

432 Sqdn., 17th Bomb. Grp.
A.P.O. 520, 9 Postmaster N.Y.C.
Sept. 12, 1943

Hello, Folks,

See, it has gotten to the point where I don't know which way to write you for quickest delivery! From all reports, you receive these regular letters faster than the Vmail, - but I won't forsake the Vmail. - They give me an excuse for stopping with one page!

Surprise of surprises! - Yesterday when I came back from our mission, I found I had a package awaiting me. And tho it is the first package I've received (that I've written for, I mean, - not counting the Vmail) it wasn't the cake as I had supposed! It was my camera + candies! - And they all came thru in swell shape. - Nary a dent or scratch. -

I went over the camera - cleaned it all - put some film in - and took a couple of pictures this morning just to see if I could make adjustments! - Course, - in assuming I can tho I won't be able to tell until I can see some prints. - Now I'll be able to take pictures of all the things I've been wanting. - The exposure meter - is a little newer model than my old one. - Take it that you couldn't locate it? - Thanks for being so thoughtful.

The candies came thru, too, in good condition. The coating around them is still firm, but once you get thru that - the chocolate is a bit on the

soft side. - about the consistency of the little
hunks of chocolate in Toll House cookies, after the
cookie is cold, but before the chocolate has
solidified - if you know what I mean. - Got awful
mad tho. - after opening them and passing them
around, I ~~was~~ grabbed the bag by the top and
was sorta bouncing it up and down, so I could
get the sack & all back in the box (to help keep
ants out of it) when the damn bottom gave
way! - Don't think I threw the ones that went
on the floor, away, tho. - This is Africa, and candy
is scarce! - Besides, what's a little dirt when
we live, eat & sleep in it? - Thanks again for
being so nice & thoughtful, and I'll try to get
some good pictures to repay you! - I only wish
I had had the camera on my trip across!

This week has seemed to be my week. I
have gotten - besides a lot of V mail from Sister
Fred, & Brother - two regular letters. - One from Pop
written right after Sister's birthday - and one from
Sister herself, written on Aug. 20. - It's good
that you all have vacations and can't go anywhere
- ? - Both Brother on his & Joe-Joe on his, wrote
me most every day! Guess I just rate!

I had quite a trip earlier in the week.
Went over to Sicily on some ferrying business
and had to stay over night. - They put us up
in one of the larger cities - and it was complete.

He ~~spent~~ the night in a nice modern hotel - complete with beds, + clean sheets! - What luxury - but believe it or not - none of us slept worth a darn! - Guess it was both the fact of having a soft bed and sleeping indoors! -

The next morning - we spent in town - roaming the city. - It was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting - and damage was pretty bad - ~~and~~ everywhere. First off - after leaving the hotel - we stopped in a barber shop and had a shave. - Not having shaved for a couple of days - and being dirty - we looked pretty rough. - and in addition to this - my hat had blown out of the plane as we came in for our last landing the night before! - We were really rough! - Well, judging from the barber - the Sicilians feel kindly towards us - for besides taking pains with us - he didn't even ~~nick~~ nick any of the three of us! He decided that as long as he hadn't slit our throats - the relations must be on good terms!

There weren't many stores open - just a few drink bars selling lemonade and vendors selling all sorts of fresh fruits + nuts. - We bought some of the fruits + nuts - Almonds + Hazel nuts. - They were all good but the Almonds had the hardest shells! Almost like black-walnuts or Brazil nuts. - Went in some dry good stores - saw some zippers which we bought for the pockets of our flying clothes. -

While in one store, we got to talking to some

English nurses. - They told us of a store where they were selling ladies' silk hose! - all of us, thinking we might buy some to send home, prevailed on them to go with us and show us the store. - We got there. - but no soap! - They had some - but wanted too much for them, so the nurses told us! - (\$2.40 a pr.) The price made no difference to us, in fact I thought that rather cheap, but the nurses were too furious for us to pay the price! - They said that was the trouble - Americans made so much more money than they, that rather than bargain - we just paid - thereby making it hard on them (the English) when they wanted to buy! - Well, we couldn't very well buy after listening to such a dissertation, and then still present. - So, - they took us to another store. - In here - the prices seemed to be reasonable - but the stockings had no "fashion" to them (whatever that is), so they again wouldn't let us buy! - For me - the stockings looked O.K. - but I didn't like the colors - so again - we didn't pass the matter. -

About then, it was time for us to start out to our field and home to Africa so we left. - But our story doesn't end there, - no! - You see, we had been given a ride into town after dark with "black out" lights, - so while we knew the general direction of the field - we didn't know how to get there on the ground. It's funny, - after flying all the way from Africa and finding it - we were "lost"

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- so to speak - within a few miles of it on the ground! - It makes you wonder, doesn't it? - He was to call and a car would be sent in for us, but it was getting too late to fool around and we couldn't make phone connections for the car! - Well - we got a ride in a jeep going in the general direction. - After we hit a landmark we had seen from the air - we got off & took a truck going down a side ~~the~~ road. - again - after so long a time we spied our plane in a field - so then, we got off the truck, walked across a field, - jumped a creek, crossed some more fields - and finally got to our plane. - Then, just being the 3 of us, - we had to borrow some tools and pull our pre-flight inspection before taking off.

All in all - I really enjoyed the change and odd enough - my hard little "sack" (bed) lulled me off to sleep in record time! - Guess I'm just not cut out for too much comfort?

Believe I mentioned meeting a Lt. Col. Boudreau while in Sicily. - He is in the Air Corps - works under Gen. Eckles, I believe and knows Col. Ames! - He expects to be back in D.C. in a few months and promised to call both you & Col. Ames. - He is seemingly a swell guy. - we talked for a long time that night. - He lives in Arlington - but I guess I told you all that in a V-mail, didn't I? I signed his "short-sporter" and he mine, - with the exception that he put his home telephone number on his. Next time I'm in Washington I'm to call him and we are to have a drink together - at his suggestion!

Being as he is a superior officer, should I consider it an order?

It's getting near show time now - so I'd better start finding something to tie the end of this with! - Tonight we are seeing a show I've never heard tell of. - Micky Rooney in "Andy Hardy's Double Life" or something ~~to~~ like that. Besides I've been writing this off & on all day. - I started this morning went to church, ate, went flying, ate, and here I am again!

Two or 3 of the older fellows are packing and leaving tomorrow for home. - And don't you know we all wish we could crawl in their bags! - They have been over about a year - and now after they've completed their required missions - they are homeward bound. - We call them "lucky" as if it were just an accident they are going - but down deep - we know they have more than earned it - and only hope our turn won't be too far away. - Some say before Christmas and others say later! - We always hang onto the nearest one, and then after it passes - we grab at the next nearest date. -

Well, once more - bye, + thanks for the camera + candy. Keep the letters coming - and I'll try to do the same.

Lots of Love,
Frank