

Cadet North. U.A. GB 1583475

M.P.O. 304 R.C.A.F. Station,

Mountain View,

Ontario,

Canada.

17. 12. 43.



REGINA SASR

Dear Father & Mother,

At last we have been given a whole day off, so instead of going out, I am staying in, and trying to catch up with a little of my correspondence. Very many thanks for letter of Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>. and for air letters dated 28<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> of Nov. and airgraphs 24<sup>th</sup> Nov. & 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. all received during the week.

Trust you are both in the best of health and that Mother has fully recovered from the flu, I was a little anxious when I read in the papers about the epidemic in England, was sorry to hear about poor old Pilmore, I'm sure "L" dept. would miss him, so hope to hear that he has fully recovered and is once more back in his rightful domain.

Apparently, from Barbara's last letter Mrs Perring has been very ill and only just avoided pneumonia.

I also received an airgraph from Basil last week, he should I think, by now have graduated, so in case you get his new address before I do will you let me have it.

Your letter was I'm sorry to say, rather foolishly I imagine, damaged by the censor, on the last page you had added a P.S. (By the way have you observed)

was all that I could read, so I'm rather curious now to know what I should have observed, and of course the writing on the other side was missing as well; perhaps I should only write on one page or one side of a page rather, in case they decide to cut something out of mine, but its rather a waste of paper I think, and I'm sure I never write anything that could be justifiably censored; I will write more about my ideas from your suggestions later on in this letter, I hope, but first I want to write an account of my travels whilst on leave and after leaving Moose Jaw, so I will root out my diary and try to give you<sup>a</sup> connected account or more or less anyway, I had intended to write this before now, but I'm sure you understand and will understand why my letters are sometimes few and far between.

I left Moose Jaw on Saturday October the 30<sup>th</sup> on the night Dominion (The Montreal-Vancouver express) and arrived in Calgary at 09.30 hrs on Sunday morning, I decided to spend the day looking round Calgary, although I had stopped there previously on two occasions, whilst changing trains, it was only for about two hours so I had very little time to see much of the City.

I had quite a substantial breakfast in one of the many Chinese restaurants that are to be found in all the large Western cities (Canada of course is a very ~~cosmopolitan~~ cosmopolitan country, just for



REGINA, SASK.

curiosity I counted the number of different nationalities that I met in one days travelling, I counted no less than twelve entirely different nationalities, all civilians and all as far as I could make out were Canadians, this gives you some idea of the number of nationalities that go to make up this great Dominion.

But as I <sup>was</sup> saying before I started to wander, I had breakfast booked a room at the Y.M.C.A. for the night and dumped my ~~bag~~ <sup>bag</sup> there, and then spent the rest of the morning wandering round Calgary; in the afternoon I rode out to St. Georges Park, built in a marvellous setting on an island in the centre of the Bow River. It contains a very good modern Zoo, and in my opinion the greatest attraction a rather unique collection of life size models of prehistoric animals of the "Mesozoic era" including most of the well known dinosaurs and reptiles that roamed about the American continent about 80 million years ago.

A few of the models were reconstructed from fossils and bones discovered in Alberta by a Mr. W.E. Butler of the South Kensington Natural

History Museum.

I walked back to Calgary along the bank of the Bow River, had some tea at the bus station with a Canadian that I met in Regina, who was waiting for a bus. At night I went to evensong at the Anglican Cathedral, and was surprised to find the church packed about 15 minutes before the service. Later on in the evening who should I bump into in the lounge of the Y.M.C.A. but George Campbell who was at blur with me, he came over with some more of the "b" flight fellows, so we had a long and interesting chat about old times.

On Monday morning I caught the 09.15 train to Banff, its a pleasant ride through the foothills, past several ranches and an Indian reservation, I met a New Zealand airman on the train who had an address in Banff, so we went along together, the train arrived in Banff at 11.55; they had only had about six inches of snow, so skiing, which I had hoped to do, was out of the question, as six inches is not enough to cover the tree stumps and the uneven ground.

On Monday afternoon we met a young couple who were on holiday there and they offered to show us round in their car, they took us up to the hot springs; the water naturally heated comes from the sulphur spring, we bathed in them 6,000 feet above mean sea level in November surrounded





REGINA, SASK.

by snow, it was really exhilarating, we afterwards went for a drive along the Bow Valley past the gigantic C.P.R. Hotel which in peace time was always crowded with American tourists, but now closed for the duration, as it requires a staff of over 500 to keep it in operation, after visiting the Cave and Basin a very pretty floodlit underground pool, they invited us to have dinner with them, and told us that if we cared to call at ~~the Hotel~~ for them in the morning they would take us to Lake Louise, about 41 miles West of Banff and ~~to~~ probably the most famous beauty spot in the Canadian Rockies. It was a marvellous drive along the snow covered highway round the bases of the mighty peaks of Castle Mountain so called because its shape resembles the great ramparts of some gigantic castle, we also past herds of deer and moose and a few buffaloes, I will not attempt to describe the beauty of Lake Louise, even the photographs that I hope to send do not do it justice.

Mr & Mrs Parker the people who took us, treated

6  
no magnificantly, we<sup>6</sup> dined with them that night and as they were returning to High River, Alberta their home on the Wednesday, we said goodbye, I promised to write to them occasionally, as Mr Parker wants me if possible, to visit some of his relatives in England when I return.

Owen the New Zealander was meeting some friends in Victoria on Thursday evening so he left for Vancouver on the morning Dominion.

I decided to climb Sulphur Mountain (8,000 ft above M.S.L.) with three Australians who were staying there, It was quite good fun climbing up though, as very often we were up to our knees in snow and occasionally up to our waists, so we arrived at ~~the top~~ ~~wet~~ through, the view from the top was really magnificent, to the West was the Bow Valley to the South the Spray and below us the fork where the river Spray flows into the Bow River, so called because it was from the trees along the banks of this river that the Red Indians took the wood for to make their bows and arrows.

On Thursday I left Banff on the Dominion which leaves at Midday, bound West for Vancouver, the 21 hour journey through the Rocky, Selkirk, Monache, Coast, Cascade, and Rossell ranges, is 600 miles of really spectacular scenery, that has to be seen to be believed, great snow covered peaks



REGINA, SASK.

rugged precipices, glaciers, waterfalls, foaming torrents rushing through deep canyons, the train crawls through beautiful gorges, round the bases of mighty mountains, the ledges on which the track runs have been hewn out of the solid rock of the mountain side, round lakes set like vast sapphires and amethysts amid the great forests of spruce, fir and pine that cover this area.

I arrived in Vancouver at 9 o'clock on Friday morning, I met an R.A.F. fellow of the medical section, Jim Jewitt, whose home is just outside Newcastle; on the station, he had come on leave from Weyburn, Sask. another R.A.F. Station, so as he had nowhere to go and like myself. Before noon there he came along with me, we went along to the United Services Centre where after a hearty breakfast we made a few enquiries at the hospitality section, who made arrangements with an English lady who was willing to give two boys bed & breakfast for a week, she treated us very well indeed, so we were most comfortable there.

Vancouver from the "skyline" view might almost be mistaken for New York, especially from the harbour as there are so many tall buildings that one could term "skyscrapers" I suppose.

On Friday night we went to a dance at the "Alma Academy" and spent a very enjoyable evening, as the dancing was more or less English style with only a little "jiving".

As it was fairly late when we retired to bed we stayed in bed until lunch time on the Saturday. In the afternoon we took the street car to Stanley Park, a thousand acre <sup>park</sup> forest land with great Douglas pines, many of which are over 50 ft. in ~~the~~ circumference, situated on the end of a peninsular, jutting out into the sea; we walked about ten miles round the Park, but it was so beautiful we didn't notice it.

That evening we stood on the famous Lions Gate Suspension Bridge, on the <sup>same</sup> spot where their Majesties stood on their Canadian tour in 1939 (or so a plate informed us) and watched the sun gradually sinking over the Pacific.

I will not go into very great detail when describing Vancouver and district as I'm sending a lot of postcards and books that describe it much better than I could.

On Saturday night we met two girls in the "United Services Club" and went with them to a dinner and



REGINA, SASK.

dance at the "Cave" one of the big night clubs in Vancouver.

On the Sunday it was again fairly late in the day before we eventually managed to collect enough will power to crawl out of a comfortable bed.

I went to St James a very fine modern church in Vancouver, I'm reading a small booklet about the church though.

On the Monday we spent the morning looking round the large, modern, 14 storey, white stone City Hall, we went to the top in a very fast elevator, but as it was a very typical English November day, very misty and damp we couldn't see very far. The climate of British Columbia is very different from the rest of Canada, and very similar to that of England.

I was particularly impressed with the very fine ~~to~~ wood paneled council chamber in the City Hall, If I had more time I should like to write about their system of local government, which is quite different from ours, for instance their Mayor is paid \$5,000 a year and an

an Alderman receives <sup>10</sup> \$1,300 a year, and so they have more authority and responsibility than their English equivalents.

In the afternoon we visited the Law Courts and after looking all round we stayed in one of the courts for two hours listening to a trial.

At night we went to a dance at the U.S.C.

On Tuesday Jim wanted to do some shopping so after looking round some of the larger stores with him, I left him to his shopping and spent the rest of the day looking round some bookshops and the library.

At night we went to a cinema and saw an old film that was being reviewed "The Young Mr Pitt" which I quite enjoyed.

On Wed. we went to the top of a "skyscraper," the "Marine Building," and walked round the docks and China Town.

In the afternoon we took the train to New Westminster a town at the mouth of the Fraser River, it was here in 1808 that ~~the~~ Simon Fraser was attacked by Indians, and today there is quite a large Indian reservation there.

That evening I saw Jim off at the station, he was very sorry to leave Vancouver but his leave was up before mine.

On Thursday I said goodbye to the friends that



-REGINA, SASK.

I had made in Vancouver, as I intended to spend <sup>from</sup> Thursday afternoon to Friday dinner on the North shore, so I took the ferry boat over to the North shore and caught a car and then a bus to the Capilano canyon, one of the prettiest gorges I've seen, and walked over both the swinging suspension bridges, and gosh! they really swing when you walk across them, all that you have to hold is a rope, on one of them.

I left Vancouver at 19.15 hrs on Friday, it was a lovely evening, with a glorious full moon, and a cloudless sky, I stood in the corridor by the window for quite a while as we passed through the Fraser canyon, a really beautiful sight, with the moon reflecting in the rushing water of the Fraser and bathing everything in a wonderful silver light.

During the next afternoon we passed the Great Divide which is the boundary between British Columbia and Alberta, and the highest point on the ~~the~~ C.P.R. here a stream divides all the water that goes West eventually flows into



the Pacific all that <sup>12,</sup> turns East flows into the Atlantic or Hudsons Bay.

So after a long journey I arrived back in Moose Jaw at 07.50 hrs Sunday morning.

After going to 08.30 communion at St. Johns, by the way I don't know whether I mentioned it but I heard a very good Sermon ~~by~~ preached here by the Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, just before I went on leave.

After having breakfast in Moose Jaw I leisurely strolled to the bus stand; on arrival at the drome the storm just broke around me, but as previously explained I managed to get away alright on the following Tuesday, although the S.W.O. was a little peeved about it. On the way to Mountain View I had a 1½ hr. wait at Toronto, whilst changing trains, so I had a walk round part of the centre of the city. Belleville which is the nearest town and station to the drome, is a fairly sized town with; I should say City actually, three cinema's, from the air it looks about the same size as Melton.

Quite a large number of the inhabitants are French Canadians.

The R.C. church is a large impressive building standing on the top of a hill overlooking the Town, there is also a convent and a modern school.



REGINA, SASK.

On the morning that I arrived in Bellville, I went into both the R.C. and Anglican churches whilst waiting for a transport to come in and take myself and hit out to the drome; it was about 12.30 hrs and the C. of E. which is very low, and built on the style of a typical Victorian chapel, was of course empty at that time of the day, but there were quite a number of people in the R.C. church including a number of children of about five and upwards who had evidently come in on their way home from school, some were lighting candles, others were kneeling in front of one of the stations of the Cross, or one of the many statues and saying prayers, it was all in a way most impressive and pleasing, but as I prayed and went away I had a feeling that somehow, somewhere, something was lacking, were they really on the right way to achieving their objective?

Mountain View its self is actually on an island in Lake Ontario, but is connected to the mainland by a swing bridge, the island is called "Prince Edward County" and is situated

147  
about 120 miles East of Toronto and 40 miles West of Kingston.

I have already told you our programme here and its still the same except for occasional days off, and today's the first for three weeks.

I think we are getting five days leave at Christmas though so am thinking of taking a trip to Chicago with one of the other fellows on the course.

I posted quite a few Christmas cards to people at home, hope they arrive in time.

I'm afraid I haven't much time to discuss at any length the subject of your letter, as I had hoped to do, but I must say that on first considerations, your remarks about matric. do not exactly appeal to me at my age, it depends though on what you have in mind, as regards the conditions under which I should take it; it is though, I think you will agree something that should be taken between the ages of 16 and 18, and might now be rather a waste of time in some ways, in any case there is I believe talk of it being abolished; but disregarding this, I should like to know what you think of my above remarks regarding the matter.

Pleased to hear that you use a little discretion



REGINA, SASK.

when speaking to Mrs Exon; if Geoff. is lucky and goes straight home from S.F.T.S. he may I should imagine, be home about next February or March; I shall, I hope if everything goes smoothly finish the course here about next February, after this I only have one more course before I graduate, which should be about next June I hope, so with a bit of luck I may be seeing you again next July.

Yesterday was about the coldest day I've yet experienced in Canada it was nearly  $14^{\circ}\text{C}$ . below on the ground, we haven't had very much snow here so far though just enough to cover the ground with a carpet of white.

Two of the fellows managed to get some films for their cameras last week, so we are now waiting to see how they come out, as they took quite a few shots of the flight at work, if they come out, I will send you some in my next letter.

Some of the fellows have had colds, but so far I've managed to avoid everything of that nature, and am pleased to say that I still

feel quite fit.

As regards sending money over here, I think it can be done with a lot of trouble, but please don't send any unless I ask you to, I would much rather manage on my pay, which I can quite easily do, providing it doesn't put you to any trouble though you might make enquire some time, just in case I need any, which I think is most unlikely, I should like to know if it can be sent though, just for curiosity.

I really must go to tea now, so with all my best wishes for the New Year,

Ever your loving son,

Alan