

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

30-12-14

Dear Mum and Dad,

Christmas is over, and as you can see from the date up above, New Year is just about here. It was not a 100% white Christmas, but there was quite enough snow around to make things look like the picture postcards. We had our real Canadian Christmas dinner with our pal the policeman, and very nice indeed it was, too. Turkey, of course, is all the rage over here for the festive season, but I really prefer our Spring lamb and green peas. Since our policeman has two small children, there was a Christmas tree in the front window, as there is in just about every front window in Canada at Christmas. They make a big fuss over Christmas here - perhaps even more than we do in New Zealand - and every family just has to have a Christmas tree and turkey dinner. If we had been able to accept all the dinner invitations the three of us were given we'd have had enough good meals to keep us going for about a week.

We slept on station, and as there were very few others in the barracks we slept in properly every day, getting up just in time for lunch. In the mess Christmas Day lunch was served up to us, so for once we were able to sit down there and be waited upon; sad to say, however, there was little

improvement in the quality. Our afternoons and evenings went to ice-skating, bowling and a movie or two, and we managed to have a good time for $3\frac{1}{2}$ days.

The "people of New Zealand" turned up trumps for Christmas, too, although they probably don't know it, as each of us received a big tin chock-full of cigarettes and Tobacco just a day or two ago. Of course, mine was an awful lot of use to me and I was on the point of giving it away to anyone who would take it off me when a Canadian waved three dollars at me. He was happy, because he wanted C.Z. cigarettes to send home or something, and it certainly suited me fine. You can see there must have been some value in the parcel because three dollars is roughly worth $17\frac{1}{2}$ and this chap reckoned he was getting them cheap at that price.

Before I forget again - I've been trying hard to remember this little item for you, Dad; I've been talking to an ex-electrician who says that a resistance such as you will probably find with your razor is not a good idea for running things off; he reckons it works all right but is liable to give trouble in a short time, so maybe you can pick up a Transformer such as I remember Jack Black used to have for his Schick.

Our night-flying is all finished now, but I managed to get a bit of excitement out of it on one of my last flights. For the benefit of my technical father, the flaps and undercarriage on these machines are electrically operated, and when I put the wheels up after having to "go round" again when someone beat me to it on the runway before I could land, I found myself in the unfortunate position of having a pair of wheels which wouldn't go down again and a pair of flaps which wouldn't come up, so I had to fly very slowly, climb out of the circuit and fly round about the sky while I hand-wound the wheels down. It takes nearly 200 turns of a little crank-handle, somewhat smaller than Charlotte's crank, but they came down O.K. and I landed in perfect safety. Electricity is a great thing, but just occasionally it lets one down. It was quite a bit of fun, playing round on my own, once I got used to things, for of course the lights went out and I had to use a torch.

To-day I went on a cross-country with another pupil, with him as navigator and myself as pilot. It was quite a bit of fun, and next time we reverse the jobs. Thos and I have been up together for a couple of hours' instrument flying, which also worked out well.

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We have just found out that our final exams for those precious wings start in about a fortnight's time, so I'm going to be pretty busy until they are over. If they wash me out it won't be because my ground-subjects were a total flop - I hope.

Well, it's a day later now and in the meantime Thos and I have been up for a $2\frac{1}{2}$ hour dual cross-country, with me as navigator this time. These cross-countries are very interesting, and I'm not sure that they aren't the best part of the training here. Temperatures were around 25 below this morning and even with the cabin heat on it was not particularly tropical, as I found when I looked at my log; a drop or two of moisture had fallen on it and froze solid in no time. However, we are pretty used to cool temperatures by now, though hands and ears still get nipped.

Did I mention that, inspired by my purchase for Dad, Tom has bought an electric razor? He has been having a grand time trying to break in his skin, so I hope you don't have as much bother, Dad. The expert in Vancouver said it could take a fortnight before you got a 100 per cent shave. That's all, folks, so love from
Arnold f.