



March 5-6, 45

Dear Folks,

No. 2 Christmas came to-day with the arrival of presents from four sources! "That Vanishing Eden" and the "Sea Witch" were among them, the others being Ernie Pyle's "Brave Men," from Han and Edie, the "Mayor of Casterbridge" and the "African Queen," from Mrs. Lowell and two penguin books, Benet's "O'Halloran's Luck" and "Pipeline to Victory," from 54 Fairmount St. Needless to say Dr. Barbouni was the most welcome, though it will doubtless make me realize how little I saw of Florida. I'm afraid I've read both of Mrs. Lowell's books, though re-readings could do no harm as I've forgotten the Hardy, if I've ever read it, and the "African Queen" in a delight. Well, now there are even more books on the shelves to read, a most comforting thought. Thanks, Ma, for the two from you.

I've also been doing well with letters and Christmas cards. Recent cards have come from Henry, the Payner, in Jacksonville, Jack O'Connor, my forest pathology professor at Mich., whom I used to beat in handball and who would have asked me to go to Alaska with him in the
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summer of '41, expenses paid, if he had realized I didn't have a job (as he said later, though I don't know about how it could have been arranged) also ^{one} from Ollie and even one from the wife of a Daytona friend (fellow instructor, who was in our squadron for a while). Recent letters have come from Nance, Ham, Grandma, Jack, Dan and even Mr. Goodhue, telling of Shippens and Margie's addresses. Oh, and I forgot to mention a Christmas card from Mary and Bobby Lincoln. Well, anyway all of these various greetings, presents are most reassuring. For a while it looked as if all but my own family had forgotten about me, but again much of it has been my own fault.

So it's been snowing again. "Snowbound!" is thumbtacked up on the wall - to make it seem cooler. My cold, by the way, has disappeared, but it had little right to come in the first place.

Occasional clippings are good ideas, Ma, and the last one did just beat Time, though I haven't had ^(given myself) a chance to read it. I got a hold of a World Almanac the other day and couldn't put it down until I had drawn graphs or curves of the population growth ¹⁷⁹⁰⁻¹⁹⁴⁶ of the more significant states, and tables showing the number of towns of certain populations in each state (Mass. has more over 25,000 than any other and as many both over 50,000 and 100,000 as any, 32, 16 and eight, being respectively

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The actual figures, curiously enough, so you can see³ what a funny case one of your sons is! Besides articles, etc., in clippings, interesting weather summaries, spot news, good maps such as those in the N.Y. Times would be welcome, though I don't mean to imply that every letter should literally be padded.

Life is pretty interesting most of the time both on and off the job. The dullest part of flying is when we don't fly, as during spells of poor weather, etc. Though much of our time amounts to marking time, it isn't considered that we are merely doing that. Don't forget that there still are Japs "behind our lines" so to speak, which means that almost anywhere west of Hawaii can still be considered to be in the combat area or war zone.

The boys in the front lines seem to be doing well most everywhere, don't they? The Rhine region situation must have encouraged you a lot of late, Ma., and as for the taking of Manila and Iwo (halving the distance from Saipan to Tokyo) and the latest carrier strikes, it looks as if the Japs are not as inevitable as most everybody thought.

So Hamie has his wings. Bravo! Too bad they had to be silver instead of gold. It certainly puts him in the minority among his in-laws, cousins, etc.

Well I'll have to get to work now on all the other letters owed.

Love T.

T. Richards