

Thursday, December 3rd, 1942



Thursday

Dear Folks-

Could't wait to write of my arrival in the new base - I'm at the one and only hotel, and will go out to the field tomorrow.

From all the rumors the field is o'k' - but you should see the town and surroundings! The population is about 2000 with about 3 "Mex" to every white man (the border is just a half mile south!)

Truly I believe it can be said, that this is 500 miles from nowhere! That unless you count barren mountains, huge cacti, and desert, as someplace.

Don't get me wrong - I'm not in the least disturbed by these

2/

queer surroundings, but to be truthful with you - I never knew a place like this existed.

Be sure of one thing, my weekends for the next eight weeks will be spent in camp writing letters to you.

I do plan to spend one weekend in Old Mexico but I'm sure that will sat my appetite for adventure. All ready I had a fellow on the street say "Amer-ee-cano" to me while we were talking!

Aside from this hotel, a main street half the size of Lowell's, and a few mines (copper I believe), you see nothing but adobe huts and cactuses. The mountains are

3/

on all sides and furnish a wonderful diversion to the otherwise nude landscape. The only citizens of this thriving metropolis that you can see are usually lying on one elbow hat over their eyes and chewing on a tumbleweed. This dog sits a few feet away with equal distain for exertion.

One thing I'm located only 60 odd miles from Lowell - but don't expect me home right away, its Lowell, Arizona!

This change of camps kind of throws a hink in my getting any Xmas gifts for the kids and you folks. Aside from not having a place to get anything, I'm broke until the Army refunds me for my

traveling expenses etc. Tell the kids they'll have to wait until after Jan 1 and then maybe I'll send 'em a trinket from Mexico. Well so long for now and write.

All my love and prayers,  
Your loving son,  
Bruce

P.S. Give my new address to the folks.

P.S. I wouldn't trade these experiences for a million - the only way you can know a country like this is not to drive thru it - but to live in it a few weeks.



# Douglas Army Air Field

## 43-B Army Advanced Flying School Douglas, Arizona

The Army activated the former Douglas Air Field on May 28th, 1942, as a twin-engined advanced flying school for training bomber pilots. It was also used to train soldiers as post mechanics.

Sunday

Dear Mother <sup>and</sup> Dad,

Well I guess you know I tried to get you on the phone this afternoon - this phone is out of order and so I couldn't get connected. As it was I waited three hours to get the call in. Hope you didn't get too nervous waiting. The way things are now, with so much war calls going thru, its almost impossible to call as far as Michigan.

My purpose in calling was just to say "hello" - its been quite a while since we heard each others voices. Well, I'll try again next weekend and maybe I'll have better luck.

As I told you in my last letter I'm so busy now that I guess you'll

2

have to forget the picture I was going to have made. Believe me, I tryed hard enough to get some taken but I just hav'nt had any time outside of camp. When I graduate, around Feb. 6, I'll have a picture taken in my officers uniform and Silver Wings. Maybe that will make up for having to wait so long for a picture.

This camp is certainly in the rough stages - never-the-less, the flying is really o'kay. This big jobs (twin-engines) really handle beautifully. Course there are a few gauges and levers stuck here and there. You should see 'em all - it takes two men just to pilot one of them! But "yours truly" is really getting everything pat. I ask a million questions, study manuals

3

very spare minute, and carry the "tick" orders of the ship around with me! Believe me, if I'm going to be living in one of these babies from now on, I'm certainly going to know it inside and out.

Seeing as how our P.X. is so new it doesn't even have peanuts, I would appreciate it if you could send me, ① some stationary ② Air Mail stamps ③ ask Helen if she could send me a couple of cookies and maybe a piece of fudge or divinity! There, I'm not a bit bashful, am I. Seriously tho, the mess hall isn't so hot here and if I had a cookie to nibble on - even if they were store cookies - it would be swell.

Everything goes well with me - I weigh 185 lbs. (bed-side) have a double chin - no fooling the guys kid me about it, feel like a million dollars and I'm mentally twice the guy I ever was (which wasn't much)

Christmas will be just another day here - Father Bill, our chaplain, has a catholic family lined up for me to eat Xmas dinner with, nice eh? I'll fly in the morning and go to their house in the P.M.

So long for now -  
All my love <sup>and</sup> prayers,  
Your loving son,  
Bruce.



A/C J. McMahon



Dear Mother and Dad,

The first thing is— I passed my 6-4 physical exam! Yeee-!! That's the last one before I'm commissioned in fact it's my officer's exam. I haven't said too much to you about my physicals but, believe me, I've sure worried about them, and this final one in particular. Well it's all over and I'm accepted,

One thing helped me wonderfully and I'll let you in on it. I met a doctor in Tulsa, he practiced in Lindsey and he gave me a vitamin tonic that they give to pregnant women who are sick-to-their-stomachs for the first few months! Well I wouldn't want the fellows around here to know I was taking that kind of medicine! But it has done wonders for my vision, plus plenty of prayers.

II

You asked whether any of my friends are here with me — well my two best buddies went to Luke Field and I miss them a lot. However the fellow across from my room is McWilliams. He's the fellow I told you about a long time ago about. He was at Pearl Harbor during the attack. He is a Catholic and so we have a lot in common. We are going to the same Catholic home for Christmas dinner in Douglas.

Dad your letter was sure swell, you didn't need to send me all that money although it comes at such a good time. I paid my own transportation down here and I was flat broke. We will get refunded by the gov't in a couple of weeks.

I hope that I don't spoil your Christmas this year ————— just knowing that you are having a nice holiday will mean so much ——— it's funny how I worry almost continuously about you, guess its cause I know you worry about me and its im-



possible for me to do anything about it. Just write me and I'll have fun reading your descriptions of the tree etc. Mother, I'll be close to you when you're all gathered together in front of our tree if you let a few stray tears slip out — its o'kay, I won't say "stick that chin out, now." Dad that lump in your throat is o'kay too, I'll probably have a small one in my own. Just say to yourselves, there are others like us this Christmas, but in another year we'll all be together again.

My Christmas this year will come Feb. 6. Providing everything goes well. If they give me only five days to report to my tactical unit I'll hope an airplane and show you what you saw with Wings

IV.

Looks like!

In a few letters ago you mentioned putting parts of my letter into the Ledger. Since then I've tried to find time to write something which you could use, but as yet haven't found the time. In the next couple of days I'll try to write something of interest and let you "proof-read" them before you put it in the paper. It might be of interest to tell as much as I'm allowed to, about our ships we're flying now. There's a thrill about these multi-engined airplanes that certainly bears telling about.

I'm not going to send my friends cards this year because of time and the impossibility of getting any at this post. Dora Thomas has always sent me one so I wrote her a short letter yesterday instead of a card. I've also drop a few lines to some of my other friends but I haven't time to send cards to them all.

Well, goodnight and God keep you well for me until I return — Your loving son,  
Bruce

Sunday

Dear Folks,

Please excuse this paper its the last I have - One of the fellows is getting me stationary in town to day.

I'm just back from church and I can still hear your voices from our telephone conversation. I had no idea they would contact you so soon and so I didn't say all the things I wanted to. But your voices sounded so natural it didn't make much difference what I said.

I went to tell you of the experience I had in Hollywood when I was on my way down here----- I stayed in Hollywood for a night and one day, didn't intend to, but here the reason I stayed the next day - we registered at the Plaza and went out after dinner to "look the town over." We, Bob McKee and Bob Cowie (two swell fellows) went into a few places and just oogled at the people. Then we went down to the Warner Bowling Alleys. Well here where the story really begins - I bowled a two hundred game and a couple of near two hundreds? exceptional bowling for me. The fellow, a middle aged, prosperous looking, man on the next alley started talking to me about



1

The Air Corps etc. It seems he was the vice-president of Columbia Pictures and so he asked me if the three of us would like to visit the studio next day--- we said "sure" (who wouldn't) Well he said they had a few movies being made and they'd use us in publicity shots of the actors. Next day he assigned a girl and a photographer to us and they took us all over the lot. We went on the set of "Destroyer" and met Edward G. Robinson and several others including Glenn Ford the hero. He a swell fellow and took us all over the set. We posed for publicity shots with him and then went to the Ann Miller set.

She was making a show called "Reville with Beverly" and its theme is supposed to be about a girl who plays recordings early in the morning and is the "soldier's sweetheart." We posed with her, boy is she beautiful! and met some more famous actors & actresses.

Now keep your eyes open because these shots might get into Eastern papers as advertisements on these movies!

The girl that took us around just wrote me a letter and said they were sending me a print of all the pictures they took of us with the stars. As soon as I get these pictures and "show them off" sufficiently to the new here, I'll send them on home to you.

3  
Ain't it awful the the way you seem to get acquainted with the famous people! I'll send you the letter I received in this letter.

McKee and Cowie, Maryland and Tennessee respectively, are the two fellows I've been going around with but who are now in Luke Field - I won't see them again for a while but hope to again before this is over with.

I read in the Ledger about Earl Dwyer talking over the radio from London. Seems he gets around a bit, also.

Yesterday I went down and had my officers blouse fitted (maybe its a bit too optimistic) The gov't allows us \$250.00 for our uniforms and it'll take about all of that. To give you an idea of what our uniforms will cost - a blouse = about \$50.00, "pinks" about \$18.00, hardware \$15.00, caps \$10.00, etc.

Well, so long for now -

P.S. I wrote Kelli a letter and received one the next day from her! Tell her I wrote first -

All my love and prayers

Your loving son,  
Bruce

