

Formation
flying
organization

An air group

Charles Farrell

Some impossible
sentences



U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION
ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

6/21/44

Dear Folks,

Your letters have been as welcome as ever, which in saying plenty, though it may look differently. There's something about the furious pace out here that is not exactly conducive to letter writing.

Attractions ashore are usually more attractive than a crowded room with a strange room-mate.

Did I tell you that one of the series of room-mates I've had was Charles Farrell, a former leading movie actor?

all your news by the way.²
whether it's about the weather,
which, incidentally, must have
been pretty tough this Spring,
or the vegetable garden or
whatever has always been most
interesting. I don't care for ^{such}
news about people as about
L.T. (J.P.) Putnam, but it would
have been worse just to get
the grim announcement! How
about that sister of hers?

Her description or rather
quotation of Aunt Editt
concerning Nance was really
killing.

Yes, the Invasion makes
big news all right, and the



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Mitchell map must be
just the thing. Doubtless
the apparently rather small
scale of things will quickly
grow. I wouldn't say that
the Italian campaign is
overshadowed yet. Notice
that it approaches our
furthest south in '27. For
me the Pacific war is
ever more exciting and
interesting, naturally. A
step as big as the one to
Saipan seems almost
incredible. The latest

news of the week, the first
concerning any of these
latest developments (invasion
etc.), arrived to-day, and
from now on I expect to
do each copy more justice.

Since last writing I've
spent two nights at the
Greys, the night before
and the night of my next
to last day off, and I've
decided they are about as
nice people as there are.
A longish bike ride down
the coast road from San
Francisco beach and back
featured that particular
day - some difference from



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Florida with all the hills
 here. As with the whole
 west coast, the coast here
 is rugged, high banks,
 in reality ocean-worn hills,
 and rocky headlands, ^{in miles} far
 outnumbering the beaches.
 San Francisco Bay is
 certainly one of the wonders
 of this coast and obviously
 as fine a harbor as there
 is in the world. A rough
 estimate from the map
 would put it at about
 fifty miles ^{northwest-southeast} long, with an

average ^{width} length of nearly ten
 miles, and yet the Golden
 Gate is narrow enough
 for a suspension bridge,
 even if it does dwarf all
 others. A still longer
 bridge, as you probably
 know, crosses the bay to
 Oakland, next door to us
 here, but a small island
 in the middle helps
 with all that goes on in
 and around the bay and
 with all the surrounding
 scenery including mountains
 up to four thousand feet,
 you can imagine what it
 is like to fly around here.



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There's one thing about scenery flying that often hits one in the eye on the ground, and that is seemingly short distance "upstairs".

A nearby mountain seen from the air for instance may turn out to be hours away by road and so hidden as to be completely out of one's world on the ground.

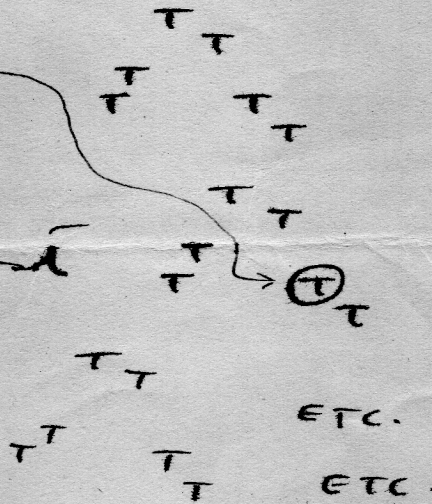
A word of explanation about formation flying seems in order. A section is the smallest unit above a single plane and may consist of two or three planes. Next above

is a division, which most
often consists of six planes,
either two three-plane
sections or three two-plane
sections, but could consist of
anywhere from four to nine
planes. The number of
divisions in a squadron
depends on the size of the
divisions and obviously too
the size of the squadron.
The air group of a carrier,
and all I've described may
be approximate for any air
arm, but particularly so for
a carrier, consists of several
squadrons in the case of a
large ship. Here where I've



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been flying:
 I'm training
 flights we most
 often operate in
 separate
 divisions, but as an "nav" hope
 may even as sections and could
 as single planes. I'm a real
 attached, however, or in practice
 the whole air group operates
 together.



Well, that's about enough
of my scrawl for a while.

Love to all

Toot

P.S. Bound Sat. for outlying field just east of
Coast Range for 10 days to two weeks night flying.