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Officers' Club

Roswell Army Air Field

Roswell, New Mexico

Sunday evening

April 30, 1944

Dear Dad,

I now have sixty hours of flying a B-17 to my credit and have passed my instrument and solo checks. All I have to do now as I complete my transition training is to fill in time requirements for night, formation, instrument solo, bomb approach, high altitude and cross country navigation flying. Shipping orders may be announced at any time during the next thirty days for our transition training will be finished ahead of schedule, it was fast but thorough; a third of our class has been eliminated. As usual, when a shipping date draws near, rumors abound, but as far as I can see it seems as if I will ship to Lincoln Army Air Field, Lincoln, Nebraska, (not Salt Lake City) for assignment to an operational

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unit for approximately twelve weeks of final training with combat crew and plane before flying to war as: 1. first pilot of a B-17; 2. first pilot of a B-24 (since B-17 production is now B-29 production); 3. co-pilot of a B-29.

Two things gripe [sic] me in considering the future: 1. that I have to fly planes that are a chore to maneuver [sic]; 2. that I will not participate in the European invasion.

If you have a chance it would be worth your while to see "The Memphis Belle," the Air Forces movie of a bombing mission over Germany. Some of the combat planes shown probably came from Roswell for planes fresh from the factory are sent here for a breaking in period before being assigned to a combat crew. I wish I could show you a Fort and take you for a ride in one. I am sure that you would find it most interesting riding in a 40,000 to 70,000 pound four fan 4,800 horsepower combat

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bomber. The B-17 was originally designed in 1929, first built in 1935 as an experiment — a four engine bomber, a bomber that could defend itself. If the Fort were allocated four 2,200 horse engines it would today be the fastest yet for when she gets up to 25,000 feet her ground speed she can register a ground speed

of 300 miles per hour. The Fort has a crew of ten, six gun stations, eight separate [sic] radio sets, main and reserve oxygen systems, 27,000 gallon fuel capacity, eight ton bomb capacity, wing de-icing system, prop anti-icing system, four turbo superchargers, Hamilton Standard three bladed hydromatic adjustable pitch propellers [sic] on Wright Cyclone fans, life raft, emergency flares, main and emergency hydraulic brake system, main and alternate vacuum system, six escape hatches, main and emergency electric systems, in short, every-

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thing conceivable to insure a perfect bombing mission against all emergencies.

Among others I received letters from Mr. Baker and Mrs. Hanning last week. By now I am hopelessly behind in my correspondence.

Tell Mother that I received her cookies and they were fresh and delicious. Also tell her that I would like two links removed from my identification bracelet.

Tomorrow I get paid \$268.25. I will pay \$35.00 for board, buy a pair of shoes, two towels, a half dozen socks and a gaberdine dress summer uniform and work uniforms. After all is taken care of I will send the rest home.

Yours,

Lee