



U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

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C/O Mrs. Eva Killen

My dearest Cathie:

I suppose you thought you would never hear from me again--well, you aren't going to get off that easily, because I'll be pestering you for a long time to come yet. It was bad that I didn't get a chance to see you ere I left "Jolly Old England", but the way I figure it, it won't be too long before civilian passenger planes will be resumed for flights to England and other European countries--England will be the most sought place, because so many G.I.s have learned to like it, and want to return to her shores someday, just to see how the old "adopted" country is progressing.

Honey, I AM AT HOME! I have seen my Mother, and held her in my arms, and squeezed her until I thought I should break every bone in her body, and she loved it; she laughed, and cried, and laughed, and we celebrated until five o'clock in the morning the day I arrived. By the way, the best birthday present she could have received--was me; my birthday, I mean, for darling, I finished my processing, red-tape, and everything and arrived home July 20th--coincidentally everything worked out just that way--it was the first birthday I had spent with my folks in four years, and is an occasion long to be remembered. Landing in the states Friday--Friday, mind you, July 13, a day which is considered unlucky, but for me it was not unlucky--and I was at home to see final and complete victory over Japan. My coming home has really been beneficial to the war effort; I thought I was doing some good, but maybe I should have come home long ago--don't you think. As long as I was in there, the enemy had a glimmer of hope, probably thinking I would mess something up so terrifically that they might possibly have a chance, but the moment I withdrew to an inactive theatre, they knew their hope was lost, so they capitulated.

There are so many things I want to tell you that I don't know just where to begin. I had a wonderful flight home--in a Liberator, and it took less than a day to make the journey. I really kissed the good old American soil when I reached New England--in Connecticut. The first thing I did when I reached the air base, was to fill up on delicious peach ice-cream, cram nickels into a juke box (the first time I heard after my return was Chopin's Polonaise in A Flat Maj.--it is sweeping the country now. When we left Canada, on the last leg of our flight (7 hours) July 13, I went to sleep, and when I awoke we were over Maine--about ten thousand feet high, and through a slight cloud I could see a tiny village nestling against the breast of a mountain, and massive forests for hundreds of miles, and a lazy river was only a pencil-line, but the thrill that surged through me is indescribable. Passing over large industrial cities of the East, farms with hundreds of acres, and



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high mountain peaks....I knew I was home at last. Everyone has been swell to us since our return; nothing is too good for us--and this is still a land of plenty. I had read various reports about the food situation; so the minute I hit New Orleans, I went into an air-conditioned cafe (they have to be air-conditioned here--the temperature hovers around 98 degrees, and often gets to 103-105, and after England's 50-60 degrees it's unbearable) to see how the food situation was. This is the breakfast I had....choice of pineapple, pure orange, or tomato juice, cereal, two fresh eggs, bacon, coffee, toast with real butter, and a slice of banana....all for 36 cents (in English value that is 1 and 9, or 21 pence. When the waiter gave me my check I was almost floored; still people here complain about the food situation! I have eaten so much since my arrival, I feel that I shall never be hungry again. My Mother has made big, delicious lemon-meringue pies, coconut cakes, roasts, steaks, chicken soups, chicken & dumplings, Southern fried chicken. I know a fellow (a buddy who used to ~~xxx~~ work with me who runs a market, and he saves me meats--which are scarce now) I've drunk ice-cold beer (lager--American) until I look like a beer bottle.

Food rationing has ceased since the day Japan surrendered, and gasoline (petrol) has gone off the ration list; shoes were the only items of clothing rationed and they say it will be lifted in three weeks, but I think sugar and cooking oils and fats will continue until January of next year.

My brother who is stationed in France recently spent a furlough in London (he hates France & loves England; he's divorced his American bride to marry a girl at Warrington--on the west coast, near Liverpool) and he says that he could get anything he wanted to eat in England now. I certainly hope you don't have to suffer much longer--you've had six years of it now. I think it won't be too long before everything will be back to normal.

Gosh, how I miss London; even New Orleans seems boring compared to that city. I've had some wonderful times there in my two years, and all over England, for that matter, and I shall never forget it, and I am going to return just as soon as the situation prevails to make it possible, and you may lay to that!

I've written a long newspaper article, sort of a comparison between the two countries; I don't know if it will be run as a serial, or put into one publication....it is almost book-length (short novelette) and the editor I used to work for nagged until I finally wrote it (in my leisure) I am frank--telling the good and the bad; incidentally I put in a plug for the English girls, saying they bow to no woman, and what was their power to attract--20,000 or more becoming brides of American soldiers and sailors....that in itself is conclusive proof that they HAVE something. Especially one I know.....

In less than a week I must return x to the Army; I've lived



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such a life of comparative ease that I feel just like a civilian.... But now that my chances of going to the Pacific are slim, I won't mind going back. My Mother has good news from my oldest brother--who has spent three years in combat in the Pacific; he is on his way home. It has been over ~~th~~ four years since I saw him, and I wish he'd arrive before I leave. I know that I am going North when I go back--about two thousand miles from home (almost as bad as being located in England as far as chances are of getting home) The Army plans to release five million men in a year or eighteen months--I hope my number has a top priority. I still haven't decided what I am going to do when I'm out--my people want me to go to Louisiana State University, the largest school in the South (only about three hundred miles from here, and I could get home on weekends) to take journalism. Maybe--maybe not; that's too far yet.

I saw the little French girl (once) and once was enough. If there ever was any spark in me, it's dead now, and she's not for me. She gave me a nice wallet for a birthday present, which I was ashamed to take, because I knew I'd never see her again. I told her it was no use; that I couldn't like her in a matrimonial way. I'm being frank with you, Cathy, and telling the truth, for if it was any other way, I didn't have to mention it. But definitely, it is all over, and has been for years, but there was something in me that wouldn't let me be conclusive, until I got back to see for myself. I only wrote her two letters all the time I was in England, and that was because I was lonesome.

Mom hasn't answered your letter, but it isn't because she hasn't wanted to. She's been ill, and her eyes are bad, and she writes so seldom even to my other brothers. She's waiting for some new lenses to arrive; they have to be changed every year. But she likes you--a lot. My bud in the Pacific is engaged to a New Zealand girl, and she can't stand up to you (and that's not flannel, as you would say)--her writing is poor, her composition bad, and her English terrible. Are there any French people in N.Z.? She writes like a French girl, speaking broken English.

Hundreds of friends, relatives, and acquaintances have been asking me to spend days and nights, and to take meals with them, all of which I refuse, because I can't keep all the dates, and if I accepted one, and not another, they all would be angry, so I just stay with Mom and a special aunt I like.

How long do you think you will be in the service; not long I hope. They should be letting you out, now that it's over. I know you'll be happy to return to civilian status. Cathy, I've got a G. I. haircut now, and it stands straight up, giving me about 2 more inches in height. Much to my sister's consternation, I have retained my in-famous moustache. It gives me a few more years in appearance. When I got into the barber's chair in Conn, the old guy asked me was I 18 or 19--what an insult! So I decided to grow it again.

Cathy, the little girl is so long-compared to others she writes. But I'll be writing regularly & often if you answer. I hope you do.

R.T.O.

And if you have a chance send me a
snap of yourself - will ya? For now I'll
say *Amor prevale* - *Chiusi Hasta la vista*,
etc. All my love to you, Yours
Heathcliff