



ALEUTIANS

15 Sep 44

Dear Dorothy...

I'm sure you won't mind the typing. I discovered that when I tried to write a letter of any length in longhand, it was a little too much weight for economical air mail.

Inasmuch as I don't plan on doing much for Christmas, I hate to start telling people (even my own sister!) what I would like. It's simply that I don't really need anything. But if you insist, I'll take a fruit cake at your suggestion. We get excellent chow, but a fruit cake always tastes good, and it's something we never get on the menu.

Aleutian Xmas shopping is extremely limited unless one wants to "buy a pig in a sack." The PX, as you probably know, operates a sort of mail order service. You stand in line in the middle of the PX floor until you reach the GI with the little catalogues (catalogs?). Then you thumb through them, provided they don't fall apart, and try to choose a suitable gift for someone while a lot of other guys are waiting in the line like a pack of hungry dogs. (I think you are familiar with the expression in the eyes of a hungry mongrel.) Anyway, you can't make up your mind who you want to order for first, last, or any other time. And when you do, you have considerable difficulty trying to select something that will please. And even when you have made a final selection, you're still not sure you want to order. For there in black ^{and} white are printed these words: "Due to an acute shortage of articles of this type, substitutions may be necessary," - or words to that effect. And flowers - I've sent flowers home a few times. And Mom has never gotten just what I ordered. Of course all these things I've mentioned aren't a real excuse for doing no Xmas buying. I think the real reason is that one just doesn't get the spirit of Xmas up here. It's just like any other day in the year, except that the Red Cross comes through with a gift for every man. Last Xmas I got a wallet from the Red Cross that I'm still using. I have a better one that Mom gave me stowed away in my foot locker.

I'm glad you like your new home. Here's hoping you like your new boss as well. Which one was Mary Ellen? I don't have my pictures handy, but I believe she was from Iowa, wasn't she?

Oh yes, I must tell you what Mildred Smith (Treis) said about you. After her visit in Lansing she wrote and said everybody looked the same to her except you, and that you were much prettier. I agree with her, of course; had even thought about it when I looked at your pictures, but hesitated to say anything about it for fear of making you conceited. My fears are groundless, I suppose. I'm operating on that basis right now anyway. To what do you attribute the improvement? Health? Position? Environment? A steady job? Change? At this point I would like to say (without being too nose^y, I hope) that you should concern yourself more with finding a permanent home, ^{than that} ~~instead~~ of saving money. You have one, of course, you're going to say. And you're right. It's permanent and wholly reliable as well as a darn good place to be, but it isn't your own. See what I mean? Don't bother to answer me on that point - just take it as a suggestion - for what it may be worth.

LOVE -

Bill