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Officers' Club

Roswell Army Air Field

Roswell, New Mexico

Monday evening

April 3, 1944

Dear Bernice,

Today I flew a Flying Fortress! At 5:30 this morning I went to the flight line to be assigned a transition instructor and to fly the Boeing B-17 for the first time. Lieutenant Jerry Minia of St. Paul and I were assigned to Lieutenant Paul Standage of Phoenix and at 6:00 the three of us were conducting a pre-flight inspection of Anita before going into the blue. Jerry and I alternated at the controls for four hours and 45 minutes of intensive work. I shot seven landings and practiced stalls, climbs, glides and steep and shallow turns. By the end of the period I was really worn out for during the constant maneuvering [sic] every muscle in the body was at work and every pore sweated. For the Fort is a big plane - combat weight 70,000 pounds, wingspan 104 feet, four 1750 horsepower engines, a cruising

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speed of 250 miles per hour which, above 20,000 feet, figures out to some 350 miles per hour ground speed and which enables it to out climb any fighter at that altitude, most heavily defended bomber with its ten gunners, the most stable bombing platform - big plane or small - in the world, the only plane in the United States Army which is not restricted from flying through thunderstorms. I only hope that I can sweat this transition period through for she sure is a sweet ship even though I damn her for all I am worth when I am holding her straight and level by sheer will power during two and three engine practice.

What did Mother need my clothing measurements for tonight? The wearing of suntans should start very soon here so check with Dad to see about my clothes. I need several regular but good looking suntan shirt and pants with shoulder straps and pocket flaps. The latter can be done without however. I also need a dress outfit for summer and I believe Eppe's is at work on that. It should be tropical worsted or gaberdine [sic] and maybe there should be a shirt-pants combination

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which I could wear for dress without the blouse. Except for this I am in good shape as far as clothes go although I am going to try to get an extra pair of shoes at the quartermasters. Mother owes me some odds and ends - barracks bag, books, underwear, socks, photos, clippings and maybe some other little items like a shortened reinscribed identification bracelet, etc.

This past weekend I traveled to Carlsbad, New Mexico, to visit the noted caverns [sic] about which you will be receiving ample literature soon. The journey of eighty miles, three hours by Greyhound Bus, was taken with my three roommates - Alfred Murphy and Warren Morris of El Dorado, Kansas, and Robert Todd of Joliet, Illinois. We had a grand time. The caverns [sic] were most impressive.

I met the Watkinsboy from Greenbank my first day here but have not seen him since. I believe that he was transferred to Victorville, California, to ferry bombardiers.

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I must give a line or two of credit to the food served here. It is of the finest quality and of any desired quantity. Even ice cream and cake twice a day.

Let me here [sic] from you all.

Love,

Lee

P.S. Please give the enclosed check to Mother.

P.P.S. Get my address right. No mail is coming through.

P.P.S.S. My B-4 bag arrived safe and sound.

P.P.P.S.S. We should get paid this week.

P.P.P.S.S. I think thats [sic] all.