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California.

May 19, 43

Dear Toot,

It was great to hear from you the other day. Things have really started moving around here lately. We're due to go out on the tenth of June and certainly have a lot to learn by then. I got a good break in the form of my gunner Dzama, who's already been to Guadalcanal and should prove a good man. It's up to me to do my best. We're flying quite a bit now; all kinds of stuff; dive-bombing, torpedo-runs, oxygen hops (went up to 25,200 feet today with my crew in the TBF; I could have gone higher by putting my flaps down and practically stalling out but didn't see much point in it. I think the highest possible in the TBF is about 27,000'. Night flying is strictly the "shits" if you'll pardon my French. As far as I can see you only need three hours of it, one of landings, one of section tactics, and one of division tactics; however it would be swell if we could make some night bombing and torpedo attacks but that may not be possible before we shove off for the wide open spaces. I'm glad we're leaving as it means I'll get home all the sooner, go ahead and laugh but it's the truth. We're getting Colt 38's instead of the automatic 45's we were issued in Diego; however we may be able to keep the 45's and also draw the 38's which I should like. The 38 looks like it would stand up under mud, water and the like much more than the automatic.

Goodman, do you remember him at Jacksonville, is flying in my section, led by a fellow from Pennsylvania who is a good man. Our officers (exec, flight, etc. have all been to Guadalcanal in SBD's but no one in the outfit has done any torpedo work in action. It's going to be one grand experiment as far as I can see.

I guess there's not much more to tell you; my address remains unchanged as far as I know.

love,

Phil