

January 21, 1944

Lieut. T. F. Hughes  
Armed Guard School  
Naval Repair Base  
San Diego, Calif.

My dear 'Proffesor':

Professor, I understand, is spelled with one f, and 2 s's, but I don't think that that should bother between friends. This ofcourse acknowledges your letter of the 17th and I hasten to assure you that from our experience in California that rating B gasoline cards and having money to pay for the gas, does not necessarily mean that you are going to get the gasoline. After Bill left on the 28th or 29th, we set sail for San Francisco, Reno, Salt Lake City, Wyoming and home. The morning we left it rained cats and dogs and we succeeded in getting as far as Santa Maria. A short way above Santa Barbara we asked at the AAA about the Trail Ridge Road especially through Yosemite National Park. We were told that for the next four or five days that the road would be closed on account of snow, also the road from Frisco to Reno and points east. Ofcourse we did not believe our informant but did take his advice and turned east immediately by way of Needles, Grand Canyon, Albuquerque, Amarillo, Oklahoma City, Muskogee, Wetumka, Denton (C.I.A. or T.S.C.W.), Dallas, and Orange. The minute we hit the ridge in California we found the snow on each side of the road but the road was open. This we found to be true all the way across California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and up to Oklahoma City. We hit a nice day at Grand Canyon and enjoyed the view, also the Painted Desert and the Petrified Forest. Sunday afternoon at Albuquerque we decided to run up to Santa Fe and see if we could do Taos, Cimarron Canyon, Raton and Amarillo. We did get to Santa Fe but the snow and ice were so terrible we immediately went back to Albuquerque and travelled our itinerary from there.

When we arrived within about 75 or 80 miles of Needles, Calif. with about one-quarter of a tank of gasoline left, we ran into a complete vacuum of gasoline. We were able to coast down hill about twelve miles into Needles or we would not have been able to have stretched our quarter of a tank that far. There was no gas in Needles for anything except trucks and buses. We kidded around for about one hour until the filling station man received his next months supply of gasoline, and thus were able to proceed. For the life of me I cannot see why they permit the coupon holders to get as many gallons of gas

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per coupon as they do out on the Pacific coast. I believe I would rather have less coupons and be assured that I might get gasoline.

What with being married to a wonderful woman, spending Christmas with Butch and Bill, you and Helen, having a wonderful trip, I would say that that season ranks with any other Christmas that I have ever known. You may have Homer's address, but here are the addresses of both of the boys:

Lt. W. H. Stark, II  
VMTB - 143  
MAG - 11  
1st MAR Air Wing - FMF  
Navy 140 (one four zero)  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, Calif.

Homer H. Stark, S/1C  
U. S. S. Richmond  
Second Division  
c/o Fleet Post Office  
San Francisco, Calif.

Homer has had another 135 pound shell drop out of the gun, this time on his toe. Whether it cut the toe off or just washed it I don't know, since he is always careful not to give too many details. Bill is out on the front somewhere. We do not know where, although Butch intimates it is Sprite Santos. From my repeated mention of Butch you have probably gathered that she has arrived in Orange and is now domiciled at the house. Nelda and I arrived home and found that her Mother and Father had been sick the entire Christmas holidays, and we, of course, moved in with them. We had intended to move home when Butch arrived but she got here before Mrs. Childers was able to be left and since Miss Conboy is also absent on vacation from the hospital, we have just continued to stay at 502 Orange Avenue during Mrs. Childers' convalescence.

Butch looks fine - says the baby is beginning to kick her around, and seems to be bearing up under Bill's absence very well. Julia stays in the house with her at night, and of course she has the two dogs, the little one - Dilbert - in bed with her and the police dog "Vido" serving as assistant to Pate in the yard. Pate, by the way, has taken unto himself another wife. I swear the same disease seems to have hit all the grandfathers in this community. When we arrived home, we found Becky living in her own house and Betty living with Helen Reid; but because of this siege of cold and rain, her sinus had forced her to go back to Austin. While we were gone they had a lot of cold rotten weather, and we are today celebrating the first week of dry sunshine we have had since arriving in Texas. Most everybody has recovered from the flu, but Nelda seems to be hatching a cold and whether it will develop into the influenza, I have no way of knowing. I discovered also that she is somewhat bothered by sinus, but has what I believe to be a healthy fear of an operation.

The shipyards are busy as they can be turning out war materials and I saw more LCI's or landing craft on the ways the other day. They are continuing to finish and occupy more houses daily, and I have no way of knowing just how many people we will have here;-although Doug shakes his head regularly and says they will never fill up all the houses, we still have no vacancies nor do we seem to have any in sight. I think W. T. Burton has brought in a new well on The Litcher & Moore Lumber Company tract, and Byron and George Colburn are up taking a look at

it this afternoon. Incidentally at the annual meeting of The Lutchter & Moore Lumber Company the other day we added Doug and Byron and Ben McDonough to the Board of Directors. The annual meeting of the Sabine Supply Company is scheduled for Friday, the 28th, and I suppose we will have the pleasure of looking at a statement which will pay to the Government a nice sum of money.

I am going to write to Homer and Bill this afternoon and I shall include your address in both of the letters. George and Byron have just returned from looking at the well and are very much pleased over it. It made about 246 barrels in the last 24 hours through a one-eighth inch choke.

I was awfully sorry to hear about the burglary across the street but have gathered the impression that you and Helen had put about everything of value away and are probably none the worse for the inspection which the intruder apparently gave you. I guess I could continue to write more of the same type of news, but I am perfectly sure that you and Helen might be somewhat bored with the information from here. To sum it all up, Nelda and I were happy to spend Christmas with you folks, and are continuing to find happiness each day as our lives go on. We are just hopeful that we will all be able to meet again when the war is over and peace is declared. I am a little old fashioned and perhaps too old and experienced to be sanguine as to the ultimate meeting of all; however, in closing I do want to repeat that our hopes are high and will continue to remain so. Take care of yourself and let us hear from you from time to time.

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