

Santa Fe, New Mexico
Last Day of 1943
Late Afternoon

Dear Fellers - Blaine, Bennie, Jeep, Buck, Tony, Paul, Irving, Jimmy Hill
Smith, Johnny Wyss

Here it is - practically New Year's Eve and it looks as though I'm going to spend it all alone, way out here with the coyotes on the ranch. Both boys are now shaving and getting all smelled up with hair tonic in preparation for a gay old time in town at dances and shows. Frank is planning to go to the sub-deb dance and to the midnight show - Al is going to dance at a private home with his new sweetie-face. His party lasts until two o'clock - THIS TIME - there won't be anext time until he is older. From now on he gets home at eleven. After all, if he stays out until two when he is fifteen, what will it be when he is eighteen. It looks as tho' I'll have a heart-to-heart talk with some of the mothers - I need sleep occasionally.

David Thornburg received his papers and will report to Ft. Bliss Jan 14. He leaves the day after Frank does. Harry Richards is reported missing in action. Lenora Peddie is said to be in Kentucky taking nurses training. Zorra Bradley and Earl Robbins left for the West after short furloughs. George Henning is still here - he and Frank have been having fun together. Phyllis Calkins was working at Taichert's during the holidays. Tommy is in Sicily, I think she said. John Slye was drafted to play in the band and sent for his instrument. He plays in the Rose Bowl (in the Band, of course) and gets a seat on the 50-yard line! The Rainbow dance last nite was graced by the presence of both of my sons - the orchestra from La Fonda played and from what I gathered, no-one could get the hip action necessary to keep in time to it. Irving still has four months more training at Sheppard Field - mechanics school. This training starts Jan 8. Paul thinks he'll soon be leaving Denver. Buck is somewhere down amongst the cocconut trees, bananas and big green snakes. David says he is s¹st Class now - is cooking for his gang.

Blaine, I had a nice card from your folks at Christmas time. If ever I get to Albuquerque I shall see them for SURE. Bennie, I passed your house Christmas Eve. The shades were up and I saw a big Christmas tree in one corner of the room. It was all sparkly with lights. I could see the little service flag in the window, with all the stars on it, too. Tony and Paul I went by to see your Mother and Dad just before Christmas. Your Mother had some of those good Greek cookies all covered with powdered sugar. She gave Frank Jr and me some of them and gave us some "spirits" to wash 'em down. She had pictures of you two boys and somehow I got the impression that she loves both of you very much. She and your Dad both look fine. Jeep, I had another long talk with your Mom the other night. She says you are an Air Cadet now and were to pass you mental tests the last of December. Hope you had good luck. Frank Jr talked with your Mother and Dad, too, Irving just before Christmas - they were hoping you'd be home for Christmas. I see the big grey Buick most every time I go to town - parked in the same place. I planned to see all your "folks" before Christmas but I had so much company and so many people to feed, there just wasn't enough of me to go around.

Just as I feared, Bennie was in one of those big Pacific battles - but his letter received yesterday (written Dec 18) says he came through all right. His outfit joined up with the 2nd Marine Division. He sent me a piece out of a Jap Radio-man's note book. Al took it to school to show. Thank you, Bennie. I've had six letters from you fellow this last ten days - Blaine, one of my 'bestest' and promptest writers is a little late with his - the last one I had from him was a V-mail from aboard ship. Jimmy Hill, I hope you and Johnny do get a furlough after 'boot camp'. We'll all be glad to see you.

Curtiss Kinney's father died Sunday - he had been ill for quite a long time. Curtiss is in schbol in the East. Frank Jr leaves with Richard Shaffer, - Richard makes the fourth Shaffer boy in the service. By the way boys, if I am wrong on an item occasionally - forgive me - some of my information comes second-hand. And I cramp my sentences without regard to paragraphs etc., just to conserve space. For instance, like this - Jack Hennigan and James Richards passed thru Lamy just before Christmas

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I am finishing this letter January 4th. I was interrupted by guests New Year's Eve - then next day I was in bed with the worst case of Flu in New Mexico - this is the first day I have sat up - I'm still in bed but much better. Al is a wonderful cook - no foolin' - maybe the Army will make one out of Frank - he's no great shakes now. He says to tell you all 'howdy' and that he expects Hitler to quit ~~when~~ when he hears he is in the Army. Probably in sympathy for the decline of American manhood.

See you soon - in writing

Love
m Paclard