

1

United States Army Air Forces

Thursday morning

January 20, 1944

Dear Mother,

I soloed out in the AT-17 this morning. (Fifty Two Days Left Before Graduation!)

Yesterday Lieutenant Blacow addressed the cadets of class 44-C on the subject of their future in the Air Corps. Of interest:

1. decline of importance of fighter planes. a. no longer defensive. b. long range bomber protection. c. jet propulsion plane which goes over 600 mph. d. "totally" new P-51 with new super Merlin engine which goes 550 mph. e. so fast that only experienced pilots will be used. f. the present Allison engine

2

entirely out.

2. leveling off of heavy bomber production. a. change from the B-17 to the super Fort - B-29. b. continued production of B-24s

3. chief emphasis on medium bombardment. a. no further B-26 production. b. the "totally" new B-25. 1. two 2000 HP engines replace the 1250 HP and speed it up to 350 mph. cruising. 2. four tons of bombs. 3. one 75 mm and three 50 cal. machine guns in nose 4. two 50 cal machine guns out each side of nose at 45 degree angle 5. two 50 cal machine guns out of rear, top and two waist turrets. 6. no belly turret. 7. it adds up to the fastest most heavily armed plane of all and will be used for low level communication blasting.

3

ship blasting and ground strafing. This is the ship which will blast the invasion path and most of class 44-C will fly it -- probably not in Europe but from the Philipines [sic], India or China or carriers. (The navy just commissioned a carrier which will carry ninety B-25s).

My furlough time is ten days plus travel time from Pecos to my next post. If I take transition in Texas - eleven days; If I take transition in North Carolina or California - thirteen days. You might try the Red Cross local chapter for transportation arrangements by the way.

Taps! Must close,

Yours,

Lee