roommate. Beekman Pool is the unlucky kid....he is a bit younger than some of the rest of us. My guess is that he is about 30 years old. He was a lawyer and came from New York City. He is much the best of the new men in this department. It should work out pretty well. He is quite a tennis and squash player and in the latter game was a national amateur champion. There is a squash club in town and I imagine most of Pool's spare time will be spent thereabouts. He should make one

more friend who we will want to keep in touch with after this is all over.

Speaking of new men, there have been big changes here in a year. Looking back as one is apt to do around anniversary time, the amazing thing to me is that we were able to do as much as we did with such a pitifully few men and with fighter escort that would in those days take us just about to the coast and let us carry on the rest of the way. That was in the experimental days of course. But we did more than merely experiment. That is what is so amazing. Our odds were worse than flying tigers and we were up against Germany's very best. At times our results were disappointing. But there were other times when the results were very good and they couldn't be published.... Things are different now. The experiment is all over. All we have to concentrate on now is doing the job we have shown can be done.... Aside from that we have built buildings here. We have put plumbing in places it never was before. Our comforts have to a large extent been provided for. And I at least, am becoming used to the perpetual damp and cold. So, all in all, I am much more comfortable than I was a year ago.

September 4, 1943 I haven't written you since hearing over the radio, the exciting news of the beginnings of the invasion of Italy. That was about 24 hours ago and still there are practically no reports coming through. It has started all kinds of speculation around here.

September 5, 1943 Glad to hear Tom is back for the weekend. I trust you will have a gay time of it. I hope you are able to have several gay times these days, darlinest. It's much more important, it seems to me. I mean one must have some balance in one's life and when things are a bit rough or a bit heavy then there should be moments which counterbalance this in order to make life more normal and to keep you on an even keel. Maybe I'm wrong, but I think not. That's why I want you to have a few real flings – in a discreet and sensible way, naturally. I'm sure you understand. I try to do that myself. I mean when we have a Group party here, I think myself into it, drink enough to lose some inhibitions and kid with the girls as tho I hadn't a care in the world. I stop at kidding and have no doubt that I shall carry through on my intentions (as I have to date) to return when the time comes, quite virginal, but otherwise I manage to have an extra good time for the most part and I think that that is both proper and necessary.

I put my name in for a 2 day leave. If I can get any one to go along I shall go to Scotland. Otherwise I shall make for London where I can

always count on joining up with friends. It will come the 14th and 15th
.... Will let you know about it later.----

September 10, 1943 Did you hear the latest? A man asked his girl, as he was mixing her drink, to say when. She answered, "Right after we have finished these."

September 12, 1943 Another lovely Sunday. Outside it is nice and cool and damp. A perfectly glorious fog has reduced vision to a minimum. Cute little muddy pools of water on roads allow passing trucks and jeeps to splash the most divine patterns of blue clay all over one's newly pressed and polished pants and shoes. And to think that we were always taught that the pilgrims came away from here in order to preserve their freedom of religion!

I have an idea this coming year will be a very different one for me.... I shall be busier in the first place.... We have infinitely more planes and crews with which to work....Germany, already on the defensive will make a stand no further from the Alps than the Po valley and then we will be able to use Italian bases to bomb places in Germany which are either out of our range or which could be more advantageously reached from the south...we will be able to give all of Germany hell and it will be worse for them than it was a couple of years ago for the British. No, it would seem entirely possible now to finish up militarily things in this theater within 3 to 6 months after we fully occupy Italy and start using Italian bases for our bombers....

Well, I guess I got a little far afield, didn't I darling. But my thoughts are largely on this subject these days. I can't help but start thinking, when things like the surrender of the Italian army happen, along the lines of how long it will be before I will be with my darling family again, if only for a leave. You see, I am still hoping that before the time when we who are in this theater get sent to the far east, they will let us have a bit of time with our loved ones.

.... Darlingest, I love you with all my heart and soul---it most certainly has kept me going during this past year.----Most certainly I have had brought home to me how very dear and precious you are to me. How very much I need you. How I worship everything about you. There are, you know, loads and loads of girls in this country. All kinds of girls. Pretty ones, nice ones, all kinds. I bring this up because if there was just a little tiny weakness in my love for you, my darling, there would be all kinds of opportunities with a great selection of girls. But these opportunities haven't bothered me in the slightest. I don't think, by nature, that I am particularly celibate. Perhaps you could answer

that question better than I. All that I do know is that I haven't had even an inclination that way to date except in my dreams about you and that quite frankly is why I say my love for you, my precious, is really a most wonderful thing. Thousands of kisses to you as usual, if you have any to spare, give them to our three children. Your devotedest, Freddie

September 16, 1943 I had a day off yesterday and it turned out to be just about the most fun I have had since I have been to England. I don't suppose anyone would believe me but perhaps you will. It involved another girl, by the way. Her name is Joan Green and I must admit she is quite young (24 years) and quite good-looking. On the other hand she has not been married long and is very deeply in love with her husband. I have known her for a long time but before yesterday I had only met her twice while sipping beer in a crowd at the Swan Hotel. Her husband is R.A.F. on the ground side of things, as I am and he is as nice as she is. If and when I bring you back here to look over the land where I spent such a long time, I am going to do my utmost to have you meet these 2. I am sure you will enjoy them. Well, Joan, unfortunately, has been suffering from what you might call "Mother" trouble. She is the youngest of 3 daughters and her mother has resented each husband taking her daughters away. So, for the past year Joan has lived with her mother and, as so often happens, her life was not her own and a good deal of tenseness grew into their association. At any rate, this unfortunately became a bit unbearable and Joan and her husband decided that it would be best for Joan to move into a flat. I heard about this and I also knew how hard it was to get help here and that there was bound to be some heavy work and so I suggested that if she wanted, I would be glad to come in and do some of the heavy moving. And that is exactly how I spent all of yesterday. It was a good thing I did, too, for she was there alone except for her older sister and there was lots of heavy work to be done. Also a couple of gadgets that needed fixing. As to the last, I didn't tell her what you thought of me as a gadget-fixer. I just told her I could fix it and the funny part about it all was that I did. But in addition to that, I washed dishes, dusted out cupboards, put paper on shelves, moved sofas, tables, chairs, and trunks and all that sort of thing. I became and felt quite domestic, which was the best change from army life you can imagine. The result is that I feel more exhilarated today than I have felt in a long, long time and I did have the best time yesterday, that I have had since I came to these shores. A week from Saturday I have been asked to a "house-warming" party, so you see, virtue has its rewards. I expect to see more

of Joan, by the way. But don't worry. All is very much on the up and up. Joan, as I said, is a nice girl and I really mean that.

.... Before I get off this subject, of my day off and the good it has done me, there is another little but very important bit. Perhaps it was the domestic work that I was doing. Perhaps it was just the exhilaration. But as I biked out from town last evening, I kept singing to myself and I was singing about how much I loved you. It was good. I loved you just to pieces and it wasn't the sad sort of love that I sometimes feel when I am blue. Rather it was the kind that made you want to jump and sing and dance and whoop. As a matter of fact, when I got back here, I found that I had broken my best speed record by about 5 minutes and still I wasn't at all tired. Does all that sound very foolish and unbelievable, darling? I don't know how else to say it. The main thing, though, is that I love you so much, and right now, so happily. It is all very, very wonderful....



September 18, 1943 Saturday afternoon. The calm before the storm....tonight we are having an anniversary party. That is the storm I am awaiting...

.... It is now Sunday morning. I am chipper no end. I guess you know that means I was a good boy. Naturally, I always am. The party....was much more crowded than usual because of all those who "came back" to celebrate the anniversary. I spent most of my time with them talking over old times. As a matter of fact, I had only a couple of drinks and danced twice during the whole evening. Chester May, Frank Yaussi, Bill Reber, Harry Holt (of Saturday Evening Post Clay Pigeon Squadron fame), F/L Bemrose, Jack Wright, and many many others came from all over the country. It was lots of fun. Many of the boys who have completed their tour of active duty or are now at some higher headquarters have jumped a peg or two, all of which is very, very proper. Yaussi who I first knew as a Lt. and who got his Captancy just before I did, is now a Major and so forth.

At the party we had our first mass view of WAAC officers. There were about 10 of them. I had seen 1 or 2 before at a distance, but none before at close range. I didn't meet any of them, but they appeared to be a very fine bunch of girls. I could hear them talk, too and it was rather nice hearing an American girl talk American.

.... My social plans this week are confined to next Saturday evening. I think I told you, probably because of my help in the moving job, I have been asked with several closer friends to Joan Green's house-warming party. Shube and I are the American contingent. I expect there will be about a dozen there altogether. I suppose I should try and get something during the week to take to the party. I wish you were here to advise. But it seems to me we always used to do something like that at a house-warming. Joan, by the way, has a flat consisting of a kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and then a livingroom-diningroom. She has gone ahead and walked through some furniture stores buying what she thought she would need. You know what we always thought about that. I bet she will regret many of her purchases later on. Her flat is in the back of what used to be a large single house on the bank of the River. It should be a nice enough place for her purposes, though it will have to go when she has any larger family than at present. It reminds me somewhat of the flat we first had at New Haven. About the same size but not nearly as cute. I wouldn't say her stuff that she has acquired is as cute anyway near. But I guess it's her first place of her own and she is still a bride and probably thrilled right now. She'll have to learn just like Martha Treadway learned. We were

lucky ourselves, weren't we, darling. That was because you always saw what would happen if we plunged in and you always went slow and were sure that you wanted something before buying it. I guess the only thing we bought and didn't keep for a long time was the day bed in New Haven and even that we didn't regret because we certainly used that a lot in the first 3 years and it served its purpose.

I had a wonderful time the other evening. I was all by myself. And I just sat and closed my eyes and thought of some of the highlights in our sweet life together. I pictured all the details, for instance of our first New York trip, the train ride east after our marriage, Mount Tom, and our first climbing of Newport Mountain in Maine; our first day alone on the first trip to Tamagami; the swimming hole we found on Maui on our last trip and many others. It was fun. You should try it, darlinest, if you haven't done so already.....

September 24, 1943 2 letters from you in the past 2 days....and they fill my heart with joy. In yesterday's letter you told of Lee's swimming and I decided that she would have changed the most of all since the time when I left. In today's letter you tell of your purchases for Isabel and so once more I am in doubt. So I have my oldest no longer a little girl but now really a young lady, and my youngest no longer a baby, but rather a little girl. It is all very, very astounding. Not easy to visualize. I suppose some vast change will come to Arthur too, to make him totally different from when I went away. Whatever happens, darlinest, to the children, don't change yourself, will you? I am counting on your being just the same as when I saw you at Holyoke, just as though all this past year had been no more than a very bad dream.

.... I am here at headquarters waiting to see if it's a boy or a girl....In about half an hour I will be very busy and then will be writing down the answers to my questions until some time after midnight. I wonder if I will get to bed then or if there will be more work to do for the morrow. I don't know as yet. If there is, I am the goat because it is my turn....there are 3 of us now who share most of the night work. Capt. Weld, Lt. Pool and myself. So that means that I never get it more often than every 3 days....

Well, darling, it is time to consider winding this up because I always like to get over to the field about 10 minutes beforehand so that I won't miss seeing the boys fly overhead. There is so much you can find out just by watching them. It isn't only a matter of counting. Sometimes you can sense by their attitude whether they are feeling good about what they have been doing. When their formation is

perfect and they come in low over the field with a great roar of engines and then peel off with a sort of flourish, you know that all is well and that they found what they were looking for and that the thing is no more. But if they look tired (and I can't tell you how I know they look tired, but they just do), then either they have had a long fight, or they are discouraged because they missed what they were after, or something of the sort. If they look tired and there is a feathered prop or 2 and you know that all is not well and you start looking for flares (the signal that an ambulance will be needed). That's why I like to get there early----millions of kisses or one huge one whichever you prefer.
Freddie

September 29, 1943 The party at Joan and Dickey Green's new flat last Saturday was lots of fun. There were just 9 of us in all. Including Shube and myself. Dickey, who is an expert at motors and is now working at the Rolls Royce factory came down for the weekend. He must have been quite an amateur motorcycle and automobile racer in peace time. He had drawers full of trophies of one kind or another. He has always been crazy about motors and things like that. He has been trying, according to Joan, for some time to get into one of the services, but the Rolls people have stopped every move he has made. I don't suppose Joan is too angry about that. But to get back to the party, it was just a case of sitting, sipping and talking with some very tempting tomato, cheese and other kinds of sandwiches to munch on throughout the evening. One of the men—I can't remember his name—had been with Dickey on some of his races in times gone by and it was fun to hear them reminisce. It was a nice party and good fun. I still think that these two are a pair that you must meet if we ever come back here or if they should ever come west.

September 29, 1943 I have already written you once today, but since I wrote I received these very wonderful letters from you.... You make no further mention of your horseback accident so I assume that your first headache hasn't returned. I very much hope so.

.... I personally haven't been too active socially of late. I wrote you a bit about the housewarming party given by Joan and Dickey Green. It was lots of fun....Our hosts, Joan's sister Bobby, Shube, Mary Corfield, and a couple who were peace-time friends of the Greens. Shube and I brought some tinned fruit which we had got out of the mess and which is practically unobtainable by civilians because it requires more coupons for 1 tin than any single individual is allotted. Those were the only presents brought to the party, though, I guess

almost every one there had at one time or another contributed to the welfare of the Green family, and its new headquarters. We spent the evening sipping beer and eating some sandwiches and talking....

September 30, 1943 ... You asked me, darling, in one of your letters which I received yesterday what I wanted for Christmas. Actually, I haven't the foggiest idea. That isn't much help, is it? But the fact is that there is nothing that I need myself. I have warm clothes, thanks to last Christmas. I am able to buy everything that I need in the way of clothes and I can probably get them cheaper than you can. I have ample candy and smoking ration, food is no problem, nor are all those little necessities like toilet articles, etc. Now that I think of it, though....if you can get a film to send to me...Otherwise, I suggest that perhaps that subscription to the New Yorker would make an excellent gift. And if you should not be satisfied with that, then get something for the house which you can show me when I get back. Perhaps the best thing of all (and I am not kidding) would be a black chiffon nightie. A picture of you in such would do me a lot of good. And I wouldn't show it around either.

Must stop now, my darlingest. I love you so very very much. Please don't give two thoughts to Christmas, though. Being way over here and in a camp Christmas really means nothing at all. It's no use trying to make it mean anything. I know you understand. I'm not griping. Just a fact....Thousands of kisses. Your devotedest---

October 2, 1943 Allied troops are, according to the papers, in Naples. The town is pretty much in ruins. But the news brings to mind so many, many happy memories. I liked Naples. I would like any place with you, darling. I even liked the place in the French chateau country where we ate and there were so many flies on the food. Do you remember? The news will increasingly carry the names of places that were part of our honeymoon. And more memories will materialize. It looks as though we were taking our honeymoon route in reverse, doesn't it. I wonder if our armies will do Rome as quickly as you and I did it. Our armies are not advancing, it seems, with the crushing speed of a month ago. Then we were going so very fast that many people had high hopes of everything being over so very soon. Our armies are still doing splendidly, in my opinion, and nothing more could be asked of them. But we are now facing realities a little better. The facts are that Germany is not yet whipped. She is still very strong. She is losing just as surely as anything and will eventually be crushed, but there is much work to do. I am still of the opinion that she can be practically crushed

by the kind of work we are doing, but it is just wishful thinking, to my mind, on the part of those who are saying that it will be over before Christmas. When we get Italy and if then we can use Italian bases for our heavy bombers based in the Mediterranean Sea against the southern and south eastern German targets, then give us about 6 months and the rest will be a comparative walk away.

....This winter should be more pleasant for me than last winter for several reasons. I guess that I have told you that I expect to be more comfortable and all that. But what is more important, I know more people in town. People that I can feel free to call on, spend an evening with, join for a cinema party and that sort of thing. People who I would like to keep knowing after all of this is over. I am thinking most particularly of the Greens right now because whether it happens at home or over here they are 2 people that I want you to meet someday and whom I intend to correspond with when this is all over. I have only really got to know them in the past few weeks, but already they have been terribly nice to me. I can imagine them both fitting in really well with the "gang". When this is over, they won't be here if they can help it. They intend to get a country house (thatched roof stuff) in Devonshire. Sounds like good stuff. It would make a nice place to visit them if we ever made the trip together in this direction. All this talk about the Greens by the way comes from my plans in the near future to return their hospitality at the time of the "house warming" by taking them out to supper and then the movies. I'll let you know how it comes out. I haven't yet set a date. But to get back to my original thought, my precious, I am for the first time since I came to these shores, enthusiastic about people outside the army and it makes a great deal of difference. It's all very well to go to town in uniform and then to the movies. But with the Greens I can take off my blouse, wash dishes, polish silver, work in their little victory garden thus getting entirely away from "army" for a few hours and come closer than I have before of feeling that I was really welcome for myself and not as a matter of duty. Do you understand, darlingest?....Well, that is enough "raving" about the Greens, but the point is that they are one very important reason why I expect this winter to be so much different from the last winter.

October 5, 1943 Let me congratulate you, my darling, on the way you conducted the Junior League meeting and especially the dinner beforehand. That was quite an undertaking and a most important one. I suppose there are people like Dr. Lineman who are thinking about what is to happen after this is all over....That is one thing, I think, that

soldiers are apt to forget. I mean when they are demobilized, they think that they have done their work and that the country owes them a living and all that. That is all wrong. They will have a rude shock, many of them, for instead they will find that they will have to work much harder than they have been accustomed to and for much less in the way of money and perquisites. It was the same at the end of the last war and will happen again. They will make demands and there will be ill feeling. If only they could get the idea through their skulls that when this is all over, there is a new and probably tougher job to be done and that they will just have to buckle down and do it in order to survive, then the world would be happier. But to get back to the point, darlinest, right now we are counting on the home guard and the thinkers and planners among the home guard to plan as much as possible for the future at this time so that we won't get caught without any plans at all, and that is why your meeting was so very important and timely. You have performed a real service to Cleveland and the whole country by having this meeting. And that last is a carefully considered and very sincere statement.

Darlinest, I think you are the most wonderful girl in the whole world. I am so terribly proud to be your husband. It isn't just the meeting you have just had. It is everything you are doing. And the way you are doing it....These reports come from all sides. That is why you make me so proud and happy. They are also some of the reasons I love you so very much. Love, I think, is a funny thing, in that it can't always be explained. A good person may love a very bad person perhaps because of some hormones in the bloodstream or something of the sort. They love simply because they love and can't help it. I love you that way, darlinest, but to that you have always added so many, many reasons that my love has just grown and grown and grown. It is very wonderful to me.----Freddie



October 8, 1943 My darlingest, I had another real good evening in town the other day. It was the 6th. Perhaps most people wouldn't appreciate why I had such a good time. I'll tell you what happened. I dropped in about 5:30 at the Green's flat. Dickie was not there. He only comes on Holidays and week-ends. But he himself suggested that I do not wait until he is around. (You may not believe it but I have a reputation around town for being "safe".) Anyway, Joan and I went to the Swan, which is an old-fashioned sort of friendly hotel and had a very nice supper with a cocktail first. Then we went back to the flat and while she did her weekly ironing, I polished the silver. We worked on these jobs and finished them just in time for me to catch the bus back. I don't suppose you would consider that a very exciting evening. It wasn't actually exciting, but it was one of the nicest and most satisfying I have had. I guess it is the same old idea of "getting away from it all".

.... I told you in one of my recent letters of the various reports coming in about your big meeting. It must have been one of the big things of the year for Cleveland.

The house party at the Smythes sounded like it had all the earmarks of a good time by all. You mentioned Chick's suggesting, or I think you used the term "insisted on", playing musical beds. One great

gap in your letter resulted when you failed to mention if it was actually played or not. And if it was played, did you enjoy it? If I had been there I might possibly have backed Chick up on the idea. That is, if I had been home right along. Naturally, if I had only been home on leave, there would have been no time for any such nonsense. But what I started to say, if I can make myself clear on the point, is that that brings up what to me right now is a rather fundamental idea. One that I have had right along but I don't believe I have ever expressed it to you before. I do so now for no particularly good reason except to give you some reassurance perhaps. But, you know darlinest, how I always enjoy smulching etc. at home. Well, my idea such as it is, is that was all right when you were there and I could always show you that I loved you. Now I can't show you. I can write and tell you so but you have to have faith in my words. With a physical demonstration, nothing else is needed. You just know because of the tenderness of a caress, the pressure of a hand, the twitching of a lip. There are a thousand and one ways which tell better than any words the truth that "I love you". But as I said, words are different. I can't show you with words. You just have to have faith in what I tell you. If you should lose faith it would be just too bad because all I could do to restore that faith would be to send you more words and if you ever doubted me you would probably not believe me when I was trying to restore your faith in me. That means only one thing—that I must do nothing while away from you to start you doubting what I have to tell you. I must do nothing at all which might by any chance make you doubt in the slightest that I love you and you alone and you completely. I can't say, of course, that I have done nothing which might raise these doubts in your mind. I can say though, that I have up to now done nothing which should give you any doubts and I intend that that shall be the case right along. As I said, it might be different if I had been with you right along. Being away I am extra careful.

Well, with that off of my chest—I hope you didn't mind my going off on that tangent—I can return to your letter....Kisses to you, the children and A. Your devotedest, Freddie

October 9, 1943 I worked very hard last night, darling. Got to bed at 6:30 am. Then I slept until just too late for lunch. I'm up and around now, though, waiting, waiting most expectantly. This, as you might guess by the time you get this letter, from reading that you will have done, is a real red-letter day. I won't be tired until it is over because I am all keyed up....

Note: From Russell Strong's (First Over Germany, a History of the 306th Bombardment Group) account of the October 9th mission briefing, "...Maj. Robert C. Williams, group operations officer, told the assembled combat crews that if there were any doctors in the room then it would be best if they remained until after the screen hiding the mission route was rolled up. The yarn looped across Northern Germany as it never had before, leading to Gdynia, Poland, where the target was naval and industrial and port facilities." (Strong, p. 162). Twenty one planes took off from Thurleigh and twenty made it back. The crew of the downed ship parachuted out over Denmark and spent the remainder of the war as POWs. The Group successfully bombed a ship and port that the Germans had assumed would be safe because it was 200 miles east of Berlin.

I don't remember just what I said in yesterday's letter, darlingest, I mean, I don't remember just how I put what I was trying to say. I am just a touch worried because I coupled a reference to Chick's wanting to play musical beds with a discourse on some of my ideas on morality while away from home. What I am worried about is that you might think I in any way was not approving of that kind of party for you. That is not the case at all and I don't want you to have any such thoughts. Darlingest, as long as you love me, that is all I care about. I would approve of anything you did as long as you loved me most. That my darlingest, is the only thing that I shall ever ask of you. It is the only really vitally important thing anyway, darlingest.

October 12, 1943 Since I last wrote I have been to town. It was last evening, as a matter of fact. I had planned to take the Greens to dinner on Saturday, then I had been busy and just couldn't show up. That often happens here and the civilians are used to it and very understanding. As a matter of fact, all "dates" are made with the understanding that we may just never show up. Well, I couldn't and I felt rather badly about it because I had counted on being able to repay some of the very grand hospitality that they have shown me. So the first chance I had, I went to town. Dickey wasn't there so I took Joan out to the hotel where I had planned to take them in the first place. We had a drink, supper and then another drink in the lounge before I escorted her home and took the bus back here. I took in all the pictures of you, the children, Dad and all that I could lay my hands on. She had asked me to do this. I had a grand time telling her all about you and the kids and our house and all. I think they are persuaded to come to America sometime after this mess is all over. As I have stated before, I

hope they do because I certainly want you to meet them, and have them meet you. You may get a letter from them one of these days. Such has been threatened. I have mentioned my hopes to keep this friendship up after the war by correspondence. With this in mind, I gave Joan your address when she asked for it.

It is time to get back to work again, darlingest. It looks like tonight will be another long and busy one. But no matter how busy I am, I love you precious and think of you most of the time. You are “everything” to me. Annex sends his love along with mine. Your most devotedest, Freddie.

Note: The Group was preparing for a raid to Schweinfurt, Germany, where they had been badly mauled in August, losing 17 planes (though none that day from Fred's original squadron, the 423rd). The ball bearing plant was deemed an especially vital target. Intelligence calculated that the first raid had degraded ball bearing production by 38 percent but that much of the damage had been repaired. So on October 14th, they went back. The full 8th Air Force effort entailed 350 bombers. Fred's roommate, Beekman Pool, was now writing the 423rd's Combat Diary and his drama-infused entry for second Schweinfurt is evidence that Beekman felt that more, in the way of storytelling craft, could be wrung from this dry task. Fred's entries had occasionally acknowledged particular loss, and even more occasionally injected asides of humor. Beekman, channeling Ed Murrow, is worth quoting at length about the October 14th mission:

“Schweinfurt again! In the cold afternoon wind, little bunches of men peered anxiously at the low, grey clouds. Our planes are five minutes overdue—here they come now, five of them! Red flares pop up. The meat wagons dash past. Watchers turn to pick out other planes expected. The roar of engines approaches: these must be ours: no, they pass on: and the clusters of watching figures grow more intense. From the first plane to land trickles back the words: ‘Those G—D--- rockets. They'd hit a plane and it would just disappear—17s blowing up all around—never saw so many fighters in my life, the sky was saturated with them.’ As the crews came in their faces were drawn, not just from weariness but because friends had gone down in flames in front of their eyes, not one or two but many; because jerry had thrown so many planes at them they had been bewildered; because—well, what answer could they find to this kind of stuff on the next raid, perhaps tomorrow? The group lost 10 aircraft. From our squadron Lts. John D. Jackson, Robert McCallum, Vernon Cole and their crews did not return...That is the bad side.

"Here is the good side. At the briefing this message from General Frederick Anderson had been read to the crews: 'This air operation today is the most important air operation yet conducted in this war. The target must be destroyed. It is of vital importance to the enemy. Your friends and comrades that have been lost and that will be lost today are depending on you. Their sacrifice must not be in vain. Good luck, good shooting, and good bombing.'

"The target was destroyed. Their sacrifice was not in vain. Tanks, submarines, airplanes and guns, but by the score or hundred, will not roll from enemy factories because more than half of Germany's ball bearing production was destroyed by the raid..."

Three of the 18 planes the 306th sent out had to abort with engine trouble. Only five of the remaining 15 returned after bombing the target. From the 10 planes lost, many chutes were sighted. In fact, of the 100 men from the lost crews, some 65 would survive as POWs. But there was no way for those at Thurleigh to confirm such a silver lining. One of the 423rd planes lost was that of Lt. Cole, whose lifeless body was found attached to his parachute in a tree. Cole's plane went down over a Dutch village, Beek, that long remembered the event of parachuting airmen floating down among them. Seven survived the drop, but were quickly captured by the German soldiers. In the early 21st century, the village of Beek commemorated the event by holding a service for the dead liberators and then dedicating a new playground in which they had fashioned a sizable sandbox in the shape a B-17.

Beekman's assertion that they had eliminated more than half of Germany's ball bearing capacity was overstated. Intelligence was unaware that Germany had, in addition to partially repairing the damage of the first Schweinfurt raid, pursued a policy of dispersing production, substituting other products, and sourcing supply from Sweden. (Gerald Astor, p. 160)

Regarding the attitude of higher Air Force command at the time of the Schweinfurt raid, Russell Strong observes, "There seemed little appreciation in Washington for the battle the airmen were waging. 'More planes over more targets on more days of the month' was the constant command of Gen. H.H. Arnold....In a letter to Sir Charles Portal, [Arnold] said, '...we are not employing our forces in adequate numbers against the German Air Force in being, as well as its facilities and sources. On my part, I am pressing Eaker to get a much higher proportion of his force off the ground and put them where they will hurt the enemy.' " Strong adds that Gen. Eaker, "wrote an optimistic report to Washington about the Schweinfurt raid, concluding his remarks with, 'We must show the enemy we can replace our

losses....We must continue the battle with unrelenting fury. There is no discouragement here.” (Russell Strong, p. 173). But there was considerable discouragement above Eaker: he would be replaced in the new year with a general that H.H. Arnold hoped would find better results.



October 15, 1943 -----I don't honestly feel too much like letter writing this morning. And maybe this won't do you much good or prove of great interest, for that reason. But I am not feeling too happy this morning after the figurative sock on the jaw I took yesterday. Naturally it is not conducive to high spirits to look up at the blackboard and see a lot of blanks. So much for that. The thought is best dismissed. If there is one thing we learn over here, it is that we must always look at the present and the future and only at the past to take something out that we can use in the future. It is not a case of being hard boiled but, as I have said before, one has to carry on.

.... I have just seen a Life dated either July or August. It showed some paintings of early forts in action in this theater. One of them showed all the activities of an airfield and practically right next to the greatest center of war-like activity was a farmer loading his wagon with hay. Sometime I wrote about the contrast of war and peace one finds over here and of the incongruity of it all. That picture shows that someone else had the same thoughts on the subject. It is all very remarkable...



Note: Fred saved the Life illustration of US airmen working within view of an East Anglian farm. This artifact of his effort to find meaning in the tragedy unfolding around him made it back to Ohio, where he pasted it into the last page of his war scrapbook beneath a handwritten caption: "War and Peace."

October 16, 1943 Had an evening in town yesterday. Not much details to write about. But Shube and I took Mary Corfield on what we call a "pub crawl" ending up with fish and chips. To you Americans, that would be similar to going night-clubbing and stopping in for hamburgs on the way back. Of course pubs, or public houses are different from night clubs. No music, no floor show, no dancing. Instead there will probably be a dart game on the wall, a draughts (checker) board on a small table, a miniature pool table in one corner, a bar in the opposite corner, lots of smoke, about half the people seated, no seats for the rest, civilians with their caps on, quiet conversation among various groups, a mixture of ladies and women (if you understand what I mean), of soldiers, war workers and enemy agents. Everything and every kind of person is met with at the pub. On a crawl, you enter the first pub that looks promising. The girls may or may not find a place to sit. It makes little difference. The men go to the bar and order a beer or a

Guinness for that is generally all that is available. You may have two if you like the pub or if you get into some interesting bit of conversation. Then you move on to the next. You can drink all night without getting tight, for the beer and even the whiskey, when available, is practically void of anything but the odor of alcohol. Then about an hour before the 11:00 bus leaves for the camp you go to a blacked out store where they sell fish and chips. There are about a dozen of these in town so you never have difficulty finding one. Here they take a big hunk of fish, dip it in some yellow pastry stuff, slap it in a flour bowl and drop it in some boiling water. It comes out with a brown sort of crust and they wrap this fish together with some French fried potatoes (called chips) in an old newspaper. Then you take this in your left hand and eat the fish and chips with your fingers as you walk home. If you are feeling fastidious you can wait until you get home and put it on plates and drag out a knife and eat it that way. But it actually tastes better if you eat it with your fingers while walking. Anyhoo—that is what happened yesterday evening. No excitement except that Shube and I had to walk pretty fast, we thought, to catch the bus. Actually, there was plenty of time for the bus left several minutes late. Joan said she had written a letter to you, but didn't tell me what she said in it. She did say she had a tough time doing it because she hadn't met you yet. If you do answer her letter, as I hope you will my darling, you will probably have a tougher time than she did. For I have at least spent several hours with her telling her about you. I don't know Dickey as well. He is away most of the time. But I did find out a bit more about him through Joan. After the university he went to work for a while. But as he was the only son of an only son of a really wealthy man and inherited a considerable amount at an early age (about 25 yrs. I should judge), he retired, though he had been doing very well. His hobby was cars and these races that I spoke of were more like field trials than anything else. Steep hills, muddy rocky roads. Tests of endurance of car and driver and of strength of car and skill of driver. It was this rather than flat races on prepared tracks. He liked it and so he did it. When war was declared he tried to get into the RAF but was put instead on a job making, or designing, or working on airplane engines and though he has tried several times to get away from it into the RAF, they have never let him. Here is something very confidential which I am going to tell you because it may help you understand certain things, if as I hope, you two get to know each other. They have no children. The explanation lies in a condition similar in some respects to the case of Jack and Chiz, except that they don't intend having any. At least as I understand it to be. Well, they both think that the war may have been

of some benefit to them due to the fact that it has forced Dickie back to a job. He realizes that the year or so of "trials" was fun but he was getting nowhere fast...Well, so much for that. I thought, though, I would give you something to start on in case you were considering the matter of correspondence....

October 24, 1943 You speak of Churchill's mention of our work. It makes one very proud to belong to an organization which receives and deserves remarks like that. And there are countless others these days....

.... May I thank you in advance, darlingest, for the Xmas box you sent off to me. I haven't received it as yet, but my goodness, this is much too quick to expect a package to come through. It should come, if all goes well, sometime about the middle of next month.... Thanks also for including in your plans, a couple of lip-sticks. These are most welcome by females in these parts. They can get some but it is all pretty trashy stuff like one would get at the 5 and 10. Decent lip-stick is a very rare article. I shall give one to Mary and one to Joan each of them from both of us. Speaking of Christmas, I have a plan for you, darlingest, which I hope you will like. I won't tell you what it is....

October 24, 1943 We are to have a party this evening at the mess hall. I am not taking anyone. Shube is taking Mary Corfield and I asked Joan if she could make it but she is on duty at the Observer Corps all night so that is out. I shall tag along and see that Mary gets cut in on at regular intervals. The party itself will be a little different from other parties and I think it may be considerably better. This party is for officers of the rank of Captain and up. Next week there will be a party for Lts. The old parties were pretty good, but in my mind there were two things wrong with them. One was they were much too crowded. The other was that a small percentage, but a very obvious percentage, would get much too much liquor inside of them. The general idea is to cure both of these things, as I understand it. I think it will undoubtedly thin things out a bit. As to the last, in the past I have found that drinking is not confined to the youngest officers and I have doubts if anything very good will come of the new set up in that respect. However, it may, for, there being fewer people to see or be seen, maybe everyone will be a little more careful of his deportment. Well we will see what we will see. I'm rather disappointed about Joan, though, because it would have been a new way to pay back some of my definite obligations in that quarter. However, there will be other chances. I wish I could ask you to this party, darlingest. How good it will be when we can -----

October 24, 1943 The party is over. It was much the best we have had. It wasn't dry by any means but I didn't see one drunk during the entire evening. The band was good, we had a G.I. floorshow which was really good. The food was grand. More partyish than before....

October 25, 1943 Glad you saw the Barkers. I guess that was a surprise all right. So Dick thinks he can get me to Washington when this is over. Actually that was probably a bit of cocktail-conceived baloney. But seriously, of course, it won't do, unless Garfield DB and V should not want me. I am under tremendous obligations to those at 1401. Not only for everything before the war but especially for the way they have treated us during the war - making up the difference in salary and all that. I appreciate that action of theirs more than they will ever know. And that is in addition to the fact that I myself want to work for and with them practically regardless of the terms. That is, providing they feel the same way about it. In addition there is the move to Washington and away from Cleveland friends - the gang and our families. I am very different from Dick in my make-up. If I can have a happy life I am content. To have a happy life it is necessary that you be happy and the children be happy, healthy, wholesome and that they be given the opportunity for an education such as ours. More money is desirable but there comes a point where one must choose wherein lies one's greatest happiness. I could work nights and week-ends like Dick does, and you would be proud of me and get diamond wrist watches and all that. That way I might become the best lawyer in Cleveland. I have felt, tho, that you would be fundamentally happier during our life as a whole if I didn't do a Dick Barker. Maybe that shows a lack of ambition. Maybe I am kidding myself. I know there are lots of times when I could have worked harder and still maintained our "family" life. I know I should have worked harder then and didn't. In those respects I have missed my goal. But all in all --not counting this war (and I realize I have not made you happy by getting into it)—all in all, I think I have made my decisions wisely provided you consider the goal a wise one. Well, that is getting far afield. In any event the partners at 1401 will always have first, second and third call on me especially now....

October 26, 1943 -----Had a lovely evening the other evening and tho I mentioned it, I believe, in yesterday's letter, I want to tell you more about it. Because on analyzing my good time I think I have the answer to why I feel so at home with Dick and Joan Green. But I had a bridge date in town, to play with Bobby and Harold Gough (sp?) and another

man. Bobby is Joan's sister. Harold is RAF on leave at home. I knew Dick was to be home until 5 in the afternoon and the bridge date was at 7. So wanting to see Dick I rode my bike in right after lunch. I got there just as they started their lunch. They went right ahead and we chatted until they were thru. Then Joan got up to clear the table and do the dishes. I suggested that since they would be leaving for the station so soon (it was then about 3) that they let me do them later and that we three sit together and listen to a Tchaikowski (sp?) Concerto in the mean time. Well, after but a slight argument they took me at my word and all that Joan did was to clear the table in what we would call a living-dining room but what they call here "the lounge". But that—letting me be useful and taking for granted that I meant what I said when I offered to do the dishes, makes me feel as tho I was more that just another guest, if you know what I mean.

Anyway I did the dishes while those two went to the station and then Joan and I biked over to the Goughs for the bridge party.

It was rather serious bridge and tho I won (on magnificent cards), I believe the rest are all better players than I am. Joan doesn't play and she took her sewing along. The bridge was interrupted half way through when we all had tea and some chicken sandwiches.....

Well we had one of the biggest delicacies of mail here today that we have ever had. They haven't yet sorted out the letters. But they did sort out 2 truck-loads of packages and I got one from you, my darlingest.... I will try not to open it until Christmas. Very excited about it, tho and I may very well not be able to hold out...



October 28, 1943 My darlingest....your little Freddie is really and truly 38 years of age as of some time this morning.... I have an invitation to have dinner Christmas Eve with the Gough's. It will, except for me, be a family party with Bobby and Harold Gough, Joan and Dick Green, Joan and Bobby's mother and myself. It sounds very good and I have already accepted. I got some time off around Christmas last year in order to visit Mrs. James. This, being right

here, will mean that some others can take time off at this time. One or two, especially Al Weld and Beek Pool, have relatives in these parts and it is much more important, naturally that they celebrate Xmas with their relatives. I will give Joan one of those lipsticks, I think, if that package comes through as well as the first one. That is, if you still intend to send lipstick. But I will be sure to have it come from you....

October 28, 1943 This being my birthday, calls for 2 letters....I have about ½ hour before giving a class that I am all prepared for and since my mind is with you and the kids all day today, what better to do than sit down and write.

About an hour ago I received a birthday telegram. Thank you very much for the thought. I know you will be glad to know that it came right on the dot. Because of the reference to the rest of the family, I take it that it was sent from everyone at 2686 Wadsworth Rd. so when you accept my kisses of thanks remember the kids, each and every one of them, get some too.

I have just seen the Aug. 30 issue of Life magazine. There is a series of pictures and an article which should really go into my file, if you are still keeping it up. The pictures toward the end showing what

actually happened are of particular interest as they were taken and developed right here....

October 29, 1943It is now about 2 am. I am now planning what I shall do tomorrow. Generally when I make these plans I do not have the time to sit down and write, but this time there seems to be a catch somewhere. Anyway, I need more dope before I can do anything more and all there is to do is sit and wait for it....

I went to town last night. Had supper with Joan Green. We celebrated my birthday with a glass of beer (all we could get). I missed you so very much my darlingest, I just had to see some one—not a soldier. I'm afraid I got quite wistful as the day dragged on. I sure hope that that is the last birthday I have to celebrate in that fashion. I mean away from you and the children.

Must stop now, things are beginning to hum once more. Loads and loads of love to you my precious. Thousands and thousands of kisses. Your devotededst---

November 1, 1943 My most darlingest, After a lapse of 3 days in writing regular letters—I wrote you a V letter on the 30th—I can now start in once more. The lapse to which I have referred was not caused by failure to think of you or lack of an opportunity to write but rather the appalling emptiness of my purse. I actually couldn't buy a stamp without borrowing and you know how I just hate to do that, even to the tune of 6 pence. I came to the conclusion, after due consideration of the problem from various angles, that it was worth 24 hours delay in order to maintain my most fundamental principles. Anyway, that is how it came about. Today, tho, is pay day and I have bought another pound's worth of envelopes which should last me thru the month....

Note: For Lee, a signal memory of her father coming home from war—one which would be related to her own children on family hikes—was of Fred hoisting her onto his shoulders and singing his army song, "Rolling Home" which joyfully sets off on the lyric, "I've got six pence, jolly jolly six pence, I've got six pence, to last me all my life! I've got two pence to lend, and two pence to spend, and two pence to send home to my wife, poor wife!..."

I have a social date also. It is for the 8th of the month. The B.B.C. (British Broadcasting Co.) is putting on a concert in town and I have asked Joan to get tickets for it—if she can change her hours at the Observer Corps. She is "on" that night from 4 to 8 and the concert

starts at 7. It will also depend, naturally on what happens out here, but that is as it always is. If it works out, I'll let you know.

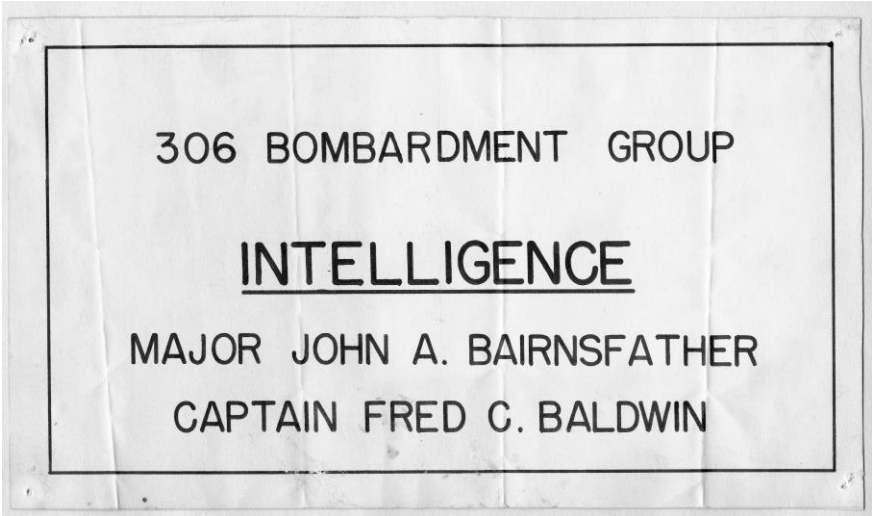
"... No cares have I to gree—et me, no pretty little girls to decei—ive me! I'm as happy as a lark belie—eve me! As we go rolling rolling home! Rolling home, rolling home, rolling home, rolling home, by the light of the silvery mo—oo—on...."

November 2, 1943 Isabel.... and Arthur.... I would be interested in knowing just what their present interests are. I can imagine Isabel may turn more and more of her attention toward dancing and men and such. That, of course, is quite the natural thing and being natural is therefore right—if not carried to an extreme. As you have known, more or less since the days we used to talk about it on Mt. Tom, I have always thought and still think, that the natural life is the best one, all in all. The extreme life, either one way or the other, is not natural and is all wrong, no matter to which extreme it goes. It is almost as bad one way as another. I still hold to those views, darling. It isn't just a way of applying a philosophy to myself. Of course, I realize that what I have said is pretty general and won't bear up in many specific instances. But generally it is right, just like my idea of what is most beautiful in dresses. You remember—my idea is to come as closely as possible to modeling the feminine form. That's natural you see.

"HAP-py is the day, when the soldier gets his pay, and we go rolling rolling HOME!"

November 3, 1943 ---- I am a little extra busy right now because my boss has gone on a bit of a "trip" that you may read about, leaving me in charge....

I saw Joan Green again yesterday evening. (Am I seeing too much of her? I don't think so.) Anyhow, she was very low. Today is her 2nd wedding anniversary and she did not like the idea of celebrating it alone. Also, this year she and Dick have found out what I did about Christmas presents—that you can only get utility stuff on the one hand or stuff that is 10 to 20 times too much—and have consequently decided most regretfully to forgo the idea of presents at all to one another. I took her to the Key Club, (officers' club in town) and tried to cheer her up, but I wasn't 100% successful. (I guess she still likes Dick more than she does me.) I merely mention that, because that is what constitutes my social life for the present as well as for the immediate past....



November 6, 1943 Al Bairnsfather, the boss, is out hunting, or rather shooting, today. That leaves me in charge here.... But Al has done quite a bit of shooting. There are game birds in abundance in these parts. Pheasants, quail and such. They are not as thick as the ducks at Winous Point of course, but a decent shot can nearly always bring back 1 to 6 birds. I haven't been out myself. As a matter of fact I haven't thought of going out myself and probably I shan't. Not that it wouldn't be fun. But I am too lazy. There is too much, at this stage of the game that would have to be done. Contacts to make and cultivate. Clubs to be put up for and all that. It is too much bother. I have the contacts here that I want. Getting into town about once a week or so, I can't possibly see even the people that I now know. And everyone is so cordial and hospitable and unless you see them pretty often they always want to know why you haven't been around to see them, and that means explaining. It is better, it seems, as long as this is but a temporary stay, to know a few well and not try to cover too large a field. But Al does go for shooting. Also for fox hunting. He spends all of his spare time doing one or the other of those 2 things.... While I haven't considered the idea of hunting, I have really thought of riding, but I have discounted that too. Unless I go through the whole procedure of contacts, etc., etc., the only thing is the livery stable stuff. And those horses are always tired out. It would be almost like riding work horses. It's not worth the trouble of either buying or sending for riding clothes. (I couldn't buy them anyway without coupons which I haven't got.)....

November 7, 1943 Well, the distinguished guests that I told you about yesterday have come and gone, and today I am in a better mood. Perhaps they have something to do with that for they were either really interested in what we had to show them and appreciative of what we did for them, or else they are pretty good actors—and that is not their profession. It isn't so bad when you go to a lot of extra work if, after it is all done, you find that it has been appreciated and that it may do some good. Before they arrived, no one knew who they would turn out to be. Except that we were all pretty sure that they had something to do with the newspaper business. I don't know why there was so much secrecy involved. When Eleanor was to come most everyone knew about it. The same when the King came here and again when his aunt arrived. Everyone knew that Mr. Eden was going to be our guest and Mr. Stimson and Mr. Knox were no mysteries at all. But Mr. Gannett of the Gannett publications, Mr. Caldwell of Los Angeles, a Canadian owner of a newspaper chain were most carefully guarded secrets.

Anyway, we put on a mock briefing and showed them how we would have done it and then showed them over a fort and they seemed, as I said, to appreciate it very much, and, as a consequence of the latter, largely, I feel infinitely better about it all. Of course I have just had my daily dose of vitamin pills and perhaps that has something to do with my feelings. I don't know.....

November 10, 1943 What do you know. I have just received your letter of Oct. 25. I was so glad to get it and it was such a grand letter.

Thanks for looking into the film situation, darlingest, but remember if it is too much trouble, don't really bother about it. I really and truly would rather not like to have you go to trouble for me—The Christmas present for me (the 2 chairs) sound very grand. From your description of them I can easily picture the room as it was set up for the party you gave the Chases. I am glad you bought something for the house. But remember, you have now fixed me up completely and don't bother any more about me....

A rather tragic time at the Greens' the other day. Joan's little dog which she has had since she was 11 years old, died. He had not been well for some time and Monday morning he was terribly uncomfortable and was pretty much groaning all the time so Dick took him to the vet's. The vet told Dick he could drag the dog for a couple of days but couldn't really fix him up and so he was "put out of the way". Joan and Dick were both very upset and Dick called me up and asked

me if I could come in for the evening and spend the night with them. Since the next day was my day off, this was quite practical and I did. I was really tickled to realize that they would ask me to come rather than any of their other home friends. I guess maybe they like me about as much as I do them. I plan, by the way, to give one lipstick which you are sending me to Joan and one to Mary Corfield.

By the way, I stopped at the Corfield house during the next day and I found Mrs. Corfield making some very lovely calendars which she sells as Christmas presents. I ordered 4 of these. I will send them home to you and you can do what you want with them. I told you once, I believe, that in her youth she used to do a lot of painting. Well she had picked it up a bit again and these are water color scenes which I think are very good. Almost good enough to cut the picture out and forget about the calendar and the letter paper and blotter that goes with them. Anyway, I am supposed to be able to pick them up by the end of this week and you can do what you like. The scene showing a cliff and lighthouse, though, I would like to keep for special reasons, so don't give that away.

You state in your letter that "I can't imagine how tough it must be to live where lipstick is hard to get." I think that applies very much to Joan, by the way. She is very much like you in many ways and one of them is that she believes very strongly in keeping herself up well after "she has her man." She loves clothes, is very careful in what she buys and as a result, looks well and pretty snappy at all times. That is really something in these days and is very unusual for an English girl. That is one of the many ways in which she reminds me of you, darlingest. Dick is harder to place. He is something like a very thin Howard in looks but is more like Lyman in what he would probably hate to have me call his natural sweetness. At one time or another he reminds me quite a bit of either of them. I find he doesn't work for Rolls Royce but rather for the air ministry at one of the Rolls plants. At any rate what I started to say and what I will reiterate here is that the lipstick will be as welcome to Joan as it would have been to you if you had been practically without any except 10 cent store stuff for a couple of years and you know how much that is....

November 11, 1943 Today is Armistice Day. In other years it was a day where we at least paused and thought of things. This year, though, as stated in our newspapers, we are at our desks as it were, or in the air, pressing home our attacks on the enemy. It is certainly no day for rest and contemplation.

It also told in today's papers here that it had been decided by the powers that be to give the air corps a real chance to see if they could win the war without a second front—setting a deadline, naturally. As you know, from my precious letters, it has been my idea for some time that it would be a good thing to do if really done whole-heartedly....



Lots more packages came into camp today and I got 2 of them, darling.... I will open this one before Christmas—enough to pick out 2 lipsticks....

Did I tell you about going to Mrs. Bailey's house the other evening. Mrs. Bailey is Ceylonian (if that is the word). She lives in a flat directly above the Greens. Joan had her to tea with her in the morning and told her that she expected me in the evening and hence the invitation.... Well when I arrived, (a little ahead of Joan who came off duty at the Observer Corps), I met a Mrs. Ford for the first time. She reminds me quite a bit of Mrs. Reuben Hitchcock. She has been

working here at the Red Cross place in town. (That isn't open to officers and that is why I hadn't met her before.) It appears that she has been here 11 years but that she came from Cleveland Heights and was in a class below Louise at H.B.S. In these past 11 years she has become more British than the English—a true Anglophile, and wouldn't go back to America if her passage was paid. She thinks the Americans over here are pretty awful. She is much more outspoken about that than the natives who as a whole are really very nice about the nuisance that we are undoubtedly creating. I, of course, didn't like that side of her, but aside from that it was fun to meet a home-towner.

Note: Fred's description of Mrs. Ford—with her disdain for the American invasion of Bedford that the rest of her townsfolk were trying to be polite about—uncannily fits that of a woman he would also have been very interested to meet—Isabel Baldwin Pickering of, say, 1983. Like Mrs. Ford, Isabel would become a principled expatriate—cheerfully waving goodbye to Cleveland, H.B.S., American hubris in the world and so much for which she found England a welcome antidote.

At any rate, supper having started at about a quarter to nine, it was over just in time for me to take Joan downstairs to her flat before leaving for the 11:00 bus back to camp. I had planned to tell you all this before, but the thrill of getting those letters from you and Isabel the other day drove it from my mind.

There is a notice that the next officers' dance will be the 20th of this month. I will ask Joan, who couldn't come to the last one. (She has yet to come to 1 of our parties.) I can't ask Dick and Joan naturally doesn't like to leave him home when he is present.-----Your devotedest, Freddie

November 12, 1943 Last night after supper I went down to my quarters thinking I would light a fire and read. I worked about an hour trying to get my coke burning with paper, a couple of sticks of wood and some lighter fluid (we have no coal). It did no good and when all my resources were exhausted and the fire still not started, I gave up and turned in. It was too cold to do anything else. That is why I have no news. Unless you consider the fact that I got about 11 hours of sleep and that it was darn cold last night to be news---

Beekman Pool my roommate, has just returned from a conference in London. There he met several of my old friends.... including Mike Phipps, and some of the gang. Mike, you know, had a job like mine when he came over here a couple of months before I did.

He is now one of the air divisions (higher echelon) and is a major. And I suppose it brings up a question which you should have a part in answering. As I have told you, as long as I stick at this job, at an operational station, the highest I can go, unless Major Bairnsfather goes (which God forbid) is the rank of Captain. The question is,--how much pleasure, pride, satisfaction etc. would it give you to see me a major. My only chance of doing this is to get a job in division. Very frankly I would rather stay at an operational station as a captain than be a major anywhere else. I believe sincerely that we now have the best operating station section of Intelligence officers in the ETO and it is quite like a law partnership in the way it is working. We all have separate jobs but work together like a team at the same time. Everyone likes everyone else and it is a grand association. It is fun to work with the rest and really inspiring to work for Al Bairnsfather. Now that is a very frank statement of how I feel about it and I want an equally frank statement from you. I have had one very indefinite chance to go to division which I turned down before it really got started and I think I could make it with just one word to each of 2 people. What I want from you is a sincere and frank statement of how you feel about it.... Let me know what you think, darling, because in spite of the distance, we are still a partnership you know.

.... I love you my precious. A is terribly in love with you too—quite up righteously if you know what I mean. It is really getting to be the case of the old Duke's bone. My pal, Annexia, is going to have quite a time of it when I get home. Oceans of love, darlinest. Your most devotedest, Freddie.

November 15, 1943 Some time quite soon I expect to go to higher headquarters for 1-2 weeks. Jack Wright has the idea that it would be a good thing to have some of the officers to find out what it is like on an operational station and vice versa. I guess I am to be the goat from this end. It will probably be interesting though and seeing as how it is not permanent, I am very glad to have the chance to do it. I would certainly hate a permanent job up there though....

November 16, 1943 We are being blessed, this morning, with another visit. A very important personage is due to arrive any minute not. I will be able to tell you who it is as soon as he is gone, which may very well be before I finish this letter. Right now we are busy scrubbing and polishing floors, practicing salutes in front of the mirror, washing our mouths out with soap and all the other little preparations for such blessed events.....

By the way, darling, did you ever get Joan Green's letter. She showed me the address she put on the envelope and it was correct. She wrote about the 1st of October, I think. She asked me if you had heard the other day, and I couldn't tell her. I asked her to come out to the camp for lunch this Wed. She hasn't been out here before and she won't be able to come to the next officers' dance because she will be on duty that night. I hope she doesn't mind being the only woman among a couple of hundred men. And speaking of Joan, you mentioned the possibility of sending her some tea. I think that would be very nice provided it didn't cost coupons or points. She gets enough when I or some other guests don't pop in too often at tea time. What she is really shorter of, I think, is sweets—which you probably still call “candy”. That would be very much appreciated. I think, if there are regulations against sending anything like that direct to her, you could probably send it to me and I could deliver it to her from you.

One other thing. You mentioned in your letter that you couldn't afford a trip to New York this fall. That might mean most anything. I would like to know, pretty frankly, if you will tell me, whether you have enough income.—How you are making out. I haven't heard in over a year whether you are getting Hawaiian Dividends regularly—have you still got any other stocks at Murph Co. etc. Could you write a letter sometime darling just giving me a rough idea about income and outgo. I don't know what I could do about it but I might probably be able to help somewhere or suggest somewhere along the line....

November 19, 1943 This evening my original squadron is having a stag party at the mess hall and I expect to go to it. We have only had one other of the kind since we came here and there should be more of them. With a large turnover such as we have at this type of station, there is a lot of getting acquainted to be done. A couple of drinks loosens the tongue and you all end up by being the “besh of frenges”.... It is kind of pleasing to be asked to come after being out of the squadron for 3 ½ months. Perhaps the fact that I, along with a few other invitees are contributing the regular amount has something to do with it. But I have had a few other evidences recently of kindly remembrances of things past. It wasn't so long ago when we were getting a new batch of combat crew members and the new squadron executive officer was looking around for additional accommodation and he suggested to the C.O. that since I was now in group rather than in squadron, he could have me move out and use my room, whereupon the squadron C.O. is reported to have told him that I was one of the first guys in the squadron, and that as far as he was concerned I was still an

ex officio member and that I could stay in my quarters as long as I liked and if necessary new members could use tents. All of which, when reported indirectly to me was highly gratifying. And that is why I am also pleased with being asked to the squadron party and somewhat discount their need, as the only reason, for my 2 pounds.

.... I told you, in yesterday's letter about having Mary Corfield and Joan Green out here as my guests for lunch, but I don't believe I mentioned that Dick is expected home this weekend. I shall try to get in to see him some time, if possible, though the chances do not look too bright at this moment. It is getting mighty close to my turn to do night work.

November 21, 1943 ---- We had another officers' party last night. Once more, believe it or not, I left early....It was a good enough party, but I was tired to begin with. I hadn't slept a great deal 2 nights before....

The war news is exciting, isn't it, darlingest. Especially the news from Russia and what these 2 tremendous armies are trying to do to one another at the salient west of Kiev. Both sides apparently making big and far reaching gambles, the outcome of which can mean so very much....

November 23, 1943 I see so many references in the papers of this country and also from home which would lead one to believe that this D--- war is all but over. I must say I don't like that kind of talk. God knows I want to come home—when I have finished my job—and the earlier the better, but from a military standpoint, it seems to me this war is far from won. Complete victory over the German army was, I thought, one of the musts. A political victory over the Nazi party was not enough. I can see the Nazis being overthrown in a hurry. I can't see a complete victory over the army until at the very earliest late spring or summer. If that is true, I wish the papers would print the truth and not get a lot of guys' hopes up. I shouldn't think it would be any better for the home morale. If we have to face a long war, I want to know it. So do most of my friends. We can take it.... Personally, I joined up because I believed that we had to lick the Germans so very badly that they wouldn't during Arthur's lifetime dare to start things again. It is not enough just to beat them. We have to beat them so badly that the people, 25 years from now, would rise up in revolt before going to another war. We haven't done that yet.... All these newspaper quotations of men in government that "the war may be over any day" and all that sort of twaddle is just plain not fair unless, of course, we have decided

to give up the struggle—and I hope for Arthur’s sake that that is not the case.

.... Since starting this letter, I have received your letter of the 10th. I’m very glad to hear that you received Joan’s letter. She is a sweet girl (quite like Martha in her sweetness and her love of animals—she can get crowds of boys listening intently while she tells them of how her dog chases sticks)—and she has been a great help to me. I am still lonesome, darlingest. I will always be lonesome while I am away from you, but she has been a grand help. Dick, when I see him, is also lots of fun. I am going to try and wrangle a photo of them which I will send you if you can get it.

What an experience that must have been—meaning the fire in Lee’s room. How fortunate the level-headed Isabel was there and noticed it in what I suspect was good time. But above all, how very diplomatically you handled yourself, my darlingest. I am very, very proud of you. It must have been quite something to discuss punishment, delinquency courts, monetary settlements and all that and still remain friends with the neighbors. The scotch, I imagine was a costly touch, but well worthwhile idea. But what a terrible thought it is—what might have happened. Well, all’s well that ends well, I always say.—Or was it me who thought that one up?

Note: Lee Baldwin Dalzell remembers the story about the fire in her room. Apparently, a particularly malevolent boy who lived in the house beside theirs climbed the terrace awning frame to the second floor. He started the fire. Isabel discovered him and acted. Pat looks to have conspired with the neighboring parents to subject the boy to a severe scare—painting a picture of the dire consequences that await juvenile arsonists. The scotch perhaps offered as a seal of the parents’ conspiracy—and accepted in the interest of peace. As a matter of fact, several years later Fred himself set fire to the Wadsworth Street house when he tried to burn Christmas wrapping paper in a basement furnace. The fire department acted to save the house in that instance.

Poor David and Margaret Moore! Such a horrible experience. I don’t know whether it is better or worse that the sailor married her first. I don’t know whether that had anything at all to do with it, my darling, but above all other things we must remain very, very close to our children and so conduct ourselves that they will always give us their full and complete confidence. They should never be scared to talk over anything at all with us and we must be very understanding. Only in that way can we be sure that they will always tell us first before

making some great big mistake. It isn't good to say that our children are different and wouldn't do those sorts of things. They are human, thank God, and they will have all kinds of desires and temptations put their way. We must never take them for granted any more that we do ourselves and as I intend from now on to do with our own love. I don't know why I am telling you all this, but despite the fact that I like Margaret, I can't help but think that in that type of case the parent is a good bit to blame. He or she should be so very close to the child that he would know that the child might do something of the sort. Darlingest, don't keep yourself so very busy that Arth and Isabel especially at this time feel that you are at all distant.....

November 26, 1943 Yesterday, naturally, was Thanksgiving day. I had intended lighting a fire in my quarters last evening and writing a long letter to you. It didn't pan out though. I worked for about half an hour trying to get the coke fire going without any kindling without any success...

We had a big dinner yesterday. There wasn't quite enough turkey to go all around but I was numbered among the fortunate ones and got a nice slice of white meat. With it we had the usual stuffing, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, peas, corn (both canned naturally) and beets. For dessert there was pumpkin pie. All this, with 2 cups of coffee filled me completely....

I haven't been to town this week as yet. I expect to go tomorrow, however. I am supposed to be in charge of the "Liberty Run". That means the truck caravan taking the men in for the evening. We leave the station about 6 and start back about 11. I plan to drop in to see Joan Green unless she is too tired. The reason I say this is that she has had a rather tough week on duty. If I find her tired I shall try to see a movie. There are some good ones in town this week including "The Four Feathers". This is a British version of the old story in technicolor and the boys who have seen it are quite enthusiastic about it.

Well darlingest, this is short, but it is time now to go ask the usual questions of the boys....

November 26th, 1943 We have now finished the rough draft of our final report for the day. It is on its way to Bairnsfather to be proof read and scratched up more or less. When it gets back here, I'll type it up and send it off. Rather unusual procedure, because generally Al insists on writing it himself. He is good at that. Considered by Division as the best in the ETO. That is pretty good. Today, though he has what we all call "a regular English Cold". Of course we all have had runny noses

ever since we got over here a year ago. But every so often these get a bit worse and then you get a sore throat or some other symptom of a like nature and you start feeling pretty punk. That is what we call an English Cold....

----- I suppose you are getting ready for my return. At least making some plans. There is one thing that I assure you, you can count on when I get back and you might just as well get yourself used to the idea. That is, that you will have to spend a great deal of time, days on end, in fact, without clothes on. Whatever plans you make be sure to be ready for that....Another thing! There is to be no need to have my bed made up fresh. Whether we sleep better in 2 beds or in a regular double bed is out of the question. At least for the first month or so. Your bed will be plenty big enough for both of us.

Darlingest, maybe this war is almost over. Maybe it is not. In either case I tell you these things and I think rightly so now. Because I am very serious about them and you might just as well get used to them. Especially the matter of no clothes. Telling you now will give you a chance to acclimate yourself-----....



November 27, 1943 The news in the meantime...was good. Ground has fallen—Berlin hit again last night. It must be terrible in that city. I hope I never see the place. London, I thought when I first saw it, was pretty bad. But you have to multiply the London damage by several times before you approach what has been done to Berlin. I wonder

how much longer they are going to be able to “take it on the chin” like that. Not too many months. If we win the war now it will be because of our ability to carry this through to conclusion. Everyone here—or most of them anyway—will freely admit that England couldn’t have taken much more of what she was getting in 1940 and early 1941. But the Germans didn’t carry it thru. They got diverted to Russia. That is why we must strike here and strike again and again, greater and greater blows so that the Germans will know that no matter what they have endured—next month will be worse. I believe it will eventually be the dread of the “next month” that will, if anything, cause a capitulation on their part.....

Note: The idea that bombing civilian populations will force national capitulations is a misconception with a strangely persistent life in military strategy beyond the 1940 failure of the London Blitz. The lesson that people rally, and rally hard, against enemies who would destroy their cities from the air was still unlearned when—more than twenty years after Fred imagines B-17s winning the his war—President Lyndon Johnson sends American planes to bomb Hanoi in hopes of subduing the North Vietnamese.



November 28, 1943 My most darlingest, I received your letter of November 3rd today and it was most welcome particularly because I had just started letting myself feel a little sorry for myself and your letter snapped me right out of it.

Beek Pool who has been away at one of the many schools for a week, returned today and we have just been celebrating his return by

(hush) breaking into one of his Christmas boxes which we suspected was food. It was and we have been sitting in front of the stove munching pate de fois gras on crackers and drinking some bouillon cube soup. It has been a very enjoyable evening indeed. Now we are writing our most loved ones at home.

You asked me to tell you more of the guy on the “crash landing” clipping. Well, off hand, darling, he’s just another guy. He did a swell job that was written up. He finished his tour—volunteered for 5 more and really crashed on his 27th. Broken up and still in the hospital, but he’ll live....But there have been so many other “guys” that haven’t been written up.... But perhaps Klette was one of the best. He was a good looking, modest, soft spoken kid. Pinked cheeked but as tough as they come....The rest had all come back when Klette showed up. He had taken longer with only 2 motors and we weren’t sure he could come back at all. We felt like cheering when he did show up but just as he passed overhead one more motor caught on fire. It was getting dark and perhaps that made the fire look bigger than it really was. Then we saw him feather his third prop which left only one engine going. He still had to do a 360 and hit the runway just right. I really didn’t think he could do it. When he made it every one in the field gasped. I found myself wringing wet with sweat. And then when he came in and was to be interrogated and was turned over to me for this purpose, you would never know anything unusual had happened. He merely answered all my questions as he did every other time with that soft spoken way—far calmer than I was. I don’t see how he did it.

Note: In the 2nd crash landing Fred refers to, Klette suffered five fractures and a broken pelvis that landed him in a hospital body cast for 5 months. Klette went on, however, to serve as a squadron commander in the 91st Bomb Group, and continued to fly. By the War’s close Immanuel Klette had flown ninety-one missions. (Russell Strong, p. 159)

December 1, 1943 The months would appear to be rolling by. Here it is December—the Christmas month already. The time for jovial celebration, happiness, good will toward men. Funny, n’est pas? Not much of any of those things floating around the air this time. Perhaps, in a year or so we can start regaining some of those most essential feelings. I hope the time will come soon enough so that people don’t forget their importance....

December 2, 1943 My most precious, the weather would appear to have really closed down on us here after a few uncertain days. That means ground school as far as our section is concerned—plus sorting reports, answering the telephone and such uninteresting daily items. With nothing much to do I might ordinarily wander into town, but it so happens the Joan Green is spending the week up north with Dick and as I have indicated before, unless you have someone to see in town, there really isn't much use in going.

Perhaps you have wondered why Joan doesn't stay with Dick all the time. That would, off hand, seem the natural thing to do but it is not as simple as all that. In the first place, Dick is not, of course, going overseas and that makes a difference. Also he comes home weekends and that also makes a difference. Another thing is that there is only hotel accommodation at the little town where Dick works. Joan's family (mother and sister) both live here. Perhaps one of the main reasons tho is that Joan would have to give up Observer Corps work—at which she has during the past 4 years become quite proficient—and then would probably be drafted for factory work any place in England and would consequently be forced to live separately again. This way she at least sees Dick on weekends. You see, all girls including wives without children are put to work here. Unless they have a priority job already, they are drafted for something or other. Most of them are working on the trains or war factories. It is still surprising to me—and a bit shocking too—to see young girls and old women too dragging trunks, heavy objects, on a Ry. Platform, loading baggage on trains or trucks etc. The work Joan does now is important and hours are difficult enough, but it is not as physically tiring as working 6 eight hour days in a factory. I agree with her that her present set up is the best for her and Dick thinks so too. But that is why she hasn't tried to follow Dick. I tell you just in case you may have figuratively raised your eyebrows.

I went to the camp movies last night. They were terrible. Shube got up half way through and said he couldn't stand it. But I stuck it out somehow. The projector is in bad shape. The music sounds like an old victrola record

December 6, 1943 First of all...Grandmother's death. That is the first I have heard of it. I am so very sorry. It is all very well to say that she would not have been happy living on and that she had a very full life. That is all very true. But it doesn't help very much, it seems to me. In spite of the suffering which she has undoubtedly gone through in the recent past, I was terribly sorry to hear about it. Give Daddy a great deal of love from me next time you see him....

Note: In 1876, Emily Whitney Alexander was a little over a week away from giving birth to Fred's father, Arthur Douglas Baldwin, when her enterprising husband, Henry Perrine Baldwin, got his hand caught in the rollers of one of his sugar cane processing machines. Henry lost the arm. But he taught himself to write left-handed and went on to turn the little sugar business he had founded with Emily's brother into a major Hawaiian financial and real estate concern. Alexander & Baldwin was paying dividends helpful to Pat during the war and helpful to family members down to this day.

Another thing I got in the mail today, Darlingest, was the first 2 issues of the New Yorker Magazine. I have had my first glance through both of them and they certainly are welcomed by both me and most everyone else in this section. Thanks so much for getting them for me. The particular issues in front of me are the Oct. 23rd and the 30th issues....

December 8, 1943 I had the day off yesterday but I am afraid even that wasn't very exciting. In the morning I took it easy here at camp. After breakfast etc. I went over to the building I am going to move into and looked around. They have about 2 weeks of work to do there before I can get busy. The room is now used to store the effects of missing crew members and right now it is pretty crowded. This stuff will be moved out before the week is over.... Hogg (whom I will room with in this section).... will probably have to take in a 3rd member. At first I thought this might be Pool but as squadron S-2 officer, his C.O. wants him to live down at the site so he won't be able to come with us....

December 10, 1943 ----Al Bairnsfather has gone to London for 3 days. And so I am in charge here. But practically nothing has happened since he left---Things have been pretty quiet lately and I don't expect they will pick up very much.... I don't particularly welcome these slow months....

December 11, 1943 Just a note today because I am really very busy and haven't much time. Things should ease up by Monday tho, and then I will write a good letter....

December 13, 1943 The big rush of the last few days is now over. Al Bairnsfather is back here at the station and I can breathe easily once

more. Al had to be called back a bit early which was too darn bad seeing as how it was his first leave since he got here some 15 months ago....

In the mean time, my life here has been (aside from work) none too interesting. I arranged my first date with Joan in just about a month for next Thursday last night and find this morning that I am to be the officer of the day on Thursday, so that will have to be called off unless by some chance I can get somebody to change dates. I would like to be able to do that because...it may be my last chance to deliver your present and one that I picked up myself to her. In case you are interested, I found a little makeup bag. Actually it wasn't that I found it, but Beekman Pool planned to send it home to his wife but changed his mind when he later found something that he liked better. I bought it from Beek. It should go well with your lipstick. The rest of my Christmas shopping has consisted of a box filled with 3 weeks of my candy rations for Mary Corfield, a couple of decks of playing cards for Mrs. Corfield and another couple of decks for Bobby Gough.... I am obliged to all these people. In addition to these things I will try to get something from the back of the mess hall for each family. Maybe a tin of fruit or something of the sort. You probably know that that is pretty welcome in these times.

You may not know it yet, darlingest, but I have already made some plans for you for Christmas, too. As usual, I wish it could be more, but quite frankly I do think you will like it. I don't expect you to find out what it is until the big day, though. I have taken care of that by making arrangements through some of my spies.....

December 14, 1943 Beekman Pool left this noon. He goes first to a conference and then starts a week's leave when that is all over....I believe he will be taking the leave with some friends in London....

My social life here would seem to be straightening itself out a bit. Yesterday, as I wrote you, I was more or less in the dumps because my one date in just about a month was close to being scrubbed....Then this morning I got another fellow to trade dates as O.D. with me and that has cleared the atmosphere. I have also got the approval of the station adjutant to make the change and so now everything is all set. Now there is only one fly in the ointment. Joan will have worked from midnight until eight o'clock the night before and will probably be pretty tired. If I find that she has not been able to get in a nap in the afternoon, I shall probably leave right after supper. Well, we will see....



December 16, 1943 Some pictures have been taken here recently that I will probably not get hold of because they are probably for the official files only, but they make me think of something I don't believe I have ever told you. That is about the ceiling of the lounge in the mess hall. It is rather interesting. I wish you could see it because that is the only way to get the right picture of it. But it so happened, that after our first tough raid when we had some losses, the boys were hit rather hard and that night they in turn "hit" the bottle. During the course of the evening, one of them got the idea of writing the name of the target and the date on the ceiling with the smoke from a lighted candle. That was done and after that on important raids or raids that stood out for particular reason, the name of the target and the date was always put

up. We kept that up for the first year. The ceiling is now absolutely covered with names and dates. Most of the flying personnel, of course, don't know what it all means, but to us old timers, that ceiling is a very important document. All you have to do is look up, and all kinds of stories are recalled to mind. I don't think any more dates will go up. Not that we will not have new and different stories, but I think most of us want to keep it (the ceiling) just as it is now.

I'm glad to hear that Clen is turning into a good escort. At least, from what I gather, he is fitting in well with the gang and probably means that you are enjoying his company. That pleases me to no end. I think you have been fairly lucky to get 2 such good "boy friends" as Tom and Clen, not to mention the Commando. I only wish you could have a whale of a time, darling. But I know it isn't as good as all that. All that a good escort does for you and all that a person like Joan does for me is to provide for a few moments a bit of diversion from the starvation of our separation. That isn't a very good way of putting it, perhaps, but I hope you understand what I mean. Companions of the opposite sex mean that our lives are not quite so abnormal as they might have been.

Well, I hear the boys overhead and so I must put a hurried finis to this letter. Naturally, I must first tell you that I love you. For that is the one thing that is the very most important to me of all things on this earth, my darlingest. And that is how it will always be, even long after we are both dead and buried. That is something that is so great it must be eternal-----

December 18, 1943 I have just now received the letter which you started on the 7th of this month and which you finished up downtown at the Union Club while waiting for Isabel. You told me of several things that I wanted to know. In the first place you relieved me of what little worries I had as to your financial status. True, it will be a much brighter picture when Arf finishes up his sessions with the Doc, but even then you do seem to have been able to put aside some money now and then. I think you have done a truly remarkable job of planning, darlingest. I hope you get the extra Hawaiian dividend to help out.

.... I am glad that Clen is taking hold so well....for Clen, when he wants to be is tops. Have a grand time with him, darlingest. Go places, do things as the saying goes. Like him all you want to. My only requested line to be drawn is the same as it always was and always will be—that you always truly love only me. Anything else is quite unimportant it seems to me....

December 18, 1943 I mentioned, in my V letter, I had received from the office, a typewritten copy of the “appreciation” given at Grandmother’s funeral.... It is naturally something that I would want to keep....

Mr. Rowan’s tribute is indeed very beautiful. I wish, though, that Dad had been there to write one for him. Mr. Rowan knew Grandmother for only the last 18 years of her life and I think his tribute is colored by that. Somehow, I feel that he has not said enough. I hope someday, the rest will be said. I don’t know how to put it, but to my mind Grandmother was not so much the “uncrowned queen of Maui” as she was the “mother” of all Maui. Washington is thought of more as the father of his country than one of our Presidents. It is something the same with Grandmother. She is the mother of Maui. Mr. Rowan did a good job, but it is not gentile enough. However, it is so good that I will always want to keep it.

.... Nothing very exciting has happened to me recently. I had a telephone call from Dick Green this noon. He merely wanted to say hullo. He is here for this weekend and assures me that he will be back again in time for the Christmas Eve party. It will be good to see him again, for it has been over a month since we have seen each other. He was not at home when I saw Joan last and took her out to dinner. Joan, by the way, has decided to get a new dog. That should be nice for her. It won’t make her flat seem so empty as it has been recently.

In order to have something to do more than anything else, I am raising, at this time something which I hope someday may become a mustache. If it should ever blossom forth in to anything like what it is intended to , I will send a picture of my face. But naturally, it will come off long before I see you again, darlingest. After all, when that day comes, I don’t want anything to stand between us....

December 21, 1943 I mentioned in my V letter having received what I consider one of the most exciting letters I have yet got from you. It was your letter of Nov. 29th and it was exciting because you told me of our most recent acquisition to your trousseau—the black nightie. Just the idea of that purchase makes me all excited and thrilled, darlingest. I suppose I am awful mean and low-minded and everything else that you may want to call me, but you don’t suppose it would be possible to have someone, possibly a girlfriend, or perhaps Isabel (if she is old enough or young enough) take a picture of you in your trousseau for me, do you? Perhaps that is too much to ask. I won’t bring it up again, but I am really thrilled, darlingest, at your getting the nightie in the first

place. It was really very darling and sweet and understanding of you. I hope it didn't use up too many valuable points.

..... No social activity from this front as yet....The Christmas Eve party that I have mentioned several times already...is to happen at noon on the 24th, and a dance here at the station on New Year's Eve. I have asked Joan if she wants to come to that party, but she doesn't know yet whether she will be on duty or not. If she doesn't come, I shall ask Mary Corfield, and if she can't come I will wolf it. But aside from those 2 parties, I don't intend any gay activity unless someone suggests a game of bridge. That, by the way, is something that I haven't done now for some time....



December 23, 1943 -----As Christmas approaches I want more and more to write my precious wife. I seem to mention Xmas a whole lot these days, don't I. You would think it was really something special. Perhaps that is the trouble. It is just another day here except for extra food at noon dinner. And it is because of that I think about it so much.

..... Tomorrow morning when I wake up I shall stay in bed a few minutes extra and just think about you and the children. I imagine Arthur, by this time has had enough practice to make a pretty good Santa Claus. And I can just see Lee's eyes these days. She is probably close to those glorious years when she tries to stay awake long enough to see Santa Claus come down the chimney. Grand trusting years, those are. But now time to get back to work. Sorry this is such a note. I love you, tho darlinest—distractedly. Your devotedest, Freddie

December 25, 1943 Dear Art, Merry Christmas to you, my boy, and a very happy New Year. I wish for you this coming year, lots of happy times, lots of good work at school, lots of thoughtfulness for your Mother and others who need more than you do.

I want to thank you especially, Arf, for the bridge cards and the scoring card and pencil that you sent me. It was very thoughtful. What I need most is things to occupy my evenings. Without a family to play games with, it is sometimes hard to think what to do. The cards will be most helpful, I assure you. You and the rest of the family have been so very wonderful to me this year. I had thought Christmas would be just another day, but it has turned out to be a very happy day indeed.

Loads of love to you, my son. I am so glad I have a son like you that I can count on. Most sincerely, Dad.

December 26, 1943 My darlinest, Twas the day after Christmas—I should be in my bed. For pounding of angels dance all though my head. etc. etc. Yesterday, in fact, was quite a day. I opened my packages before breakfast to begin the day as it should be begun. And, darlinest, I want to thank you for the very wonderful Christmas that you gave me this year. All those lovely books and other things you sent through the children, but most especially of all, the flannel pajamas. You don't know how very nice these are to have. For it is cold here at night—like getting undressed and to bed in a wide-open sleeping porch would be at home. And my other pajamas certainly have been cold to get into. I hope they didn't cost you any points but that somehow you were able to get them to me—being an army man—coupon free. I should be sorry if it means you didn't get some stockings that you need.

Well, I finally did get up and went to breakfast and what do you think we had—two fresh fried eggs along with fruit juice, cereal, toast, marmalade and coffee. Naturally that made the day a memorable one right there.

Nothing much happened between breakfast and lunch. I wrote V letters of thanks for presents received—to Dad, Louise and our 3 children—and then came to noon dinner with turkey, cranberry sauce, dressing and chocolate ice cream to top it off. It was all very jolly indeed. In the afternoon I rode my bike to town and had tea with Mr. and Mrs. Corfield and Mary. She was thrilled with the lipstick, darling. I found Mrs. Corfield had been laid low for almost a month, after a fall, with water on her knee. Yesterday was her first day up.

Then I went over to Joan and Dickey's house. They were both in, as was Joan's mother and they too were just having tea. So I had another cup with them. In the evening Dick, Joan's mother and I went to the Swan Hotel while Joan went on duty at the observer corps. It was a grand evening. I gather that ever since anyone can remember the Swan has had a party on Xmas night for its residents and a few old, regular customers and that was what we went to. Lots of people of all kinds, from all walks of life, of all ages. Men in and out of uniform and the same for women. An RAF Group Captain (our Colonel) sitting next to the American PFC. BBC singers sang in the evening.—The owner of one of the movie houses did some sleight-of-hand tricks—everyone sang—turkey again for dinner and all kinds of good things to eat and drink. Actually the supper started with real turtle soup—then the turkey course—ending in plum pudding. I drank scotch before supper, then sherry. We had burgundy with the turkey and liquor after the meal was over. There then followed during the course of the evening a little more scotch, some gin, some rum, some beer and I guess that was all. Joan joined us about a quarter past 12 and the party didn't break up until 4. We then went back to the Greens' flat and had a final cup of tea and then Dick and I went to bed on the living room sofas while Joan and her mother occupied the bedroom. I had planned to get up this morning at quarter to 7 and bike out here to camp. And I guess I must have done it right for at 8 I suddenly woke up to find myself out here eating breakfast.

I checked in at the office—found that there was nothing doing and so climbed right into "the sack" and didn't get up until time for lunch today. And so that takes you thru my last 28 hours. It was really quite a bunch of hours.

Today the camp has been slowly but steadily coming back to life. More sorry faces and shaky hands than you can imagine this morning. A very glum place indeed. All we had were memories. This afternoon is better, tho. Some of the boys are actually flying. Tonight I suspect we shall be back to normal. Especially as I am on duty tonight.

I really did have a good time at the party last night, darlingest. I did miss you tho. A couple of times for a brief spell I got pretty wistful about it all and we drank several toasts to you. As a matter of fact, all thru the day I would look at my watch and try to visualize what you would be doing at the moment. I figured on a 5 hour difference in time. I think I followed you thru your day pretty clearly. Especially if it was anything like other years. I hope the schedule was pretty much like old times.

Must stop now, darlingest, for what with my fun of yesterday, a certain amount of work has crept up on me and I must get it cleaned up. I love you my precious so very, very much. My own sweet love! All the kisses you can stand. Your devotedest, Freddie

December 27, 1943 After a 12 hour sleep last night, I now feel fully recovered....

You might just possibly get the idea, from the various kinds of drinks that I told you about in my last letter, that I was no less than completely intoxicated on Christmas night. That is far from the truth, believe it or not. I don't quite know what it is. Perhaps the English have invented a new kind of non-intoxicating whiskey but it has been my experience in the past (borne out at this occasion) that 4 drinks equals the effect upon one's equilibrium what one drink used to do before I joined the army. In any event, darlingest, I was at all times a gentleman (on the surface, naturally) and with all that drinking, I only just felt it, or them rather....

December 29, 1943 I didn't write to you yesterday. Sorry! But you see, I had the day off and went to town instead.... After lunch I got on my bike and rode in—dropping in on the Corfield family. Mrs. Corfield, Mary, Mr. Corfield and Willie were there. Willie is a youngster—just 18 and a new member of the R.A.F. He has been getting his basic training and in the near future will be sent to either Africa, Canada or America to get his advanced training and his wings. He will be quite lonesome—so far away from home—and so, when I find where he has been sent (he won't know until he gets there) I am going to write letters. After all, the Corfield family have been very nice to me. And I owe them a very great deal. But yesterday, after tea with the whole family I took Mary to see Betty Grable in "Coney Island". Mrs. Corfield still has her bad knee and couldn't go. Mr. Corfield also wasn't feeling well, and Willie had a date of his own. We thoroughly enjoyed the "cinema". Perhaps largely because it had nothing to do with the war. Also, as far as I am concerned, Betty sure has a figure and she certainly displays "them". Anyway we had fun. We stopped at "The Embankment" for a beer on the way home, and since it was quite foggy I spent the night in the spare room in the attic, biking out at dawn.

All would have been well except, when I got here I found they were having a practice gas attack and I had to bike about a mile through tear gas. I arrived at the office in a fearful state, crying, coughing and blowing my nose at the same time. I am only just starting to feel better about it now....

December 30, 1943Henry, by the way, says that he sometimes receives excerpts from my very occasional letters to Dad and that that is about the only chance he has of getting news of what I am doing. I wonder, darling, if you are still having excerpts from my letters to you sent around. I know that for the most part my letters are not worth the bother but every once in a while there should be a paragraph here or there which the others might like to see. The trouble is I haven't the time to write to everyone and still get off the number of letters to you that I want to, so that means that for the most part I am relying on you to spread what news I sent through. I have tried to keep quotable and unquotable paragraphs separate and for the most part to put the unquotable parts at the end of the letters so that this could be done. Anyway darling, let me know if this is being done because if not I will certainly have to write more to others of the family.

The Red Cross have, for the past few months, been building an officers' club in town. There has, since the beginning, been a very nice place for the enlisted men, but to date there has been no place for officers to go outside of 2 or 3 hotels, countless pubs and private homes. There has been a big need for such a club. It will open very soon after the first of the year. It was supposed to be ready before Xmas, but no such luck. They will have reading rooms, probably a game room, a cafeteria and sleeping quarters. They will probably allow female guests on special occasions but not ordinarily. Heretofore there has been no place to spend the night unless you knew some family like the Corfields (the hotels are filled up with residents). I suspect when this is operating, I will take many more of my days off than I have been. So far I have been using about 1 day out of every 4 days off and haven't taken a leave since last spring when I took 2 days. Also, if I should get into a bridge game in town, I won't have to leave at 10:30 (just about as the game is ready to start). I have always turned down bridge games in the evening for just that reason....

.... It is getting very close to the time for winding this up, my darlingest. So now comes the time for a bit of loving. How I would like a couple of hours with you, alone in the Hawaiian room! The kihiee wouldn't ever be the same afterwards, I promise. Darlingest, I have a new idea for my homecoming. Darlingest, let Mother, the children, Dad, Sally and whoever wants to, meet me at the train. Then after the first greeting I will pack them all off temporarily to Brightwood. I will come home to an empty house except for you. And I will find you down in the Hawaiian room dressed in your trousseau. The balance of the day and night wouldn't pass the censor but thank God we both have

imaginations. The next day we could bring the children back. What do you think? -----

Note: The basement of the Wadsworth Street house was decorated as the "Hawaiian room," with bamboo furniture and wallpaper depicting a palm-treed shoreline. The kihiee Fred refers to might have been a divan or bed in that room. In traditional Hawaiian grass houses, the entire family and guests slept on a raised bed of woven fronds, called a "kihiee" that took up the length of one wall. Pat kept the Hawaiian room's décor in tact through the remaining years of her life. When the effects of the Wadsworth house were broken up, some of the bamboo furniture was brought by Lee to Massachusetts and situated in an attic playroom that became a teenage bedroom for each, in succession, of her three sons.

December 31, 1943 My next letter to you, after this one, will be in 1944. And that is the year that so many people are calling the "last year of the war" on this side of the Atlantic, at least....As far as I am concerned, it most certainly could be the last year. A great deal depends on how willing we Americans and British are to accept sacrifices by the wholesale in lives and limbs and whether the war workers keep up the good work that they are now doing. I think the soldiers over here are quite reconciled to the idea of giving up their lives, if need be to accomplish our purposes.....

Those are some rather serious thoughts before what will probably be one of the biggest brawls to take place on the premises. Tonight we have a New Year's Eve's party, an officers' dance....this second Xmas-New Year's season seems to be "more so" in many ways, than last year. The need for release is greater. You understand, I am sure, for you too probably found this year a good deal harder than last year. At any rate, I expect to find a high degree of intoxication when I finally show up at the party this evening.

At more or less the last moment, I have asked Mary Corfield to attend. Today I find that I shall still be working when the party starts. But Mary will be alright. She knows enough not to mind if the person who invites her to something just doesn't show up. I shall try to have someone else look after her until such time as I can break away. In any event, at the great moment, I shall be thinking of you with all my heart and soul and body, my darlingest....

January 1, 1944 My first letter of the new year. The year 1944. Which so many people you should know, are calling the year of decision. It is

leap year—maybe in more ways than one, for if there is ever to be a leap across the English Channel, it most certainly should come in 1944. For us, darlingest, I wonder what it will hold in store. I can't quite believe from a coldly logical standpoint that I will be out of the army by the end of the year. We could finish up things on this side, I really think, before next Christmas but there will then be the Japs to finish. On the other hand I do feel and hope, I think with justification, that sometime during this year our separation will at last be broken. That, at any rate was one of my first and most sincere silent toasts last night at the party.

It was quite a party. A pretty good orchestra brought up for London. There was enough liquor for all concerned, and when it looked as though it might get a bit rough, those in charge had the good sense to close the bar. Fortunately it wasn't too muddy outside, so that it was possible to go from one place to the other—a great improvement over last year when the mud on the paved streets was ankle deep.

At more or less the last moment, I asked Mary Corfield to come out. It almost did not turn out all right. For after making arrangements to come in and pick her up after supper, we got orders and the boys went up into the air and did not get back until very late in the afternoon. That meant that I was busy working until about 9 in the evening. Fortunately, though, I got another officer, a Lt. Paul Bailey, to pick Mary up when he got a girl he was bringing out and so it turned out all right in the end, for I finished up work just about the same time as they arrived. You will understand why I was worried, though, realizing that private telephones are just about nonexistent, and while I had been able to make the first arrangements with Mary while she was at work, I was not able to tell her about not being able to call for her after I found out that I would be held up.

Well as I said the party was a great deal of fun. I had a few drinks, but not as much nearly as I used to take at Fork and Fiddle. We spent the whole evening on the dance floor—except for a periodic trip to the bar.

But the very best of all came after I had gone to bed and was fast asleep. For it just happened, (I didn't have an alarm clock) that I woke up and looked at my watch and it was just a quarter to 5. So, instead of turning over and going back to sleep, I stayed awake for the next 20 minutes and pretended that I was at home with you, my darlingest. At 5 here it was 12 at home. So you see, we actually did, in a way, celebrate the new year together. It was a very sweet 20 minutes, I can tell you. Especially on the dot of midnight (in Cleveland) when I had some very special thoughts.-----Your devotedest, Freddie

January 1, 1944 just as I left for supper I received your letter of Dec. 17.... How I would have loved to watch Isabel dance in her new gown—and Arthur sing at Higbees Silver Grill and Lee act at school—doing all these things sitting beside you darlinest and holding your hand—and every so often squeezing it a bit....

I am changing my room. Not as I originally told you, but I am moving into what we have generally called the club house. There are 8 of us in all—all original members of the group. I am taking the place of Major Hopper who is going to Bomber Command. It is a nice comfortable spot with our own shower bath and a fire going nearly all the time so that for the first time since I have been in England, I will be able to dress and undress in complete warmth....



January 2, 1944 Perhaps it is a good day to start telling you of my roommates. They are a variegated bunch of boys ranging in age from early 20s to Lt. Tommy Threadgill who is just 10 days older than I am. Perhaps Tommy is a good one to start on. He is married—for 10 years and has 2 children so he is in my boat to all intents and purposes. We have spent many hours crying on each other's shoulders. Tommy comes from Arkansas and talks just like Bill Burns, the radio comedian.

A long slow drawl and with every incident that he talks about, he seems to have to bring Aunt Effie or some relation or other into the story. His stories take forever to be told. But he is good fun. Before the war he travelled all over the country selling air-cooling to theaters and such. Now he is a 423rd Squadron Ordinance Officer.

The rest of the boys are all in their 20s and for the most part, their early 20s. The youngest is Capt. Wendell Hull, a roly-poly—good-natured, jolly, but fairly dumb sort of a boy who used to be in the restaurant business in a small way in the States. He never owned, but did manage 1 or 2 before coming out to Wendover about the same time I did. At Wendover the CO was bright enough to take advantage of his experience, and his chief interest in life (food) and made him squadron mess officer. We as a squadron had so much the best food while there that when we came to the ETO and started working as a group instead of separate squadrons, he was made Group mess officer. He was married a short time before we came over but has yet to have the blessing of children. He wants us all to be sent home soon so that that little matter can be straightened out.

Next comes Capt. Kenealy one of the 7 officers who formed the nucleus around whom the 423rd was organized. He is a pilot, but for the most part has been non-combatant chiefly because he has been doing staff work as assistant squadron operations (S-3) officer. Before the war he was at school and had not yet established a career tho he had worked at several things. He is quite a musician in a swing sort of a way and has earned his education largely from playing on dance bands, some good, some not so good.

Then there is Lt. Coulter, so quiet I doubt if I ever do find out much about him. But tho he is quiet, he is not dumb. He has a grand, dry sense of humor which comes out every so often from the corner of his mouth. He is bomb-sight maintenance officer for the squadron.

Lt. Dudley Allen is another. At one time squadron supply officer he now does the same work for Group. He is a pretty big boy with blond, close-cropped hair. He is quiet too, and I really must confess I don't know too much about him.

Lt. Sibley is the last. He is now assistant group Operations officer—originally being 423rd statistical officer. He got his commission at the University of Pennsylvania and came to Wendover immediately upon graduating. He is almost as fat as Hull. And jolly also except when he thinks of the wife he married 2 or 3 days before he left the States. Then he gets what we call "ETO happy". I tell him that he doesn't yet know what he is missing and I think that is true. He comes from Philadelphia.

I don't think any of those boys, frankly, are the sort to become life-long intimate friends of mine, tho there is nothing wrong with any of them. But you know what I mean, I guess.

The new room itself is a good deal different from most officer quarters over here. Originally the building was a bath house for the squadron...We have an army stove in the center of the room and our beds and bureaus are up against the wall. Seeing as how we have the mess officer with us, I find that on frequent evenings, bread, cheese, jam or some other food is brought down and put into the cupboard in the shower room. Maybe that is why Sibley and Hull are so fat. But every so often I like a bite at 11 in the evening or thereabouts so for me, too, that is an added attraction....

January 2, 1944 It is time now for my V mail effort—my just-in-case-the-other-doesn't-get-through-in-time letter.

Since anything I might say in this is repetition of what I have or will say in regular private letter, I will be pretty brief----I am well. Of course you always have to allow for the cold which I caught the day I came to England some 16 months ago. That goes without saying. I have long since given up as far as that cold is concerned.---

.... I haven't been to town since Christmas. Not that that is so long. It isn't. At present I have no immediate plans for going to town. Joan, as I guess I told you, is undergoing a change of schedules and when I saw her at Christmas asked her to call me when she could see me. I can't call her because she hasn't a telephone. Well, I haven't heard from her yet. She probably has better things to do.

.... I am, frankly, just lightly intoxicated at the present moment. I have been making a great effort this evening to get a friend of mine who had a fall some 6 months ago and who has been on a long arduous journey since that time and only arrived tonight, tight and I am afraid that my efforts in this direction have back-fired. If it has any unfortunate effect upon this letter (perhaps I no longer retain my superb and shall we say, intuitive, sense of the proper method of spelling difficult words), please excuse. It really was all in a good cause.

Drunk or sober, though, my precious, I love you and you only. I love the children too, each and every one of them. But really there is only one you and there will always be only one you, Your devotedest, Freddie

Note: The "friend who fell some six months ago" was certainly Lt. Lionel Drew, a bombardier who had been on Raymond Check's fateful

last mission. Drew had been the first to bail out when Commander Wilson engaged the alarm bell at 23,000 feet, before co-pilot Cassedy was able to come up and determine that the plane was still flyable. No report of Drew as a POW had made it back to Thurleigh, so his friends likely had concluded the worst. Then suddenly, Drew turned up in London, rescued by Canadian commandoes who had plucked a group of evadees off the coast of Brest in a Christmas night mission triggered by coded signal to the French underground: "Time has come to remove chestnuts from fire." In London, Drew's identity was confirmed by Fred's new roommate, Capt. Kenealy, and he was back in Thurleigh just after the new year.

And Lt. Drew had a story to tell. Having cut his hands as he bailed—and then bouncing hard off of the ball turret—Drew got his chute open and could see the English coast as he drifted earthward, into France. He was lucky. A farmer whose fields he landed in helped hide Drew's gear and cautioned him to lay low in a blackberry thicket because the neighboring farmer was a collaborator and would alert Germans—who indeed showed up not long after with a search party that failed to detect Drew in his thicket. The farmer returned at night with food and clothes and moved him to a barn hayloft. When a German patrol came to search the barn the next day, Drew was saved again, this time by a milkmaid who distracted the soldiers with lively conversation. Drew was then spirited to the French underground who combined him with other evadees whom they moved around France for weeks-long stays in various safe houses. Eventually, a sizable evadee group was moved into position on an island along the coast, where they lived for a week in a cave eating only shellfish and waiting for a submarine that did not arrive. In a second attempt several weeks later the evadees were to have been picked up by a British PT boat. They spent an entire night rowing around the dark in dinghies without being able to make contact. Success finally came when Canadian commandos came in two whale boats towed by a PT. (Russell Strong, pp. 135-137)

Drew had been an original member of the 423rd, and there were any number of reasons why Fred and Lionel Drew may have been friends. Fred was close to Drew's pilot, Raymond Check. But also, on the single mission that Fred tagged along for as an observer, Fred flew in Check's plane, where he would have spent a good deal of time in the nose window. Lt. Lionel Drew, Check's bombardier, would have been at Fred's shoulder on his one ride into combat.

January 5, 1944 Since...this is my 300th letter to you, why can't we celebrate for that....So let's celebrate and talk about Annexia, for a while, huh.

First of all, of course, let's sit down on the sofa and get real comfortable and let me give a few pats and a kiss. Then before we settle down to the real celebrating, I don't know whether to recall the past or dream of the future. Both are fun. I like to recall all the details at the pool we found at Keianai—the time I chased you all over our hotel room while on our honeymoon, you wearing only a flowered chiffon dress, the night in New York long, long ago when we discovered that we would make a good “match”. It's fun, too, to think of the time when I will chase you around the Hawaiian room and you with your trousseau on and I'll catch you on the kihiee, and the times, perhaps at Maine on Baker's or at the pond when we will be alone together, just the 2 of us, unadorned and alone and free to show each other all the love that is in us. Is it any wonder, my darling, why I don't know whether to drop back into the past or the future. Tell you what. Let's pretend for the present instead of either of the others. After all, this is a letter to celebrate now, isn't it. So for the moment let's pretend. I am with you, my darling. I only have an hour with you and I am afraid I couldn't get home. Instead, you had to meet me in New York because, after all, I couldn't get out to Cleveland and back again in an hour. So darlingest, the time is short. Let me help you off with that dress. Here, I'll help with those buttons in the back. There they are—now up it comes right over your lovely head. You must kiss me now, my precious. That's right. But darlingest, aren't you ashamed keeping all that between us. Here, I'll help you roll down your stockings. Ha ha. I forgot your shoes. Well, off they come. And now the stockings, too. And now your slip, darlingest. Well, that was easy, wasn't it. But now comes the real job. Hm, fits just as tight as a riding boot, darlingest. I didn't know you could still get any more. Now another kiss before I get off of my knees, darlingest. Tell you what. You go and get fixed up while I get ready myself. I bet I'll beat you---I'll get into bed. Now come along, precious, and lie at my left. Let me hold you tight for a while just like this. Ah. Ah----- Sorry I can't write while you're kissing me like that. Mm! It was wonderful, darlingest. We'll have to do that again! Now I must stop tho as it is time to go.

January 5, 1944 Had a letter from Dick Green today. From Crewe where he is stationed. Very nice letter too. He said that Joan had finally received your letter and that it was a very nice lovely letter indeed. I am so glad. He also told me that he had written to you and I think that

is grand. I really do think, darling, when you meet these two you will like them.

As a matter of fact, I think you would like the Corfield family too, but perhaps in a different way. The Corfields are as poor as mice for one thing. Mr. Corfield can trace his ancestors back to before the Crusades—as a matter of fact he comes from the 4th oldest family in England, but there are a lot of second sons on the way and he is one of them. But tho poor they enjoy life to the full and it all shows up in the way people drop in for tea. Dick has money I am quite sure. Otherwise he couldn't have bought all those cars for his "trials". That must have been a pretty expensive sport. I would say, off hand, that Mary, Bill and Joan Corfield get more kick out of life than does Joan, but she has a sort of quiet serious sweetness quite like Mart Treadway. Anyway, I am glad they are corresponding with you. I feel so darn grateful to them. I hope someday to repay them when and if they do visit us. And talking of visits, there is apt to be a regular delegation come to Cleveland for Mary is going to work her way she says.

I saw Mary day before yesterday as a matter of fact.... She had a girlfriend—Pat Clark—who is a story all in herself....Pat Clark was one of 3 sisters. Her father has been very wealthy. At least they had horses, cars, servants etc. and were quite the stuff in a social way. Well, the father died about 2 years before the war and left the mother and 3 daughters with a mortgaged house and the clothes on their backs. He had apparently lived right up to his fairly large earnings right along. Well, a family conference was called. As a result, all girls got jobs and mother took in boarders. Pat had a job as a secretary and within 2 years was earning 36 pounds a week which is a fabulous sum for England. She must have been pretty good. Then the war came and Pat decided she could be more good in the services than out, so she gave up her good job for 12 shillings a week job in the A.T.S. She is now driving generals, changing tires, greasing trucks and such. The strange or unique thing is that, according to Mary, Pat hasn't changed a bit. Certainly she was a gay thing day before yesterday and a pleasure to be with. Anyway, Pat had a leave and was home in civies and Mary wanted her to have a good time so she called me and I asked them both to come out for lunch and the afternoon.

They came and I had Van (Capt. Van Norman) take charge of Pat. We had a lunch and then went out to the field where I had to leave them. But Van took them where they could see the boys "come in". They were thrilled really, I believe. They stayed with Van till I finished work. Then a scotch and supper and into town by taxi. We went to the

“local”, had a beer and then took the girls to their home and out to the station truck to camp. It was all quite fun....

January 10, 1944 ----- Tomorrow I start on my 5 day leave. I have cleared up all outstanding work that there is to be done....

... As to my leave, I think I have everything planned as far as I want to make plans....

I am going to try to take a camera along on my leave. If I can get hold of one together with some film, I'll take some pictures and send them on home. I'll also try to get myself in some of the pictures so that you will be able to see me in my new moustache, darlingest, several of the boys and both Joan and Mary say that they like it (all of which proves or goes to prove how faithful I am to you) because if I kissed them, they wouldn't like it, would they? Well, if I get shots I expect to, you will be able to see for yourself...

January 13, 1944 It is Thursday evening. I have just finished supper on the 3rd day of my leave and am comfortably ensconced at Reindeer (Red Cross) Club here in London. So now is a good time to sit down for a visit with you, especially as I can't or shouldn't really go out right now what with the sirens whooping it up.

I left the station Tuesday morning and biked in to town real early picking up Mary at her house and then Van and Pat Clark at the station. We arrived at London at 11 and went to the Dorchester where we had a couple of 4 shilling martinis apiece—real good martinis—the first good cocktails I have had since I left home. Then since no one would say where they wanted to eat and since I only knew of Mirabelle's, we went there and had a very tasty chicken curry lunch. From there to the Palladium—a variety show as they say here but what really is our good old fashioned, long since dead, vaudeville. Personally I would have chosen a musical comedy or a straight play but Mary was very anxious to see this so this it was--the usual acts. A juggler, a comedy team, a couple of singers, a couple of dancers, aerobatics and all that. Then after the show we went over to have tea and dance at the Piccadilly Hotel, then to Shepherd's Market to a pub for a glass of bitters and then the train back home. It was a good day. Good fun and all that.

I spent the night in Willie Corfield's room. And the next day after a bit of shopping in that town, called on Joan. She was there with her sister Bobby Gough and we had tea. After Bobby left I took Joan to the Swan for supper and then to the movies. We saw Bing Crosby in “Dixie” which was pretty good but not something you should kill yourself to

see. Then after that and one cigarette at Joan's flat, I went back to Willie's room for the night.

Today I came back here and signed in at this club. I have a room with 2 other officers whom I haven't met yet. I went to the Windmill this afternoon, but that is all I had time to do before supper. I plan to go to bed when I finish this, and then get up early tomorrow morning. No plans as of yet. I will see what comes up and who I meet.

January 16, 1944 I had told you about the first 2 days of my leave. Picking things up from there, I went back to London on Thursday and stayed there until Saturday noon. During that time I did a considerable amount of window shopping, I bought some badly needed odds and ends for myself, a book of records for the Greens, saw 3 shows and a movie and still got to bed by 8:30 every night except last night.

Last night I went with Dick and Joan to the Swan for supper. We had drinks before, during and after a very good meal, first at the Swan and then back at their flat. The "party" broke up at about 12:30 and I staggered over to the Corfields where I spent the rest of the night in Willie's vacated bed, before biking out here early this morning.

That is a very brief summary of operations on my part. I'll leave the details, my darlingest, for my real letters to follow this. All these V letters are good for, after all, are just fillers in just to let you know that I am all right.

As you can probably tell from the papers, I missed a considerable amount of excitement while I was away on my leave. Too bad. On the other hand, that is the first "excitement" that I have missed since I have been here which isn't such a bad record, is it....

Note: The excitement Fred refers to missing was a long distance raid to Halberstadt just 100 miles west of Berlin. The 306th came under aggressive fighter attack but lost no planes. Low clouds and snow made it necessary to divert the return landings, so the intelligence team had to pile in a car and drive out to other bases to find their airmen.

Three days later, Beekman Pool joined a mission as an observer, in the same fashion as his predecessor Fred had in the year before. As with Fred's mission, Beekman's run encountered neither flak nor enemy fighters. But he had gone. And Beekman notes the fact in his squadron's Combat Diary.

January 16, 1944 I have just finished supper and aside from the fact that the radio is blaring and 4 of my 6 roommates are in the middle of

a loud and intense argument about nothing at all, aside from that, all is peace and quiet and I should be able to get this off to you.

Now a few more details about London. I have decided for one thing that that is the last leave I will take alone in this country. When I started off I was sure I would run into my friends at every corner. Well, wherever I went, I missed them. Not that I spent all my time looking for them. I didn't. But I did try Thursday and Friday from 5 until supper. Well, I know better now. However, to get back to London.

I stayed, as far as room and meals were concerned at the Reindeer Club—a Red Cross Club. They had taken over what once, I suppose, was a private house in Clifford St. That probably means little to you but actually is just off of New Bond St. which I am sure you will remember. They have rooms upstairs which are very bare, but with 3 beds in each room and a bath to every 2 rooms which is all you want actually. And that costs only 4 shillings a night, or about 80 cents. On the ground floor there is a dining room serving good meals for 2 shillings and 2/6. No drinks served but that is all right. There are plenty of places for drinks after all.

Well, during the mornings I spent all my time in and out of shops. I walked up and down Regent St., Piccadilly and Oxford St. all the way at least twice. I wandered more or less aimlessly around Soho. I walked through Hyde Park, Green Park, and Pall Mall. I walked down by Westminster and the Houses of Parliament....

I came back here in the fog, the train taking 4 hours instead of the usual hour and a quarter....

January 17, 1943[sic]I thought for some months that getting into the army, I could get away from taxes. But the old saying about death and taxes seems to hold good. Inquiries have been made by some of the boys and questions must be answered and I have been found out. Skeletons have been dug out of my closet. I have been picked on and it is something that will last as my reputation grows. It will grow, of course. So I am writing to the office to ask them to send me "the Master Tax Guide" for this year and last year. This is published by C.C.H. I tell you about this because this letter may get home long before the letter I am writing to the office, and I would like it very much if you would call them and ask them to please send me these books as quickly as they can. It will be a good thing anyway because it is now about time I was starting to brush up on the tax situation. Then when I get home I won't have to start absolutely from scratch. So, dearest, would you please ask Mrs. Walters to send these on to me if she hasn't done so already.-----

January 18, 1944 My social life this week is nil as far as plans are concerned. I will go to the post movie tonight in all likelihood but that is as far as I have got. However, since I want to make it a practice to get away at least once a week, I shall probably dig up something. The last time I saw Joan she said that it looked like she would be very busy during the week but would call me if she could work out anything. She hasn't called yet, but of course, the week is still young.

I wonder what you will find by way of social life for yourself in this coming year. From your last letters it would seem as though Sarge would probably not be available and you made no mention of Glen so I suppose he has gone on. Perhaps someone else will be good enough to show up. If not I would call the war department in Washington and see if something special can be arranged....

January 19, 1944 I guess I had misunderstood the rationing at home a good deal. I was glad to have you catch me up on it. Darlingest, don't ever worry about my getting any impression that you complain about much stuff.... Actually I did know something about the rationing even tho I was all wrong thinking all food except chicken was rationed. But I would get my information in driblets and what I was more interested in was how it affected my family. I was more interested in the personal side of the question.-----Thousands and thousands of kisses----Freddie.

January 20, 1944 I have been reading a very good book recently.—Are you surprised.—The title is "Conflict" and it is by George Fort (?) Milton. It is a history of the Civil War which in and of itself may not particularly interest you. However, it is written a bit differently from most history and I am thoroughly enjoying it. Finding lots of stuff I didn't know before. I understand that the cloth-bound copy is expensive (\$3.75) but the paper copy I have here is obtained thru the "Infantry Journal" by Robert Hogg in our section and I guess he didn't pay more than a quarter for it.

You mentioned in yesterday's letter, your discussion group and the fact that you were to read Lippman's book for your next meeting. That sounds like a most intellectual enterprise, darlingest. You will be very wise by the time I get home....

January 21, 1944 I received a letter from Dad that took from Dec. 2nd to get here.... He said one thing that struck me as very true. He was talking about whether British liked Americans more that Americans liked British.... he said, "If they do like us as individuals...they think of

us as really like the English.” That struck me because several of my English friends have told me I was more English than most of the rest at camp. Small item perhaps but amusing the more I think of it. As a matter of fact I have been told just that by every English man or woman that I have considered to be friendly except the Corfield family and they happen to like Americans for themselves as American. Perhaps that is partly because they spent some years in Canada. At any rate they are alone in this respect. Others I really think sincerely like me and us but when they do they generally think that we are more English than the rest....

January 22, 1944I have been reading “The Conflict” like mad today—in my spare moments. I don’t know whether I am particularly in the mood for that sort of book right now, but I must admit I am thoroughly enjoying it. It seems to me to be one of the most readable histories I have come across. You don’t have to read a paragraph, put the book aside, reread it and then contemplate in order to understand it. It isn’t that kind of book. I still am not recommending it to you, my darling. I don’t think you are particularly interested in Civil War matters. But it so happens that the book is full of ideas that I like and other things which have brought me up rather sharply when I have run across them. All that I do say is that right now I am enjoying it....

January 24, 1944 I decided not to go to town. It was a cold and rainy day and I would have had to bike the 8 miles thru a drizzle and when I got there, still look all nice and neat. I decided against it.—There was no transport until this evening. As it happens there is a good movie at camp this evening—“Flesh and Fantasy” and because of the first part of the title I anticipate going there. I’ll undoubtedly finish up this after I get back from there so I’ll tell you about it.

.... Well, I’ve seen the show. And if you happen to have seen it, you will know what I mean when I say I hope I dream a nice dream of being with you tonight because I am thoroughly convinced that dreams come true. A pretty fair show. I do love you, darlingest, but I must admit that Barbara Stanwyck has a most interesting fanny which shows up so nicely as she walks across the stateroom at one point. But even then darling I like your fanny much better. Especially since, when I am with you, I can pat it.

Your mention of preferring me to Lee in your bed on Sunday mornings brings so many happy memories to mind. When I get leave, I’ll sleep all Sunday mornings all morning if it pleases you, my precious. Oh happy thought!....

January 25, 1944 This morning, along with Al Bairnsfather and Al Weld, I went to the army sales store in a town of censorable name to get a pair of shoes. I didn't get the shoes because they had every size but mine, but that is neither here nor there anyway because the whole point of my mentioning it at all was a story that Al B. told on the way.

It happens that among those on this post are several long and lanky boys from the state of Texas. It also happens that quite near the post is an old Norman church and the vicar of this church is very proud of his place of worship and is pleased to show it off to inquisitive Americans. Well, one day one of our long, lanky Texans happened by and wandered in to this fine old Norman church to have a look-see. The vicar took him in hand to show him around. The vicar with great pride said, "This church is very old, don't you know? It was built in the twelve hundreds." The long and lanky Texan trying to please, replied, "Yes, I don't suppose a small village like this could afford a new one."

January 25, 1944 Coulter, Willy, and Hall and I are all here in our room.... All writing our wives with Bing Crosby blaring over the radio. We get a lot of programs, you know. Charley McCarthy, Bing, Frank Morgan, Baby Snooks, and all. Only they are about a month late. I mean we have just had Christmas programs. But anyway, it is kind of nice all in all. They don't come by short wave. Rather, they send recordings over by mail. So the reception except when there are raids on London of some size, is really pretty good.

January 26, 1944 I am almost finished with "Conflict" – the story of the civil war. I am not as all-out enthusiastic about it as I was a week ago. It is still a good book but I don't think you would be particularly interested in it. Certainly I wouldn't advise you pay \$3.75 for it. And that is the current cost....

January 28, 1944 I didn't write to you yesterday and for that I am very sorry.... The reason I didn't write last night was that in the afternoon, I got itching feet and decided I just had to get away and so I kicked off on my bike and rode in to town. I found that Mary Corfield had nothing to do so we went to the movies. Saw a British film—"The Adventures of Tartu" with Robert Dinot (?). A pretty good show it was. Would appeal to Arthur and me. You know, lots of shooting with the hero killing everyone he shot at and all that.

I spent the night in "Willie's" room at the Corfield house and then biked out here again before breakfast. Can you imagine me, at my age,

biking 8 miles before breakfast. And I'm not even tired now at 9 o'clock-----

January 28, 1944 I have finished supper and am now sitting on the side of my bed and writing on my hand-made table-desk. Kenealy is in front of me, asleep—for he will have to get up later. Sibley, Coulter and Tommy Threadgill are either writing or reading or getting ready to. Allen and Hull are still at the mess hall, eating. I'll write this letter, then do a bit of reading, or maybe play a game of hearts—(I am about the only one who plays bridge) and then, about 11, I'll get to bed.

Tomorrow I expect Dick and Joan Green out here for lunch. Dick gets back from Crewe in the early morning and they will take the bus out, getting here about 11:30. That will be about right as we will have time for a drink or two before lunch. I'll be glad to see them as I haven't been able to see them for 2 weeks now. Joan has been very busy—with an uncertain schedule, and Dick has been away....

January 29, 1944 Dick and Joan arrived at the village at 11:30. I was down there with a jeep to meet them and brought them up to the mess hall. They were in gay spirits and all that was very catching. We had a good couple of hours, helped along by double scotch (Dick and I actually had 2 doubles) before a good lunch. I was so pleased. They seem to really like the place, the drinks, the food and were glad to have made the effort to come out. I am glad because it really is the very best way I have of repaying obligations. For it is something different for them.

Dick and Joan are getting a new dog—a well bred Cumberland Spaniel. Dick has to go away north practically to Scotland in a fortnight where he will pick up the pooch and bring him down. They are very excited about it....

January 30, 1944 Glad to hear of the Hawaiian extra. Coming at that time I presume that it came from H.P. Baldwin Ltd. rather than the Baldwin Packers, but at the same time I was a bit sorry to hear that Isabel is to have bands. However, I know that must be and am really glad you have the dividend to help out on it.

The news of the children was good. Very good. Isabel is such a darling and Arthur's better school reports are encouraging. I wish I could go coasting with them, tho. We haven't had any snow here yet, tho there has been ice on occasion. You would never dream we were as far north as Hudson Bay if you base your dreams on the weather. It

is more like Washington without the snow. I guess 10 degrees is the coldest I can remember in the past 2 years...

January 31, 1944 I have a new book in front of me which I am about to read.... Called "German with Tears" by Peter F. Wiener. Bob Hogg, who is my best authority here on what to read and what not to read, was quite impressed.... The book, apparently is a study of what the Germans have been taught, their educational system, all of which should, I think, be understood by those who intend to make plans for the future. After all, we have often said, without knowing the details too well, that the German educational system was one thing that must be blotted out. I want to find out just why that is so and exactly what it is we want to scrub. It is a short book and according to Hogg pretty well documented....

January 31, 1944 We have had ice cream for some time here now. It is forbidden the English, as you may know. What we have done here heretofore is to use part of our own canned-milk rations, etc. and have had an old ice cream factory turn this into ice cream. But the news got around as to what was happening. And to save Anglo-American relations it has been decided that this practice will have to stop. So that is the news behind the news about ice cream that we will not have from this time on....

February 1, 1944 Plans, worked on last night have been abandoned today, so there is not too much to do and I will have time for considerable correspondence. There are several people that I should write to....

I am more or less alone up here this morning. "Up here" means the office, just in case you didn't realize it. Beekman Pool and Ed Murtha are very busy trying a court martial case and since it promises to be somewhat more interesting than the usual—somewhat on the spicy side—Bob Hogg has decided to listen in. Al Bairnsfather and Al Weld both worked last night and are now in their "sacks" catching up on lost sleep. Most everyone, as a matter of fact, except for duty officers...are in bed. That makes it very quiet indeed....

This week, my social life is entirely in the planning stage.... I have dates for both Friday and Saturday so I should end up with a bang. When she was here with Dick last Saturday, I wrangled an evening date in town with Joan Green for this coming Friday. No definite plans as to what we will do except that I am to appear some time between 6 and 7. Of course, as always happens, if we should be "busy" that day, I just

won't appear. Then on Saturday I have asked Mary Corfield to come out here to an officers' dance which will be held that evening. That will no doubt go through whether or not we are busy, the only difference being that I shall, in that event not be on time and Mary will have to wait in the mess hall for me. However, I am not worried about a little thing like that. Mary knows what to do if I am not there. That situation, embarrassing at first, has occurred several times before this....

February 2, 1944 I am going back to school for 3 days next week. The school is to be held up at Division headquarters.... The subject to be taught is the interpretation of aerial photographs. Naturally I have of necessity picked up a good bit of dope about this through my work. To make an accurate report on bombing results, there has to be a certain amount of interpretation work done on our own strike photos. All that the school will do for me is to help me with the work that I am already doing of this nature. On the other hand, that will, or should be of great value. I am looking forward to the opportunity.

We are a bit shorthanded right at this moment, though we are well able to hold our heads above water—provided we don't have any "maximum effort" in the next few days. Al Bairnsfather has just left for very much deserved leave—and a needed one as well. Beek Pool is still away, as is McNeely. Al Weld has the day off tomorrow if nothing interferes and to top everything else, Bob Hogg came down with flu this morning and has been ordered into the hospital. And this hospital is no different from any other in one respect. That is, if you ever let the doctors get their clutches on you, it takes for ever to escape. I presume he will be laid up for at least a week and probably for 10 days or so.

It amused me no end to hear that when Mother drove all of you plus her dog back from Sunday lunch at Dad's house, Arthur and Lee protested because they had to stand up in the back of the car, though generally they fought for that position. From my intense study in the subject of child psychology I can readily understand it all. They would probably protest if told they must eat ice cream.... I liked to hear about it, though. It is really those kinds of details that are the only things that will keep me close to the kids....

February 2, 1944 I have finished one of the grandest suppers ever. So I must tell you about it.... Well, in this room of ours we have a closet. And in that closet we generally have a loaf of bread and a bit of butter and cheese. Confidentially we aren't supposed to have food in our quarters but then one shouldn't really smoke either. Anyway, we acquired the other day, some sugar and some coffee and some "Vita-

gold” pineapple. Then today a plane came in from Ireland and, as sometimes happens, there was on this plane a load of eggs.—the kind that come in shells—And, what happens only once in a lifetime, we in this room got hold of a couple of dozen of these eggs.—Soooo! Instead of going to the mess hall where they had chopped frankfurters in gravy, Dud Allen, Johnnie Coulter, Dagwood Kenealy and Tommy Threadgill and I cooked some toast and coffee and eggs and had pineapple for dessert. All very grand and satisfying and the next best thing to a picnic. Almost like “feeds” we used to have after lights out at Hotchkiss. Only, of course, with my advancing years I don’t really get the thrill of my youth in doing something I shouldn’t and getting away with it. I enjoyed this meal not because of the risk but because it was a darn good meal. At Hotchkiss I would have enjoyed horrible food if it had been eaten after lights out.....

The boys are calling me for a card game, darlingest....So if you don’t mind too much I’ll stop here....



February 3, 1944 I received a letter from Dick Green today thanking me for having them out here for lunch last Saturday. It is almost as embarrassing to get thanks when it is such a pleasure to have someone out of uniform to talk to and when actually it is quite an ordeal getting out here at all. For they have to start for the bus promptly at 10 and walk a good mile to the bus station. The bus leaves at 10:30 and they get here at 11 and then again have a good mile walk to the mess hall. It is the same on the way back and all that for what I can give them—a couple of drinks and a fair meal....

February 5, 1944 Al Richardson is here for a few hours.... Since he left us, you know, he has been stationed at a place where they receive

new crews and where they wait to be assigned. While there they are taught all kinds of things and Rich teaches them all about our end of the game. I personally wouldn't like the job myself. Teaching day in and day out. But I still think it is the thing for Rich who is not made of stern enough stuff to be able to see boys who become fairly close friends disappear or come back shot up, and still stick with the job in an efficient manner....

Note: Al Richardson, who would retire a Major, had joined the 306th at Wendover as an S-2 Lieutenant, bunking with the crew of Lt. Charles Cranmer and flying with that crew east to Westover. Richardson bonded with Cranmer, who dubbed his plane "Fightin'-an-Bitin'," Among the crew members was the genial T/Sgt Arizona Harris. Twice, Al Richardson received permission to fly along on a mission as observer, but he was called off each plane by last-minute orders from the radio tower. He was told that as an S-2 he would be needed for interrogating returning crews. As it happened, both planes that Richardson watched take off without him, on their respective missions, were shot down. On Al Richardson's third and final attempt, he was pulled off Charles Cranmer's plane as it sat queuing up for a 3 January 1943 raid on the sub pens of St. Nazaire. After successfully dropping its bombs that day, Cranmer's plane was attacked over the Channel. It went down without survivors, but became legendary in the annals of the 306th by the defiant actions of T/Sgt Arizona Harris, who was Cranmer's engineer and top turret gunner. As the enemy aircraft which had shot Cranmer's plane down made repeated passes, strafing the sinking B-17, Arizona Harris shot back at them from his top turret until the moment the waters closed over him. For his pluck, Harris was posthumously awarded the group's first Distinguished Service Cross.

February 6, 1944 Last night we had our officers' party.... Mary Corfield arrived with some of her friends from town on the bus at almost 8. And from that point until 1:00 we had a very good time. When I wasn't eating I was always dancing with some one—after 2 drinks to start the evening off right. By the way, you heard me correctly. I said 2 drinks and that is all I had. Reason being I had to get up early this morning and also see that MacNeely, who I had put on night duty, was getting on all right.

At the last party we paid 220 pounds and brought a very fancy orchestra from London. This time we paid nothing and used a band made up of GIs on the post. I thought this band that we had last night was better. At least better to dance to. They had wonderful rhythm,

and it just made you want to dance to hear them. I suppose the London band a month ago was more polished and would have been grand to “listen” to but what I want at a dance is a “dance band”.

Dancing was in the dining room of the mess hall. In the game room our 2 ping-pong tables were laden with spam sandwiches and pineapple-cheese sandwiches the latter of which were very good and then dishes of canned pineapple—also good. The visitors naturally went for the canned pineapple because that is impossible to get in any stores.

The bar was in our third room—the lounge—which was kept pretty much as it generally is.

There were comparatively few of the boys in attendance. Too tired after these recent days for one thing. But there were some old timers back including Hopper (whose bed I moved into a month or so ago), Chester May, Tiger Herry—who now has eagles on his shoulders.... And others. Of course while it was a shame the crews were too tired to come, still that did make space on the dance floor so, from a purely selfish point of view, it made the party all the better. I couldn't help but think how nice it would have been to have had you there, my darlingest. How I would like you to see one of them with me. They are really quite a bit of fun and I know your eyes would sparkle and you would really enjoy yourself. It would be wonderful to show you off to the boys, too.

February 6, 1944We had a much easier time than I expected this afternoon. That is largely, I suppose because everything almost without exception went as planned. That makes a great deal of difference and only happens once in a lifetime.... Well the consequence was that instead of working far into the night we were through a little after 5:30. Then we debated the possibilities of supper or the first show at the camp movies and decided on the latter. So a pretty good show, too, called “The Lady Takes a Chance” (and the title has nothing to do with what you are probably thinking of). Anyhow, we enjoyed it and then came back to the barracks and Beek Pool, Johnnie Coulter, Sib and Tommy Threadgill and I have cooked some toasted cheese sandwiches and coffee and we are all full and content. Beek is talking “fishing in New Hampshire” with Sib who comes from Dedham, Mass. Johnnie and Tommy and I have just listened to the 9:00 news telling of even more Russian victories. All very wonderful....

February 7, 1944 I was quite surprised to hear that you did not hear about my Christmas. That seems like a long time ago but I will try and see what I remember....

Now as to my Christmas presents. They were all grand....

The lipsticks which you sent on have been delivered, one to Joan Green and the other to Mary Corfield. Both were terribly pleased to get them and I think especially as I told them that they came from you. One thing that has made those associations more pleasant for all parties concerned is the fact that all is open and above-board and I always tell them of your latest letters and I tell you all about them, and in Joan's case, at least I have started correspondence. All that is as it should be, of course, and I wouldn't have it any other way any more than they would or you would, but your giving them the lipsticks instead of me was, from that angle, quite important to my way of thinking and they (the girls), I think, appreciated the gifts all the more, for the same reason. Perhaps it is a small item, but little things like that can go a long way towards setting up the entire basis for a relationship.

This is the last day of Al Bairnsfather's leave. He is due back here some time this evening. Today, there is practically nothing to do except some routine matters which should go like clockwork. And since the heavy work of the past 4 days has gone by without any real hitches, I am very pleased....

February 7, 1944 My darlingest, Tis after supper.—a very good supper indeed—Pigs in a blanket. You know, cabbage leaves wrapped around K rations and baked. The boys in the back of the mess hall did a real good job of it this time and I had 2 of them and enjoyed both.

By the way. Heard my first good joke in a month of Sundays.... A sailor met a sweater girl and asked her if the V (on the sweater) was for victory. She replied, "No, it's for virgin—but it's an old sweater"

We've got the whole gang here tonight. Tommy talking hard and fast as usual—just like Bob Burns—to Dud Allen who hasn't had a chance to get in a word. Wendall as usual taking one of his cameras apart and listening to the radio. Wendall wouldn't miss a program for anything—especially the dramas. Dagwood Kenealy in the rack reading. Sibly right now naked in front of the fire prior to testing out the shower and Johnnie Coulter and I are writing our wives. I don't know how long I will be here myself. I am on duty—which at night means "on call" and also Al Bairnsfather is expected back most any time now.... When Al does show up, I will have to drop everything else and tell him something of what he has missed these past 5 days. And boy, he certainly has taken either the best or worst 5 days for a leave

he could have chosen in all the months we have been here. The best if he felt lazy. The worst if he didn't want to miss anything. Well—I've already had the telephone I expected. So must stop my precious.....



Note: In the new year, Lt. Gen. Jimmy Doolittle replaced Eaker at the helm of the 8th Air Force's European Campaign. As the timetable for a land invasion crept into view, the effort to wipe the skies of Luftwaffe fighters received renewed emphasis. The size of Bomber groups and frequency of missions increased. Also, Doolittle made a critical change in policy with regard to the fighter escorts, which had been upping their number and their range. From now on, the fighters escorting the bombers would not be required to stick closely to the B-17 formations, but could use individual discretion to break away and chase enemy aircraft down. The tactic proved effective. Casualty totals among the B-17s remained high, but by Feb. 1944, this was because there were so many more Forts in the air.

February 8, 1944 ----- This has certainly been the day of all days. 9 letters this morning and 1 more this afternoon making 10 letters in all for the day. Half of them, 5 in all were nothing but grand letters. 2 wonderful ones from you, darling...2 darling V letters from Isabel...and one from mother....

Darlingest, I wish I could tell you how I feel when I think of you. I seem to have the desire to bring my knees up to my chest and to wrap my arms around my knees and hug. It makes me curl my toes up too—and hold my breath. Queer, one's reactions to love, n'est pas? But tho it may be queer, it's awful nice to be in such deep love with the one girl in the world looking at this last from every possible phase or angle—beauty, graciousness, sense, feeling, responsibility, and all from the top of her head to the soles of her feet and all the way thru her and in the air around her. It's a wonderful thing indeed to love you, precious. And that is just what I want to do....

February 9, 1944I was very interested in your having talked to Colonel (now General) LeMay. He is considered one of the better soldiers by us'ns over here. I was somewhat surprised that he should

know me, tho that is not impossible. However I guess it is just as well that you didn't ask too many detailed questions about me. What he would know all about, tho, are such things as how we live, how we eat, what we, in general, do in our spare time and such things as that. I have met the General all right, but it has always been with others—perhaps some tactical discussion or something like that. I have also briefed him but he was never actually connected with this particular organization tho he was head of Shube Owen's outfit which, in the chain of command, is one step up....

Did I tell you that I expected to go to photo-interpretation school in the near future. I expected it to be this week, as a matter of fact but haven't heard for some days anything about it.... As is so often the case in the army.... I am now starting the waiting period.... I probably won't go until summer.

My social plans for the week are sparse to say the least. Dick is expected home on Saturday and Sunday and I have asked Joan to book a table at the Swan Saturday evening for me to take them. It will only be supper as our plans for the afternoon and evening don't seem to fit....

There is one point which has me somewhat worried, darlingest. I wonder what your opinion is. I have frequently, of late, heard it said and most recently have read a quotation from a Washington "authority" that one reason why we have moved so slowly in Italy was that if we had huge losses in a big gamble the American public would not stand for it and therefore we can only attack when we are practically sure of success. I wonder if that is true. I hope not. Because if it is true it will mean that this war will drag out for many years. If, on the other hand, meaning us over here and also you over there, are willing to take losses for a few months on the scale of Russian and German losses—and that may mean counting our losses in figures of over a million, then and in that case I think we should certainly be able to knock Germany out this year. But to do that we must risk armies, not companies or even divisions. We have to take big chances. True they should be calculated gambles, but we have to rock Germany into defeat, not pat her into a frenzy. The last method takes too long. Too many things can happen to change everything. Ah well, I hope that isn't the only explanation of Italy because if it is, then things look black indeed for us. What we must have is the type of philosophy which will send out boys—relatives as well as others—into almost certain death traps. We must have the same feelings in these respects that have caused Russian and Yugoslavic women and children to form regiments and fight and die with their men. Personally I think we Americans have

the stuff that it takes. We naturally don't like to see our boys killed but we have some brains and we know war is hell and that many must die and many be maimed if we are to win. We have enough sense also to know that with this war, the casualties will be far higher than in 1917-18. And we want victory. I think we want it enough to make the immediate sacrifice....

February 10, 1944 I've been given a new job today. And I am not too sure whether or not I like it. It isn't a change of jobs. My regular work continues. But it appears that our squadron and group diaries and other material that we are furnishing the air force periodically are not entirely what they want. They are after a narrative history of this group. So I am to write it up. I have been given until the first of the next month, or in other words, just about 2 ½ weeks to do it in which isn't a very great deal of time. Especially, when I must do my other work at the same time. The job was given to me about an hour ago, so I am not sure, as yet what I am getting myself into. We will see.

In your early January letters you mentioned the book "Skyways to Berlin". I haven't been able to get a copy of that myself. So I can't tell you many names that might be referred to in it. Some of the more colorful characters that I can think of are Johnny Ryan, "Wild Bill" Casey, Riorden, Robert Williams, Bucky, Arizona Harris and Snuffy Smith. I understand there is a picture of Johnny Ryan writing with a candle on the ceiling of our mess hall, and another of Dick O'Hara's plane, "Scarlet O Hara". There probably is a good deal more because there were so few original groups over here and I understand that the book largely concerns itself with the early experimental stage. When I see the book, I will tell you more about it. Must stop now, darling-----
Freddie

February 10, 1944 Just before supper this evening I received your letter.... This one more than perfect for it had some snaps of Isabel and Lee along with it.... These of my darling daughters were very nice. Lee, except in the one where she is somersaulting was, as you say quite serious. Isabel, I believe, has grown a good deal too. They were very grand to get....

As to Casey and Smith, yes I interrogated both of those boys. I have yet to see a copy of Skyways to Berlin so I don't know yet whether to tell you it is good or not. From comments I have heard it is a bit PRO-ish to suit most of the boys but personally I should think that that would make much better reading for you and those at home—in case you don't know what I mean, the PRO officer is Public Relations Officer

and among other things it is his job to see that the press gets good copy. And what they write is apt to be on the dramatic side—but it makes better reading.

February 11, 1944 We—meaning we Americans—seem to be having a rather hard time of it these days in Italy. In a way, I think that that is a good thing. There has been so much talk since October and November about how the Germans are cracking that many people have been led to feel that for all practical purposes the war was over. That just goes to prove the fact that on the contrary, the Germans still have a very good strong army. Of course with their air force largely on the Western Front protecting their home targets from the RAF and from us, the Russians are doing real well....

Dad tells me that Lew is considering staying in the army after the peace. If these are his plans, I hope he is able to get some active service on at least one of the fronts. One's "record" is one of the big things in the army. I would say it is more important as far as promotions go (and if you are considering a career, that is what you are interested in), that your "record" is more important than your potentialities. War is the time and place to make a "record" for yourself....

February 11, 1944 Have been reading nothing but Jerry O'Sullivan's History these last few weeks. It is quite a tome. Don't think of getting it. I always kind of liked history and am now reading it largely to recall some of the great body of stuff that I have forgotten. It is a textbook and not real reading matter and I only have it in the first, second, and last place because of my association with Jerry and the fact that he autographed my copy.

Well, darlingest, I must put an end to this letter. There are the usual questions to be asked and I must be off...

Note: Interestingly, the assignment Fred has been given to write a short Group narrative seems to have gotten his wheels turning about history writing in general, and has also roused a certain competitive spirit in him. Dollars to doughnuts, Fred at this time was toying with an idea to write a definitive history of the 306th after the war. If so, perhaps his letter transcription project, begun in 1947, was the labor of his first draft.

February 12, 1944 Tonight is the night I go to town—with the Greens. Dick is supposed to have brought home with him a new dog. A Cumberland spaniel pup. The two of them have been planning about

the dog since Christmas and there is a tremendous amount of excitement in that establishment. Practically the same as a new baby in the family. I expect not to be able to get a word in when I come.

February 13, 1944 Had a lovely evening.... I went down to my quarters without coming back here at all, had a shower and a shave, put on some newly pressed clothes, got on my bike and rode the 8 miles to Joan's flat. Dick was there with "Friar" the new pup. Friar, by the way is very blue blooded. A Cumberland spaniel, with white hair and eyes as blue as Arthur's, believe it or not. The name comes in part from Robin Hood's Friar Tuck. The dog is a chunky little kart and so lives up to his name, but actually the name was picked in advance.

Well I arrived in time for tea at 6. Then I washed the dishes while Dick and Joan were trying to teach Friar good habits out doors and when that had been practically accomplished, we locked him up in the kitchen and hied ourselves off to the Swan. It recalled old days to hear Friar "cry" as we left him alone. Remember how Lucky used to behave when left him in the cellar?

We had a gin and lemon at the Swan (no whiskey available) and then a pretty tasty meat pie. The dinner wasn't the best I have had there by any means, but what I was interested in more than anything else was taking them out, and they are natives after all and when you go out as we did you don't have to apologize for the feed because you have nothing to say about it anyway. You don't order at hotels. You take what they offer—except at some of the better places in London where they have a couple of choices.

While there we met another fellow, a friend of Dick's from old "trial" days and he drove us home. Much speedier and more comfortable than the usual walk. And then for the next hour, we just sat and talked of one thing or another—dogs, children, home guard, radio tubes and such and drank some bourbon whiskey that I had been able to buy for only \$13.00. That sounds expensive I suppose, but it is the second bottle that I have bought or been able to buy (not speaking financially) since I left the States. And so I don't think \$13 too much. Any more than once last year, when I hadn't had a fresh egg for half a year and then had a chance to buy a dozen for \$4.00. These eggs were worth all of \$4.00 to me so I didn't kick at the price either. But that is getting off of the subject.

As I said we talked of everything and nothing at the same time. And then, at 10, I started getting ready to go. Dick, especially, I could see, was tired. After all, what with bringing the pooch down from next door to Scotland, he had had about 4 hours sleep in the last 48. I made

a date with Joan for Thursday the 17th before leaving—we can't use telephones for personal calls during the day and she hasn't a phone in her flat, so all dates for the future must be sewed up in advance by personal contact—then for the next hour I took my time biking the 8 miles against a slight headwind. Quite a job and that is why I took it fairly slow....

February 13, 1944Since my morning letter, I have been working on one job or another—talked Al Bairnsfather very quickly out of sending me to aircraft recognition school.... Instead of having supper I went with the boys from this room to the early show at the post theater. It was the movie version of "This Is the Army" and I thought a pretty good show at that despite the fact that it had to do with the army as its title implies. Nothing that will go down in history or win Oscars but as good a movie as the stage show was for the stage....

February 13, 1944 Darling Isabel, I feel very guilty for having waited a whole week before answering the 2 lovely letters I received from you and which you wrote on Jan. 19 and 20 and which I got all the same day. I hope you will forgive the old man.

They were grand letters and told me lots of things I wanted to know. The description of your various teachers was most vivid and amusing. I have read it to many of my friends and they all enjoyed it....

Dick Burwell is new to me. Is his father the real estate man that Mom and I know. I suspect so. If so, I should imagine him to be rather good looking, glasses or no. I suspect he is a pretty good dancer. I am glad that at that particular age he is more popular with boys than with girls. That might be a fair scale to follow later on too. For generally a fellow who is more popular with the boys is a "real fellow" and when you really fall in love and start thinking about getting married, I would feel much better myself if it were with a "real man". For I know you will be happier with a real man.

But I guess I am a couple of years early at giving you "advice" like that, eh, what?

Darlingest, this is a very short letter, but that is the kind I write. Also I want to write to Mother and then if I have time to Aunt Sal—I got a letter from her today which I must answer. Anyhow, whether long or short, I love you very much my dear. And I guess you know that without my telling you. Thousands of kisses and hugs my darling. Your loving father, Dad.

February 14, 1944 Nothing of great import has happened, my darlingest, since I last wrote to you, except that I had a very good sleep and as usual, pancakes and coffee for breakfast. And that reminds me, darlingest, when I get home, I don't want to see a hot cake for months and months....

February 15, 1944 ----- Last night.... I went back to my quarters for an hour's "sack" time before supper.... However, all my plans were upset. For I was just climbing into the good old sack when Sib breezed in unbuttoning his clothes as he came in anticipation of a quick shower. At the same time he started to talk, and he talked fast and persuasively with the result that instead of pulling the covers over my head and drifting off into welcome oblivion as I expected, I too was taking off my clothes. Before I knew it I had showered and shaved, cleaned my fingernails, clipped the hair out of my ears and in no more than 20 minutes, there I was, all dressed in pinks and blouse with a shiny face and sparkle in my eye, for all this was preparation for a trip to the base hospital where they were having a dance for American nurses. So, after a hurried supper at our mess, Sib, Dagwood and I got into a waiting jeep and hied ourselves to the party.

Actually and quite frankly, it was rather a flop as far as I was concerned. I didn't know any of the nurses before leaving and when I got there all the nurses present seemed to be pretty well tied up elsewhere. Sib and Dag had their own dates which made it better for me than it might have, but I couldn't get the idea out of my head that I was always a "third". I saw and talked to some of the old Docs that I had met before and hadn't seen for some time, including Doc Langworth who used to be the first squadron doctor and Schuller who was the first head of our group set-up but who is now in charge of "division".



Note: Fred might have taken the opportunity of seeing Dr. Schuller to discuss the historical sketch he had been tasked with. Schuller had been with the group as far back as Wendover, where his responsibilities included lectures to the boys about the dangers of venereal disease. From early on, Schuller had been a keen observer of the extreme stress experienced by airmen facing dismal odds of surviving successive combat missions. He lobbied for higher command to set a limit to the number of missions required of each crew member—suggesting a cap of 20. General Eaker instituted a policy of 25 missions as the definition of a full tour of duty. At the time, life expectancy of an airman was about 15 missions. But the policy was very well received and proved transformative to morale.

February 16, 1944 --- Before going any further—I'm sorry about not writing you last night...I was pretty tired and the letter was not turning out at all well.... I had been laboring under difficulties anyway.... What with the radio going full blast and my roommates plus Al Pierce (squadron navigator) and Des Salada (squadron operations officer) deep in discussion of politics which called for answers on my part every so often to settle points, and others dropping in or leaving throughout the evening. Bedlam is really the way to describe it....

We are having what would appear to be practically a holiday today. At least for intelligence. No ground school this morning, and at the same time, pretty bad weather.... I intend doing some reading from

a pile of reports that have recently come in and then get a crack at a couple of months of group history.

I gather from your last letter...that you have already started taking some pictures of yourselves.... I am really earnest also about wanting what one might call "pin up" shots of you, but I guess that is more than I should really ask for. If I ever should come home on leave, by chance, that is one thing I am going to insist on taking care of, preferably personally. And in that case, I warn you, it won't just be a bathing-suit shot. That, my darlingest, is both a threat and a promise....

I see by the papers that the Benedictine monastery (Italy) has been pretty much smashed up. They are making quite a fuss over it, but it seems to me there is far too much protesting. People must realize by now that we are in a war and if a certain building or city is used by armed forces to our detriment, it must go, no matter what its historical or artistic significance may be.....

February 17, 1944 Perhaps the most exciting news was that of Arthur who has just finished reading a long paper before the lower school. What splendid progress he has made. It has been a long pull for him and an expensive one for you, but darlingest, it will pay great big dividends all thru his life. Go ahead and clinch it. As you say, it would be folly not to drive the nail home after you have got the worst of it over. Almost like having a dentist drill out a cavity and then not bothering to have the hole filled. But tell Arthur for me that I am very very proud of him. He has certainly earned his captain's bars....

Darlingest, did you know that you have a very dumb husband.... For you mentioned in our letter and others written thereabouts, a dog, distemper, Dr. G, and such. Either I missed your earlier letters telling of the acquisition of this dog, or else I am completely dumb and have forgotten. Anyway, in one of your next letters will you let me know what kind he is, what name, description and how acquired. As you talk of distemper, I take it he or she is a pup.

The rumor is spreading around camp that back home they are thinking of tightening up the rationing of spinster clothes. Is that true? They say the reason for it is that there is a lot of unused stuff in their drawers.

Tomorrow is supposed to be my day off. Instead of taking it that way tho, I have decided to leave this afternoon while there is nothing doing. I will drop in on Joan about tea time and spend the evening with Friar and her and come back on the camp bus....

February 18, 1944 And now as to your letter. Glad Mother is back from New York in good spirits. She must be somewhat worried when she starts up a trip like that as to whether or not she will find anything to buy.... Your trip on the 6th will be a different matter. I trust you will have a bang-up time, full of shows, full of fun, and all. Even get pickled and picked up if you feel in the mood. What I mean is have a nice carefree time which will be a real good change for you. Something to “get away from it all” and come back thoroughly refreshed. I am afraid, tho, that I won’t be able to meet you there this time.

Now, about yesterday. I left the post about 2 in the afternoon. I had intended biking but it was a miserable day and I was lucky enough to find someone that was making a business trip to town so I enjoyed the luxury of an open jeep. Some time you should try an open jeep on a cold, windy, rainy day. It was delightful. It was so nice that I was quite numb by the time I arrived at town. That made me about a half-hour early so I did what I have intended to do for a month. I paid a visit to the new officers’ Red Cross Club....

In the first place it is located on the edge of town. The edge nearest to this post. That is important for convenience. Also it is only about 6 blocks from Mary Corfield’s house and about twice that from Joan’s.

I walked in the front entrance.... The front door opens into a reception room and a lounge. On the right is a bulletin board filled with notices, rules, and a list of the cinemas showing currently in the town’s movie palaces. Opposite, and on the left as one enters is a desk and office behind it with a Red Cross female receptionist. I guess that is the place to go when you want a bed for the night. Then.... A reading and writing room. The library at present has about 10 books and some newspapers. I found 1 sheet of a Cleveland Plain Dealer pictorial section. There is a wood-fireplace at one end with a sofa and 2 stuffed chairs at one end of this room and some dozen desks for writing letters. On my way back to the entrance lounge, I noted (which may interest you) a door about half way down the corridor with the word “Ladies” printed on it. I don’t know what that is for.

Next I went straight thru and down the corridor which, as you enter the building is on your left. Here I passed a checkroom where I left my coat and hat. I spotted a door across from the checkroom which had “Men” written on it. As I was a man I thought I would investigate. I opened this door and guess what I found—yes, you’re quite right. And all nice and shiny and new too. Then I went on, feeling much better and came to the game room. A half-dozen bridge tables, a ping pong and a snooker table all very nice.

Then.... I saw another door.... And I was quite amazed, for there I found a barber shop (one barber) and a shoeshine parlor combined and again on the left, a dining room where they serve 3 meals a day plus snacks between breakfast and 11 at night.

By this time it was time for me to call on Joan and I did so. We had tea with bread, oleo and cheese, all really very nice, and then we took an hour's walk thru the park with Friar the new pup. I don't know whether it is because of his breeding or not, but Friar who is only 8 weeks old and has only been in the Green establishment for 5 days, made the whole trip at heel without a leash and didn't at any time cause any trouble. He is really quite a darling. On returning we washed up the tea dishes or rather I did while Joan was doing some other odd jobs around the house, we had a drink of gin and then I went out to get some fish and chips for our supper. They only had herring at the shop, but aside from the great quantity of little bones it wasn't so bad. When I brought it back I told Joan about the London fishmonger and the blitz, a story I am sure you remember. She hadn't heard it before—or at least she said she hadn't.

In the evening we sat by the fire, played with Friar and talked of one thing and another. I read her your last letter (or most of it anyway) and then about 10:00 she started to get tired. And so I left. As I had a full half-hour I went back to the new Red Cross Club, had a cup of tea at the snack bar and then caught the truck for this post.

.... And I think, my darling that except on the subject of my very deep, complete and abiding love for you, that is all I have to tell you today.... Your devotedest, Freddie P.S. I am very happy.

February 20, 1944 Now it is a little (just) past 10 in the evening. I am just back from finishing up reports as to the day's doings which no doubt will or should be blazoned in the Press, News, and Plain Dealer. For it was spectacular and in my opinion we did more towards bringing this thing to a conclusion than anything we have done before. Perhaps I am over-optimistic. We will see.

Note: Gerald Astor, in The Mighty Eighth, sets the big-picture context for this day and the six to follow: "Starting on February 20, the B-17s and B-24s participated in what became known as Big Week. Meteorologists had forecast several days of clear weather over Germany. The Eighth Air Force conspired with British Bomber Command and the U.S. Fifteenth Air Force operating out of Italy to visit a six-day cycle of destruction upon Third Reich industry, with particular emphasis upon its aircraft factories.

On opening day, 880 B-17s and B-24s from twenty-nine bomb groups and 835 Lightnings, Thunderbolts, and Mustangs from fifteen fighter outfits lifted off fields in the United Kingdom, to strike a series of targets.... Unlike earlier days when a maximum effort left the bomber command supine for days, the Eighth mustered another intensive assault the very next day, penetrating German air space with 762 bombers..... On the third day...almost 800 bombers.” (pp. 202-3)

Russell Strong notes about Big Week results, “It did not finish the Luftwaffe, but it caused serious supply, maintenance and eventually training problems.” (p 222). The costs for the 306th were not negligible. Most days of Big Week they sent about 40 planes up (though on one, just 21), and in that week 12 planes were lost--seven during a single mission to Bernburg on Feb. 22nd.



Well in addition to this afternoon's work, the details of which I can't tell you, I spent this morning at Division catching up on some of the finer points of interpreting intelligence from photos taken 5 miles in the air. They have a bunch of fellows from higher headquarters and it was amusing because it was plain to see that while they undoubtedly knew all about their own jobs, they had absolutely no conception of what goes on at an operational station. But we all let the many slips they made for that reason slip by and all in all did learn quite a bit....

Got a bit of a head cold, darn it. I feel fine except stuffed up. I shall naturally do all those things you would have me do....

February 23, 1944 I have been listening to the news. It doesn't sound so bad, does it? Our hammer blows from this end are falling with ever-increasing fury and strength on Germany. And, to me, what is even more encouraging is that we are apparently really operational against Southern Germany from station bases. That is terribly important for Germany will now have to move some of her fighters and flak away from this front to protect herself in the South. Now if we can also start from Russian bases that will indeed speed things to a close. The beauty of it is that by forcing them to spread their fighters, it will make it easier for all to bomb their factories which in turn will make it easier for us all. The effect of our bombing will grow progressively. It can't help but be that way. Right now I think we are seeing just the start of that process....

February 24, 1944 I had a date for this afternoon with Joan Green. The sad part about it is that it now looks very much as though I will not be able to make it. And I have no way of letting her know that I won't be in. I hope she doesn't wait around too long for me....

February 25, 1944 Yesterday, after my so-called letter, I did work hard and fast until about quarter past 8. As you may remember, I had had a date with Joan for 5:30 in the afternoon. Well, when I finished up the last report, I beat it as fast as I could to the mess hall, grabbed a quick bite and then tore off to my quarters where I changed from O.D.s to my pinks. Then Al Bairnsfather drove up in his jeep and he took Bob Hogg and myself to town. He got off at the squash club and Bob went on to parts unknown and the driver left me off at Joan's flat. It was about 9 by that time, but I saw a light through a small hole in her black-out and knew she was still up. I was just in time though for when she opened the door she had taken off her make-up and her dress in preparation for a bath and had thrown on a house coat to answer the bell. I had brought a tin of peaches, a peace offering for my late arrival. I just stopped long enough for one cigarette. I found that Dick is expected home this weekend and so asked her to come out here with him for Saturday lunch. That's tomorrow. But as I didn't want to spoil her plans for an early-to-bed, I left as soon as I had made these plans and went to the Red Cross Club. There, I found I had about an hour and a half. I saw a sign on the bulletin to the effect that there was to be a dance on this coming Tuesday. I will ask Joan when I see her on Sat. if she will come to it with me. If not, I will ask Mary Corfield, and if neither of them can make it—oh, well, it probably would have been

sticky anyway. I... read for a while until someone suggested that there was quite a worthwhile fireworks display to the south. So I went out to look for a while...as it was cold and as I am not yet over my cold, I soon gave it up as a bad job. I went in and had some waffles with Dagwood Kenealy, Tommy Thompson and a couple of other combat men and then took the truck back here to bed.

I have just been reminded that before the hour is out I must have the pleasure of taking four "refresher" shots, for typhoid, tetanus, cholera, and typhus. Oh happy day! Thank god we are not in the yellow fever belt!

February 26, 1944 In half an hour I expect Joan and Dick Green for lunch.... News of Arthur is wonderful. I hope he is half as pleased as I am. I know you are, darlingest. That will be something to the good all the rest of his life. He has been a good boy to work on it, as he must have. And you, my darlingest, have been very very wonderful. I am so thankful in and for both of you.

I am thrilled (literally) to hear of the snap-shots and if I weren't a purist, I would say that from now on, I will "sweat them out". And that leads me to one of my usual digressions. For that term ("sweat out") is a very important, forceful, expressive term which is much misused by boys around here. I shall explain. Boys here use it frequently to denote "wait expectantly" and that is all wrong. It emasculates a good expression. I used it correctly in what you have referred to as my "famous" letter. For there is or should be the element of actual sweating involved. Boys on raids who are approaching a flak-defended area know that at any minute, bursts will appear in front of their noses or off their wing tips or maybe fight in the center, these boys sweat actually in 20 degrees below temperatures. When fighters come in and the bullets can be heard hitting your plane or suddenly you see the plane on your right catch fire or explode, they sweat too. I often sweat waiting for the planes to come back. That is the true meaning of "sweating out". And I object to boys talking about sweating out mail etc. And I frequently correct them because that term, to me, is too good, too expressive, to spoil....

Evening of Feb. 26. – To pick up where I left off. I telephoned for Al Bairnsfather's jeep when I stopped writing. It is a long mile to the gate where the bus stops and I thought that it would be a good idea to meet them and give them a lift. However, the jeep was in use elsewhere on business. So instead I hopped on my bike and went down on it. The bus arrived about 5 minutes ahead of me with no Greens on board. Nor

did they appear later. But this evening I got a call. It appeared that Dick had had an appointment that could not be broken with his solicitor. He had tried to get in touch with me yesterday evening but...that had been impossible.... Disappointment on both sides. Now what I will have to do is write a letter to Joan.... to either call me when she has a free evening or write and send me her observer corps schedule (which changes every 2 weeks).... So, you see, in about a week's time, I will be able to arrange a date.... That is what I mean about it being unsatisfactory when no one has a phone.

.... "my day" has been spent writing up several detailed reports on enemy fighter tactics—covering some of the details that don't get into our first less specialized reports. We always send these in a day or two after missions. It is fun to read some of the old ones. Even as recently as a month ago they are quite different. Tactics are something that you always have to keep on your toes about. Each mission there is something brand new. Maybe it will stick and amount to something. Maybe it will disappear for a few weeks or even forever. Naturally being pioneers over here we have experienced a tremendous range of tactics of all kinds. From the beginning we learned by the process of trial and error. Sometimes successful. At other times tragically otherwise. But even now it is change, change, change.

February 27, 1944 Pay day comes the 1st of the month (naturally). The reason I mention it now is that another installment is due Kent the Florist.... I think I will send this money to you to give to Kent.... If by any chance you have paid Kent anything on these flowers--am a bit behind schedule--then of course, reimburse yourself first and turn over the rest to Kent. I am sorry to bother you with this but this is the only way I can keep the record absolutely straight. For your information, the arrangement was to send you 5 dollars worth of flowers on Christmas and 2 dollars worth every week thereafter for a period of 1 year, or until I get home, whichever was less. At the time of placing the order, I sent \$25. That is all I have sent so far. I think that should give you a pretty complete picture, just in case there are any disputes.

There are bound to be some questions... in connection with Grandmother's estate which can be very well agreed upon by anyone for me at home but which may require legal signatures. In view of this, I shall, in the next day or so, write up a power of attorney giving you or Dad the right to sign for me any papers.... I want you to know what I am doing. As you are my business manager in addition to being my partner in everything....



February 28, 1944 We are in the process of winding up our reports. Al Bairnsfather spent the day in London thinking nothing would require his presence and then 10 minutes after we lost all chance to contact him, things started to hum and the post came suddenly to life. I have really done my part on the work which tonight has been to find where the H our bombs dropped. I have found that out rather quickly by lucky break, having spotted the give-away crossroads on a map. Al Weld and Beek Pool are writing up the rest of the report. When they are thru I will check what they have done and perhaps change a few words and send it off....

February 29, 1944 There is to be a dance at the officers' Red Cross Club in town. I shall probably go to it. My idea is to go to town—drop in on Joan and if she is available take her along. But if she is busy I'll probably go myself. If she is there when I call I will at least try to arrange for a date some time in the future.

Since starting this letter I have received a letter from Dad and another from you.... Both told me of the death of Clare Vroman. Naturally, that is quite a shock. I wonder what the firm will be doing. There will undoubtedly be changes. Between you and me, I don't think that it need go any farther, it would be well, I think not to "count" on a

job waiting my return. In other words we will probably have to face that problem when we come to it as I have an idea conditions and other factors may not be at all what we envision. I don't think that that is discouraging. It is challenging perhaps. But nice too. It's not discouraging because I am confident that anyone with sense who is willing to work and who does not become too set in his ways and his ideas, will get along perfectly OK.

I was sorry to hear of Lucky's death. A doggy's death is in so many ways worse than a human's. But it is just the same. Tell Arthur and Isabel and Lee not to feel too badly....

March 1, 1944 I start this month with a V letter.... I am well and quite happy. Last night I went to town as planned. I called at Joan's house but she was not in. So I turned the corner went down a block and a half and dropped in on the Corfields. Mrs. Corfield, Joan C. and Mary were there. Sat around and talked for an hour or so. Then Mary came with me to the dance at the officers' Red Cross Club. Everyone was there. That is, most all the officers from this station. It was a good party. Pretty good G.I. orchestra furnished the music. Of course, being a "Red Cross" dance, there was no liquor but that was all right as far as I was concerned. For everyone else was in the same boat. The party warmed up a little after eleven and the liberty-run truck waited until 12 for us, which was nice of them. It was a good evening. Quite fun. And as a result, perhaps, of the sobriety of the occasion, I feel full of beans this morning.

Love to you, love to the children, and to Mother---- Kiss them all for me and then tonight kiss me too. Your devotedest, Freddie

March 2, 1944 I am now up here at the office. I have just had a breakfast of grape-fruit, juice, cold cereal, 2 hot cakes with a fried egg and syrup on top and 3 cups of coffee. Personally, I am worried about my appetite. The egg was a gift from Mary Corfield who insisted I take it. She had apparently done someone else a good turn (as, I find she is always doing for someone in trouble), and this person had given her 10 eggs. It was my first fresh egg in about a month and was very very welcome indeed.

There have been a lot of stories in the papers about soldiers voting and that has made me think (just a little bit, of course). Actually I have my own ideas on some of the national trends, issues and personalities. But I know practically nothing at all about what is happening at home locally and in the state itself. Ohio, from what I have read, is one of the 11 states that have already a setup for the

soldiers.... Darlingest, I want your help. If once and a while, as far before the election as you can, you can tell me a bit about what and who is being voted for, I would sure appreciate it. Perhaps an easy way would be to clip some editorial that you think is particularly right. In other words, on state matters particularly, I don't want to vote a straight ticket.

March 3, 1944 I have finished supper and now am back here at our quarters.... Aside from Dagwood, the rest of the "gang" are here reading a new batch of magazines—Life, Look and Esquire—which came in the mail. The Esquire I glanced at before supper. Personally I think that this latest post office officer has taken any good out of Esquire that was ever there. But I guess most people don't follow me there. That is because most people haven't got as low a mind as I have. Pretty low, as you probably know. But I did like the old Pelty and Vaughn drawings and, it would seem, they're something of the past, until the post office wakes up to the facts of life. But then, as I have said, you know why I joined the Art Club, at least you think you do—and actually you are partially right. In other words I like to see pin-up gals in pictures and I don't like to be told by a fat post office politician that I can't, especially when I know he doesn't give a snap but is really after more votes. Aren't I bitter, tho?

March 4, 1944 Darlingest, Just time to dash off a note. I have received a letter from Dick Green asking me to come in this evening and so I won't have time for more than what I am sending. I am waiting now to proof-read reports the boys are typing and when that is done will dash down to shower and shave and eat supper—all in an hour from now. So you see, there is some need for hurry.

March 4, 1944 ---- Here I am in town at the Red Cross (as you can plainly see by the letterhead). I had expected to be visiting the Greens, but they weren't in so I came back here to wait for the truck back to camp—first leaving a note suggesting that we try to make it for next Saturday. Well, that is one of the inconveniences we have to expect when you don't have telephones. I took a gamble and I lost—that's all. One thing tho, I wouldn't have had time to write you tonight if they had been at home so you see there is a bright side to everything.

.... Here comes Dagwood, darling. He wants me to have some snacks before we go out. So I'll stop. Tomorrow is Sunday and I should have some time then. Loads and loads and loads and loads of love to you. Your devotedest, Freddie

March 5, 1944 Things are very quiet and cold today. Nothing but routine stuff to be done. Al Bairnsfather left last night. One day early.... He has found a yacht down in the South coast district which spends all its time, I gather, tied up to a wharf somewhere, or else anchored. It is a grand spot for a rest and that is what he needs. He works like a horse while he is here. Probably the hardest worker in the entire outfit, and there are several here who really work hard. I get a real kick out of seeing him take some time off. More so than in the case of any one else I know.

I haven't seen the morning papers yet. I don't know that they will have the news. But history was really made yesterday. You will see it eventually in your papers, though it might not get in until the Monday issues. In any event, I believe you can imagine the excitement we have been feeling of late. In a way it is like the shot at Lexington which was heard around the world. But the Jerries haven't heard the last word yet.

Note: Just before Al Bairnsfather left for his leave, he had the honor of pulling back the mission briefing curtain to reveal the target for March 4th, Berlin. A first for the Americans—though the British had been bombing Berlin by night for a good while. Ultimately, cloud cover frustrated efforts on the 4th, but the 306th finally got to the skies over Berlin on the 6th, then again on the 8th, and again on the 9th. Fred would have been the curtain puller and chief intelligence briefer for each of these. Little wonder his executive spirits are running so high.

March 6, 1944 ----- This is the 2nd of 4 days Al Bairnsfather will be away on pass. So far everything has run off on schedule, though early this morning we almost had a lapse. As you know, everything on these posts is pretty well disrupted. And it has been our custom to collect the executive officer of the group and take him to early morning briefings in our jeep. When I say "we" I mean the Intelligence section. Well this morning we called for him at the appointed hour. We got him down there all right. But just as our driver was slowing the jeep down for the final stop, the motor coughed and we found we had no more gas. I myself was in the briefing room at the time, getting it all set up and so I missed the fun. But it was too close a shave and I have therefore just given the clerks some pointed and detailed instructions—quite explicit, in fact—not to let anything like that happen, or come close to happening again. Fortunately, Col. Coleman always rides back with someone else and so we had no obligation to

see him any further than we got him and as a matter of fact, he never even noticed what had almost happened. Also, even if it had happened, it wouldn't have been too tough. I mean by that that despite his rank he is still "Doug" to me....

March 7, 1944 I suppose you have read the papers and realize the excitement and –yes the strain too—of these days. I'm pretty tired myself and of course I am nothing like the boys in combat. But there is one thing that keeps us going and that is that we are undoubtedly taking bigger steps right now than ever before to bring this part of the war towards a conclusion. Every month now since last April that has been the case. The possibilities are limitless...

March 8, 1944 I got 6 letters yesterday and 3 of them were from you.... All were grand letters. The other 3... were written by Dad, Mother Dodge and the last was an extract from a Jan. letter of Ike's.

A large part of your letter was devoted to the blizzard, to your efforts to avoid getting the car stuck and to your later efforts to getting it unstuck. You poor girl. I know just exactly how tiring that must have been for you. I am only surprised that even with Dotty doing the driving, you had the energy or the nerve to make the trip to Shaker Square. I myself would have been exhausted for days, and I mean that literally.

I am so excited about the pictures. I mean the roll of 36 that you say have been completed and sent off to be processed. You don't know how good it is to get snaps of all of you. One thing, though, you didn't mention having had any pictures taken of you in your new nightie. The black one. You will do that, won't you darling?

March 9, 1944 ---- I'm going to try and get this before the boys get back. Because after that there is no telling. ----

Last time Al Bairnsfather went away we had 4 big do's in 5 days. This time it has been 4 out of 4. He certainly picks his times! Fortunately for me, we have a staff here that mostly definitively works for the good of the staff and not for the personal good of the individual. That, sadly enough is all too rare in the army and, as a matter of fact, out of the army as well. All the boys, officers and men, have really pitched in and have done a magnificent job. It has been a real strain on all but they have cancelled dates, forgone all trips to town and have done it all with a very fine spirit. I am rather proud to be a part of such an organization.

.... I received a note from Dick Green today saying he was sorry to have missed me last week and asking if I could make it this coming Saturday. I shall try as it seems to me that aside from my abortive sortie of last Saturday, I haven't been off the post for almost 2 weeks now....

March 10, 1944 ---- The events of the past few days have been really remarkable in many ways that I can't go into. But among other things, they have been a strain to all personnel including your devoted husband. Today is a "day of rest" but now I must do those things that I let go before.... I shall have supper at the scheduled hour and then will beat it just about as fast as my little legs will carry me down to my quarters where I shall take a running dive into the sack. I shall then spend from 5 to 15 minutes thinking very hard about you and hoping that I will be able to dream of you as well, and then I plan to turn over and go to sleep.

.... Al Bairnsfather is back. Looking like a million. And very pleased with what we did while he was gone. I have been quite set up about it all. As a matter of fact I have been "set up" by all of the things that have been happening around here and which, in general, you have no doubt read in papers and magazines. Some of these things have been unbelievable to my mind.... It is a matter of history. The facts are there and the figures are definite and settled and I am amazed.

As a matter of fact, I am not the only one who feels this way. You should hear the rest of the boys. Everyone is just bubbling over with it. Every time you meet someone the conversation is about the same. It starts out "Do you realize that etc., etc." and then the figures are quoted of one kind or another. And the reply is "Gosh!" or the army equivalent.

Well must stop. I've just been asked to make a fourth at bridge and must beat it. It is a couple of Colonels asking me....

March 11, 1944 Here we are in the throws...of the second day of relaxation in a row.... I am doing these few things in a nice gentle lazy sort of way and it is lots of fun.

Last night as planned, I got to bed right after supper.... Now I feel fresh as a daisy. I am ready to take on all comers and am willing to let them choose weapons.

About 4:00 yesterday afternoon and before supper, Col. Lambert called me and asked if I wanted to make a 4th at bridge. I had nothing in particular to do so I accepted. I played with Col. Furst against Lambert and Major Duy (pronounced Dewey). We got in 2 rubbers,

playing for a shilling a hundred much to my chagrin (but I didn't feel like telling them, too that we played for a nickel an evening at home). It was my first game out here in just about a year and I was quite worried that it would be disastrous. However, the first rubber we had all the cards and walked right through them to the tune of about 2,000 points. Then the 2nd rubber they tried to recover. They had just a little better cards than we had, but they were naturally a bit too anxious to make up what they had lost and would bid game when they should have stopped at 3 or slam when they should have been content with game. Also, I do think, Furst and I really clicked as partners. The result was that though they won this second and last rubber, at the end of it we were up another 200 points on them and so I am today a pound and 10 shillings ahead of where I was yesterday. Naturally it was lots of fun as far as I was concerned and I don't think I have lost too much of what bridge I used to have with this lay-off....

March 12, 1944 As planned, I went to town yesterday evening, and had a very nice, but very quiet evening with the Greens. Dick had arrived in the early afternoon. He was pretty darn tired. He had been working nights this past week and has one more week of that type of work. But what made him especially tired was that he left Crewe right after work on Friday night and took the train Saturday morning and therefore had had no sleep for 24 hours. He was just finishing a 20 minute doze when I showed up. I felt sorry for him and, as a matter of fact, wouldn't have stayed except that they both insisted. Also I had missed them on both of my 2 prior attempts, so I was easily persuaded. I left promptly at 10 though. About all we did all evening was to sit and talk and play with Friar Tuck, the new pup, who, by the way is about twice as big as when I saw him last some 2 weeks or more ago. Talk was mostly about nothing at all so I won't repeat it. About 9:00, Dick and I took Friar for a walk while Joan cooked us some toast and coffee. Sardines went on top of the toast and it was all very tasty. I left after that, first to arrange to call if we are not too busy out here, next Wednesday which is my next day off. Then I dropped around to the Red Cross Club, chatted there with some of the boys from this station, had another snack to make company for them rather than by reason of especial hunger on my part, and took the 11:15 bus out here.

March 13, 1944 At supper Dagwood and I....conceived the idea of going to the G.I. Red Cross Library (the only part of the post Red Cross that is open to officers). It has been open to officers for almost a month now and neither of us has made the effort to look into its possibilities.

So, right after supper we did just that. They have quite a selection of books. Most, I must admit, are stuff that very few people would want to read at all, but scattered through the great bulk are a few items of interest. I picked out a couple of these last—a Vicki Baum (you know my tastes) and a Harvey Allen—both of which I can keep for 2 weeks. Dagwood took longer than I did to make his selection and it was almost 8 before we got back to the barracks. I lazed around for half an hour or so and then was just about to sit down to a letter when the boys suggested cards and I found that they didn't have to twist my arm very hard. I still was going to write when the card game was over. It was hearts. I didn't win, but I had the pleasure of "shooting the moon" twice which was just twice more than any one else did. But the long and short of it was that the game didn't come to an end as quickly as I had thought. When it did end, it was high time for the good old sack....

March 13, 1944Almost as soon as I had put my last letter to you into an envelope, I was given your letter of Mar. 2....

You told also of Lee's accident in the laundry. Tell her I send kisses to any parts of her arm that still hurts. Poor little girl. It must have been very hard on you too darlinest. It almost turned my stomach inside out when I read about it—until I got to the place in your letter where Mother had taken her for a drive. Then I figured that she must have been fundamentally all right. Also, you didn't mention any doctors having been called, so I guess all is well.

The mail today also brought 2 more Church of the Covenant Sunday programs. I was thrilled! What a day it has been. Talking of Church, though, there have been some discussions over here of how couples who have been separated from each other for a long time, should or should not go thru a second marriage ceremony when they once again get together. Personally, I feel that as far as we are concerned, our great and abiding love is better than any ceremony conceivable, more holy, finer, more binding, more everything. However, if you should feel at the time that some sort of blessing by Dr. Bird or something of the sort would be nice, I shall be very glad to cooperate. I guess you won't have to decide this right away, tho. What I mean is that one way or the other is perfectly all right with me. I don't think it necessary or anything like that, but I can almost understand and especially some of those couples who were married just before coming overseas and who haven't had the years of glorious experience that we have been lucky enough to have.

March 14, 1944 When I got back to the office this noon I found your letter of Feb. 29th and your V letter of March 1st waiting to be read and they were so very wonderful that I shall cast all else aside and answer them right away...

The letter had 6 pictures enclosed. 2 of you and 1 of those was very good indeed. It was a full-length picture taken in the driveway.... Then there was one each of the children and a last one of Arthur and Lee together on her tricycle. The thing that almost knocked me over was the amount the children have grown since the last pictures. Isabel is a charming young lady. I shall put her up with my "pin-ups". Arthur has grown considerably, too, and I would be very much surprised if he had now gained a whole lot of weight. Lee is a darling. She had her hood on and so of course I couldn't see her hair, but there too I find a great change. What a grand family I have. How wonderful it is to be able and proud to show friends pictures like these. What a group to be fighting for. I love you all.

I was terribly sorry to hear that your New York trip had to be postponed. I want you to make that trip this spring, darlinest, even if you have to make it alone. Though company naturally would be more fun. If worse comes to worse, let me know and I'll come home and take you myself.

March 15, 1944 ----- This is the beginning of my day off—the first one I have taken as a matter of fact, for a couple of months....

Last night I came in to town and spent the night here at the Red Cross Club. I find it an excellent place to do that. The dormitory is fixed up with about 75 double rooms. 2 beds, 1 bureau, 1 chair. But that is all you need for just the night. I got in about 9, had a snack (toast and jam and coffee) with a navigator friend, Lt. Simmons and then went to bed about 10. Simmons is a nice kid doing groundwork mostly now. He had half his lungs shot away last June and can't fly above 10,000 feet. He helps the group navigator with training and paper work and is available too for "slow time" (testing of instruments and all that).

Well I slept soundly until about 9. Had breakfast here after a shower and then did a bit of shopping. I bought such interesting items such as shoe polish, a new wrist-watch strap, some cod-liver oil for Joan's Friar Tuck, and then, in a bookstore window saw "Skyways to Berlin" and bought a copy of that, too. Now I will be able to tell you what parts, especially, are about us....

It's a lovely day for my day off. Very cold—but the sun is really out.

March 16, 1944 ----- As you can see, I am now back at work.... (yesterday) I had done some shopping before lunch. I got a copy of Skyways for Berlin and another to give the Greens.... I...walked over to Joan's house, stopping on the way to get some cod-liver oil for the pup and some cigs for Joan. The rest of the afternoon was nice but not too exciting. We took Friar for a walk in the park, then had tea and left a little after 6 for the movies. This was not too good. "Reveille With Beverley" But at the same time it was not too bad. After the show and on the way home along the embankment Joan gave forth with a couple of beautiful yawns and so not wishing to wear my welcome in that quarter, I suggested that she was tired and a bit of sleep would do her good. To my regret, she agreed with me, so I left her at her door and went back to the Red Cross to wait for the early truck back to camp.

This morning when I got to the office, I found your letter of Feb. 25 in my box. This was the letter in which you had enclosed the first batch of pictures of yourself and the kids. Another wonder bunch and a grand letter with them....

March 17, 1944 ----- I worked a good part of last night, and as a result I am not too sharp at the present moment. But I want to write anyway. We will see what the awful result of that combination turns out to be....

.... There is to be an officers' party out here tomorrow and if I want to go to any such affair, I can go to that one.... I asked Joan to the party tomorrow but she was on duty at the Observer Corp that night and so couldn't make it....

Ben Hogg has been talking today about taking a leave in Cornwall. I have been telling him about some of the high-lights (geographically speaking of course) of our honeymoon. It has been fun recalling the little ship-studded bays at Loo and Fowey, the ruins and the running water at the King Arthur Hotel at Tintagel, Shelley's cottage at Lynmouth and the walks along the cliffs at Lynton. The bus ride over the Dartmoor country of Devonshire. Do you ever suppose we will be doing that again? Joan and Dick are planning if things don't go to pot after the war, to get a country cottage somewhere in Devon. Perhaps we will visit them and imbibe on their strawberries covered with Devonshire cream. Who knows?....

March 17, 1944 Today has been rather slow and routine. Reports, classes to new crews, a little history writing and such.... Also I got my weekly rations at the P.X. which consist, in case I haven't told you, of 7 packs of cigarettes, 2 bars of chocolate candy, 1 package of gum and a box of crackers. They have other things like tooth paste, shoe polish,

soap etc. but I didn't need the first 2 and, of course I don't use soap. Sometimes they have handkerchiefs or towels. Once in every couple of months, it seems, they have some lighter fluid, tho of course on an air base where they use 100 octane gas this isn't a real problem. Clothes can be got either in London or Kettering. And between the two and the English stores where we can get anything that isn't rationed. That means food, clothes, and leather goods and that is about all. What I am driving at is that we can get about anything that we might possibly need....

March 18, 1944 I have glanced at the start of "Skyways to Berlin" and I find that it tells a pretty good story, though some of it is laughably impossible. Right off the bat, though, I noticed references to Rip Riordan, Arizona Harris, Joe Bowles, "Wild Bill" Cassedy and others. Then I notice Jack Ryan painting on the ceiling of the mess hall with a candle.... It will be a nice book to have around. I am glad you got it....

How different those first few months were to today. I don't suppose many people will ever realize just what we did in those days. How we set out to try something that all those with any experience said was impossible. How we tried one thing after another. How sometimes we were pretty successful and sometimes we had tragic disappointments and costly ones too. How we had to combat ill-advised criticism of those who did not know the true facts of the case and how in the end we proved that the impossible could be done and not only that but we, through our mistakes and successes, proved the way to do it and laid the ground work for all that we are now doing. Those books, in part, attempt to tell that story. I am glad they did it in a manner which probably can be appreciated by the public. I am sorry that they had to be careless with details, so careless with some that combat men laugh out loud when they read it. But perhaps the telling of the story is the most important so perhaps I should waive the matter of accuracy. But you know how I am. Personally I think my thoughts on the book as above expressed are very generous of me.

Note: Fred's competitive nature may have been a factor in his reception of the new book. If Fred was imagining writing his own account, he might even have felt that "Skyways" was scooping him. Four years after the war, a major motion picture, "Twelve O-Clock High" experimented with another medium for telling the remarkable story of the 306th's early days. The screenplay was written by men from General Eaker's headquarters who had not served directly with the 306th but were eye witnesses to the General's trip to Thurleigh to

review the morale and discipline situation there, and eventually relieve Colonel Overcracker of command in favor of Colonel Frank Armstrong. The movie took pains to be as accurate as possible in its depiction of a station's operations, and the human dynamics among men engaged in "maximum efforts." With its star cast, the movie was popular and for many years enjoyed an after-box-office-life as a training film for military leadership. It would have been fascinating to hear from Fred himself, just what he made of "Twelve O-Clock High's" attempt to put the experiences of his colleagues on the psychotherapist's couch.

March 19, 1944 My darlingest, This is one of the most lovely, peaceful Sundays I can remember since coming to these shores....

Last night I worked up here until about 10:30 with the reports. Then, on my way back to my quarters I looked in at the officers' dance, more with the idea of seeing who was there, than anything else. Somehow or other, my footsteps led first to the bar where I had a scotch. Naturally that wasn't enough, so I had another. I put my glass down at that point and was just leaving when the day's lead bombardier came up and I told him what a fine job he had just done and explained to him the results as shown by the pictures which I had just been developed. Well that called for a drink, naturally, and again, naturally, I had to buy him one too. By that time I came to the conclusion that I should really stay a while. So I wandered in to the dance floor. There I spotted Sibley and Dagwood with a couple of American nurses. I had been introduced to these nurses in the time of our last dance and so cut in on each of them. The orchestra was the one made up of the boys from this camp. Four of them, by the way, had been out on the day's mission. They must have been pretty tired. But they didn't show it. Our orchestra is definitely on the blarey side but it is a good one to dance to. And I enjoyed my two dances with Ruth and Polly. I don't know either of their last names. Then back to the bar for a drink where I put the bee in a couple of Colonels' bonnets to the effect that Wick, the bombardier, should get some sort of citation for his day's work. Finally, about midnight I went home....

Last night I called Joan to try and make a date. She is pretty busy this week so we made plans for Saturday evening. Dick will be home then so I will be able to see them both. I shall be taking them to the Swan for supper. That will be about the extent of my social life for the week unless some good movie is to be shown on the post....

March 20, 1944 This morning, at breakfast, I came to a very fundamental and far-reaching decision. I don't know what you will think of it. But when I get home, the second thing that I am going to do is to put up some wire fencing around the back yard and start raising chickens. Then, after making a fortune with selling shell eggs to war veterans, I will buy or lease the vacant lot next door and expand. I want to build up the chicken farm to the place where I can afford to reserve for us at least 3 eggs apiece for breakfast. All these thoughts, by the way, were brought about by the fact that we had each a fresh egg for breakfast and it sure was wonderful.

March 23, 1944 Had some mail today. Consisted of the tax books I sent for some time ago. Not quite the kind of mail I was hoping for, I must admit, but nevertheless, please thank Dad for sending them on to me. I'm too tired tonight to look into any subject like taxes but I guess there will be plenty of time for that.

No news, my darlingest.... This P.M. I was busy asking questions followed by elaborate reports and just made supper before the doors closed at 7:30. After supper I was pretty tired so I took a scotch that I would have preferred to have had before supper but didn't have time for. Now it is 8:30 and I am sitting on the side of my bed writing this. Wendell Hull is back from London—leave. Sibley has found some new pin-ups and is hammering them into the ceiling where he can look at them as he lies in bed. Johnnie Coulter and Tommy Threadgill are reading some fairly recent Life magazines that came in today. Dagwood Kenealy is up at squadron operations working on a list of crews for tomorrow. And so it goes. All pretty routine.

March 26, 1944 I was to town last night. Got through work out here about 5:30 or so and caught the bus in.... I was supposed to take the Greens out to dinner. And I half accomplished that purpose. When I stopped at their house I found that Joan was not feeling any too good. Dick, however, insisted on going through with it—partly to relieve Joan of any extra cooking. So off Dick and I went to the Swan and had a very good dinner of broiled trout plus a couple of very large glasses of beer. Rather quiet time of it but we managed to keep up a conversation covering such subjects as Rolls-Royce engines, fortresses, their coming summer vacation, a possible change from Dick's location of Crewe to Manchester and such. Then after dinner, we met a couple of former friends of Dick's in the lounge, had a glass of beer with them and then walked back with them to the Green's flat. Here, after a glass of whiskey, I left (about 9:30) as I could see that Joan was not up to

company, and then went back to the Red Cross Club to wait for the 10:15 truck....

My next date according to present plans, takes place a week from today. Mary Corfield this time. We intend, if possible and if the day is good, to bicycle into the country to an old inn that she knows about which I believe has some history behind it, and have some lunch there. I'll let you know more about that when I learn some more about it myself....

March 27, 1944 We here are feeling good about developments everywhere except perhaps Italy and I am feeling more and more that we could take Italy if we really wanted it in pretty short order. We must remember always that Italy is a liability and it is not worth too much effort and lives to gain a liability. The only advantage to be gained by fighting in Italy is in getting German soldiers down there where they can't help to defend against a possible invasion and we can accomplish that purpose without winning any more territory....

Note: What happened to Fred's idea of bombing Germany from Northern Italy?

I told you I might mention some names from "Skyways" which might interest you. So let's have a go at the pictures in the book. I have told you about Lt. Riordan, page 31, who always used to come back with 2 or 3 engines.... Then about 39 you will find Jack Ryan, now a major up at Division, writing on the ceiling. Jack after the picture was taken was made a squadron commander, went down the next day, got back after a short time at the hospital went right up to Division. He is one of the best yet. Used to teach languages at school which probably helped him in France during his short "stay" there. Jack is being held up by Jack Lambert, smiling, who commands the 423rd now and George Backy who commands the 367th. The last, called Harry Hebe, had a nervous breakdown after his personnel had had about 200% turnover in the first few months and after a long rest has been up at air force headquarters since. Then the picture of Kiel shows our bombs which that day were right on the button.... Then, of course there is always Snuffy Smith. Can't get away from him no matter where I turn....

Since I started this note, Wendell Hull has come back with some fresh eggs he picked up somewhere. And Tommy is boiling them. One for me. Sooooo----I may not be able to write as long a letter as I would like.

March 28, 1944 I suppose you notice the number at the top of this page (400). I guess you know what that means. Among other things, before you go any further, let's pull immediately over to the side of the road and celebrate the occasion with a kiss. It doesn't matter where we are or who will be watching us. There is room over there by the curb. So come with me, darling. Let's get out of the front seat which is much too crowded what with the steering wheel and all. Let's get into the back. That's right. Now turn around. Put your feet up. Face me. Lean over here. Come into my arms—like that. Now let me have your lips. Mmmmmmm! That's real nice. Thank you, my precious. That was lovely. Let's do it just once more. Mmmmmmm! Sweet! All right, I'll drive on now. But what do you say we continue from where we left off as soon as we get home. Perhaps it would be best if I leave the rest to our imagination. [It was Dad's 400th letter home]....

Note: In this one, parenthetical insert, Isabel—by typing “Dad”—reveals that it is not Fred Baldwin who has been carrying forward the letter transcription, but HER. Examination of the transcription pages shows a slight change in formatting style at about Feb 6, 1943 (41 pages in) and then a change to a different typewriter about June 29, 1943 (108 pages in). Did Isabel take up the project of her father's letters at the time of his death...or years later?

March 29, 1944 You mention Isabel's Freshman-Sophomore dance. I remember a long time ago when Louise took me to one of those. I was attached to some girl I can't remember now at all, but it seems to me I had a very good time indeed....

As to Arthur's going away to school, I hardly know what to say. Frankly I hadn't given it much thought before this—probably because I thought there was plenty of time for that when I was home and then it did seem a bit out of the realm of possibilities. I don't know, now, what to say. So many reasons for and against a step like that. It is a pretty big step of course. I don't want to answer your implied questions tonight, darling. Let me sleep on is a bit. I'll try to have something to say tomorrow.

Now just let me wish you a good good-night and sweet dreams. And cuddle with me awhile tonight especially darlingest. I've just lost some good friends you see. Your devotedest, Freddie

Note: In March the 306th flew more missions than in any prior month and did so without losing a single plane until its March 29th mission to Brunswick, when 4 planes went down. Six of the downed airmen had

in fact flown more than 25 missions—as Bomber Command had upped the tour requirement from 25 to 30. Two of these “old timers,” Lt. Alvin Schuering and Lt. Robert Flood may have been the lost friends Fred refers to. Russell Strong recounts their dramatic survival—which Fred could not have known about at the time—when the pilots put their engine fire out by steeply diving the plane and then landing it wheels-up on a spongy field. “The crew scattered while Schuering and Flood stayed behind to try and burn the plane as fighters buzzed over them. They were captured along with six of their crew mates. A group of civilians with rifles, shotguns, farm implements and ropes were marching them down a road when soldiers appeared and took them in custody. The soldiers told them that the civilians were planning to hang all of them.” (Strong, pp. 228-9)

March 30, 1944 ...To begin with, I have heard some inside stuff about Churchill’s last meeting with Stalin which you may not have heard. It seems that at that meeting Winston told Stalin that he was very much interested in Russian women. He had known women of many races, in fact from all over the “Empah” but had never had a Russian woman. Would Stalin fix him up? Stalin said he would that very night. So when W.C. went to bed that night, he looked around and sure enough there in his bed was a female. But the female was a little 6 months old baby. He was puzzled, no less, until he saw a note pinned to the baby’s clothes which read, “perhaps on the youngish side, but her front will be opened as soon as yours.”

Enough for such twaddle.

My thoughts, following your last letter, are naturally more or less centered on Arthur and plans for his future schooling. I don’t know much more than I did last night about it. I presume Arth is in the 6th or 7th grade this year. Honestly I can’t remember. Of course, all I know is what I have experienced or heard myself. As you know, I have often thought that 11 years away from home was somewhat too much in my case and that when I started in work at law, I had to begin with no Cleveland friends. However, as you also know, I am not too quick at making friends and maybe that tendency of mine is as much of a reason for that as the fact that I was away for so long. Going away to school did many things for me. It made social adjustments at college much simpler. As a matter of fact, from a social adjustment standpoint, I always thought that boys who had gone away to school were on average about a year ahead of boys who did not. Scholastically (aside from spelling which must always be excepted in my case), I was better prepared going to Hotchkiss than most boys. That helped me at the

start. The work, at that time at Hotchkiss was much harder than at U.S. On the other hand, I don't think you can compare the present U.S. with the school that I went to. But you remember what I got in my Hotchkiss entrance exams. They were pretty low. Even then, U.S. boys at Yale did not do too bad in my days. Another thought—I am not too sure that I am too anxious to have Arthur go away to school before he is close to 14 years old. Anyway, there are pros and cons and I am not sure which outweighs the other. I think I would say that right at present there is not the need for Arf's being away at school as there will be in a few years. Also, I would like to see him under our wing, I think, at this stage, considering the fact that he is doing so well with his doctor, I wonder what the effect of a big change right at this point might mean.

Well, as you can see, I haven't made up my mind. But then I haven't had too much time to think about it. I'll write you more after more thought...



April 1, 1944 It has been so cold here, except for two days last week. I have been cold at night under four blankets and wear a sweater, muffler and heavy overcoat every time I venture outside. Also gloves.

My plans for the weekend are as follows. Tomorrow I am supposed to have a day off. I intend, if I am not put on duty tonight, to go to town and spend the night at the Red Cross Club. Then if nothing is doing tomorrow, I will pick Mary Corfield up and we will bike to an inn she knows of in the country. I note that there is a tea dance at the Red Cross Club Saturday afternoon and we may show up for that. But

as a matter of fact, by that time, as Mary and I generally do when we have dates, we will be entirely on our own and will do whatever we feel like at the particular moment. That is one of the reasons Mary is fun as a matter of fact. The best times are had with her when you make no plans except for the original meeting and then just follow your nose for the rest of the date.

I suppose from my letters you must get the impression that about all I do and think about is dates with Mary and Joan. Actually of course that is not so. I have dates about once a week. I try to get away from the camp often and I find it nicer and more fun, when it is possible, to be with someone other than an American soldier when you are off the post. Mary and Joan, for the most part are available and fun and at the same time are not involving, if you get what I mean. But perhaps the reason I write about dates more than other things is that is about the only non-military thing that I am apt to do and the one thing therefore that can be written about at length without any qualms. Everything military, even discussions by us as to what is or is not happening in Italy and Burma and such, must be carefully considered before being put in a letter.

A couple of more thoughts on Arthur. These scattered thoughts will probably creep into my next few letters. Don't mind them too much. But I think I generally like the idea of sending Arth away to school but not quite yet. I think the ninth or tenth year of schooling is plenty early. I mentioned the idea to Bob Hogg just now. He is sitting next to me doing the same thing I am doing before the afternoon rush starts. He said right off the bat before I had mentioned any names of schools that he liked the idea of sending a boy to Deerfield. He knows and likes the headmaster who he says is a "real educator." I shall talk more to Bob about this. I respect Bob's judgment very much indeed. Must sign off in a hurry now, tho, darlingest. I love you!!!! Your devotedest, Freddie

April 3, 1944. Saturday afternoon, after I'd finished a letter, Al Bairnsfather sent me suddenly off about 50-60 miles away...on an investigating job.... I didn't get back until late evening. About an hour late for a date with Mary C. as a matter of fact. But that made little difference. Mary cooked me a quick welsh rarebit with cheese and bacon and mustard and onion chips all together, and then a cup of tea and then we both went to the Key Club which I may have told you about in days gone past. It is an officers' club in town, or rather an officers' pub. About half filled with English officers from Canada, Australia,

New Zealand, South Africa and even from England herself. The rest are Americans.... I go there about every 3 months or so.

Anyway, that is where Mary and I went. We met John Cockshaw and Muriel, his wife (friends of Mary's) and as we progressed we picked up Sibley.... We were there until about 10:30. Drinking slowly, chatting, and, occasionally, dancing. But at 10:30 we all went back to Mary's house and had a last snack in her kitchen before going to bed.

Sunday (my day off) Mary and I had booked tables at the Bedford Arms Hotel for lunch. But when I woke up—I had spent the night at the Red Cross—I found it to be a very wet day, even for England, and walking out there some 3½-4 miles was quite out of the question. So after a very short consultation Mary and I decided to cancel our reservation. Instead, we had lunch in town. Then later on went to a tea dance and in the evening joined up with Muriel and John once more at the Key Club....

Well that is how I spent the weekend and my day off. I had lots of time for letters, but I didn't want to ask the Corfields for paper.... Loads and loads of love to all and especially to you, my darlingest.

April 4, 1944. Your recent letters have been full of League and League business. As I understand it, you will be through with all that in about 2 months. Perhaps that will be a relief. It will be good, at least for a while to be out of it and in shape to relax....

I have just been asked to play bridge this evening, with Major Duy, Col. Furst and one other. Possibly Shube. That will mean that I won't be able to write a 2nd letter today.... However, I still have time to let you know that you have, over here in the British Isles, a husband who is deeply devoted to you...

April 5, 1944.I can appreciate the Woods's impatience which mother speaks about in her letter. I was pretty lucky in that I was able to get "active" in about five and a half months after joining the army. But even then, I can remember my own impatience. Especially after making the trip over here and then having to wait almost a month when I thought all the time that I and the rest of the group were really ready from the start. Now that I have been here for some nineteen months, though, and can really speak from experience, I know that I was far from ready and, as a matter of fact, I think that we could well have stood several more months of training before embarking on this adventure. But times were different then. We were definitely on the defensive if not actually losing the war. And it was a question of throwing a few into the breach in a great big hurry to slow down the

Jerries who were getting mightier and mightier as they approached Egypt on the one hand and Stalingrad on the other, sweeping everything aside that stood in their way. So it was necessary to send a few in to stem the tide with what amounted to only a very hurried preparation, hitting at best, only on the high spots. That is why I skipped six weeks at Miami and one at Harrisburg and probably at least a month or two out west. Woods may be impatient, but despite all the training he got in the states, a bit of training in the special features of fighting his particular sector of the world will stand him in good stead. It is that way with air corps and I should imagine it would be equally true of the mechanized cavalry.

I played some bridge last evening with Colonel Furst, Major Duy and Shube. The Col and I had some rotten cards and Shube and Duy had pretty much their own way with us....

April 6, 1944. Wrote a pretty long letter to Dad today answering his letter. He had covered the political situation pretty much, and I was very glad to get his views which I pretty much agreed with. On the other hand, it does seem too bad to me that the republicans can't offer something better in the way of opposition than seems at the present time to be evident. I take it, after the Wisconsin primaries, that Wilkie's chances are not so hot. I don't like anyone else that I have heard of in the Republican forces. Too bad, because I am very much in the mood for a change. Perhaps Dewey is a better man than I imagine. However, I don't suppose it makes much difference this year because the war certainly won't be over before elections and people won't want to change horses right now and probably no one would stand a chance—not even the best that could be put up....

April 6, 1944. ---- This is my fourth letter of the day. Which is really pretty fair going, if I do say so. But actually I am up to date with you, I owe letters to nearly everyone else and that is a bad situation to be in....



April 7, 1944.
Anyway, after a really pretty tough day at the office and a very good supper Dagwood Kenealy, Doc Salada and I had a drink of gin and coca cola, and then another of sherry as there was first no more scotch and then no more gin and then we went to the show in camp. It was "The Vanishing Virginian" and I must say I liked it very much. Very much indeed. Now I am back here—still slightly spiflicated as you can no doubt see by the way this darn pen is going round and round and round.

And everyone else wants to go to bed and are trying to get Doc to go home. But darlingest, I must finish this first, for I love you in sickness and in health, for better for poor, for drunk or sober, and all that.

.... Arthur's having played hooky. I got a real kick out of that. Naturally it is not right to play hooky. But I suspect he got all the punishment he deserves when he reported back at school—probably I suspect, for an extra half day at least. But according to my ideas, every boy should play hooky at least once in his life and I am glad he did it—so long as he doesn't make it a regular thing. That of course would truly be bad. But once is good. It is just one more thing to prove what we have really known all along—that he is a real boy.

Must stop now the darlingest, as the rest really are beginning to object to the lights being on...

April 8, 1944 My darlingest, it has happened. The event that I have been awaiting.... You have been to New York and back. The trip has

actually been accomplished despite threats of measles, maids, upsets and everything else.

I guess you just live right, my precious. For you were pretty lucky, it would seem, to be able to get all those reservations, railway and theater tickets and everything else right after having cancelled everything.

The part of your account...which really tickled me and made me realize above all else that the trip was a success was where you told of getting the dress at Bergdorf-Goodman which you "had no intention of getting". That is the one thing that I had wanted you to do. And that undoubtedly made it a spree for you.

April 9, 1944 Out of the clear I called Mary Corfield on another matter and made a tea date for this afternoon with her. We are to bike and meet at a spot in the country that I will tell you all about tomorrow when I know more about it....



.... I have been doing some more work at odd times with the pastels together with Sgt. Moore of our staff. It's funny how you can work with a fellow for a couple of years without knowing very much of his background. That is the case with Moore. I had wondered during the past few days at the amount he knew about drawing and stuff like that. After a while I began to wonder if he had not done some of it himself, perhaps before the war. I finally made a few inquiries. It turns out he used to be on Walt Disney's staff. SOOOOO!!! I have decided now that perhaps I will let him tell me a few things. At any rate the work has been received in high favor here and at Division so I (and Moore) are quite pleased....

April 10, 1944 Now let me tell you a bit about yesterday.... The morning was beautiful.... I finished work here about 2:30 and after a quick change into more presentable clothes, I hopped onto my bike and started off. Unfortunately, between lunch and take-off time, the weather had closed in. So I rode the 4 miles or so to the meeting place though a slow drizzle. We were to meet about half way to town at the top of a big hill. When I got there there was no sight of Mary. I waited for about 10 minutes and then decided it was foolish to wait too long as she might have determined to call it off because of the poor weather. It stopped raining at that point. So I decided to go on to Mary's house over the route she would be taking. As it turned out, I met her steaming out at the bottom of her side of the hill. She had waited to avoid the worst of the rain.

Note: This episode for Mary and Fred, each waiting for the other on different levels of the same hill seems to sum up, aptly, the imbalance in their relationship. On her bike, Mary was there all along. He found his way to the hill, but not to her. And by the spring of '44 Fred seems at peace with where things had settled. His brief: to "sweat out" a nearing repatriation with those people in the snaps he was always showing around. But how did Mary feel about things? In Fred's first description of her, he laments that Mary is the sort of person that people are always taking advantage of—putting their feet up on her open nature, taking her generosity and her game readiness for granted. It is Fred himself, of course, who is taking advantage here. He might have preferred a dance—no less unrequited—with Joan Green because that turn could be executed with intrinsically more balance. Joan, however, was often out when he called these days and tired when he did visit. Mary was in. In, and willing to pedal through drizzling rain to spend time with him.

We found a different route to the spot where we had intended going that didn't involve another hill climb (for which I was very thankful) biked through Oakley to a privately owned place called "Hurdlefeet".



On entering we rode down a dirt driveway along sides a hedge to an oak grove about half a mile off this lane. Now the grove was about 50-100 yards wide and bordering the River Ouse. Between the trees were rock gardens and wild flowers, some already in bloom. Also some gravel paths up high on the bank and down by the water's edge. About 4-5 cabins housed the offices, kitchen, tea room and store room. Also dressing rooms for bathers. At the river bank was a slip where the water is plenty deep for swimming (later on, thank you) and where they have some dozen punting boats tied up. The grove is about a mile long and in addition there are other cabins (already rented for the coming season) scattered through the entire length of the grove.

Across the river it is rolling farm land with a railway bridge. Up perhaps a mile and a half just past the bridge, you can see the steeples and higher roofs of Pavenham. There were just 3 other parties at Hurdlefeet. One was an RAF officer and his wife. Another comprised of 3 young boys about Arthur's age. It was all very quiet and peaceful. I understand that during the really warm Sundays it is very popular, but this is early in the season and on summer weekdays it is real nice.

Anyways, by the time we had looked it over, the sun came out again and so when asked we agreed that it would be very nice to have our tea outside. Tea was good. We had fish spread and watercress sandwiches and strawberry jam with bread and butter, and little cakes as well. What you might call a pre-war tea. That is the first butter I have seen served at a public spot in the past 20 months.

After tea we went back to town on our bikes. I then left Mary, who was planning on working that night, dropped over to Dick and Joan's house—but found them out, and then went into the Red Cross where I read some very old home magazines and papers, had a cup of coffee and took the early bus back here.

It was a very nice peaceful afternoon and I felt very refreshed with it all. I am going to repeat it especially in the warmer days to come.

April 11, 1944 I had more "social life" yesterday, which is quite surprising seeing as how I spent such a nice afternoon on Sunday. But as you may recall...the Sunday tea in the country was an affair which had been arranged on the spur of the moment. I had telephoned Mary Corfield with the idea of sewing up the details of an indefinite date for Monday evening when she suggested the Sunday tea. Well, last evening we carried out the Monday date. I took the liberty run to town and called for her at her house. After a short visit with Mr. and Mrs. C senior we walked to the Swan and there met up with a Captain from another field and a girl named Joan Halliwell (a youngster of about 26 years and the mother of 3 children). Very nice appearing girl and, I understand from Mary, a very good mother. Well, that called for bringing out my latest pictures again, which, of course I did and once more everyone was impressed. We had a very good supper (roast beef) and then went to the County Theater where they had a variety show as usual. The show was not too good, though there were some good numbers in it. It really is small town, old time vaudeville, no more, no less, but good or not, it was a change and that is what we were all after.

After the show Bill Whatsisname had to catch a liberty bus back to his station and I hopped on my bike and came storming back in a hurry as I was supposed to be back here by midnight. That's about all there is to it. And now I am all set for another week at camp before making another raid on the town.

Beek Pool returned today from his leave. He spent it all at Tintagel. He is as full of it as Bob Hogg was a couple of weeks ago....

April 12, 1944 We are to have 2 new lieutenants here probably tomorrow...Their names are Henry L. Moore, William H. Leatherman.

April 12, 1944 The last 2 letters from home have given me 2 good examples of how Arthur has changed very little since I left and I loved hearing about both of them. The one, of course, was about his having missed his last day at school and the terrors he suffered therefore. And in this letter it was helping the old lady with her trained kids at the sportsmans' show. Both very delightful reading. He is so fundamentally kind, friendly, and happy and helpful. Yet he has a bit of mischief and imagination with it all. It's a bold combination when, as I hope, it later will be put to good use. For kindness, imagination, the spirit of adventure and happiness concentrated on a general purpose in life, which he will no doubt develop, will carry him far.

April 14, 1944 I had quite a long talk with our two new men, Moore and Leatherman. Both youngsters as far as S-2 personnel are judged. Both in their middle twenties I would judge. Leatherman had served in the Aleutians before going to Harrisburg. Moore had just graduated from meteorological school when he was sent to the same place. They waited for a month and were sent over here. They seem to be enthusiastic enough and I think, after a month or so should prove to be quite helpful to us.

Your letter of April 5 came this afternoon. You told of Paul's death. A very tragic thing because he had so much promise. You say that I feel losses like this every day and that you should not talk so much about it. But that isn't true darling. There is naturally a lot of such sad experiences and losses. But it is different somehow. Perhaps partly because it is generally sudden and quickly over with. Perhaps partly because they die while fighting and while expecting that they may very well be killed. Even then of course it isn't easy to take at times. But just because there are many doesn't mean I am any less concerned with any one individual loss of this kind—especially when

it concerns a friend. One doesn't get hardened to this sort of thing though perhaps you do keep it to yourself more after a while.

Your letter was very full darlingest.... But let me stick my oar into one thing right away. You speak of the League of Women Voters and an offer of a directorship. I'll admit right from the start that there would undoubtedly be some very fine contacts. However! I would kind of like you to take a bit of a rest for a few months. You will probably be deluged with jobs when your Junior League work is over. You will have your pick of many jobs. And they will always be coming back to you to serve on one committee or other. Why not just turn everything down for a couple of months—maybe until fall, and then be rather choosy in what you decide upon—especially if the Women Voters job might wait until that time.

April 15, 1944 I note further that Lee has the same artistic temperament or leaning that Art had a few years ago. Personally, tho, I think it very considerate of her to paint her dress rather than the car. Clothes can be cleaned. Cars can too but as I remember it is tough work and the finish on the car is never quite as good again....

Note: Fred is referring to the famous family story, when Arthur decided it would be fun to paint the family car. He found a bucket of bright red and set to work, getting an entire fender done before Pat called him from the garage and out he came, brush of red paint dangling from his hand.

April 17, 1944 I received yesterday an envelope containing a very sweet picture of Arthur and Lee. One of the very best of both of them that I have seen for some time. And they both look so happy, and Lee looks just mischievous enough to go and paint yellow coats red. In other words, I was very pleased to get it...

April 18, 1944 Last night...I went to town with the idea of completely curing myself of my desires to crash dishes. But I was pretty much out of luck as far as making something of it. I dropped over to Joan's for the fifth consecutive unsuccessful time. She was out. So was everyone else that I could think of. So much of the evening was spent at the Red Cross Club which is growing fast into my favorite haunt. At least that is what one would gather from the way I have been using it. Actually, it is very nice and I cannot imagine what we did without it before. No women guests are allowed except when they have one of their occasional dances, but it is centrally located and a good meeting place.

And you nearly always will find at least one officer present whom you know especially in the evenings. And it is new and clean. I suppose many of the pubs are clean too, but with the tobacco smoke, the blackout, the weak English lights and the pre-war paint jobs they don't give a very spick and span appearance.

Beginning today, I am starting on a new health program. It includes (don't laugh) cutting down on cigarettes and coffee, eight hours of sleep, an hour's outdoor exercise every day. Worked it out with Beekman Pool. The schedule is going to be somewhat stiffened at the end of the first ten days. I need something of this sort as I am not in any too good shape right now. It's funny. I always thought that in the army one grew practically muscle-bound. That isn't the case with us paragraph troops. As a matter of fact, the opportunities in civilian life were very much more apparent even in winter, for exercise. I suppose it is very different for the infantry and it is office stuff from breakfast to supper and then after that on so many occasions, in air tight, artificially lighted rooms. One has really to go out of one's way to get in exercise and it is easy (all too easy) to slip. Which I have done. However, I intend to correct all that now. Again I ask you not to laugh—at least don't laugh out loud.

Note: Beekman Pool, a national squash star in his youth, became an exploration enthusiast after the war—his travels taking him to polar regions routinely as cold as the skies the forts flew through. Beekman Pool lived to his 94th year.

April 19, 1944 My darlingest, Nothing new since I last wrote during the day time—except perhaps what you would read in every paper and in spite of that, which I can't write about at all.

Note: On April 19th the Group bombed the aircraft component works at Bettenhausen in a raid to Kassel. The works produced parts for FW 190s. The raid followed, by a few hours, one on the same spot by the RAF—notable, the 423rd Combat Diary observes, because it represented “the greatest force of RAF bombers ever dispatched against German targets.” There was flak, which inflicted damage, but neither the Group nor the squadron lost any planes.

I might tho report on my new health program which has been in existence all of 28 hours. I've got in my exercise, which consisted of shagging flies and sitting up exercises yesterday and a run around the field and more exercises this afternoon after work. 8 hours of sleep

was had last night. And today I had 2 cups of coffee for breakfast and one for lunch. Six cups today with one more to come just as I get into bed....

April 20, 1944 Bob Sibley leaves today.... So we are saying farewell and discussing whom we will ask to move in to our quarters in his place. No decision yet though we are seriously considering Doc Stutznizen—the dentist. I don't know the Doc as well as the others do... he is a nice jolly roly-poly sort and is always either laughing or looking like a scared rabbit with glasses on. But thoroughly nice—for a dentist....

April 22, 1944 Mary Corfield called me last night and said that there was to be some sort of money-raising ball in town next Friday. She was making up a party of six and wondered if I would go along with Joan Halliwell. I told her I would be glad to go with the usual proviso that at the last moment I might not be able to show up. So, that is put on my schedule. As a matter of fact, that is all that shows on the schedule right now....

April 22, 1944 My darlingest, This is your birthday. Thank God for this day, which some years ago brought you into this world, eventually to become my wife—my life. Whatever would have happened to me if it had not been for April 22nd. I shudder to even think of the possibility. Whatever would I have done all these glorious last 16 years without you to keep me going and in line and then giving me your very precious love. It would have been as bleak and empty, more bleak and empty, in fact, as these past twenty months. More empty because now, tho far away, I can at least think of you and write to you and worship you, and if it hadn't been for April 22, I wouldn't even have that. And besides, now I can look forward to many long years when we will be together again united in every way. Perhaps that day will come very soon. Perhaps longer than I care to think about at the present. I don't know and neither does anyone else. But it will come just as sure as anything and that thought is a very wonderful one.

I often have thought and gone over in minute detail some of our loveliest moments – like our visit to the Van Burens in New York, remember? I can remember every precious moment of those times. And then I like to think and dream over times which will come. Times equally exciting and thrilling, equally tender and passionate.

Don't ever think for a moment, my precious, that such times will not come again. We will find our swimming holes at Keanai again. I

will take you down to the pool when no one is around and we will again alternately swim and make love.

And with the thoughts of what has already happened and what will come to pass, is it any wonder that, as I said, I thank God for this day which brought you into the world, eventually to be given to me as my everything. Your devotedest, Freddie

Note: The 306th's good April luck ran out on their raid to Oberpfaffenhofen on the 24th, when 10 planes of the 21 which took off from Thurleigh didn't return. This was no longer 1943, however. On the very next day, 21 planes were put up for a raid on the German fighter training school at Nancy/Essay.

April 25, 1944 My Darlingest, I guess one can't have all the luck all the time. Such things would seem to even up after a period of time and yesterday was our time to get it in the neck. You will be interested, no doubt, in hearing that Shube was one of the unlucky ones. From what we could gather on asking questions he has a pretty good chance of being O.K., but I imagine I won't see him for the duration. I certainly hope, for his wife and family's sake, that he is where I expect him to be. Too bad that in all the hurry and excitement it is impossible to get any too accurate information in such cases. I will let you know in the event that I hear anything further. I shall also write in a couple of days to Mrs. Owen. Perhaps, in the meantime I shall be able to get some more encouraging dope.



By the time you get this letter, your tour of duty as President of the Junior League will about be over. I want to congratulate you, my darling, on the very grand job that you have done. You have been most progressive and have given the League something really worthwhile to do and to carry on with after you leave. I am most proud of what you have accomplished. But that isn't the point I want to get across right now. Rather I want to stick my oar in again (probably where it doesn't belong) and urge you once more to take it easy for the summer at least before jumping into anything new....You know much better than I do what you have been doing, whether a rest would do you any good physically or mentally....I am not requesting that you rest, in other words. I am asking you to consider the advisability of a bit of a vacation.

Not having been able to get to town for over a week and with the outlook pretty dim for the future, I have asked Mary Corfield to come out here for lunch today. This is my one way to get in "social life." We will have to cut the visit pretty short though, because I will have to start asking questions very quickly after a hurried lunch....

Note: Fred's close friend, Shubel J. Owen, rode along as an observer for Oberpfaffenhofen—his second such mission. Shube's plane was among the 10 shot down. Fred is hoping Shube was able to parachute out, in which case he would have a good chance of surviving as a prisoner of war. Are Fred's shock and anxiety for Shube manifesting themselves in his renewed suggestion to Pat that she take a vacation from her volunteer work? If so, he is projecting: it is Fred, of course, who is the one in need of a rest. And not the fleeting escape offered by a half-day's bicycle ride in the country. The impulse to reach out and ask Mary out to the base is telling as well. In his account to Pat, Fred downplays the urgency of his need to share the devastating news with a sympathetic woman who knew Shube.

Shube had been flying in a fortress piloted by Lt. William Tarr. If the Midwesterner in him held to the superstition that lightning generally avoids striking twice in the same spot, he may have thought Tarr a good choice of pilot to ride along with. In early April, Tarr's plane had been ravaged by enemy fighters who charged it straight on, killing the navigator and bombardier. On that occasion, Tarr flew his severely damaged plane—the nose had been shot away—on to the bomb site and then back to England, his crew jettisoning equipment as they steadily lost altitude over the Channel. For his gallant flying on

the 11th, Tarr was awarded the Silver Star. Little wonder Shube chose to fly with Tarr.

Russell Strong describes events in Tarr's plane on the Oberpfaffenhofen raid. "Tarr was leading the high squadron of a composite group on this mission. This six plane unit lost four of its aircraft. During the intense fighter attack Tarr's plane was hit in a wing tip and in the nose.... Tarr sensed that many things were wrong and quickly ordered his crew to bail out. Within a minute after they left, the plane exploded.... Most of the enlisted men were veterans of Tarr's previous episodes.... Capt. Shubel J. Owen, an intelligence officer, ...gained more combat experience than he had bargained for." (Strong, pp 236-7)

It is possible that Tarr's plane was downed by a famous Luftwaffe ace, Hauptman Hermann Staiger. Flying a Bf 109 armed with 30mm MK cannon, Staiger achieved the stunning feat of shooting down 5 American planes on April 24th. Staiger would survive in his dangerous profession, retiring at the war's end with a score of 26 four engine planes.

April 26, 1944 And in the mail... pictures of all three children. And very lovely pictures they were, too. I agree that the one of Isabel is one of my favorite Pin-ups. As a matter of fact, I have decided that my next two charcoals are going to be a copy of that one plus one of you that I got a month ago. I shall also eventually do one of Lee and Arthur.

Your letter was written in the middle of a very busy day. What with Isabel's play. Tuesday Club, Garden Club, and then the Junior League meeting in the evening. Again I am pleased with Isabel. She is always pleasing me, isn't she—everything I hear about her pleases me. But I was glad to hear she took a part in the play that must have been so foreign to her natural being and yet have been able to lose herself in the part and do such a good job of it. As a matter of fact, being able to do that kind of acting must be much more fun than even being the young heroine.

.... Nothing has happened to me, darlingest. I am playing a bit of volleyball in the evenings after supper, when I get a chance. It's a good game in that it gives you quite a bit of exercise in many different kinds of muscles (if any) and also makes one think and act quickly. All of which is good stuff...



April 28, 1944 I now have plans for social life. The big day is to be this coming Tuesday. Plans are somewhat nebulous at present but it appears that Joan Halliwell and her husband used to have periodic parties where they met for dinner and in the evening played poker, bridge, roulette etc. They naturally haven't been able to get a gang together in the past five years. Well, the idea for next Tuesday is to come as close as possible to those parties....

April 30, 1944 Did I tell you that I have done my second "pin-up"? It is a copy of the professional photo of Isabel and I really think I did a very good job of it. At least the boys who have seen it say so. She is really a glamour girl, no less. I guess I have already told you, I intend to take her on a night-club party or something of the sort when I get home. Of course, after our own honeymoon.

April 30, 1944 I was terribly sorry to hear that Dad lost his wrist watch. I know what that has meant to him. It was a most dependable watch and he never had much confidence in any other. I was glad you were able to get him another good one for his birthday.

My own watch that I bought before leaving has been reasonably good. I often think that in a week's time it has gained between ten and fifteen seconds. It has never been more than a minute off since I got it.

It is a wonderful feeling to know that you are on time. I will save this watch and then, some time in the future, I shall give it to Arthur.

April 30, 1944 Another thing I wrote about, dearest, was a matter of a pen, this one that I have is all shot. I filled it to start this letter and it got thru a page and a half as you can see. I've tried every way I can think of to fix it and I have had it looked at by others who know more about pens than I do. But it is no use. What I would like is a good pen. One of those that used to sell for \$7.50-10.00. A Parker or a Sheaffer and Everready or a Waterman. So—if you can call up one of the stores like Higbees, Halles, Burrows etc. and have them send me one, I would greatly appreciate it. Then if you tell me how much it was, I will send you a money order. It is absolutely impossible to get any pen over here except a 25 cent one that is almost worthless. I now use this by dipping it, but can't always be taking ink with me. And all interrogations have to be in ink because they are permanent records. And it isn't convenient to go dashing about with an ink bottle in your hand all the time. You always wonder what to do with it when you should be saluting....

May 1, 1944 My dearest, The problem is to see how much I get into this letter in an hour – if I have an hour. We shall see.

This is Monday and it has been a beautiful day – a grand way to start off the month which brings the flowers and other things to life – including love in young men's hearts, as well as those who are thirty-eight and a half years old. I have spent it, not as I should but rather as I wanted to. I was busy working this morning (except for about ten minutes when I slipped in a very short V letter to you). Then this afternoon I took off. I did a bit of sleeping. I did some standard exercises. I threw a ball around for an hour or so. And then I came in and listened to the radio. A nice lazy sort of afternoon. Actually, I was not gold-bricking. For tonight, I am on duty and I expect to be up all but a very few hours. So this afternoon was in a manner of speaking getting ready for the coming ordeal. Right now I am waiting for my friends to return. I have had a glass of scotch and a nice supper and I feel that all is well with the world – especially as I expect to see all my friends. I hope I am not disappointed. I have been before.

Plans for tomorrow night are materializing. Five of us are going from camp. Ed Murtha, from this office, Paul Bailey (assistant adjutant of the field), the officer in charge of the "B" mess hall and one other who I don't know. Aside from Joan Halliwell and Mary Corfield, I don't know what other women there will be. The party is to be about twelve

in all. I have already acquired for Joan a couple of tins of Hawaiian Pineapple (Maui Pines Vitagold) which came in the other day. I have also a line on a bottle of gin which will cost me three pounds-ten, or about \$14.00. It's a good thing I don't buy gin every week. But since that is the first bottle I have bought since coming here, the price doesn't really matter so much. We officers will take the usual liberty-run trucks in at six-thirty, getting to town about seven. We will get a taxi to take us back to camp – leaving there about midnight. Otherwise, in order to catch the bus, we would have to leave the party promptly at ten-thirty, which you must know is just too early. Roulette is the order of the day. There will not be cards as the party won't be big enough to split up. We start with supper after drinks. That is the reason for my pineapple donation.

I haven't told you much about Joan H. I can't tell you too much because I don't know her too well. But Mary speaks very highly of her. They went through school together. She is the mother of three, though she is still under thirty. The children are all a good deal younger than ours, the eldest begin somewhere between five and seven, I should say. The husband is a commando and a Captain. And there you have just about the whole story as far as I know. Except that she is about as skinny as Betty Nethercet (I'll be D---ned if I'll take the time out to try to think how that is spelled). She also is a blond, but, as I said, her husband is a commando!!

May 2, 1944 A letter just received from Dad says it was never intended to send Arth away to school at least for a couple of years. I am rather glad of that. What made me think that next year might have been considered, is that he mentioned it so soon after Weeze had moved into Brightwood and, of course her, Woods and Arthur, too have been a couple of years at school in the east. Personally, I think that was a wise move on her part, but each case should always be considered on its own facts. I'd rather have Arthur wait. And I am therefore glad that you thought the same thing. Dad also suggested that Arthur should, when the time comes, work more on the scientific side than we did. I think that probably true. On the other hand, there is time. Also, it might be better to wait. There are so many questions that first must be answered. Among others—does or will Arthur have any interest or inclination or ability in things scientific. Well, those things can wait for awhile, can't they?

Did I tell you, darlingest, that I have finished the charcoal of Isabel. It is pretty good too. I've got it pinned up beside my bed.

.... I see my space is short, so I will sign off. A is still waiting for a letter. I agree with him that you owe him one, so, you see, this is two to one. He and I both send our very heartfelt love to our two girlfriends. We also both send thousands of kisses, Your most devoted, Freddie (*V-mail, letter 437*)

May 6, 1944 MY DARLINGEST, THE INGENIOUSNESS OF AMERICANS AND IN PARTICULAR, YOUR HUSBAND, IS ASTOUNDING. I HAVE HAD A TYPEWRITER THAT IN MANY RESPECTS WAS O.K., BUT IN MANY WAS NOT SO HOT. IT NEEDED A NEW RIBBON FOR ONE THING AND FOR ANOTHER, THE CAPITAL WOULD NOT STICK DOWN. SO ONE EVENING, I WAS LOOKING THROUGH MY LOCKER TRUNK FOR SOMETHING ELSE AND WAY DOWN IN A CORNER, I CAME ACROSS A TYPEWRITER RIBBON. OF COURSE YOU WILL SAY I WAS INGENIOUS NO LESS, BUT YOU HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING YET. LAST NIGHT, ONE OF THE OTHER OFFICERS DECIDED TO COME BACK HERE TO WRITE SOME LETTERS AND I, IN MY INGENIOUS WAY, PERSUADED HIM TO TRY THIS TYPEWRITER. SURE ENOUGH, THIS MORNING WHEN I CAME TO WORK HE HAD FIGURED OUT A WAY WITH A MATCH AND A RUBBER BAND TO KEEP THE CAPS DOWN. SO NOW YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO READ WHAT I HAVE TO SAY. SO YOU SEE WHY I CONSIDER MYSELF SO INGENIOUS. [Vmail – letter 441 – and the only Vmail in upper case which is, in fact, much easier to read.]

May 11, 1944 Darling Isabel, I am very glad to hear that you are doing hospital work, and especially that you were the chairman of the Junior Auxiliaries. For not only are you doing a real bit of good and helping the war effort along, but being chairman must teach you responsibility and leadership. Two qualities which, if acquired, will stand you in good stead the rest of your life. Every one of us owes something to his or her community and to the country. Until recently, all too few of us realized that. And that put the burden of doing community work on those few, like Mommy, Grandmother Dodge, Grandmother and Grandfather Baldwin. So that these good people had to do a great deal more than their share. They, you see, were some of the few who realized that one has to give of ones time and effort and thought as well as ones money in order to fulfill that obligation to the public. And that meant that they were busier than they should have been. Mommy is still doing a great deal more than her share. That is all right. I am glad that she is doing it. But in a properly organized society every one should do a little something. In peacetime as well as

in war. I want you always to give a little thought and effort to the good of the public....

May 12, 1944 My very darlingest, I have just this minute received the letter which you wrote to me on the first of May. May day. What a grand day to be thinking about the garden and to write to me about it. I could picture you and the children out there gathering up the bundles of clippings from the hedge. I can imagine myself doing the cutting for you....

May 12, 1944 My darlingest, Really it is bed time. The rest of my roommates are already undressing, getting ready for the sack, and I shall join them as soon as I finish this note. I have been working until this moment (a little after 10:30) and may have to work again before the night is over. But nevertheless, I do want to figuratively bring you into my bed for a bit of a cuddle before turning in. I want to kiss you and hold you tight to me for a while. Without too much on. So that I can...be there with you close up to me at my side and forget for awhile all the cares of the world.

So darling, cuddle up even closer. And let me kiss your mouth and your ears and eyes and nose and then your mouth again. All nice and gently and a bit sleepily. Yes, that is ever so nice. That is the way I like to go to sleep, my precious. So now that we have kissed and you have given me for a time, at least, peace and relaxation, I wish you sweet – the sweetest – of dreams. So good night, my precious own wife. Your devotedest, Freddie

May 13, 1944 I received a letter from Mother, dated Mar. 1. She says people at home are quite intense now, waiting for things to happen. I can remember last year at this time. We were all speculating at that time on the question of which month—in 1943—we would cross the Channel. We were getting a bit panicky then because we realized there were not men and supplies then to do the job and the time was getting close. We used to say that July was absolutely the last month. How funny it all seems now, to look back on those days. What ignoramuses we all were. As a matter of fact, you would be surprised at the number of boys who, two years ago, thought we might be home for Christmas of 1942.

May 13, 1944 I found I could make it to town for the afternoon and evening so I jumped on my bike and pedaled as fast as I could to get away from here. When I got there I stopped in at the Corfields but

found that Mary, who had been working nights, was getting in some sleep. So I went on to Joan Halliwell's house. And played with her two oldest kids until it was time for put them to bed. Then gave her youngest his bottle. (I haven't lost the knack of it.) Then a drink and back for supper of bacon, eggs, chips and tea. Out here again at 10:30 as I didn't have any lights and had to make it before dark....

May 15, 1944 And now, a touch more about yesterday. By noon, proposed plans for the day were suddenly brushed aside and the boss suggested that I take the afternoon off. So I hopped on my bike after a quick wash and a change of blouses and high-tailed it for town – assisted no end by a strong tailwind. I called at the Corfield home and found Mrs. Corfield just leaving for a game of bridge. And she said that Mary (who works at night, four days on and four days off) was getting in a nap. So I went on to Joan Halliwell's house. She was in with her three children, aged about five and a half, three, and my guess is eight months or so for the youngest.

So aside from tea, I played with the kids showing them how the gentlemen and ladies and farmers ride and such. I tried rather unsuccessfully to fix some of their toys. But to do me justice, the reason for my failure was lost parts more than any particular lack of skill on my part. At tea, Christopher and little Mary partook of a couple of Florida Oranges that I had brought with me much to their and their mother's delight. Then while Joan was getting them ready for bed, I went to work on the youngest, giving him his bottle of milk. Quite professionally, too, I assure you. Right from the time I cooled the bottle in the tap, tested it on my wrist, until having taken the whole bottle like a lamb, I stuck him up on my shoulder and let him regurgitate. He was then changed (naturally) and put to bed. We stayed around for a while waiting for the kids to get to sleep, and here again I showed Joan evidence of my consummate skill in such matters. For when, after about three-quarters of an hour of calling up the stairs and telling the kids to shut up (or the English equivalent thereof), I decided that she had had her chance. So I went up the stairs, got them both to lie down again, and exercising some of my innate charm, I proceeded to persuade them both that unless they went right to sleep, I might not be welcome in the future. From that time on, not a sound was heard. –So Joanie and I went over to the local and had a couple of "bitters" (beer to you) and back once more to a supper of English bacon (a cross between Canadian bacon and our own), a fried egg each, chips, and tea. This was about nine o'clock. I left between ten and ten-thirty because I had to get back to camp before dark, not having taken any bike lights

with me. In the meantime, I learned a bit more about Joan. it is all pretty general, and I will have to get some more details later. But among other things, she has always been interested in dresses. She is also a bit of an artist and has put that to good work. She has done most everything that there is to be done in the dress business except sell them. She has designed for some of the leading London shops and used to be asked for stuff for Vogue. She has also designed costumes for stage shows. She has been a model for clothes as well, and has made quite a few on her own account. She is quite a linguist, speaking about four languages which she said was a great help to her both when she was modeling and designing. She went to a finishing school in Switzerland where she really learned French and German – though she had had several years before at school in England. Also, her blood type is OW which is very strange, but I don't suppose has anything whatsoever to do with dress designing.

Today is quiet and cold. What Jerry O'Sullivan used to call a "gray day". Back into my winter overcoat and warm gloves. I think I'll put any thought of swimming out of my head for at least another month.

So that is about all there is to tell at present, my precious. I am very much in love with you, my very own. I think of you always. I too want you. Perhaps I will be with you before the flowers you have planted are picked. Who knows? Your devotedest, Freddie

May 17, 1944 About Shube. It was his second trip. I personally think he was silly to pick that trip because in his position he should have been able to get all he would want on many other easier ones. However, his plane left the formation under full control which is a good sign. Gives the boys plenty of time to bail. At first we were sweating him out in hopes he might land safely in the mountainous neutral country but tho we heard from others—nothing from Shube or his crew. Now it is just a case of waiting. By the way, he went down very near the place where you got sick on our honeymoon. That is about all there is to tell, that I haven't told you already. As I said, I have written to Janet Owen twice and will continue to write her until one of us hears something more....

May 17, 1944 I have just had a telephone call which is going to take me for a quick trip to town. Van Norman plans to pick up a lady correspondent at the station.... And I want to get some more charcoals and some fixatives so that I can make some pretty pictures. As a matter of fact, I have been commissioned to do the wives of my various

roommates. I'm a bit sorry that I can only work with pictures and not from life because working from pictures is most definitely not as good practice as the other. On the other hand, there are a few things that one can pick up from copying pictures and so I am sticking at it.

May 18, 1944 My Darlingest, The start of another gray day. It would have been completely gray if not for your grand letter which I got yesterday and which I have been reading and rereading. The old S-2 department is loaded down with one class after another and often two at a time. Lucky me, though. Being executive officer of the section and being in my usual lazy mood, I have unloaded all classes on others in the section. (Actually, so that you won't get too poor an impression of me, though, there are a few things that I want done around here and I want to be free to supervise.)

I was most interested in at least the start of your Sunday. Before the English fog set in, Arthur was cutting the grass, Isabel raking up the leavings. Arth has developed in the past two years. I suspect it is a bit heavy work—especially when the grass is a bit wet, but it is very good for him to help out that way and he must be much stronger that when I left. It would be a good thing for him to take over the cutting of the lawn this summer. Especially later on when there is no school and when the dry days of June and July make the grass lighter than it is in the springtime. The whole job—cutting the lawn and raking up—is really quite something. I remember when we went away and had Charles Weeks do it, I came to the conclusion that the whole thing was more than I should have asked for. I don't know if or what you are paying the kids for doing that work. I think it is a good idea to let them earn money. And at a rate high enough to make them realize that earning money is worthwhile to them. I paid Charles a dollar for cutting and raking all the grass. I think he was underpaid. For a good job like he did it is worth more. Of course there is a difference in a good and a sloppy job. But if the kids do a good job of it and make the lawn look real nice when they are through, I should think that about a dollar and a half split between them would be better. It is my experience that cutting and raking are about equally tough. I should think that if Arth would help Isabel carry off the cut grass that she had raked then, they should just split the money between them.

Well, that of course is up to you entirely. Just giving you my ideas based on having cut it myself and having considered the matter of paying Charles. But do as you see fit. Also, I have no idea of what war time wages are as far as one's children are concerned.

All is well with me, my precious, and I suspect that it shall continue to be that way until I see you again. I still see no need of my doing what Shube tried to do and until I see a real need for that I shall certainly not do it. I have no desire at all to act foolishly in the matter. I know I did right in going when I did. And if I hadn't done it then I could do it now. But having been I've got all I want out of it. So don't worry at all about me.

Must stop now and get back to work. All my devotedest love to you my precious one, Your devotedest, Freddie.

May 19, 1944 ... Last night, I went to town. As usual, I went the rounds of houses of those that I know. I found that Mary Corfield had a man by the name of Something-or-Other under her wing and that Joan had dropped in. So the four of us joined up with supper at the Swan and then to the County Theater. There we saw a stock company, or what to a certain extent corresponds to a stock company, presented Noel Coward's *Blythe Spirit*. Much the best show I have seen at this theater to date. Pretty well cast, as a matter of fact, considering the size and importance of this town. Probably nowhere near as good as when you saw it with the author himself in the leading role....

May 20, 1944 Yesterday, while we were at our busiest, Bob Hogg had a friend arrive on the post. A British friend, as a matter of fact. An M.P. (Member of Parliament—not Military Police). He was here to conduct a discussion at our enlisted men's Red Cross. Being at our busiest at the moment, I didn't have a chance to really talk to him or to listen to his affair at the Red Cross. But I finished up work with Al Weld at about ten o'clock and then went down to the "B" Mess for a drink before bedtime. And I was just ordering my drink when Bob and his friend showed up. Now all of this leads to a true story of something that recently happened in the House of Commons within the past week and which I think is worth passing on to you.

It seems as though there has been a shortage recently in clothing provided for the WRNS (pronounced wrens and which is the English equivalent of Waves). A lady member, during the question period, asked if this shortage could not be remedied. In answering she was told that the shortage was recognized, was most unfortunate, but that the government was at the time having a hard time providing clothing for the men on the Royal Navy itself. That these men were given a priority and that the wrens would just have to wait. So the lady-member said in a loud and accusing voice, "Does the right-honorable

gentleman mean to say that these girls must wait without clothing until the entire Navy is satisfied?"

Whether or not it brought down the house I don't know.

May 21, 1944 By the way, I think I would have surprised you last night. My bike was not working at all well. And what your little hubby did, all by himself, was to take it all apart, adjust the brakes, straighten out some roller bearings which were locked in the place where American bikes have coaster brakes and then put it all together again without a slip or mistake in the entire operation. It was a really beautiful job, believe it or not, and the bike now runs like new—or pretty new, anyway....

May 25, 1944 My darlingest, For the balance of the afternoon I expect a comparatively easy time of it, and for that reason, I should be able to give you something slightly better than my recent hurried efforts.

Last night, as I said this morning, I went to town with nothing particularly in mind except that I wanted to get away. When I got there, I soon heard that Joan Halliwell's little five-year-old boy, Christopher, had a bad ear and that Joan was quite worried about him. So I went out there with no hesitation at all, tho it is a full mile walk out there and another mile back. (See how I have changed for the better?) When I got there, I found the reports pretty much true. The boy had had a pretty high temperature (103-4) and an earache for a couple of days, and the Doc had finally shown up yesterday morning. It was a little old Czech woman doc, and Joan could hardly understand her. Joan helped by giving chloroform while the Doc lanced the ear and stuffed in the dressings. Since then she has been giving him periodic doses of M B tablets. He had been quite dopey until about the time when I arrived and then cried for his first food in a couple of days. So we gave him some milk and chips. Then went down to the living room where I reminisced about the time you went to Florida and left me with easy kids. Then a couple of games of "memory" and I got the 10:15 bus back to camp.....

June 2, 1944 My Sweet, I have an idea that if I am to get in a letter to you before evening anyway and perhaps before tomorrow, I better get cracking....

My God, I already have had one interruption. What do they think I am here for. To fight a war or something like that?

There were all kinds of rumors going around the mess hall this A.M. It all started when we were served French toast for breakfast. They must be getting us ready for something.

Note: Surely, Fred is signaling Pat his fore-knowledge of D-Day plans here.

I think I have told you in yesterday's V-letter, that I have heard from Janet Owen. She is taking the situation in splendid fashion. Fortunately she was able to steel herself so that the children were not hit in the face too badly. There is no more news of Shube either at this end or hers. My guess is that there will not be any such news until the end of this month anyway and probably not until the middle or end of July. That is a long, long wait, but that is the way it generally is. By the way, did I ever give you her address. It is 3021 South Irving Street, Minneapolis. In her letter she had some questions to ask and I endeavored to give her what I think is the right answer to each of them. Her chin is up, but I imagine her insides are in a perpetual whirl. I wrote on the 1st, by the way.

June 4, 1944 I was listening to the radio last night. I wonder if you were. Tuned in to the CBS. Heard Ed Morrow. Do you remember him? I have met him, by the way. Quite a guy. Rather smooth. Apparently from what he said, he was broadcasting from a plane specially equipped with special mikes during what we call a milk run. He mentioned being with the Eager-Beaver squadron and said among other things that "He thought he had seen formation flying before". That as a matter of fact is one of the things we have prided ourselves on and we are firmly of the belief that we have saved the lives of many, many boys by always insisting on that little matter. As a matter of fact, that is where you really see discipline in the air corps. Despite all that is said on the subject, the air corps has remarkable discipline. But it shows up in different ways than with troops in training and other ground forces. But that is not the point that I started to make. You might be interested in hearing Ed Morrow or whoever else the CBS might have in mind do some of the broadcasting. Some of it should be interesting. Especially as it is a real thing and not a story cooked up afterwards....



June 6, 1944 My darlingest, What a day this has just about to have been. (Peculiar wording, perhaps, but the reason for that is that it doesn't seem to have been through yet as far as we are concerned.) I have no doubt but that you have either been listening to the radio, read the paper, or heard someone mention the rumor about landings or something of the sort. Naturally, I won't discuss the truth or falsity of those rumors. All that I will say is that the morale on this station, for one reason or another, has been boosted during the past twenty-four hours by just about one thousand six hundred and seventy seven percent. I suspect the same is true of those at home, who probably all went to church when the notorious false reports came over the teletype, the other day and probably went to church again this morning. Anyway, I feel better than I have in such a long time, that it is not funny. I have just three hours sleep in the past forty-eight, but that makes no difference. I must admit that I didn't expect to be able to get in a letter to you, my precious, but with it all I find I can.

Personally, I think, if you can make anything out of that first paragraph you are very remarkable indeed. But what I have been trying to say, and maybe have passed on to you is my feeling of utter elation at what has gone on during the past twenty-four hours. I suspect most of you at home feel the same way as you do. Or mean, as

I do. It is tremendous. Absolutely tremendous. Like infinity, it is something that just can't be imagined. For the first time in a long, long while, I am really glad to hear and be a part of what is going on. I am glad, now, that I didn't quit, like some others that I know, and give in before the big day came rolling by. How I would like to tell you of all that I do know and of what we ourselves are doing. On the other hand, you probably are getting at home just as good a picture of the overall business as we are and probably a better one at that because it is natural that we think of things mostly from our own individual standpoint—our own individual part in the whole affair.

Well, it is a great day. I'd like to write reams. I can't though because, strangely enough, I am rather busy. As a matter of fact, I've got something unexpected that has just come up right at this moment, so I will have to stop. I haven't had a moment during the past two days to get any new envelopes. I shall buy some tomorrow and will mail this then, with the letter I scratched off yesterday.

I love you most intensely darlingest. I suppose you realize that what has happened today, brings us so very much closer together, that it isn't funny. It is just plain wonderful. So many things are at last brought within sight. Thousands upon thousands of kisses. Your devotedest, Freddie

Note: On D-Day, the 306th crews flew 3 separate missions—returning for more bombs and fuel between each.

June 7, 1944 [*D-Day plus 1*] My Darlingest, I have finally got a real good sleep. From two-thirty this morning right through until noon today and so once more I feel full of beans, as they say over in this neck of the woods. Time now I have been taking advantage of the breathing spell to work on my bike. Fixed a leaky valve and patched up two holes in the tube and now at long last I have a usable bike at my disposal. A great relief, I can assure you.

The happenings of the past two days have been wonderful for the morale of people on this station. And I think quite understandably so. The boys have been pretty darn good it seems to me. I mean even before yesterday. To explain, we had been here about two years, as you know. We have been, especially at first, subjected to a lot of criticism from those who don't know enough about what is going on. As a matter of fact, as far as English papers were concerned, we weren't in the war at all until we raided Berlin. And even then it was a case of "R.A.F. was out last night" and of "Allied Planes Raid Germany in Daylight." Of course it is natural for British papers to talk up what the

English are doing and I suppose American papers make little reference to what the English are doing. But here all we see is English papers. And even when you know the reason—after two years of it, it gets on many people’s nerves. It is all really silly but we like to be recognized for what one does, and to be told by someone, somewhere along the line that he has done a good job. Well, that was one thing. Another was that people expected us to win the war all by ourselves. And many of us, I think, got a bit tired of that burden especially when they felt it was all wishful thinking that this was possible. We all knew that all the bombing we could do would make land operations easier and more certain of success, but I think very few ever thought we could actually force the Germans to unconditional surrender by bombing from this country alone. A third factor was that we had waited for so long for what has come about. Lots expected it to happen at the time of the landings in Africa in November of ’42. Perhaps optimistic but there were signs then that big things were about to happen. Since that time we have periodically expected the events of the last two days. Last April and May (1943) we were very expectant – especially with the clamor raised in Russia. Undoubtedly, those that felt at that time that big things were possible were somewhat crazy, but that didn’t lessen the disappointment. What I am trying to drive at is that there have been many, many things which tend after a period of time to dampen one’s ardor and it has been tough to keep going with any great enthusiasm. And yet the boys have never let up. They have kept a remarkable rightness of purpose through all those two years. They have taken many socks on the chin, many disappointments and taken them all in stride. That is what I mean by “the boys have been pretty darn good.” And that, poorly explained, is why the latest “events” have had such a tremendous effect around here. We feel very much as the British must have felt when America declared war. We are no longer alone. We have some one at our shoulder. It is so much easier to have some one else hold your hand when you go exploring into the dark woods at night. That is how we feel now....

Note: Fred was on target in his feeling that the Eighth Air Force’s effectiveness was a matter of debate and scrutiny over the course of the long run-up to June 1944. Casualties during the two years Fred served began as intolerably high and by the time of the Normandy landing they were still high. And what impact was daylight bombing having? By spring of 1944, effectiveness against the Luftwaffe, oil fields, and industry had greatly improved, and casualty rates had halved. But Fred, who was responsible for his Squadron’s history,

could see the big picture well and the carnage of the early struggle clearly weighed on him. Ultimately the debate about the effectiveness of the daylight precision bombing campaign of the 8th Air Force has outlived the war and—by now—most of the men who fought it. Fred's testimony to pride in accomplishment experienced by 306th members is broadly corroborated and amplified by his peers over the years since the last B-17 left Thurleigh. The 306 Bomber Group has a Historical Association, a Museum, annual reunions, and years and years of issues of their Group newsletter, "Echoes," in which the many small chapters of their achievement are told and retold.

Historical evaluation of the Eighth Air Force's contribution often makes a distinction between the campaign before the Normandy landing and after. It is worth quoting at full length here from the conclusion of Roger Freeman's book, "The Mighty Eighth: A History of the U.S. 8th Army Air Force" (1970):

"At the end of hostilities the US Strategic Bombing Survey was produced by a large team of specialists with the object of evaluating the work of the strategic bomber: a formidable task in view of the complexity of the subject. Some of the general conclusions published were not universally accepted, but the Survey did underline its finding that air power's overall part in achieving victory in Europe was decisive.

"The Eighth Air Force delivered 75% of its bombs after the Allies invaded the Continent, and it was the cumulative effect of sustained bombardment on such target systems as oil and transportation with its direct and indirect strain on German War economy, that brought the B-17s and B-24s their greatest contribution to victory.

"The effect of the US heavies from the fall of 1942 until the spring of 1944, although often spectacular, was never serious enough to have profound effect. Germany's powers of recuperation were far greater than appreciated, and the small bombs carried by the B-17s and B-24s might destroy a factory building but not the precious machine tools within. Attacks against aircraft factories, even in the intensive period in early 1944, saw only a temporary decline in production. On the other hand, it has been estimated that the dispersal programme instigated by the Germans in 1943 to escape the bombing possibly cost them more lost production than through actual damage to installations. In assessing the part played by the Eighth and other Allied strategic bombing forces, the considerable tying down of personnel and material in defense, both active and passive, must not be overlooked. Such manpower and material might have been

channeled into extra panzer divisions and so turned the scales in the land campaign.

“The chief obstacle to daylight precision bombing was the inconstant weather. Clouds continually hampered and foiled attacks. Tight formations and the performance of the lead bombardier were imperative to accurate bombing, and while precision was difficult, when visibility was hampered by weather conditions, error was inevitable and sometimes frequent. The likelihood was even greater when a formation was under attack, as was illustrated on many occasions. The B-17 and B-24, the vehicles available, were far from ideal for the task in which employed, yet in circumstances they were utilized with undeniable zeal and often with remarkable effect.

“Probably the greatest single contribution of the Eighth Air Force to victory in Europe was the star part its fighters played in attaining combat superiority in continental air space. Originally furnished for bomber protection, the US fighters came to be a potent offensive weapon. Fighter and bomber operations were complimentary, the bombers becoming important as bait to draw the Luftwaffe to battle, apart from their primary function....

“The record of the Luftwaffe against the Eighth Air Force is an inconsistent one. Like the British, the Germans were cautious in the use of bombers by day through experience in the Battle of Britain and other campaigns. When the B-17 formations appeared over the French coast in the fall of 1942, the Luftwaffe did not foresee their activity developing into a serious threat despite difficulties of interception. Not until the B-17s struck into Germany in 1943 were fighter reinforcements forthcoming and spirited efforts made to evolve means of breaking up the US formations. The Luftwaffe was usually too preoccupied with the bombers to deal with the escort that eventually transpired, even when the P-47s appeared with drop tanks over the very borders of the Reich. The Luftwaffe’s first incredible error was not to undertake determined and regular interception of the US escort in order to force them to jettison their tanks and thus restrict their range. Instead the German fighters continued to pursue the same policy with dire consequences for themselves until, with P-51s giving near continuous escort, they found themselves the hunted and not the hunters.

“A second extraordinary omission on the part of the Luftwaffe was not to press a campaign against the Eighth’s bases or against bomber formations during assembly or prior to landing, in spite of success on the rare occasions when this was tried. British air defense

was good but the congested East Anglian sky was ideal for intrusion with minimal risk....

“In carrying out its mission the Eighth was aided by its location in the UK. Far enough removed from the Pentagon and government administration in the USA, it was able to enjoy a degree of autonomy: it flourished in an environment where many of its requirements could be met locally.

“Despite a certain natural impetuosity and a highly developed national pride, its officers readily acknowledged that in many instances throughout its operational existence—particularly during the early days—lack of know-how and sometimes inferior equipment necessitated the Eighth leaning heavily on the battle-hardened expertise of the RAF and facilities of the UK. Having survived and surmounted the initial troubles, however, it pressed forward with characteristic élan on its elected course. In this the American superiority complex played its part. Untempered by ideas of caution, the men of the Eighth Air Force pursued their concept of strategic bombardment with dogmatic faith. It was this fervor to get things done, to surmount all technical and operational obstacles, that took the Eighth further along the road it chose than ever the British or Germans would have deemed possible. Procrastination and the negative were scorned, and even bloody experiences did not deter the overwhelming intention to succeed. This spirit percolated from the top to the bottom; each isolated combat group set in the English countryside proclaimed itself “the best damn group in the AFF”, and in a sense it probably was. For each was more of an enduring entity than any collection of military flying units have ever been.” (Freeman, pp. 235-236)





June 8, 1944 ...I am well and very busy as you may imagine, but I wouldn't be otherwise. Not in these days. I don't want to miss a second of what is now going on....

June 9, 1944 (Evening) My precious, All ready for bed – and all ready to take you in my arms for a good-night kiss – that sweetest kiss of all. The one that when I am home says “thank you for a lovely evening”, “sweet dreams”, “God be with you”, and “I love you” all at the same time. A kiss that is different from most any other during the day or night. It is not hurried as is often the case of a good morning kiss. It has not been bought with a gift, as you might say. It has not the frenzied ardor of those kisses which often precede it. It has, tho, the memory of passion. It has promise for the future. It is the sweetest kiss of all. And tho my blood often boils with yearning for physical contact with you, my darling, so that at times I can hardly stand it, I think of all the kisses, I miss most that last sweet kiss and cuddle before finally we go off to sleep.

Thinking about that good night kiss surely makes me blue, darlinest, tho I must admit I often get a wistful sort of lump in my throat...So darlinest, let's cuddle up close together in each others'

arms, all naked as we should be, and luxuriate in what I have called and will always call the sweetest of all kisses.

Good night, my precious, sweet, darling – Your devotedest,
Freddie

June 12, 1944 At noon all activity on our part stopped just about as quickly as it so often starts up and Al Bairnsfather told me to take the S-2 recon with my bike to town. I did. Only that meant that I had to leave right at that moment. No time at all for a letter. Only time to throw my shaving stuff, some pajamas and my weekly chocolate rations in my kit-bag and I was off.

Found the Corfields just about to sit down to dinner and I sat with them. They had already given up the idea of the picnic just as I had. We spent the afternoon quietly talking up in the room they still call the nursery and which is the gathering spot for about a third of the people of this fair town. Talked about everything and nothing at the same time. A bit of general talk on the war and what was happening in Normandy. About Bill Corfield who has passed his exams for twin-engineers planes and now goes off for the final touches to his training, of a cousin of the Corfields who was skipper on one of the landing barges, of Ken Halliwell, Joan's husband who is a Commando Captain and one of the first to land. (She has not as yet heard from him.) The rest of the talk (having discussed ships) was of shoes, ceiling wax, cabbages and kings. (I think that is correct.)

At tea time I left the Corfields and went to call on Joan. I had arranged to take her in the evening to an officers' dance at the Red Cross Club in town. I think she is just about ready to really want news from Normandy. Up to now she hasn't expected any, but she is starting to hear of a few people who had heard. But otherwise she was OK mentally and in spirits. Found her children all fit. Christopher, the oldest, had entirely recovered from his ear. I helped her put him to bed and gave the youngest his bottle. Kind of fun doing those things again. Then after supper we went down to the club and to the dance (after a stop for a couple of pints of mild bitter at the local). The dance was horrible. An orchestra for five pieces each of which, I am sure, was playing a different tune. And that wasn't all. None of the musicians could keep time and different ones would slow down or speed up at different times. We stood it for about two full dances and then gave up. I took her home and then after a cup of tea, back to the Red Cross where I got me a bed for the night.

I biked out this morning getting here about nine o'clock and finding things just humming around here. And I have been going at it

hard ever since—it is now six o'clock. Well, that is the story, and there just wasn't a moment that I could find for a letter....

June 12, 1944 (evening) ...Something rather out of the ordinary happened today. A piece of flak hit one of our planes and badly wounded a navigator. He was hit in the stomach and the head. He felt the blood run down his face and saw a hole in his stomach. Before he passed out, all he said was, "Ah hell - in two places -" I think he'll live...

June 16, 1944 Rather exciting news came in today. It means quite a bit and then again it means very little. But a clipping in a Fort Worth (Texas) newspaper, lists Lt. Olin Odom of 1100 West 12th St., Cisco, Texas as being a POW. Lt. Odom was navigator on the same plane that Shube was on. He was riding in the nose of the plane—where Shube most likely was riding. The report is round about but probably accurate enough. No details of course. Just the fact. It doesn't mean anything particular about Shube. It does mean that someone got out all right and someone got out from the same place where Shube was riding. That is all encouraging. I shall write to Janet today without fail. This is the only clue or anything like that that we have to go on to date. I shall also give Janet the name and address of Olin's wife....

Dear Fred -

July 9th, 1944

Your two letters of June 16th and 17th arrived in the same mail. As I read them in sequence, I'll answer them the same way. I was awfully glad that you were able to give Mrs. Odom's name and address and I am about to write to her - we can probably give each other some moral support if nothing else. If I had not already known that Shube was a prisoner, your letter would have been a wonderful "up-lifter" and I think you are a grand person to take time to write to me when I know how very busy you must be! As for your second letter, I was thrilled to learn that you had received my letter telling you that I knew Shube was a prisoner - and my letter took only nine days to reach you, for which I was very glad because I could hardly wait to tell you the news.

Shube is at Stalag Luft III and I have had one card from him which he wrote on May 5th (three days before I had my missing telegram!). That card was about eight lines long, printed in his own printing and on which he said "the worst part of all this is in knowing what you have gone thru. Have satisfactory place to sleep. Treatment good. Sufficient food thanks to the Red Cross. Send food and cigarettes. Will be home after the war." That card took six weeks to reach me but was a most

welcome sight when it did appear; now I am impatiently waiting for another card or letter. It is so unsatisfactory writing to him and not knowing whether or not my letters are reaching him – not knowing anything at all about him, really. But I realize that all this is part of the fortunes of war so I am not too upset – just a bit low sometimes.

As to the prisoner treatment – yes, I did read about the English fliers who were shot but I had the feeling when I read it that they should have “stayed put” and not tried to escape so I didn’t tie that episode up with the usual treatment of men. In a recent Red Cross monthly bulletin which was sent to me, is an article by a flier who was repatriated on the Gripsholm last March. He had spent several months at Stalag Luft III and wrote the entire article about the life the prisoners have there. I really felt pretty good after I had read it and when I think really hard about that article, I am SURE that Shube will be home safe and sound someday. From the way the Russians are going, I wouldn’t be surprised if they open the back door of Stalag Luft III and let all the prisoners out most any day now! – According to the map the Red Cross sent me, Stalag Luft III is southeast of Berlin, not far from the Polish border (as you probably know, of course).

Your offer of help touched me, Fred; I feel that you are a sincere friend. As a matter of fact, I do not need any financial help – Shube’s allotment to me was most generous and that is, of course, continuing to arrive right on the dot each month. I am a thrifty Scotch gal and so I have been able to save some money each month from that allotment. Also, both of the boys have jobs this summer – Huddy has a paper route from which he earns forty dollars a month – and Chick is caddying and working in the drug store occasionally so that he is earning money, too. Both of the boys are simply thrilled with their money-earning and are sure that their Daddy will be very proud of them. Huddy has gone to Scout camp for three weeks and while he is gone, Chick has taken over his paper route, so for that three weeks, Chick will earn the ten dollars weekly stipend. Huddy went out and got his paper route as soon as he heard that Shube was missing – so I think he is a pretty good guy for only thirteen years of age! Chick will be twelve in September but he is a great big boy so his jobs don’t hurt him – he is caddying for a doctor whom he admires immensely and the doctor takes time out to teach him a bit about golf now and then.-----The only real help I need is a good boost now and then for my morale, so if you can think of anything at all to write about, a letter from you once in awhile would do me the most good – but if you don’t write, I’ll know that it is because it is an awful chore to write when there isn’t anything about which to write.

I haven't heard from Pat in way over a year so please remember me to her. I like to think of the good times we all enjoyed together in Holyoke and hope that someday we four can be together again, for a little spree. Thank you again for all that you have done to help me, Fred! Sincerely, Janet Owen

June 18, 1944 (Letter 500) My darlingest, Who would have thought, two years ago, that I would have time to write five hundred letters to you before I came back. I am sure that even in my most pessimistic moods, I didn't consider that as a possibility. But the figures don't lie and I don't believe I have made many mistakes in numbering them. Perhaps there are some that you never got. I know there are some of yours that I have missed - though not many. But, as it says above, this is number 500.....

June 18, 1944 My darlingest, I was very disappointed in my last letter. I had wanted the 500th to be a humdinger. As it should have been. But then I got started on it and almost immediately interrupted and when I got back to it, I had very little time left....



306th Photo. Possibly Fred in 1st row, far right?

June 20, 1944 I went to town after all.... But it was not any too exciting. I left here after six o'clock supper. Met Joan Halliwell at Mary Corfield's house. Mary was on the night shift and so had to leave about

eight. We stayed there, in the “nursery” until it was time for Mary to leave and then wandered off to the “Cricketers”, a local pub, and from there to the Key Club. About 3 whiskeys apiece. A bit of reassuring on my part in connection with first these pilotless planes (which if nothing else are perhaps the most spectacular development of the war), more reassurance as to Ken, her husband, who went to Normandy on the “D” day and hasn’t been heard of since, a bit of idle chit-chat about nothing at all, and then I just had time to walk back to her house and see that her key did not stick in the door before catching my liberty-run bus back to camp. That was about all. Not too much fun for either of us. Joan is really getting worried as other people have heard from their husbands etc., and I was tired having been up until seven in the morning the night before....

June 24, 1944 My precious, A bee-autiful day. And being such, I am naturally tied down here tighter than a drum with the old proboscis adjacent to the old grindstone....

As for my plans, I have none definitely. Tuesday is my day off. That’s the 27th. But naturally whether I will be able to take it or not is problematical. If I can, I have a sort of indefinite arrangement with Mary Corfield to bike in the country during the afternoon. Her brother Bill may be home then and if so, he will go along. We will probably end up at that Hurdle Foot place I looked over in April and described to you but to which I have been unable to return. It’s a nice spot if I ever get there. With boats – a swimming platform, and such....Well, this is a busy day, and so I must put an end to this letter. But I must first send you all kinds of love, my darlingest. I have it for you and I push it all into my letters. If it only stays there until you get them, then you will be receiving an awful lot. Loads and loads of kisses, too. Your devotedest, Freddie

June 25, 1944. Nothing much new here, darling. I note in the paper, the fashion note that women are wearing the same things in sweaters as they always did. And in a way that is exciting even though it is not too new. We are doing very much the same things we have been doing for almost two years. Of course we are doing them better than before, for in a way we have become experts at our jobs. That is natural. We are doing a great deal more than we ever did before but we at the same time are operating so much more smoothly that, except at periods, we do not have to work very much harder. I estimate that any one of us today can accomplish about six times the work that we could when we came here, in the same amount of time. Certainly, if I had been told

that we would be doing now what we are—six to ten months ago, I would have said that it was quite impossible and out of the question. Perhaps when I get home I will be able to give you a couple of figures to show what I mean.

June 30, 1944 My precious, I don't believe I will have time for much more of a note today. As usual we have been quite busy and I find the day has passed much more quickly than I ever thought possible. But that is the way it is. I must admit that under ordinary circumstances I would have time to write to you this evening, but it so happens that I have a date tonight with Joan Halliwell, and I don't want to disappoint the lady. She, by the way, has just started getting letters from her husband who went across the very first morning. As might be expected she received the sixth letter first. But the main thing is that a great load has been taken off her mind and she is naturally in great spirits.

July 1, 1944 ...Censorship rules now prevent members of the armed forces speculating as to future events. Therefore, all I will say is, "What will July bring forth!"

Last night I went to town. And had a rather good time of it. Mary C. was with an old friend of hers, a Sub-Lt. Jeffrie England, on seven days leave after three weeks of feverish activity in all the excitement. Of course the British Navy is just about the most security minded body of individuals that one can meet anywhere, but by insisting on general answers to general questions, I had a very, very interesting conversation with him. He is to come out here this coming Tuesday for lunch. To make a foursome out of it, I took Joan Halliwell along. It was drinks at the Cricketers and the Officers' Key Club and then back to Joan's house for a chat and a snack. Jeff is so tired he can't sleep and is very jumpy. I suspect he will be that way for the next few days - before he gets to relax enough to sleep. But he was so tired that I broke up the "party" at an early hour and cycled back here to base through a downpouring rain and against a strong headwind. I was wet, cold and tired when I arrived, but as generally happens when you get wet but keep going and don't stand around, I have suffered no ill effects from my experience.

July 9, 1944 My most precious, Today is a gray day, but nevertheless we are quite busy regardless. That is one of the differences between this year and last. For then, when there were so few we could only go out every so often and therefore picked only the very best days. At the same time, we falsely got the reputation of only being able to go on the

best days and people began saying that this was not the theater for heavy bombing. But they were wrong, as usual and we are proving that now. Today, also, I am the Officer of the Day which means that I will be able to make of my day just about what I want to. The actual duties of the O.D. are few and far between but at the same time, they take precedence over everything else....

I see, by the papers that the King and Queen and Princess Elizabeth visited an American field the other day in order to christen a fortress. I wonder what field that could have been. The paper didn't say, naturally.

July 10, 1944 I had my bike overhauled yesterday, new brakes, an oiling job and several other adjustments, and today it is working like a dream. How silly it is we in America are to have such heavy bikes, which tire you out if you ride a mile or so. On this one I can average twelve miles an hour for the full seven miles to town and am fresh enough to dance during the evening and then average about ten miles an hour coming back, and I am by no means done in when I get back home, in spite of the fact that I am in no better shape than I averaged in civilian life. The bike makes all the difference.

You mentioned in your last letter having high hopes that I will get a leave some time this fall. I don't quite know what to say to that. I don't want to build up your hopes too much. On the other hand, there is enough possibility of my getting home before the end of the year so that I don't want to discourage you too much either....Actually, I think I have about a fifty-fifty chance, which is encouraging, all right, but I don't want to subject myself or you to the disappointment of having it fall through....

July 17, 1944 ...By the way, here comes a story supposedly from Normandy. It so happened that one of the soldiers was given a leave to go back to the States. (Frankly I am beginning to doubt the veracity of the story right now.) This soldier, so I have heard, went to his C.O. and after exchange of military courtesies (salutes to you) said, "Sir, I want to ask a favor. I am about to home on leave, but I have always been behind the front lines. I have killed no Germans. I can't face the folks back home and tell them that. Can you postpone my leave for a couple of days and send me up to the front until I have killed at least one?" Since this soldier's record was very good, the C.O. granted his request. And so that there would be as little delay as possible, he gave the lucky soldier a bit of advice, to wit, "When you get to the front, first get yourself a well-protected position. Then if the Germans don't show

their faces, yell 'Hitler is a son of a B---!' and one will be sure to jump up. Then you shoot him. All very simple." Soooo our little man got his pencil exchanged for a gun and went marching proudly off to the front. After a day or so he reported back to his C.O. who asked him how everything went. "Not so good, sir," was the sad reply. "Why, what happened?" asked the C.O. "Well, sir, it was this way. I did everything you suggested. I placed myself in a most advantageous site. Then, as soon as I was all settled, I yelled as loud as I could, 'Hitler's a son of a B---!' But then, sir, instead of jumping up as you said, the Germans yelled back, 'So is Roosevelt!' And, sir, I can't shoot at fellows on our side."

According to my records, your stay in Edgartown is almost one-third over. I expect, by this time, you have a real, healthy tan. But that you are only beginning to get real benefit from your trip. I wish so that I could lie out on the beach with you and the children. No hope of getting a tan over here, of course, what with only one or two good days in a month, and those good days being especially base days where I must stay inside and work. Aren't I sorry for myself, though.

Must pause now, darlingest. Things to be done....

(Later) Have a few minutes. Jack Wright (Col Wright) has just been in and has used up most of my letter writing time. It was good enough to see him, but I did want to be able to get more time. Jack is the same as ever. He is doing a splendid job up at Division. He flew down with Harry Holt who hasn't been here for over a year - and has just flown back again.

July 19, 1944 I had a most interesting day yesterday—going through the plant I was telling you about. Mary C. had arranged the trip for me. It took all afternoon from one-thirty until after five and I didn't see it all by any means, but I did see a whole lot. I can't tell you what they make or who they make it for. I'll save that for some time after I come home. But I was interested in the number of women workers and some of the jobs these were doing. Not only precision jobs. I can see how women might be very fine at that. But also some very dirty, hot sweaty, heavy jobs in the foundry. A lot of work which we would probably do by machine is done by hand. They claim that hand work in many cases is far superior to anything that a machine can do and are not willing to change even if they were offered the machines to do it. Saw several Warner Swasey machine tools and others from the USA. I was most interested in the cafeteria where they have a real good show twice a week at the noon and mid-night hours. All in all, I learned a lot and they were vey nice. Very few people get to see this plant.

Afterwards I went back to the Corfield house. Mary was working on the night shift and so I had a very nice supper with Mrs. Corfield which, I think, we both enjoyed very much. After supper I took a bike ride with Joan Halliwell. And it turned out to be quite a ride. We thought of going to a certain pub in the country. Well that pub, about three miles out of town happened to be closed when we got there. So we went on. The next one was closed also. We went on, and when the third pub was closed, Joan happened to think of some friends in that town and we went calling. Joan's friend was, as far as I could see, in the ninth and a half month "along". We didn't get any bitters until we got back to town. All in all, what with my bike ride in and out of town, I rode a good deal over 40 miles yesterday. Can you imagine doing that on an American bicycle?

July 20, 1944 I often wonder if it will take me as long to get acclimated to the warmer days at home as it took to get used to the colder days here. I apologize for talking so much about the weather, my precious. But of course, you must remember that at this moment you are probably stretched out on the hot sand on your tummy, with the kids digging holes in the sand. You probably have loosened the straps of your bra in order to get a ninety percent tan (one hundred percent where it shows) and are literally drinking in the solar rays. And quite frankly I am very envious of you.

There is to be an "A" mess party here this Saturday. I shall probably take Joan Halliwell who has never been to one of these. John Kavanaugh will probably take Mary C. That will make something to tell you about this coming Sunday....

By the way, some time can you send me the address of the new law firm. I know it is in the National City BDG, but I don't know the room number. Also, the official name of the firm. I used to send most of my letters to Dad to his office because they would get there a good deal quicker than to Shady Brook...

July 24, 1944 My Darlingest, You probably have received several letters already, from me, telling you of my new plans. So I won't go into that again. But there is the matter of the check that I cashed and about which I wrote to you in the past. It was for seventy-five bucks and I drew it with my old checkbook on the Terminal Branch of the Cleveland Trust. So when you get this letter, my sweet, will you see that there is that much available in that account.

What I need the money for is two things. In the first place, as an emergency fund in case I have to buy railway tickets from the east to

Cleveland which I hope to have to do very soon. In the second place, I had Joan Halliwell out here to the officers' dance day before yesterday, and she lost her pocketbook. I am going to try to get her to at least take the amount of money that was in it if I can. As you know, the British Army pay is outrageously low and she can't afford, with her three children to lose that amount. Actually, I think she was a bit careless, but on the other hand, I am partly responsible too as it was I who asked her to come in the first place.

I understand that I may be leaving here on Friday, the 28th. Which is one day earlier than I expected. I still don't know what priorities I will get at the port of embarkation. I may be held up there for weeks. We will just have to sort that out.



I suspect that, after leave, I may be stationed for awhile in Washington, or some place in the east. Actually I hope not. I do think that eventually I will be sent out into the field (meaning Ohio, I hope).

One more thing you could do for me, my precious. If possible, could you get the typewriter overhauled. I have become quite dependent on a typewriter and know I will find good use for it.

The main thing, though, is that I am practically on my way. That in maybe less than a month I will be in a position to hold you in my arms and show you all that I have meant so very sincerely during the past two years or more when I have written of the tremendous amount that I love you. How wonderful, absolutely wonderful, that will be. Your devotedest, Freddie (*V-mail, letter 537, the last numbered letter from Thurleigh*)

September 8, 1944 [*Note: Likely from New York City*] My darlingest, My second day here is over and naturally it is time for a second letter – if you can read it. My second day has not been too much to write about. We had a ten o'clock orientation lecture scheduled for us, and that was all there was for today....

As to what is ahead, there are stories already flying about. Personally, I don't believe any of them. I myself started one to the effect that the army already had enough R.P.O. officers and so were planning to send us to China. And within two hours, I got it back as coming direct from Washington....Actually, there is nothing that I can lay my hands on except that I am more and more sure that as a lawyer, I will go to Ann Arbor when the time comes. I should know a great deal more about that tomorrow afternoon. I go to the classification officer at 1400 hours....

September 20, 1944 [*Ann Arbor*] My darlingest, It is bed time, and I am pretty tired, so this will probably be short. But I have you and also this weekend very much on my mind and so must have our "visit" before I hit the sack.

In the first place, I called the Statler and the Berk-Cadillac Hotels in Detroit without any luck. But I did get a double room – with a double bed – at the Detroit Leland which was recommended by the Statler people. So we are all set if it is still o.k. with you.

My last "class" is a drill and inspection Saturday afternoon....without knowing time tables, I should think that I might be able to get to Detroit around four in the afternoon....I shall go direct to the Leland and hope you will be there, too....

September 27, 1944 My precious, Another day gone by, and tonight, I must work like the devil to get ready for another test. But that most certainly is not enough to stop me from writing to my sweet.

There is not a very great deal to write about. When one gets up at 6:45 and is busy with classes and drill until 5:30 and after that has to get supper and put in three to four hours of studying, there is not

much time left for those little things that make up writable news. On the other hand, while I was in England, I had so often to write when I knew that I couldn't speak about any of the things that I had been doing, that this seems to be duck soup.

My suitcase finally showed up today and so now I can go about my work fully clothed....

A somewhat disturbing element has entered into the picture as far as this weekend is concerned. It, in all likelihood, won't bother us at all. But, on Friday and Saturday of this week, three air-corps officers are coming to interview those of us who are from the air-corps. This interview is of the utmost importance as, I suspect, my location in the immediate future will largely be based on their findings. This, in other words, is my first and best chance to tell them where I want to be stationed.....

Though I am far from clear on practically every point that has been raised in this course on contract termination, I at least am beginning to see some daylight....On the other hand, I find that every one who was not in procurement work before this is in the same boat. I was assured today that all things that are not clear at this point will be cleared up when, during the last week, we start working on actual problems. With my faith placed in that, I shall keep plugging along....

I love you, as you know, like nobody's business, and I send all of that love to you. If we are not too gay Saturday night and stay up too late, I'll show you a thing or two after the party.... You won't hear from me until I get to town and I will then call the house and find out from you, or whoever is there, whether to come all the way out, or whether I am to meet you at Cleveland, Shaker Square, or the Skating Club. I suspect, if I have to take the train, or if I get kicked off the first plane, that you will go right on to the party and I will meet you there.

So once again, all my love, my precious. Your devotedest,
Freddie

October 10, 1944 My very darlingest, Well, this is a letter to be kept. Not that it will be any better than any other from an imaginative, or creative standpoint. But with this letter, I am disclosing facts hitherto unknown by man or beast. (I don't classify the powers that be as either on or the other.) You will have heard about these things, as a matter of fact, for in a couple of hours I shall most certainly telephone you and if you are at home I shall tell you about them. But the fact of the matter is that I have received my orders. Not only that, but all the way down the line I got absolutely everything I asked for.

Here is the story. First, I am assigned to Detroit. That means that I shall be as near home as is possible. But that is not all. For Cleveland is in the Detroit district and it is possible that this may mean that some day I shall be assigned more or less permanently to one or more factories in Cleveland and be able to live and work at home. This last is, naturally, only a possibility. But if I had not received the Detroit assignment I wouldn't even have had that possibility. This also means, of course, that I will not be teaching, which pleases us all.

Secondly, I have a week's leave and so shall be home from Saturday evening until at least midnight the following Sunday, and, possibly, until the Mercury on Monday morning. That week's leave speaks for itself. And while we are on the subject, I might say that I leave all plans to you. I will be content with anything that you want to do. Or not do. I would like, really, to take a crack at a bit of painting and plastering so if you would like me to do any of that, perhaps it would be as well to get some paint on hand.

But that isn't all, by any means. I haven't yet mentioned the thirdly part. This is that I have been classified as a negotiator. I don't know whether or not you realize what that means to me. But in brief, it is like this. The work is done by what we call a "termination team." On the team are one or more experts, so called, on legal matters, accounting, engineering, property disposal, and whatever other kind of expert it is felt the situation calls for. The boss of the team is the negotiator who uses the rest as required. It means a good deal more work, as I see it, because I will have to know something, at least, about what all the others are doing. I'll have to keep my hand in on everything. After all, I won't be able to negotiate, unless I know what it is all about. But though it means more work, it should be, at the same time, infinitely more interesting and exciting. I find it hard to get excited about what I am doing for the country when my job is to sit back and write opinions on whether my boss should or should not do something direct and concrete. I am sure you see my point. Nearly everyone else up here has, as expected, been given a classification as legal officer. So I consider myself unusually lucky. I asked for that job, you may remember.

Well darlingest, so much for now. I have enough work on hand to keep me busy until well after midnight as it is. Anyway, I'll see you in just a day or two after you get this letter and then I will be able to tell you all of the nice things that I would like, if I had the time, to tell you now. Let's leave it that I love you immensely and that I expect to dream of you tonight. At least I hope so. So, my precious, all of my love,

and tell the kids to be good. Your very devotededest, Fred (*letter from Ann Arbor, Mich.*)

November 2, 1944. Darling Isabel, Arthur, and Lee; I guess I actually did thank you for my birthday present at the party over at Brightwood. However, those thanks were mingled with the thanks I was giving right and left to everyone there for all the grand presents that I received. And that is not enough. I want to do more because I like these presents so very, very much. I think that each one of your gifts showed a great deal of thought and usefulness and I am very proud to be able to call each of you “my very own children.”

This living in Detroit away from you is frankly not so hot. I am staying at a hotel as you know, called the Woverine. Staying at a hotel is all right for a few days, but it isn't so good as a permanent position. I long for the day (may it come soon) when I will be home with you once more—for good....

November 16, 1944. My darlingest, I have just received your letter telling about your hectic day on Monday and also, unfortunately, about Arthur's report from U.S. When I left Cleveland, after agreeing with Arthur and you as to what he was to do and what would be required of him (and I think you will find it so stated in the “Contract”), he was to be on his own until the November report came out. It was left entirely up to him whether he would or would not come home early. However, though it was not part of the contract, we did suggest to him that it would be in his interest to get home right after school and get down to work before supper. But there was nothing in the contract that said he had to do that. The contract did say that unless he got an average of at least 77 in November, then, for the next month (meaning now) he would agree to come home right after work. Perhaps we made other conditions too. I don't know. What I am driving at is that he was not breaking contract by not coming home early before this report came out. From now on, though, until the December report, he must come home at once after he is let out of school. That is what he has agreed to do and he said when he signed the agreement, that it was fair in every way.

Note: Woe to the boy whose father is away drilling, sharpening, rehearsing his military contract termination skills!

Needless to say, I was very disappointed to see this report. His teachers say it is carelessness and failure to hand in assigned work. There is no excuse for either of these failures.

I agree with you, that, in doing his homework he should do it alone and without your help. That is the only way that he will learn anything. On the other hand, darlingest, I wonder if it would not be a good idea to have him show what he has done each evening. In that way you will be able to see whether he has done it and the manner in which it has been done and, in the right case, have him do it over. That is in the case of a written exercise, of course. It would be too much to ask of you that you see whether or not he has studied his lessons outside of what is written or drawn. We could at least see that what he hands in is neat and not carelessly done.... (*letter from Ann Arbor, Mich.*)

November 27, 1944 My darlingest, Not much more than a note this evening, my sweet. I have told Gil Seigel that I would meet him at the officers' club at six this evening and now it is ten past five already. The day's work is complete. I am back at my room and all I have to do is douse some water over my hands and face (and, perhaps, behind my ears) and then beat it to the Tirenman bus. We shall probably take in a show, though the main thing is just to get into a different section (the downtown one) of this city. Gill, you know, took that room on Roselawn that I almost took.

Anyway, with this trip to town, I will have to rush this through a bit. But I must write something, seeing as how I had such a very grand time at home this week-end and seeing as how I am so very, very much in love with you. Only, you see, it has to be quick and snappy or I will make Gil late.....

By the way. There is another reason why I think the midnight train—with reservations—would be a good thing. And that is that I stood all the way back. Not even room in the men's John. Two negro "ladies" were occupying that. At Toledo there was enough room so that I was able to get a suitcase belonging to a kind old lady (white this time) into the aisle and I sat on that the rest of the way. The trouble, of course, was the Thanksgiving week-end crowd which was greater than usual. It really reminds me, for the first time, of some of the English trains.

Well, my sweet, only five more days to go now. Before another few hours of life. When I will be with you once again. These week days are almost as though I were partially knocked out. A kind of semi void.

But perhaps it will not be too long. In the meantime, loads and loads of love to you. Kiss A for me if you can.

Your devotedest, Freddie (*letter from Ann Arbor, Mich.*)

December 6, 1944. My darlingest, I received your letter which you wrote on Monday, and I was so pleased to get it. It doesn't take very long for the exhilaration of the weekend (having been with you) to wear off and for the time to start when I begin to long to see you once more and to be with you again....

It certainly was good to hear that Ike has finally returned to God's country. I can imagine how he feels. Like I did, only he has been gone that much longer. Of course, he couldn't have missed Sal like I did you, but that is partially offset by the longer separation. I suspect he is going to Ben Harrison to be temporarily demilitarized as I was. Also, he probably expects that to take a couple of days as I did. You might tell Sal just how long it took me. That might help her with her plans. But that means that Ike will surely be home for Christmas and probably for New Years as well.

About Hathaway-Brown, I wouldn't worry about that. Worry, in that kind of case, does no good anyway, does it? Also, as you say, it is all in the lower school and I should think that the Docs are probably right in thinking it had something to do with the mid-morning feeding. I do hope, though, that soon they really catch on to what polio is all about and learn something that they can do to help the poor kids that get it. In the meantime, the best thing, I should think, is just to see that our kids are as healthy as possible and that at all times they have built up within themselves as much resistance as possible.

Now I have some news for you. That leave which I told you about and which I requested last week, came through today. It starts on the 28th. I must report in, as I understand it, on the morning that the leave starts. I shall look up the morning trains. Then about half an hour before the chosen train leaves, I will sign out. I will have seven days from the moment. So that is what you can count on in making your plans—unless you should want to get rid of me before then.

I saw "Frenchman's Creek" last evening, my sweet. Have you seen it? It was not bad at all. The color was excellent. The plot impossible, of course, but not too bad for light entertainment. All in all, it was a good if not great picture. I should think that the kids might like it a lot. Of course part of the reason I liked it was because of the low-necked gowns that the heroine wore. She sure made the best of what she had!

That is all the news there is today, darlingest. It is no news that I love you with all my heart and soul and body, and that as far as I am

concerned there is nothing in this life as important as that love. It is all true, even though it isn't news. So, my sweet, I send you a thousand kisses. Only three more days to go. Your devotedest, Freddie (*letter from Ann Arbor, Mich. And the last we have.*)



Epilogue I Intelligence of Friends from the English Station

In 1943, **Shubel Owen's** wife, Janet, moved to Marshfield, WI where both of their children--S. Hudson "Huddy" Owen and Charles "Chick" Owen would attend and eventually graduate from the local high school. By June of 1944, Shubel was a prisoner at Stalag Luft III in Sagen-Silesia, where conditions were good and the Geneva Conventions observed. On Jan 27, 1945 with the Russian Army within 15 miles of the camp, the Germans began marching all 11,000 internees of Stalag Luft III some 50 miles southwest to Spremberg, where the prisoners spent days in boxcars formerly used by livestock. With 6,000 others, Shube was moved into the already overcrowded camp of 29,500 at Nuremburg-Langwasser. On April 12, the prisoners were again turned out to endure long marches away from the oncoming front. Shube would have been liberated by the US 14th Armored Division in late April. Huddy Owen relates that his father was recognized by a former student of his serving in the liberating unit. All former POWs were transported to the vast system of Allied encampments on the coast of north western France, called the cigarette camps because each was named for a cigarette brand—Lucky Strike, Phillip Morris, Pall Mall and Chesterfield—where 180,000 men lived in tents of five. They recieved medical attention, new clothes, and psychological support while awaiting troop carrier availability for their respective trips home to the States, a process that took one to three months. From free fall at 23,000 feet over Germany, Shubel Owen made it safely back to his family in Marshfield Wisconsin. Shube bought a concrete and block manufacturing plant there, and never left. By the time he passed away in 1967, his family had grown to include daughters-in-law and grandchildren.

Shube's son Huddy graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as an engineer. Building upon his father's post-war trade, Huddy specialized in concrete technology, inventing and holding sixty domestic and foreign patents. In later years he pursued railroad technology and tried his hand at writing. His 2002 book, "How to Plan for Happiness," was inspired, in part, by his mother Janet's fortitude in the face of loss. Shubel Hudson Owen is 88 at the time of this writing, and still living in Marshfield, WI.

Chick Owen graduated from Carleton College, worked as a lumber salesman, a teacher and coach, and talented wood carver. Chick had two children and six grandchildren. He died in 1999 at the age of 66.

Allen Richardson, who had had to transfer away from the trauma of service at Thurleigh, shared an artistic temperament with Fred. Like Fred, Al was older than most of the boys there. After the war, Al worked as a portrait photographer in New York City. By 1980, he and his wife had retired to Winchester, VA, where Al organized a retrospective of his work beside that of his father, who had been a prominent watercolorist and book illustrator in Chicago. (Al's father's 1915 Mother Goose was still in print at the time of Al's exhibition.) Al stayed connected to Beekman Pool and enjoyed a late-life correspondence with Russell Strong about 306th history. In 1982, Al wrote up an account of his friendship with Arizona Harris's doomed crew for the group's "Echoes" newsletter. He made it to the 306th reunion in 1988, and died in 1990, at the age of 90.

Beekman Pool was mustered out of the service in 1945 with the rank of captain. Giving up his NY law practice, Beekman became associate director of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Later he worked with the State Communities Aid Association in New York and Albany until he retired in 1974.

As early as 1950, Beekman and his wife, Elizabeth Shallcross, bought an estate in Dublin, NH, Snow Hill, which had been the British summer embassy until WWII. After retirement, Beekman volunteered as a teacher at the Dublin Consolidated School, helping improve the writing skills of elementary school students. He spent many strenuous years in an unsuccessful attempt to redirect the 101-road bypass from the center of Dublin. In 1951, Beekman and Elizabeth had a daughter they named Felicity, and through her, a grandson. Beekman remained active throughout his life—skiing, sailing, and gardening. He wrote and lectured about the Canadian Inuit and his good friend, the polar explorer, Lincoln Ellsworth. In 2004, at the age of 94, Beekman Pool died in New Hampshire.

Robert Hogg retired from the USAF as a Colonel. In his retirement he lived in Issaquah, WA. Robert died in 1989.

Al Bairnsfather had owned his own advertising agency in Cincinnati before the war, and after V.E. Day returned to that profession. He had served in both world wars and earned an Air Medal for joining 5 missions. Like Fred, Al had been a polo player as a young man. He worked until the last year of his life, though also found time to raise cattle and horses on a farm in Loveland, Ohio. Al Died in 1988, at the

age of 88, survived by his wife, a son, a daughter and grandchildren. Thirty years after the war, Russell Strong traveled to Loveland to interview Bairnsfather. Strong was chasing down details about stories for his book, but he also asked for Bairnsfather's thoughts on the Intelligence crew that worked under him at Thurleigh. From Strong's notes:

"Wright, able, corporate type.
Baldwin, quiet, soft spoken, wealthy (Cleveland)
Glass—older
Hogg—had PhD, offered much in research abilities
Kavanaugh and Glass handled awards and decorations
Pool, New York lawyer, U.S. squash champion
Leatherman (Memphis, Tenn.)
Al Weld—best writer, now deceased"

Capt. Leroy Sugg, who let Fred take the pilot's seat and fly a B-17 home from a liaison mission, completed his tour of 25 missions. Back in the States, Sugg worked as a commercial pilot, but not many years into his new career he died in a plane crash, an event that confirmed his colleagues' belief that Sugg was something of a wild flier.

Doreen Dennis (b. 1920-1924) was the daughter of some of the first friends Fred made in Bedford. Fred had taken Doreen to a memorable Thurleigh dance, after which he accidentally dropped her in a puddle as he was trying to carry her to a Bedford-bound recon truck. Fred said that she was madly in love with a young man. One hopes they both survived the war and lived happily ever after.

Maynard "Snuffy" Smith, the first enlisted man in any war to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, flew only four missions after his crowded 90 minutes, working guns and fighting fires in his plane's midsection on May 1st, 1943. The heroism of those 90 minutes and the fact of the award attached themselves to Smith for the rest of his life, which came to a peaceful end of natural causes in Florida some 41 years later. At a dedication ceremony held a short while after his death, a fellow CMH winner addressed an empty chair, draped in black and graced with the Medal that Secretary Stimson had brought to Thurleigh. The speaker told an audience who had no way of knowing better that "Maynard belonged to a vanishing breed. A man of inner strength, of love for people in trouble and an almost total selflessness. He gave other people strength."

In fact, Sgt. Maynard Smith—whose rank was restored to him three days after his heroic action – shirked duty and coasted on the fortune of his award in ways that thoroughly frustrated the leadership at Thurleigh Station. Smith was finally court martialed in December of 1944 – his papers stating “the attitude of this man is insufferable.” In correspondence, though not in his book, Russell Strong wrote, “He was one of those CMH people they didn’t want back in the States and it was early 1945 before the 306th got rid of him, much to the chagrin of the top 8th AF brass, who wanted him left at Thurleigh forever.” (306th Historical Association files)



Smith's first Stateside stop was his hometown, Caro, Michigan, where the Mayor declared Maynard Smith Day and threw him a parade. People in Caro, however, had not forgotten that Maynard wound up in the Army in the first place because a judge had given him that choice over jail-time for failing to make alimony payments to a second wife who was raising their two children. Maynard and his third wife, a Bedford girl named Mary, decided to settle in Washington, DC, where they raised several children while he worked for the Revenue Department and served as secretary and treasurer of an extra governmental organization, "The Congressional Medal of Honor Society." In 1947 Maynard Smith was arrested for selling a non-FDA approved erection enhancement cream, "Firmo." His status as a decorated veteran and a promise to reimburse defrauded customers convinced authorities to drop charges.

Maynard Smith's name popped up again in *The Washington Post* in 1952 for grabbing a young woman off a building ledge from which she was presumed to be preparing to jump. Several days later, the woman confessed to having been paid by Maynard Smith, through an accomplice, to pretend to be in suicidal distress. Smith and the accomplice were arrested and fined for the fraud.

In 1970, Smith relocated to New York, where he founded the "Police Officer's Journal." In 1980, when interviewed about his wartime heroism, Snuffy's version of events had expanded to include bandaging up the pilots and himself flying the wounded plane back to England. He also humbly admitted to having been one of the last people to see Glenn Miller alive, it being him who drove the doomed man and his pilot to their small plane. It would have been more sensible for them to have gone in a B-17, Smith observed. (Interview with Michael Skinner, *The Floridian*, November 16, 1980)

Contrails cannot, however, be altogether outrun. Over the same decades in which Maynard Smith dined-out on—and polished—his reputation as a hero, a counter-narrative has grown up and stayed aloft as well. The term "Airman Snuffy" survives in the Air Force as a description of a serviceman who is lazy, shiftless, and hopelessly self-interested.

Mr. & Mrs. Corfield lived on 26 Bushmead Avenue in Bedford. Willmont William Corfield (1888-1955) was married to Gladys Attenborough (1886-1965). William W. Corfield was Chairman of Motor Trades Association for the Southeast Midlands Division in 1927 and Vice

Chairman of Bedfordshire County Cricket Club. As late as 1940, Mr. Corfield was the owner of the Glider Rink on St. Cuthbert's Street.



One hopes that Mrs. Corfield eventually accepted the death of her oldest son Jimmy, whose Blenheim bomber had gone down on a daylight raid to Cologne on the 12th of August, 1941. Jimmy and his crew of two are buried on Texel Island, Holland. It would be interesting to find out if the Government ever reimbursed Mr. Corfield after the war for the athletic properties that had been needed for the war effort.

Bill (Willie) Corfield (b. 1926) joined the RAF, leaving a free bed in the Corfield house for Fred to occasionally use. Willie gained his RAF wings on the 2nd of February, 1945. He flew in Lancaster bombers and

survived the war. In 1992 he was Vice-President, Valuer of the Cambs, Chilterns and Thames Rent Assessment Panel and at the age of 68 still flew. Willie married Lilla Patricia in 1949. And later married Annelie Pfreimer.

Joan Corfield, who was 15 when Fred met her, came to work in the Royal Observer Corps—as Joan Green had. In her later years, Joan related her wartime memories to the Virtual Library in Bedfordshire. She mentioned her sister’s wartime employment, the base at Thurleigh, the Red Cross Officers’ Club, and the story of Glenn Miller flying into oblivion, but nowhere in her 1,800 word account is there any mention of Fred Baldwin. Nor does she say what became of her sister, Mary. Joan does mention her sister’s friend, Patricia Clark, who married a Dutch family friend, Hank Doornbash after the war. The Doornbashes settled in Vancouver, Canada, where Joan traveled to visit them. In 1971 Joan was living in Bedford. In 1991 she was living in Northampton.

Mary Corfield In 1937 Patricia Clark and Mary Corfield were bridesmaids at a wedding for Mary’s cousin that was written up in the Bedford Times and Independent. The paper reported that the girls wore blue velvet gowns and headdresses of leaves to match. In July of 1940, Mary’s name again comes up in the local paper—when Mary, her brother Jimmy Corfield, and several others were returning from a London skating party when the car they were riding in was hit by another driving in the opposite direction. The two passengers in the oncoming car, servicemen, were killed. Mary was the most severely injured person in the car with the kids, suffering fractures in both her legs. The scare must have seriously shaken the Corfield parents, who, ten years earlier, had lost their oldest daughter to a car accident. During the War, Mary had the most important job in the family, working as a night telephonist at WH Allen, maker of navel engines.

Mary was 25 when Fred met her in 1943. What this engaging, always-available-girl-Friday’s thoughts were regarding the considerable time she invested in her friendship with the American Captain, Fred Baldwin, would be fascinating to know. After their bike ride together to Hurdlefeet, however, Mary seems to change course. She broadens her circle of dates. And it is at about this time that Mary introduces Fred to Joan Halliwell, a match that probably struck Mary as a better fit, as both he and Joan were happily married, each with three children.

Family-tree records for the Corfields show that a Mary Corfield married a Captain John William Bennett on Sept. 6 in 1947 in Bedford and that John W. Bennett died in 1992. Mary survived her husband. She was living in Witney at the time of his death.

Luis Stevens was the 1st violin for the BBC Orchestra who so amused Fred on visits to Mrs. Drew's house. The BBC broadcasted its concerts from Bedford during the war. Many of the orchestra members lived in hotels in the vicinity of Bushmead Ave., which is perhaps how the Corfields came to know Luis Stevens.

Fred was likely still at Thurleigh when Glenn Miller gave his first Bedford area concert there, but would have missed the many others through the fall and early winter of 1944, that made him a part of the Bedford local lore, before the great band leader took off from nearby airfield, RAF Tinwood Farm in Clapham, and was never heard from again. The theory that Miller's small plane was taken out as it ran into unused ordinance jettisoned over the Channel by returning Bombers persisted for years, but has been discredited.

Mrs. Drew had a remarkable house, a former monastery, with a bell and in every room a rope-pull to the bell. Mrs. Drew's house sat along the river, and enjoyed a 10 ft. deep river swimming spot where friends could sun.

Joan and Dickey Green (b. 1917, b. 1914-1917) were in their mid-twenties in 1943. They lived in a flat on the lower floor of a house close to to the Ouse River. Fred wrote that the house was about 12 blocks from the RC Officers Club (in same direction as Corfields), and that a Mrs. Bailey lived directly above the Greens' flat. Searching address records, a Mrs. Bailey is shown owning a house that meets Fred's description of location exactly. Mrs. Bailey is long gone, but the brick and stucco house at #1 Kingsley Road stands today.

Joan worked at the Royal Observer Corps, which occupied a central office in Bedford and smaller stations in the region. They were responsible for compiling information about aircraft coming towards English targets so that air raid warnings could be accurately sounded. It was important, top secret work.

Joan's sister, Bobby Gough (sp?) was married to Harold, RAF. There was a Sgt. Harold Gough, former garage mechanic from Scarborough, who as an RAF gunner endured a harrowing mission to Turin on 11/28-9, 1942, as described by historian, Martin Bowman in his 2010 book, "Bombs Away!"

Joan and Ken Halliwell We do not know where the Halliwells lived. He was a British commando and landed in the first D-Day wave. In their mid 20's, they had three small children in 1944.

There was a Kenneth Wilfred Halliwell born in 1915, left in 1932, in WW2, RANVR, and Lt., in Victoria, Australia.

The City of Bedford, founded at a ford over the meandering River Great Ouse, today comprises 80,000 people within the Borough of Bedford, which is home to a total population of 170,000. The city's first known fortress was built in 919. This was destroyed by the Danes and eventually replaced with a castle on the north bank of the river which itself was razed in 1224, leaving a green mound in the city center. Bedford was a market town, specializing in wool. By the 16th century, Bedford had become one of the centers for England's lace industry. It was in Bedford that the former tinker John Bunyan, imprisoned for his nonconformist religious beliefs in 1660, spent his incarceration writing what some consider the English language's first novel, The Pilgrim's Progress. The book is an allegory whose protagonist, Christian, journeys from a "City of Destruction" to the "Celestial City" or "that which is to come," doing good deeds as he goes. John Bunyan is buried in Bedford. Fred Baldwin's sensitive friend Al Richardson found war-time solace sitting in the Bunyan Meeting House pews and contemplating the virtues of—and heavy toll taken by—his bomber group companions.

By the 19th century, brewing, steel plow manufacture and industrial engineering had become central to Bedford's economy. Bicycle innovation also occurred there. And the city had become known for its sports enthusiasm—fielding regionally important soccer and rugby teams.

The River Great Ouse is spanned in Bedford's center by the elegant, arched Town Bridge. On the north, castle-mound side of the river, Town Bridge is the end-point of a handsomely built embankment and riverside promenade. At the juncture between embankment end and Town Bridge stands a noble, grey stone building, The Swan Hotel.

Thurleigh (pronounced "thur-lye") was originally constructed for RAF Bomber Command in 1940. The field was built with converging runways of 6,000 feet and 4,200 feet respectively, and four metal hangers. The British turned it over to the Americans in 1942, when 28 total fields were listed for use by the 8th Air Force. Thurleigh's site was located one mile north of the village of Thurleigh and five miles north

of Bedford. It was about an eight-mile bike ride from Thurleigh's main gates to the center of town. To better accommodate the heavy bombers set to arrive in September of 1942, Thurleigh's runways were hardened and additional hardstands were constructed. The 306's stay would last until December of 1945, representing the longest tenure of any U.S. air group at a U.K. base.

Post-war, the field remitted to the RAF which undertook an upgrade to the standards of a Royal Aircraft Establishment. Among the changes, a major runway of unusual length was cut diagonally across the original, diamond configuration. The new runway was meant to accommodate a new aircraft, the Bristol Brabazon, which, in the end, never went into production. The RAF used the airfield until 1994, when it was decommissioned and sold.



Today the site is occupied by two entities--the Thurleigh Business Park, which uses the old runways for car storage, and a business called the Bedford Autodrome, where visitors can pay handsomely to drive high performance cars. Both uses are heavily gated. Within the confines of the Autodrome Complex—but not owning the land it sits on—is a small museum dedicated to the 306th Bombardment group. The collection was amassed over a long period by local enthusiast, Richard Franklin, who grew up beside the station and recalls daily counting the returning B-17s, even as Fred Baldwin was doing the same. There are proposals making their way through approvals processes, to develop a portion of the Thurleigh's acreage for residential use.

The 306th Bombardment Group, continued its sorties over Europe after Fred Baldwin was transferred stateside in the summer of 1944. In September, it supported the airborne assault on Arnhem, it attacked airfields and marshalling yards during the Battle of the Bulge, and it flew in support of the US Army crossing the Rhine. Towards the end of the war, the group received a new assignment, the Casey Jones Project. A joint effort between the 305th and the 306th, the Casey Jones Project involved mapping the entire European theater of war, including Iceland and North Africa. The flying was technically difficult at a time of much turnover due to demobilization, but the job was completed in 18 months. The 306th Bomb Group remained at Thurleigh itself until December 1945, when it shifted to Giebelstadt, Germany. Fred's old 423rd squadron moved from Thurleigh to Istres-le-Tube in early July of 1945, then on to Dakar, and Gibraltar after that. In Germany, the four squadrons of the 306th eventually consolidated into a single squadron. Shube's old 367th was initially left behind in Thurleigh and ended up being the last to leave. In one form or another, the 306th has been reactivated a number of times through the decades and comes down the present day as the 306th Strategic Wing.

In the course of the war, the 306th flew 341 total combat missions and dropped 22,514 tons of bombs. The group lost 177 aircraft with almost 800 men killed, 885 taken prisoner for the duration, 44 evaded, and 69 interned in Sweden or Switzerland.

Historian Russell Strong took a particular look at those 315 combat crewmen who arrived in September of 1942, when Fred Baldwin arrived:

- Completed 25 missions – 68
- Killed or died of wounds – 106
- Wounded and left combat – 10
- Prisoners of war – 88
- Evadees – 9
- Transferred, non-flying or unknown – 34

Epilogue II Vistas

"I should go out now darlingest as it is time to stand outside and look off into the distant skies and count what I can see."

--Fred, June 11, 1943

In 1952, while he was playing golf with his son Arthur at the Kirtland Country Club, Fred Baldwin suffered a heart attack. He collapsed on the 18th tee and died instantly. It was a hot day. No caddies were working. Fred knew he had heart trouble and that years of heavy smoking had increased the risks of exertion for him. But out across the fairways, with his son, he went.

For Fred's family, this life cut short was an acute tragedy. Fred Baldwin would not see two of his three children graduate from college, would not give away his two daughters in marriages, nor meet any of his eleven grandchildren—let alone bounce those grandchildren on a knee as he explained his role in the War. In this way, Fred came to share something with the men of the 306th who did not return from missions he briefed. Fred Baldwin would be left behind at his mid-twentieth century station.

Fred would have been proud of the adults his children became. Arthur Baldwin graduated from Yale and returned to Cleveland, where he married Margot Farr and ran multiple businesses over his lifetime as he served as his home town's mayor for nearly five decades. Isabel Baldwin married a British man, Robert Pickering, and came to settle in Cornwall England, where she wrote local history and tirelessly advocated for progressive causes. Lee Baldwin married Robert Dalzell and settled in Massachusetts, where she served as a college reference librarian and also wrote history. All three children survived their mother and lived into the second decade of the 21st century. Only Lee, however, is alive at the time of this writing.

Darlingest

We do not have Antoinette "Pat" Baldwin's letters to Fred. This is a shame. Fred loved them: he complimented her on ones that particularly delighted him, much as he cheered her on in everything she was managing during the war. One senses that Pat may have negotiated the separation better than he did. In the reflection his letters offer, certainly Pat's fortitude is evident. And her humor comes

through, too—as when she observes to him that all of the English homes he is visiting seem to have daughters.

Pat's fortitude was especially evident after the tragedy of 1952. She drew her children around her and launched them into their adulthoods without Fred. She applied the sort of energy that she had poured into volunteer work during the war to an entrepreneurial enterprise, cashmere sweater embroidery, which engaged her talents and brought her income. She expanded her business to include six employees, and her brand reputation still has value today in the vintage clothing market. Eventually, Pat met and married a divorcé, Wallace Quail, with whom she enjoyed a third act of over a dozen years. Wally, who was retired from a successful life in manufacturing, died of a brain aneurism while on a trip with Pat. Pat, in London, was on the phone with Isabel when Wally collapsed in their hotel. He was a warm, kind man.

Pat survived Wally by only a few years, but long enough to bounce each of her 11 grandchildren on her knee and also long enough for each of them to have known her. When Pat died in 1977, she was buried in Cleveland's Lake View Cemetery, in the Baldwin family plot, beside Fred.



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