

0715 Thursday  
September 7, 1944  
To 1600 Saturday  
September 9, 1944

Hi Beautiful;

I'm on my way and think that right now I am going through Nebraska. Everything looks so flat around here that it must be Nebraska. No two places could look like this. This train ride is awfully boring. Seeing the American countryside through a dirty and streaky window and a soot-laden screen is no sight to inspire poetry and it does not.

Yesterday I did not write. I played poker (penny ante) in the morning and won a little over a dollar. Then, at 1:15 we ate. I was never so hungry in all my life and really ate everything and was contemplating the plate (paper) which was well saturated with food juices when they appeared with seconds, so I really ate quite well. It's quite a job eating on the train though because you have to place the paper plate on your knee while you prepare the coffee and then, when the plate becomes too hot to hold there, you shift the cup and put it on the window ledge where every movement of the car slops a little coffee over the side of the cup, but by that time you're rather more interested in eating than in worrying and crying over spilt coffee.

2.

This odyssey started when the heart warming cry of "B Company on the road" rang clear and shrill on the midnite [sic] breeze, echoing and reechoing throughout the sixty tents in the company area, and bringing forth from these same tents the curses of all the ages. We finally got up at about 4:45 and with a lot of noise, to be sure a company was awakened also, we ate a fair breakfast, turned in our bedding, stacked our foot lockers, and finished preparations for our trip. I just barely crammed everything into my duffle bag and hand bag. Sr. Fick – for whom the boys found a nicer and more appropriate name not too unlike his own name – was out there to tell us we were going on a train ride but that he couldn't tell us where – of course everyone has known for weeks when he was leaving and where he was going. They loaded us on trucks and carried us over to the station. Then, strictly Camp Grant stuff, they had us carry our bags a block away to the drill field to await the coming of the train instead of waiting right at the station. We then had to carry them back. As we started to get on the train the

3.

band appeared to serenade us until we left and all the battalion officers were there to see us off. Much hypocrisy was in evidence as farewells were exchanged. We finally pulled out at about 8:30 a.m., traveled fifty miles directly east toward Chicago and then swung directly west and were off. I've already told you how I spend the morning and about the meal I ate.

I had a berth with two of the fellows who were in the tent with me but one of them moved into another car so Thomas moved in with us and he and I shared a lower berth while Jiminez had the upper. It wasn't bad sleeping but I was nearest the windows and there's a bit of metal exposed there. Once in a

while I would back up to that and it would prove to be quite cold much to my dismay. It would be much nicer if you were my berth mate here darling. I'd love that much more honest I would. Someday – soon I hope – you will be. O, happy day!!!

The scenery is really breathtaking Sweetheart, I wish you could see it all with me. Everything is so big and there's so much of everything that it has to be seen to be believed.

4.

One of the fellows in Haward Gold's car just looked up, down and all around as we were going over the Rockies and he said "God, look, land everywhere! Here there isn't any land there's mountains, and there's land all over there." He just couldn't get over it all. I'm almost in the same boat and find everything awe-inspiring.

Instead of trying to describe all the things I see verbally, I'm drawing pictures of them. I think you'll get a better idea of what everything is like that way. I still wish that you were here with me to share all this scenery, and also so I could just make love to you. I love you so much, sweet, and I hope it won't be long before the war is over. I miss you terribly and it's a lot worse now because I realize that I won't see you till it's all over. I can look forward to our being together again though and that is a beautiful prospect. I love you.

Yesterday we went through Nevada. I didn't see much of it though because we entered Nevada in the late afternoon and traveled through the biggest part of it after dark. The conductor tells me I didn't miss anything though because there's nothing in the whole state except about four small cities.

5.

I did see the bright lights of Elko. All there was in the whole town was nite [sic] clubs. They were quite nice looking too. It's a gaming town. Wine, women, and gambling. Just like Reno.

They had hooked on a trainload of merchant marines, a couple trainloads of WASs and a trainload of Waves to our train. Not bad eh? Of course they do have guards there and the doors between our cars and the girls cars are locked, but love will find a way. In my present condition though you need not worry. I am filthy. All our locomotives have been coal burners and I look as if I had fried the boiler all the way. I'm just going to throw my underwear away instead of trying to wash it. I feel like doing the same to my sun tans but I guess I won't. The first thing I'm going to do it take a shower. God knows I need it.

It's very nice here in California and so far seems to live up to all the bragging I've heard Californians doing about it. I hope it remains this way and that I have the opportunity to do some sketching here. There seems to be so much here that could be sketched that I'm itching to get to work on it. How do you like some of my first attempts at landscape sketching. The

6.

sketches were all made while the train was moving with the exception of the sketch of Wendover. It's quite a job drawing while moving and a lot of the pictures are composites of two scenes. It's been a lot of fun drawing though. It's just like writing to you and describing everything of interest.

Salt Lake City, which Mr. Gallacher seems to be so fond of, is stick out in the middle of nowhere. It's completely encircled by high mountains and the city and the lake are in the center of this natural bowl formed in the center of the mountains. Part of the land in this bowl is fertile but the greatest part is salt flats – large tracts of flat land completely covered with white salt. It's awfully desolate and barren. There was one sign we saw which amused me. It was out in the middle of the Great Salt Lake Desert and read "Only 270 miles to Scott's Shady Count. Air Conditioned Touriste Cabins". That's an idea of comparative distance, in New Hampshire the sign would have read 270 feet. Everything here is immense, the mountains, the deserts, everything is on a gigantic scale. Little towns cluster out in the middle of vast distances on

7.

the sides of mountains and they look like towns of doll houses. It's quite cool up here in California's Mountains. We've just stopped again and everyone is pouring out to try to get into the railroad station. One of the fellows got officer the last stop and got himself a complete breakfast of ham and eggs.

On the road again. We've left Keddie, California and are going through Feather River Canyon, a beautiful place. The train is going over a track about halfway up the side of a mountain. Feather River flows way below us. It's a small and swift stream running over rock and is way down so that it looks like a very little creek. Across the canyon are more mountains rising way above us. A highway goes along the other side of the canyon about fifty feet above the river. The sides of the mountains are covered with tall evergreen trees. Little bridges cross the river providing an outlet to the road for some of the houses that are on this side of the canyon. I never felt like fishing before buy I think I'd enjoy it here. It all looks so nice and peaceful and looks as if it were just put here so that people could come here to relax and enjoy themselves fishing. It's truly beautiful.

8.

Well, Honey, I'm here in Marysville, California. It is a small but rather clean looking town. If I'm able to get off I'll look up Bob Kennedy and try to get in town tonite [sic] to see what it's like. The Camp is about five miles from here and about 2000 miles from where I want to be. Anywhere away from you is too far away from where I want to be to suit me. I love you Darling and will tell you so every nite. [sic] Just listen hard to hear me. That's one thing you'll always know regardless of how far away I am from you.

It's terribly hot here. The sun is just roasting me as I sit here in the car being switched around. I guess we're finally off for the camp so I'll close now Sweet. Goodbye.

I love you with all my heart

Freddie

I'll send the sketches along separately, Darling, as soon as I can.