

[Envelope:]

Lt. A.S. Aiken

Desert Hotel [crossed out]

Spokane, Washington [crossed out and replaced with:]

Elmendorf Field

Alaska

[Transcription begins]

Greenbelt, Md.

Hi sweetheart –

I think your letter is a little incongruous with Alaska as the heading but sent from Desert Hotel. But glad as I was to get it, I didn't much care.

It's so nice that you ran into Smitty—I never did feel right about you and Jack loosing him in (Alaska) I mean Virginia. Is he married yet or still giving all the girls a break?!

Guess your conception of Gordon was more or less right at least from his latest escapade. Seems he was leading his flight and mad about something and not looking where he was going when he flew between two telephone poles and took the tips off both wings. (This is Dot's version in case you are wondering how dumb I am.) At any rate he was grounded for some time and made O.D. for the next ten week ends. He and Alice were planning on being married on the night of March 21, which is Friday but as it is they will have to be married on Sunday night as soon as Gordon goes off duty. I guess Alice is sort of dissolutioned [sic] but after all that's what she gets for marrying a flyer. Poor girl!

It's too bad you didn't hit it off with Bud Ward. After all I got "A" in golf, and if I ever take it up seriously he would undoubtedly be a valuable asset.

I guess I would have gone out and married you, because at this point in my life I'm practically willing to do anything you say. But it would all have been very confusing to myself and my will power, or whatever it is, because I've spent the past three months convincing myself that we had acted for the best in not being married sooner. I've gotten to the point where I really believe it too. From a purely psychological outlook, marrying and then you leaving for the war in a week or less would be an awful experience. My true viewpoint is probably the one I had when I wrote to you in December that I wanted to marry you then, but I had to change it for the very simple reason that there was not a damn other thing to do. I've got sort of a system worked out as for instance, making myself believe that we're better off not married. I don't actively worry about you either, of course I can't help that horrible, sinking feeling but I try to make myself not worry, because I know it does neither of us any good and, I could get a lovely case of neurosis out of it. Also it is possible to make yourself or rather, your feelings sort of numb, like I

did when Gramp died and I wanted to go home so badly and couldn't. Of course, all this isn't proof against things happening like the other night when I was almost asleep and heard someone else's radio playing Intermezzo, the last time I had heard it was in the place where we ate breakfast coming home from Toledo and you told me it always made you think of me. I got the feeling that you were as close to me as you had been then and of course you weren't so it's pretty bad when the feeling is gone.

Lord, darling, I don't know why you bring out the urge in me to tell you everything I think. Guess it's because I promised myself on the night I decided that I loved you that I'd tell you right away and keep on telling you everything, as a means of making our marriage a success. Anyway you're very brave about the whole thing.

Mary Claire got a letter from Becky today. A cheery little note saying that Becky had been tight (she must take after you in terms) three times in the past month and had taken up necking and that she looked like hell, felt like hell and everything was a hell of a mess. Mary and I laughed the first letter like that off, but it's been the same thing every time. Somehow when I think of Beck I just can't imagine it, but I wish there was some way to see that she snapped out of it. She's an awfully sweet kid as you know. I was reading an article on how to write to soldiers in the American tonight, it seems that I violate all the best rules, so I guess you have reason to complain. You are to keep up a constant patter of witty sayings; never, never get sentimentally personal and try playing games (checkers, etc.) through the mail. As a crowning theory it warns against using scented stationary [sic] lest you have a sentimental soldier A.W.O.L. on your doorstep. You know if there's anything to that I might try it—honey are you sentimental?

I've changed my mind again about Bacteriology as the dear little bug is sometimes found in diplococcus form although this cannot be counted on as a sure proof. Therefore I got A and am once again sure that I would make a stupendous scientist.

We had a total blackout for 10 hours from 8-6 Tuesday night. I merely went to the Show as we didn't have any curtains so had to turn the lights off. It seems they took it pretty seriously on campus tho'.

Golly honey it really sounds wonderful to hear you talking about the future. I think I can take practically anything as long as you stay optimistic [sic]. I can't think of anything more wonderful than being married to you. I'm glad you think of it often because it's come to mean the one thing that makes all this worth going through.

I do love you so very much. Well darling, be good and keep your ears cold.

Pat.

P.S. Charlotte knitted you the sweater, which probably makes you one of the crowd, as you aren't really in the army 'til you have a sweater. I'd love to have been with you on your birthday to say happy birthday properly but I'll make it up some day.

Pat. [Transcription ends]