



(12)

No. 4 S.F.I.S.,
Saskatoon,

14-12-41.

Dear Mum and Dad,

There was great excitement amongst the New Zealanders in camp last week when the first batch of surface mail from home turned up. I had, all told, 9 letters, which included 4 from you folks, one from Norma and Brenda, and one from Tony Broughton. Another airmail letter from Joan - the last she had written - arrived several days before, so I was doing all right. None of the letters were censored though both airmail ones were opened in N.Z. We are very much wondering when the next lot of mail will get through since the Japs set things going by bombing our beautiful Honolulu.

Tom and I, the Saturday before the Sunday on which the news broke, if you get me, had just ~~posted~~ posted home three pairs of stockings, and some airmail letters which we hoped would turn up by Christmas, and it seemed to us as if that would be a few dollars gone west. However, if my batch of stockings should reach home I'm afraid you won't be very thrilled as the colour was not wonderful - even here the range is starting to be a little limited.

It was a pleasant surprise to find so much written by you, Dad, in those letters and I think it's a poor excuse to close down early because Mum may already have written the news. Over here the same news repeated in half-a-dozen letters would still be fresh. I'm glad to hear that the jolly old thumb is on the way to recovery, but don't go doing any more things like that even if you do get a holiday from work. You were asking if we went through Salt Lake City; well, no, that wasn't the route by which we came; we were on the Southern Pacific line which seemed to keep nearer the coast than Utah, and went through places like Salem, Portland and Seattle. Portland was the only station where we were allowed off the train, and there it was just to walk up and down the platform. I don't think you were ever that far west, were you? Our friend the purser on the boat came from Portland.

Thos, Bob Thornton and I were out for dinner last night for the first homecooked meal in a couple of months. We had a great time, as the people were very nice. Incidentally, the meal is called "supper" here and the Canadians follow the American way of eating almost entirely with a ~~fork~~ ^{fork} held in the right hand - which puts



us at a definite disadvantage where table manners are concerned. We wound up the evening by going shopping, and spending the best part of an hour in a bowling alley like those you've probably seen in the movies. It's great fun and we had a real picnic since it was our first effort at anything of the kind. Vera and Hilda, our skating instructresses, were also able to show as a thing or two about bowling. Vera's boy-friend, by the way, was in the American Navy at Honolulu, and is probably in the thick of it all there.

We know now all about a typical Canadian home from the inside; The one we were in last night had a furnace in the basement which heated enough hot air to heat every room in the house. They consider electricity too dear on this flat land for purposes of cooking and so on, since it seems that there isn't enough of a fall of water for much in the way of hydro-electricity, so they were rejoicing, believe it or not, at the prospect of getting gas in the city for cooking. Electricity seems to be far dearer than in New Zealand.

The family apparently lived in the States for a while, since they were telling us that the gas supply there is a big thing. You will notice, by the way, that I have not included their name, because I can't pronounce it accurately let alone spell it.

It's curious that we all hit upon this idea of numbering letters, because Joan asked me to number them too, to make sure none went astray. The system works, because as I mentioned nos. 1 and 5 from her were airmail which turned up ahead of the surface mail, by which nos. 2, 3 and 4 arrived to fill in the gaps. I was pleased to hear that both you and she received the first couple of letters from on board ship, and I hope that an airmail letter from Honolulu turned up shortly after. Of course, we'll be keeping on writing home in the hope that eventually something will reach home.

Vera's father had a lot of fun cleaning me up at checkers (draughts to you) while Tom and Bob had a musical evening. It made the boys very happy to see me badly beaten because thanks to making a lot of silly mistakes they have both lost a lot of games to me. We don't get much spare time for playing on station,



but usually sneak in a game or two per day.

Thanks to the latest war, it now appears probable that we won't get our Christmas leave, though they may give us a day off. In the meantime we are still working 7 days a week with Saturday night as the only leave we can be sure of getting. For some reason, however, we don't start flying till mid-day to-day, which is unaccustomed freedom.

I wrote a week or two ago to Mrs Ford and got an immediate reply; she hadn't then received your letter, but had some sort of ~~idea~~ ^{idea} who I was, and seemed pleased to hear from a New Zealand relative. If I survive the course here I'll be getting a little leave at the end of it, and may just get a chance to look them up then.

I've had two solo cross-countries here in the last week, and they're not bad fun. The first was ^{to} the training station where the chap Howard from our street got his wings - Prince Albert, it is, as you may remember from his snaps, and it's about 80 miles north of here. The other was to Moose Jaw, 130 miles away, where there is another flying station. It's a totally different

country to fly over from what we're accustomed to, and it's a totally different colour, too, now the snow has returned after its temporary disappearance.

Well, it's later in the day now and over the radio Charlie McBarthry is being accused of running a crooked gambling joint. "Taint true," he says - "besides, I'm busy!" "What doing?" says the sheriff. "Raking a deck of cards!" says Chas.

This afternoon I went up as look-out pilot while another pupil did instrument flying under the hood. It was a change to see just how it looks from the instructor's seat for once. We didn't hit anything.

Well, I hope I didn't leave any questions unanswered. When Great-Aunt Emma's socks arrive I'll drop her a line, but in case there's a delay, please thank her from me. (Mickey Rooney's on the air now in a haunted house - someone blows a match he is holding out; Abloft, his partner, says it's the wind, and Mickey plaintively inquires, "Since when does the wind eat garlic?")

I think maybe that's about all the news so I'll call it a letter, with love to all from
Arnold J.

P.S. - re-opening to say that Christmas callegram turned up to-day (Dec. 15) and was very welcome, thank you very much -

P.P.S. - Greetings from Thos. J.