

Sun. March 5th

Dear Mum,

I guess you're wondering why you haven't heard from me in so long - Well it's cause we're on our way home, almost back now.

We left Wednesday afternoon. As I write this the ship is pitching & rolling violently - coming down was a cinch compared to this. The last 3 days have been unusually rough. Fri. & Sat were clear days with heavy seas, but today is a real Atlantic storm, waves breaking ~~that~~ over the flight deck and continuing half way down it. We are not flying today but this is the only one.

Yesterday I flew a 4 hours anti sub search. Returned to find the deck really pitching. When I got my "cut" from the signal officer I looked way down and saw the deck. Fortunately

It was on the way up and we met
at a happy medium. It is a
most peculiar feeling. On taking
of the deck was going up & down
with occasional waves washing over
the front of the deck.

The focus has
has been submerged most of the time.
we are now out of tropical
waters and almost back - no more
flying fish on clear blue water.

I hope to get 5 days leave
starting the 15th - most convenient
since Ben gets out then I think.

I will have phoned you by the
time you get this anyway.

Poor Tom Watson has been
sick ever since we should off. My
Tom's experience seems to have placed
me among the "salts" for I haven't
been sick at all. Once or twice I felt

a little funny, but now I am
perfectly OK. Most of the mess
boys are sick so we have cafeteria
service in the wardroom. Haven't had
a glass of milk for over a month.
This is the longest I've gone like that
in my life I guess.

I hope my lousy sickness won't
have disappeared by the time I
reach home. Now I am being
forward to this leave. It will be
of last for such a long time, ~~that~~
I'm afraid. I wish Ben could
just stay right with us, but
it is his vacation and I guess she
should be home a needness to say
the distance between Greenwich & Rye
will not change my style.

I'll phone you tomorrow if possible.

Love to all
Pop

Thurs.

Dear Mum,

Well today we got some more mail so now I feel pretty well gaught up. Among my letters was one from John Pillsbury thanking me for ~~his~~ my card. He also told me that his son Chuck who has been in the Navy for over three years has been reported missing in action. He writes "A very wonderful letter which we received from his skipper does not give us much encouragement as to his ability to have saved himself, as he was flying at low altitude over a thick jungle when apparently his plane was badly hit" Charles or "Chuck" was a fighter pilot. -

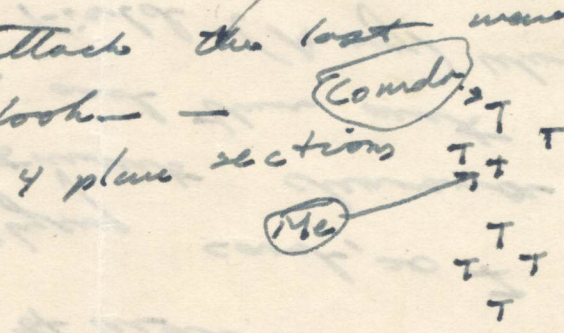
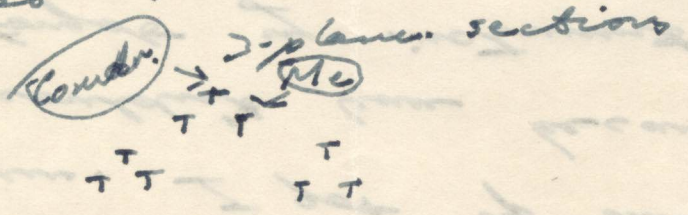
I don't think that tough luck for them?

Oh Mum, I sure wouldn't mind being at Westover Field - what a deal for Irv.

I got a letter from Gault today. The Nassau is a CVE - a smaller class than our ship. Wouldn't it be fun to run into him out there someplace - it is very possible I may.

Yesterday the skipper read off the list of the sections so we will fly in the fleet. You will be relieved to hear that I am flying wing on him, both when we fly a 3 and a

4 plane section - I am very pleased over it for a good many reasons. One is I will think be pretty sure of getting in on most of the attacks we make. Secondly it is a comfortable feeling flying wing on an experienced aviator like "Short" and thirdly it is a relatively safe position since they usually attack the last wave first - Here's how it will look -



He also rearranged the assignments of planes but I still have my 1 to 2, so that's nice. All our planes are now on the ground being checked so all will be perfect when

we go aboard.

Yesterday afternoon I flew 3 of the ③
guys up to Washington D.C. I didn't want
to go, but they needed someone so I took
them. I got up there only to find I

couldn't leave because of weather. I
forgot my instrument flying card, so I
couldn't file and instrument clearance.

I secured the plane and then went
next door to Bolling Field (Army) where
I found Jim O'Brien. We went to a

show and I went the site in
V.O.A. (visiting st. gtrs.) there. This AM
it didn't look like I could leave either

but by calling Airways into the
 National Airport I got special
 permission and clearance to live.
 I brought a pretty Wave Ensign down
 here. She wanted a hop to Norfolk so who was
 I to refuse. ~~She~~

The noon - aft. I went down to
 the Sam T and did some work. Also
 found up room 0206 - It is only 2
 decks below the flight deck. (on the
 same deck as the Captain's cabin & trunk.)
 It is a 7 new room - very nice. Roommate
 are West, Waters, Wykes. couldn't be
 any better. The work on the ship, namely

(5) finding out certain ordnance equipment
was most timing. They were being all sorts
of dills and I couldn't get a thing done

Ran into Carl Morgan here. he just
got an AUS commission in Rec. He worked
out at Memphis. This White is on the
west coast assigned to a carrier.

Today right across from us in dock
another carrier ~~just~~ came in. They had just
returned from a fruitful voyage at sea.
We watched as they unloaded a group
of the Master Race. Nazi supremes -
who had been tested by our planes.
They were a rather nice looking bunch of
men. The officers came off first. They stopped

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UNITED STATES NAVY

to thank our officers before
leaving the ship. They
were put into a station
wagon. Soon afterwards

a group of enlisted men followed.
They were put in 2 big buses.
All this was well guarded by
armed Marines. There was
no exhibitionism - being on
such. None looked too unhappy.

It was a funny feeling to
see them - I just hate to
think of the comparison
between their treatment
and that of our men
captured by those yellow
b...s.

Tomorrow night is the
squadron party. Everyone is
going - wave officers to be
enjoyed - I'm not too
anxious to go, but if my
work out O.K.

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UNITED STATES NAVY

Tell Dad I got his long
boat after of about
Jan 10th.

so long for now and
wish wish love >
ever devotedly,
P.S.

Dear Mum,

Thursday
March 9th

Called Ben up and am now
worried. Mings are going ^{around} up
there. I hope she doesn't get them -
You said that would be. If she does I'll
have to go up to Smith for a few days
myself.

My leave starts a week from
today. I hope I'll be able to get home
by Thursday with we are going to try
to get one of the guys to fly us up
to Floyd Bennett on to Philly in a
TBF. I will have till Tuesday evening
at home it all goes as planned.

Haven't flown since I've
been back from the San J.
Tomorrow we probably will have
a little journey on something. My
plane #2 is O.K. so I don't get
over of the new ones. I've grown

used to # 2 though, and really like
it so I don't mind that.

Have been swimming once a day
here and eating a ^(claiming) "fair share"
of the good food here -

Not yet home Mrs. I'll
let you know as soon as I reach
NY -
much love to all,
Pop

March 23rd

Dear Mum,

Well here I am back at Norfolk again and none too happy about the whole thing. Those five days of leave were probably the happiest of my life. Seeing you all and being with Bar so much was all I could ask for. I hated to leave and only hope that the skipper's estimated 8 or 9 months is nearer correct than the dreary 12 month prediction that goes around. Barbara never looked more beautiful than when I had to leave her Tuesday nite. It ~~was~~^{was} indeed ^{no fun} to have to look into those beautiful big eyes and say goodbye, not knowing when I would see her again.

I was unable to obtain a berth on the train so we slept in the dirty old coaches again. I met Wykes and Grab on the train. Ralph Erb suddenly got a change of orders and will not be going with us to the fleet. It is too bad cause he is a darn nice guy. The train and ferry got us here in time. I arrived to hear the good news that I was to fly at 1130Pm last nite. How dreary. Praying for rain did no good and around midnite I found myself-found myself in the air making field carrier landings. Wow was I tired when we landed. Luckily I got to sleep till 10 this morning. Tonight we have more field carrier landings and tomorrow nite we land aboard a carrier out in the Chesapeake. I am not too anxious to do this but I'll be glad to get it over with. Nite carrier work depends entirely on how well you can answer the signal officer's signals. I hope it all goes well. He uses these electric wands and gives you the signals with them. Everything seems so much faster at nite. It has been raining all day today but now it would start to clear up. I fly from 1030 till 1115 tonite so it won't be nearly as bad.

I am afraid I will be unable to get home again. I didn't expect there would be a chance of it but there was always that inner hope. No luck however.

Bill Moorehead is over at the Training Station and I will call him up and try to get him over for a meal here or aboard the San J when and if she puts in here.

Well Mum this is about all for now. I will try to give you a call Sunday or thereabouts as I don't think we will be here long after that

much much love and many thanks to you and Dad for my
marvelous leave,



March 25th 1944

Dear Mum,

Once more down at the squadron waiting for night flying. This time we are to go out and land aboard the carrier out in the bay. It looks like a real dark night - oh well we have to get it over with. This night carrier work is really exciting. We need two landings to qualify. We were supposed to go out last night but there wasn't enough wind (we aren't landing aboard our own ship). Tonight may be alright.

Had lunch up at Chincoteague today. The oyster season is drawing to a close but some of us went up for a last feed. I sent you some more hoping that they will be O.K. The ones we had today weren't as good as the ones we used to get so maybe yours won't be much good. They are shipping them Monday and you will have to pay the express charges. The guy claimed that was the only way he could send them now.

I really am worried that they will be no good but you can use them for fertilizer or something.

Have done very little flying since I've been back but it worries me little since we will get plenty very soon. They have been working on our planes all the time. That night was the only time we have flown except for a few miscellaneous hops like the one to Chincoteague today.

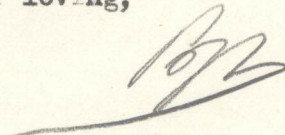
I haven't started to read the books as I want to wait till I go aboard before reading them.

We have a new officer (non-flyer) in the squadron. He is a fellow named White from St. Paul. Knows all the Pillsburys and graduated from Yale in 1942.

No letters from Bar yet but I hope there will be one up at BOQ tonight. How I miss her already.

Well Mum not much else for now. Much much love to Dad, John and that hot "swordfish" pilot Willy.

your ever loving,



March 28th

Dear Mum,

It was such fun to talk to you the other nite. I was on security watch when I got the message to call the operator up in White Plains. I tried once but it was the same old "circuit busy" story, so I began to worry that I never would be able to get back. Tried again from the O Club and was successful.

The nite landings were pretty exciting. We went out to the ship while it was still light and had dinner. After dark we were briefed in the ready room and then sent up onto the deck to wait our turn. The nite was starry and clear but plenty black-no sign of a moon. I was in the third group of three to qualify. We watched the first ones anxiously waiting for our turn. Each pilot was to make three landings. We waited in the catwalk and then when the pilot before you had finished they hollered over the loud-speaker and the next one took over. The flying was fun actually after you got a bit accustomed to it. It was impossible to see the water so it was necessary to check and recheck on your instruments. From ahead or abeam you cannot see the outline of the deck, with a result that you have to judge your turning point differently than in the daytime. They have lights outlining the deck but these lights are visible only from astern. Even after you receive the cut it is impossible to see the deck. You have to land between the decks and figure the deck is there. Usually just before you land you do see the deck so it's not too bad. All but two pilots qualified and they didn't go out. Ours is the first CVL outfit to qualify at nite-quite a distinction. Our fighters qualified 15 of their people Sunday nite, so all in all the "braid" seems fairly well pleased with air group 51. I hope this doesn't mean we are going to operate extensively at nite.

Yesterday we had a couple of hops around here. I went down to the ship taking some of my gear with me. The rooms are the same with the addition of a couple of steel lockers in place of the curtained affairs we used to have. Saw Bruce Righter and he seems fine as usual. I am still in the same room but only after a struggle. They were trying to move the Ensigns off that deck in favor of higher officers (it is the best deck). All were ousted except the four in our room. Then they moved me, but the fellow they had in my place was only an Ensign so I objected and my objection was sustained: ~~SE~~ so I now have the same room-I hope. All our stuff is now aboard. Today we have been hanging around here seeing that the planes are set etc. Tonight I am going to go aboard for good, so this will be my last uncensored letter.

I told you that I saw Dick Sisson. He was at Chapel Hill a couple of weeks after me. He is now in VC36 I think flying fighters and slated to go on the Milkwagon (convoy with the small carriers) run. He said that Caulkins was around here as a sailor. Presymight be interested to hear that I saw Dick. He asked all about the Penguin.

Well, Mum, that's about the works for now. Don't worry if you don't hear from me for a good while. If we go to the Pacific I'll probably be able to get a letter off at the Canal zone. I don't think we'll put in at California but you never know. In any case I'll keep writing and eventually you'll hear. I'll try to remember "the initial game" so look for the double meaning when you don't know the name.

This is the last farewell I guess ,Mum. I have afeeling that we may not be out too long-in fact I sort of think we may get back by Xmas.We have known that this time would eventually roll around.I have not actually dreaded it, but I sure have enjoyed these months of being home-i.e. being able to get home every so often. ~~LEAVE~~ God knows that I don't want to leave you all and my darling Barbara, but I would not change now ^{if I could} and I know that you really would not want me to stay behind.~~fx~~

I guess I have enough happiness stored up in me to last me easily thru the time I will be gone.

much much love to you all,

you can bring,
Bob