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Thursday afternoon

August 3, 1943

Dear Shirley,

I am writing to you as I am climbing to 5,000 feet altitude in the S.A.A.A.B. altitude chamber. We are now coming down lickety split after only one minute at 5,000. This is just to test our ears — to see if the ear drums will normally adapt themselves to quick changes in altitude. As yet I have felt no more than when I would go underground on the train to Philly.

We are now starting a climb to 18,000 feet — still without masks. In two minutes we arrived at 18,000 and are now sitting here for ten minutes to notice the effects. Everyone [sic] of us is belching and passing gas as the pressure is so reduced; one boy had to leave because of ear trouble; one boy vomited but is sticking it out. My pulse is now 96 compared with 80 before flight.

I have just finished putting on my mask. I have the old type continuous flow while about half of the others are using the new type demand flow. The old type

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furnishes and uses more oxygen but that is all that is different. I had to adjust a dial which regulates the flow of the oxygen but now I am all set as we are climbing up to 38,000 feet for an hour flight.

In preparation for this altitude flight squadron 64 has been on special diet and no exercise for two days. We will return to normal on Thursday. Fats and starches were the main banned items. While in classification we went to Post Theatre Number 1 for three hours of films and lecture about high altitude flying and we had another half hour lecture before coming into the high pressure chamber today.

We were led to a big white tank after the last lecture and twenty of us filed into the seats against the wall. It gave me sort of a goldfish feeling for there are big portholes in the walls through which we are being continually watched for signs of anoxia or the bends.

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Two boys have had to leave already because of the bends by the way. We couldn't bring watches or pens into the chamber because of the pressure and I had to take thirty minutes off just before starting this page to please the sergeant by reading a pamphlet on high altitude flying. It's a rule of the A.A.F.

that oxygen masks must be worn above 10,000 feet during the day and on all flights at night.

We have started down now. We are taking a thirty second halt at 20,000 feet so that bends will not set in from too fast a change in altitude. It took us five minutes to come down from 38,000 feet and get out of the tank. My temperature was 99° before and after flight; my pulse was 80 before flight, 96 after ten minutes without mask at 18,000 feet and 80 at 38,000 feet and sea level. I am feeling fine and am eager to take a B-25 up there in reality someday.

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I hope you like the account of the high altitude chamber. I cannot think of much other news.

This week we have started trying to take code at eight words a minute on tape transmission. We have big tests coming in Physics, Naval Identification, Maps and Charts and Math this week. Hygene [sic] is taking the place of Gunnery.

Jim Ham writes from King City (140 miles south of San Francisco and on the Pacific) eight to a room; air conditioning; no marching to class; no parade; eat when you like; civilian orderlies; 48 hour weekend passes; Ryan P.T.s.

I am finishing this up in the barracks. Tell Mother that we are getting Golden Bantam corn and succotash regularly. As for M.M. — all cadets must serve on M.M., guard, C.Q. and other such details. We are rated on these duties and the rating will go on our service record thus helping to decide whether we are to be Flight Officers or Second Lieutenants.

Love,

Lee