



(11)

No. 4 S. F. T. S.,
Saskatoon,

2-12-41.

Dear Mum and Dad,

I was intending to send a cable for Christmas, but they tell me there's an airmail closing shortly which will get home by the festive season so I'm going to get my money's worth this way instead. I've just finished a note to Hazel, too, and I hope the stockings, electric razors and so on turn up in time.

There is still no more mail from home but I believe there's a ship in somewhere now and after about three weeks when they get the stuff sorted at Ottawa we should have some letters and so on. A couple of days ago Tom got a parcel which was actually posted to Canada before we left Hastings and which must have come over on the boat with us, so you can see that the service is far from fast.

I've written to Mrs Ford in Ottawa just to let her know I'm in the country, but if she hasn't had a letter from you yet, Mum, she's liable to think there's a nut claiming relationship to her.

We have had our 48-hour week-end leave cut out till after Christmas, so that we can have a five-day leave at either Christmas or New Year. We still get our Saturday nights off, though, and last week-end

a lot of the boys went to a big party some of the Saskatoon socialites put on for the New Zealanders, but we "three musketeers" preferred ice-skating and had a great time. I can now manage a circuit solo, but still sit down very frequently, to the great amusement of the rest of the gathering. They have laid down an ice-rink here on the station so if we ever get any spare time that will be a good way to spend it.

We've had a surprise in the weather over the last day or three, as it has been very mild and nearly all the snow has thawed out - leaving, I might add, a morass of mud which reminds me not a little of Levin. Probably you've heard of the warm "chinook" wind; that seems to be what we are getting now, and the result is like a New Zealand Spring. It won't last, though, and I bet we have snow for Christmas.

Bob Thornton, Tom and I have been invited out to "supper," (as these Canadians call our tea), on Saturday week by two of the girls who've been trying to teach us to skate. A real home-cooked meal appeals to us so much by now that we didn't say "no." That's another example of how hospitable the Canadians are. About 20 of the chaps, through official sources, were invited out to supper last Sunday night to private homes where the people didn't know any of them but

were prepared to take them in on chance.

I hope no. 11 is right for this letter because I have begun to slip in my numbering. I think its O.K., but don't get too excited if there is a slight gap somewhere; beginning from now I'm going to be a bit more careful and make a note of what I've written last.

We have developed an affection for the Shasta Cafe in the city here, where we have procured a good meal every Saturday night since we've been here. We go for the "counter-lunch" system, where you sit on a stool at the counter to eat. It suits us, and after camp the food is great. I'm specialising in what the menu calls "chopped beef"; it certainly is good, though the preparation takes so long I'm wondering if they have to kill the beef first. Probably you've seen this counter-lunch business in Yankee land, father.

The Canadians in our course cast envious eyes at our flying-boots, as they themselves don't have such a good sort on issue. After seeing both the Aussie and Canadian Air Forces I'm reaching the conclusion that the R.A.F. C.F. is easily the best service to be in, for even though Canadian pay is higher than A.F. the cash has a long way to go.

For the first time, I went to the pictures on the station last night. It costs a quarter, or about 1/6d, as against the 6d. they charged us on all the

New Zealand stations, but as it was a Bing Crosby show I couldn't complain. It was "The Road to Jangibar," which you may have seen at home by now. I missed it at New Plymouth, missed it at Dunedin, missed it on the boat and finally caught up with it over here, of all places.

One good point about this week in camp is that we are having an extra quarter of an hour in bed instead of rising sharp at six to go flying. That's a real treat, believe me. Some time I must settle down and work out just what time it is at home when there's six o'clock in the morning sounding here. You could do it, Dad, on one of those National Geographic maps.

Well, folks, there's not much excitement afoot at the moment so I think I'll close with the hope that this turns up at 813 Dufferin Street by Christmas. I'm going shopping for stockings if we get off in time on Saturday, but they won't arrive until well after Christmas, I'm afraid.

Love and Christmas greetings from
Arnold G.