

Feb. 6, 1943

Dear Jack,

Your Christmas present to me was one of the very best and perhaps the most appropriate of all, even if it has taken me over a month to thank you for it. For this I'm very sorry and ashamed. Somehow I got way behind in writing letters, what with moving out of Miami and getting settled here, but I'm gradually catching up. The pictures you picked out are a choice lot, and I've just had another look at them, some-

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thing I can do any time.

Right now I'd be right
flying if they hadn't cancelled
it because of expected poor
weather. Flying at night is
apt to be exciting, sometimes
too much so. It might be
fun if one didn't have
to worry about watching
for other planes on landing
in semi-darkness. This
last being no fun at all.

Flying by day is seldom
quite and frequently
enjoyable, but when one
does a lot of the same
part of flying, as flying

out over the sea out of sight of everything except the sea and sky. Things sometimes get monotonous.

Flying over land is much more interesting because of the variety of things to see from above. Perhaps before

long you'll get a chance to see how very different things look from the air and from different altitudes. One can see

better of course the lower one goes (except for distance), down to the

point where everything
becomes a blur, like those
things one passes close
to in a car. None of the
planes we use are very
fast, and to make them
last longer we rarely
fly them full speed
anyway. In level flight
we cruise the OS2U
("Kingfisher") land plane
at about 120, the SNJ
("Harvard" trainer) at 140-150
and the SBC (Helldiver -
not the new one, but an
older biplane) at about
170 m.p.h. The SBC,

however, will sometimes

hit around 300 in a dive with diving flaps closed.

In a steep dive they are always opened to slow the plane down - to 250 or less, usually. Too much speed makes for inaccuracy in bombing. You may wonder how steep our dives are. The answer is steep enough so that they seem nearly vertical, though they aren't quite. Even if we don't fly the newest and speediest planes

or fly at tremendous
 altitudes, we do get some
 excitement and occasionally
 see some of the newer
 planes like F-4U (Corsair).
 It seems probable that
 I'll probably fly scout-
 bombers (usually called
 dive bombers) when I
 eventually go to the fleet
 and am through with sea-
 plane at least for the
 duration, but I don't yet
 know whether I'm glad
 or sorry. A sea plane
 would be best for Squam,
 wouldn't it? Though I

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don't know that I'd like
to keep one there for
fear of spoiling the
atmosphere.

I've bought a bicycle
instead of a car and
already rode it 50 miles
in a few hours - from
the beach to here - even
if it made me very
tired. The next time
I think I'll ride to
St. Augustine, which
is only about 25 miles
away and the oldest
town in the U.S. It

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has a wonderful old
Spanish fort there, and
there's a swell beach
running all the way
without a break to the
mouth of the St. Johns
river, about 32 miles to
the north. At low tide
the beach is fine for
riding a bicycle or driving
a car, which reminds me
that it isn't very far
south of here, at Daytona
Beach, that Major Seagrave
first drove a car over
200 m.p.h. We all saw this
car in Paris in 1927. A

bit later after Campbell
 had beaten his record by
 a bit, he drove his "Golden
 Arrow" (successor to his
 "Sunbeam") 231 A.M., but
 the later records, over
 300, have all been made
 out on what used to be
 the bottom of Great Salt
 Lake, when it was the
 larger Lake Bonneville.
 Well, I may ride along
 the beach myself. The
 sand is very compact,
 and one doesn't sink in
 at all.

This afternoon I took

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out a rowboat for a little
exercise (no flying because
of poor weather), and that
was the first time I had
been on the river proper
in anything, but a
seaplane. Last spring I
did paddle a canoe up
a long creek that flows
into the river. Here the
St. Johns is about two
miles wide, much wider
than Squam is, where
our camp is, but there's
hardly any current.

Thanks for your letter,
by the way, and write
another sometime. Love Toote