

duty last night to find six letters from you and one from your brother which was cute.

I should have written yesterday, but I was a bit tired. The day before that we were hit by fighters for the first time and saw plenty of action and I saw two FW190's blow up. All I was thinking and saying to myself was "keep away damn it" and fortunately they did. I hope I don't see any more of them. We went to Blechammer that day.

I think it's wonderful that you are still feeling well. Incidentally I still dislike the name Timothy. I hope I don't hurt your feelings, but I can't see that name.

It's swell you have parties and such to keep you entertained. When I get home on furlough it will be the most glorious day of my life and I've been thinking of all the fun we'll have. It makes me feel much better to know you are praying for me for it isn't a prayer wasted.

Whenever your picture arrives, I'll be darn happy. Christmas is about on us which to me seems impossible. It shouldn't be too bad a day here.

All my love, Len

March 3, 1945

Dearest Jean,

I didn't hear from you today, but I'm determined to write anyway. I've a dozen letters which I'm going to read in order to get something to write about. Incidentally you made a mistake in numbering your letters for I've finally put a bunch together and figured out you averaged writing about every other day. I gave you credit for doing better than that. However, I'm not complaining for I doubt if I've done any better.

Well today I did exactly two things. This morning I sent you a hundred dollars and this afternoon I got my rations. I got there early for once and got all sorts of stuff. I'll bet I've enough shaving cream and toothpaste to last me a year. We get all the stuff we need eventually, but the only thing I need now is writing paper. If I ever go overseas again and I hope I never have to I'll at least know what to take along and have you send me.

Don't get me wrong about your smoking. If you want to smoke I can't see why you shouldn't. I think it's good you have cut down to a few a day. I wish I could say I have, but I have cut down to no more than a pack a day. That is mainly because I usually go to bed by nine o'clock if not sooner. I'm not nearly as tired and nervous as I was in Pueblo. Sometimes I can't sleep so well if I'm scheduled to fly in the morning. It's sort of the feeling I get before going to the dentist. To tell the truth flying combat wouldn't be bad if I didn't get half scared to death. Everybody else does so I'm not ashamed of it. It's just a sign of good sense it seems to me. I suppose I must be getting too old to relish adventure or maybe it's because I love you so much.

You bring the child up as you think best for you know more and are better at it than I could ever be. You know Jeanie, I really made a mess of bringing up this hound dog we have here. She'll do just as she pleases regardless and won't mind me one bit. When she gets angry with me as she is now, she won't come home for a day or two. She insists on sleeping under my bed and bumping against the bottom scratching fleas or else lying on the top which she knows she isn't allowed to do. I laid the law down to her last night and now she is mad at me. When I speak rough to her she jumps right off my sack without my approaching.

I guess I haven't written very much tonight after all, I'll write

again tomorrow.

Love, Len

April 8, 1945

Dearest Jeanie:

Your letters have been wonderful Three yesterday.

I feel wonderful, and I have hardly a worry in the world. I flew my 35th mission the other day. We hit an ammunition plant at Brescia Italy. I hope it won't be too long until I see you and Karen for I really want to get home.

Karen must be wonderful from the way you write and I'm glad you are feeling better.

I saw a USO show last night which had a couple of good acts. They had a comedian and three pretty Chinese girls who sang like the Andrews sisters.

As for that night I drank champagne, I drank enough for both of us. I haven't had a good mixed drink since I saw you last. This stuff, being away from home is no damn good. I love you both and wouldn't swap you for anyone. I think of you and Karen a lot, I'm a proud guy, Honey.

Love, Len

Yakima, WA

Dear Bud:

Bill and I are so pleased with, and are enjoying, the get well card sent from the cruise ship. The signatures from the group members made it very special. Thank you so much.

We are doing our best to cope with Bill's cancer. The chemotherapy is rough but seems to have helped relieve some of his pain, and that's about all the oncologist said we could expect from it. We take each day one at a time and are grateful for the "better" days.

Bill has been looking forward to the POW reunion in May for a long time and we hope he can make it.

All the best to you and the Association,
Love, Bill and Norma Smoke



Photo Norma and Bill Smoke October 1994