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United States Army Air Force

Sunday afternoon October 17, 1943

Dear Mother,

Another crammed week has ended. Thursday I passed a forty hour civilian progress check; Friday I made a dual cross country trip to Casa Grande. At weeks end I have a total of 42 hours 7 minutes flying time — 16 hours 45 minutes solo - and 153 landings.

I had been expecting an army check but received the civilian instead. That is bad for now I will probably have the army check as my final check, probably at about fifty hours, maybe at the end of this week. I hope my luck continues.

The one dual and one solo cross country trip that is made during primary training is very simple but good sound training for future and longer trips, ultimately bombing missions over enemy territory. The trip to Casa Grande (population 2,500) is fifty miles almost due south of Thunderbird II. We fly by contact navigation, i.e. from landmark to landmark. After taking off we climb to 4,500 feet and fly over Scotsdale [sic] (a store and a garage). On our left is Falcon Primary, on our right

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is Phoenix. We fly between Mesa and Tempe and over Chandler (5,000 population). This district is green because of irrigation but soon we are flying over the desert again with Williams Advanced twin-engine three miles square field to our left. Next we fly between two surprisingly huge square Japanese relocation camps. Finally we start gliding down as we fly over the Sacatan Mountains for Three Point Auxillary [sic] Field is just beyond. We land and then take off again for the journey back over the same route but at 3,500 feet. At cruising speed of 85 miles per hour the whole procedure takes about an hour and three quarters. There is no excitement although occasionally a P-38, a P-40 or a formation of AT-10s fly hautilly [sic] by. I am occupied in remaining on course, in holding a constant altitude, in looking out for other planes and at noting the time at which I pass over the different landmarks.

Bob Dowling's mother wrote that she had received her cacti. Have you?

Enclosed is a picture of my flying group. You can see several Stearmans in the background and the Macdowel [sic] Mountains six miles away. To the left is the mile square field; front and rear extends our mile flight line; to the right is the field proper.

Love,

Lee