

Monday Morning,

Feb. 21-43

Dear Son:-

Here it is Monday morning and I am at home like an old tramp and not out earning money as you would have me do, but the sun is coming in over my shoulders at the east windows and bobby is sitting on the window seat looking out at the world.

It was so good to hear your voice and to hear it in such a cheerful mood as you were last night. I am glad that you are happy and I hope that it is only the spirit of the Lord that is making your heart happy. Well, we will skip that but you know what I mean.

I went to church last night and they had a good meeting and a full house. Everyone that I had been sick and asked me if I wasn't well. I met Mrs. Taylor on the street Sat at noon and she said that the next time she saw me she presumed I would be just a shadow, well, they all can tell that there is something wrong but they are not going to know what is.

I am going to start housecleaning this morning to be ready for your home-coming, so that you will have a pleasant memory to cherish until the next time, You are coming home aren't you?

It was nice of those people to talk to me and I am glad that they are rendering you so many kindnesses and ~~xxx~~ accomodations but that is all the Southerners are good for but they are good at a lot of other things. I would much rather have talked with you that time than to waste words with them and I know that the money they consumed in phone bill could be put to a much better advantage. Maybe you didn't have enough to say to me that you had to have someone else fill in the time, Eh?

Well just use them good while you are there because that is all they mean to me and what I see of the southerners who come here to Ottumwa since this base is here they are only to shake off of your fingers like some unpleasant smelling kind of dirt after you get from them what you can. I hate them the more I see of them.

It looks like it is going to be a fine day for washing so I want to get a lot done, Betty has to wash some things for Jack and he wanted them yesterday but I told her that we did not do those things here at this house on Sunday so when he came out for them he was disappointed in a way. He has been working at the rationing board for several days. They are making them work and do things around town here to help out and it don't go down good with some of them.

I would much rather be alone in the home than to have them here, altho I couldn't ask for better young people, but you know me; I want my home to myself and I am going to keep it that way unless it is to my advantage financially or some way like that, They will pay the monthly expenses until maybe I can find some other work to do. I am terribly discouraged with everything, even the dresses that I ordered have not come yet and the money was returned for one of them, I have just about got to the end of my rope, I don't even have a business dress now to apply for work in and look decent and you know that is what appeals to the business people of today. It wouldn't take much to knock my faith in humanity and what little I have spiritually into a cocked hat. So don't think for a minute that I am enjoying them here it is merely to help you so that you will not have the burden of me on your hands, which I presume is what you want.



2 You keep your money to come home on and then if you find you can't come or change your mind and wish to spend your leave down there with those persons you can then send some money to me. I will have a load of coal to pay for today, then the lights, phone and I think the waater comes the first of March. Coal has raised 75¢ on the single ton and may go higher before Spring. You said in your last letter that you wished I was down there with you, well it may have to be if things keep going higher here as I cannot keep up fuel for the home next winter with things soaring like they are. My allotement hasn't come yet, are you sure you made it out to me? It will be four months this week since you left, can you realize it? It has been four centuries of Hell and torment to me I can honestly say that. I am having a bitter fight to keep up and to keep going. I couldn't sleep last night at all and even went out in the yard and walked around thinking that it might induce sleep but I finally came in at four thirty and then lay in bed until daylight begin to show, so here I go at it again and I hope that this night brings rest for I have had about eight hours sleep in the past 48. You know what that is doing for me, so if you don't get to come home on your leave that will be the end.

Who is this Cloy person that rates so high with you that you put her on the phone and please explain what you meant by "just one of the family" whose family please? Are you starting one? Rolan Bush got hot pants and came home and married last week, is it catching in the Coast Guard too?

George Anderson has just returned to camp from a furlough home and he said that his machine was in the motor pool and he locked to be shipped at any time now. Bensmillers haven't heard from Ben now for two weeks so they don't know what has happened to him and he is in the same camp or is supposed to be with George. I knew that would be the way that Morrells would act as they have been acting pretty dirty in more ways than one, well, Miss Weirsmith didn't act that way anyhow.

I paid your tithe last night and mine which was \$4.50 and \$5.21 for my three weeks so they ~~ought~~ ought to be feeling pretty good at the church toward us. The convention is to be the 15-16-17th of March and more are coming than they expected, they are calling for rooms now. Mrs. Noland was out to church last night for the first time, she gets around pretty good, Alta went with me.

So you are out tom eating around until 11 and 2 nearly every night? How is the Mr. Abernathy going to take that or does he approve of it? I suppose you feel that you are evening the score with me by doing it, well, did you ever think that I can still do it too? You had better watch your step or you will have me staying out late of nights. I have been decent and came strait home from work since you have been gone but you are setting a bad example for the "Old Woman", and this town is really humming now you know. So watch your step or you will have me doing it too, and I will have a "Cloy" to talk to you some time on the phone when you call.

Well I am glad that you are enjoying yourself in your "Bed of Roses" I hope you don't roll over on a thorn and get stuck, you know what I mean. Excuse me for saying it I am just the one that is "just Mother" and I suppose I am to take a back seat and wait until I am dead to be appreciated and good things said about me. I think that must have been in the conscience of the person who started "Mother's Day". They ~~waited~~ waited until Mother was dead to make her happy. Oh, well, I am at the place that I don't care what happens to me any more. Even a truck won't run over me now because they are afraid they will ruin the tires or break the truck and can't get parts for it again. Speaking of trucks, your car has not been out of the garage since last Sunday when the kids finished hauling their stuff down. I doubt if I will have money to buy gas with now, so hang on to every cent and you can buy some to run around in when you come next month.

Speaking of next month, that is not very far off and there is a lot to be done around here. It just makes me sick to look at things. I just go off in the cellar and pretend that I am fixing the fire and have a good cry and when I see the condition of the cellar I cry all the harder. I'm telling you that I can't stand much more pressure.

You asked if the rugs were pretty, they are simply beautiful and the table is grand, just wait until you see it, it is not so big but it is heavy as iron, solid walnut with two expansion leaves to put in it. I hate to put the rugs down and to have anyone else live and walk over them but you. I'll bet you don't think that much of me do you? Well there I go again. I am not climbing your frame so don't hand me that line again for I am so discouraged and so near doing something that they will read about in the papers that it is all that I can do to hold back.

Don't tell me that it is the Devil doing it all for people can do a lot on their own too. I would have liked to tell Mrs. DeVol just how she rated with me before I left but I thought a chance would come in the future that I could hand something back to her and not on a silver platter either. The men were all sore about it and even some of those who made deliveries there had seen her sister in the store and they certainly said plenty. I made a lot of friends up there too but they don't put any money in my pocket and help me like that. I am becoming cold and merciless in many ways anymore.

Well I must get this out to the mail box as I don't know what time he comes now and then get down and fix the hot pot and get to knocking out some work. I'm sorry I don't write cheerful anymore but I don't feel that way so why lie about it. I am glad that everything is so fine with you and wish I could have some too. Now do everything in your power to come home for I am just dying by inches. You had better get some of that weight off of you before you come or you will be in for plenty of ribbing as they all saw your pictures last night and they all said you sure was getting plenty fat. Ha. Ha. Didn't I tell you that you would? I could tell you some other things too, but it wouldn't do any good, it would just bewaisting my breath and you would say that it wouldn't happen to you. I will have to give up my lessons now too, isn't that nice? Oh, well. Im where I don't care to either sing or live so what?

I must close, I am a wet blanket and you have no time for that, so be happy while you can and try to get a few more letters out this way instead of so much church and late hours and rose beds, I could use a little of that stuff too. I am going to get to real hard work today and see if I can drown my feelings in that. Let me know how the leave is coming as soon as you can and hop the first train that leaves that dump and I will be waiting here for you, it is the only thing that is going to help this condition that I have, is your coming home. Write soon.

*Love  
Henry*

At Home  
8 o'clock P.M.  
Mar 4/43

Dearest Little Boy,

Here I come, so tired I hardly know my name. As I told you on the post card, I papered the dining room yesterday. It sure looks nice too. I got done about 10 P.M.

To night the kids have gone to a show & baby is asleep, and had better stay that way because I am so tired she would just have to cry it out. I got the rug down today. I put the one out of the front room in our bedroom & the 9x18 goes from the door clear over to the east windows & I got the dining room rug down with Jack's help this evening and the dining room looks like a million.

Tomorrow I will mop the kitchen, clean the cellar way & steps & mop the bathroom, go take my lesson, pay the light bill & water bill & do my grocery shopping for Sunday & then go to church in the evening, a full day eh.?

I told you that I volunteered to take 2 or 3 O.B.S girls for dinner. I wouldn't have done it only the silence grew so embarrassing at the church that I said I would after Mrs. Orville Boyles said she would take three. No one responded for the last group so I did. I hope I make a good meal thro successfully. I asked Jerry to come too so that she would break the strangeness in the group as Betty would be strange to them & their ways.



2.

I am to sing a special on the radio  
Sun morn and it is to be the song you  
wanted me to sing the next time I sang.  
"For He is so precious to me". I suppose  
that one Post will be on hand & he will hear  
me. I hope my throat will be in good shape  
I have had a cold all winter.

No letter from you today or none yesterday  
Just how do you explain this? Mad at  
me? Or have you gone over to N.O. or what?  
You'll have to ask for special pass over  
there from the fellow who handles that matter  
at that N.O. Base.

Jack said for you to stay out of any special  
School because when you get out that they  
will put you on sea duty if not over seas.  
He said that was what these fellows did this  
running around questioning & investigating  
dissatisfied service men for. Everyone of his  
friends were sent over seas who fell for  
the inquiring officer's line

Jack goes to the tower room or the jacket room  
here when the flying cadets come in March 15<sup>th</sup>  
He is to help map out the flights, landing &  
take offs. Looks like he is to be here in between  
permanent. He lost his subsistence allowance  
today as the mess hall opened at the base &  
he has to eat there or else. So that's that  
Nellie called me & Harold is in flight  
school. He was home Sun for a few hours.





3.

Did you get the camera O.K.? I sent it Sat at noon & the letter too, well not at noon but soon after. I sent 2 gas tickets back. Who are you riding around with in Kentwood?

You should have enough films, 5 rolls, to get some good views around there. That would be something to get hold of that many films in this country.

I hope your next letter has some good news in it when it comes about the new detail and your leave. I had better get a letter tomorrow or I'll think something is up.

Aunt Lilly is looking forward to your coming so you must by all means come. I sent her a pen of plastic material with her name and it sure pleased her so much. I am glad that you & also the other boys, but that you liked your picture folder & purse. Whose pictures do you have in it? I may ask? Or do you prefer not to tell me? I thought it was nice and there are so few things that can be gotten here for Service men that you don't already have. What is is mostly just navy & not Coast Guard.

Weather man says the temperature goes down again to nite, to zero. Gee but I am tired of this winter, shoveling coal & buying it so often. It hasn't been so blizzardy but lots of snow & sub zero weather.



4.

I am going to church tomorrow nite. Jack & Betty will have to stay home & take care of their daughter themselves. She has two teeth thro' now. I didn't use the typewriter for fear I would wake her. Betty has been so homesick all day. She got a Special Delivery Registered letter from her mother & the baby got a bond from a doting Aunt. That baby sure gets its share of everything.

I am going to listen to the news & then go to bed. They sure gave the Japs a good cleaning didn't they? 17 thousand at this crack. Old Hitler is about done for too. Maybe the worst will soon be over. I hope & pray how soon so that my little boy can come home to stay & we can be happy together once again.

I hurt my left shoulder & side of my neck today lifting and I feel like those cramps are after me tonite, I hope not. I have a headache from my shoulder. Well my Darling, I'll see you in church tomorrow nite, you will be by my side. I love you so that I nearly die of lonesomeness. But I'll be seeing you soon here at home or down there & maybe both. God Bless you little boy of mine. Do write better if at all possible. I nearly die when I don't get your letters each day.

(over)

5

I will see your precious sweet face  
before me Sun shorn as I will  
your song and will sing it strait from  
my heart to you. "for you are so  
precious to me."

I will turn your tithe in Sun as I  
haven't cashed the M.A. yet. Good night  
my Angel and pray for me and  
remember how I love you and long  
for the dearest boy on earth.

Your lonesome Mother with  
love from her & Bobby.

Write write write

March 7-43

My Dearest One:-

Here I come and I hope I can make up for the time I have lost in writing to you. The kids have gone to town this evening and the baby is in bed but not asleep. I hope she holds out for the night.

I got your three letters today and was I ever glad to get them. There was so much good news and happy news in them too. I sure hope that the leave goes thro O.K. and I know the Lord will send you at the right time even tho it may not seem the right time to us.

First I must get going on the most important things which you mention in your letters and that is the part where you say that you love me and miss my letters and I do miss yours most terribly when I don't get them every day and it burns me up when I cannot write to you every day. I didn't write Sat as I was so busy getting the house ready for Sunday for the folks who were to be here for dinner. They came, Bro. Nation and his wife and one of the O.B.I. students. Bro Nation and his wife is taking post graduate course at O.B.I. Jerry came with them and we had a nice time for the brief time that they were here.

I had the salmon casserole dish as the main dish and Jerry told me at church in the evening that she didn't get all she wanted of it as she liked it so much but that she just couldn't let herself go in front of company so she is coming over again some time to be with me and have some more. Betty just fell in love with her.

I am so glad that you are having meals with the McDonald's as I know how you hate restuarants and I don't blame you a bit. I am afraid that you are going to make a pig of yourself and will be so fat when I do see you that I won't know you. Didn't I tell you that someday you were going to be fat?

Now about the tires, if it is as he says when we see them and we get there in time to make the trade, it is a deal. Be sure that he don't want too much extra before you bargain for them and be sure that you don't make a final bargain until you see them yourself because folks can misrepresent things you know or they could have been run out of line or bruised and mistreated until they were just old tires after all and we know that ours have not been abused in any way. However, if they are all right, it is a deal.

Well you say to save the gas tickets, O.K. and here is my surprise, Jack came home with a "B" card for gas tonight. He got it on the base that he was using the car which he is once in a while when we take rides or go to town or something like that with me along. The car never goes out without ME. Now these gas tickets are good from now until Oct. 16th and there is two tickets for 4 gallons each for each month until Oct. 16th but if none is used off of the card they will all be good at once up until Oct. 16th thus giving us 64 gallons of gas between now and Oct. 16-43 besides the regular gas "A" book. How does that sound? Does the Lord provide our not?

Here is another thing. Madge Wells did not let me know anything about the lot as to whether she wants to buy it or not but when a woman who lives in the cabin next to the lot wanted to know about who owned it she told them and so she came to see me to day and it is no other than an old friend of Madge's husbands folks from Freemont, Ia. Do you remember a fellow by the name of Ash down at work? He is now beef boning at night. He knows you for he asked me on the bus Friday if I were Loring's mother and I said yes. He knows you so you must know him. I thought they might be of this worthless Ottumwa family of Ashs but they don't know them much less being related to them and she said they wanted to rent the lot this summer for garden, so that matter will be taken care of for the summer and it will keep the weeds down and pay the taxes on it. Hows that? I haven't made a deal with them as yet but told her if I didn't sell it that she could rent it.



I think I will just let Loomis use the other lot for taking care of it, we will talk that over later and when you come home, so that we will not have to worry about the things on that being carried away by people.

The good Lord knows how to work things out best and if you don't get to come before I get my clothes ready and the \$1000.00 insurance it will be all for the best because we will need that to get the tires and have for emergency needs on the trip. I also want to pay the insurance on the home for the next three years as it expires this May and then increase it on account of the rugs, table and the improvements on the home, so the dear Lord knows best how to work things out for us doesn't he? I know you are just wild to get home and I am so wild to see you and have you that I feel that I can't stand it another day, but we must submit to HIS will for he knows what is best and when is best. Right now we are having another cold spell, 10 below zero and snow. It snowed Friday night and the weather man said snow for tonight. We get the weather report from the base when Jack comes home or when he calls us each day. I know you would not enjoy it so much to be home in such cold weather. I had to get a load of coal today which knocks another \$5.75 into a cocked hat and it sure makes me feel bad.

Jack said tonight that he may be able to get off Sat of this week and if he does we are going to Des Moines to do some shopping. I am going to look for some dresses and a spring coat. My old one is fraying around the collar at the neck until it is ragged, it will be nine years old this year. Betty wants to get some things up there too and if her allotment comes thro she will get over \$300.00. We both feel that we are the forgotten women so far as the Government is concerned.

I sure hope you get the Beach Patrol if there is to be no combat duty. I feel that the good Lord is still folding us under his wing and protecting us as well as answering our prayers. If the Lord wills it you will have Bobby, the vibraharp, car and I with you for a while at least and won't we ever have a good time together?

I guess I will have to cash the money order this week however your tithe has been paid from the money which I had on hand. If we go to Des Moines I will be spending some of the money order if I can find some clothes up there. I had better get another change of oil while up there with Marion so that we will have it when it is needed. Eh? The car has only been out twice since the other was put in, once to Fairfield and once to Bloomfield. But if I get about five quarts for next change and five for summer that will be all right won't it? or should I get just the same? Well if we go Sat I won't have an answer from you in time anyway so I might as well use my own judgement and not ask you foolish questions, hadn't I?

I may be able to get a nicer pair of shoes up there in the triple E than I can get down here because all they have down here in wide widths is oxford and I am tired of having them all the time.

I am glad you got the camera and have so many rolls of films. It is impossible to get the films here. Betty is trying to get some to take the Baby's picture and can't get any for their camera. It is not the size of ours.

I am glad that there is going to be a cleaning up in the detail and if Jim is going to drink I hope they work on him good and plenty. It hurt me so when you said he got on a bender. I had hoped and prayed that the Love of the Lord would touch him and do something good for his behavior. I am glad that you are not on the Lazy list and I don't know why you should knowing you as I do. I'll bet you are enjoying that milk like nobody's business. Betty said you sure had it soft and was having all the luck, with thick cream, milk and 11 rolls of film.





She is learning to make herself more at home, she don't do any cleaning or going ahead but she helps me better and hemmed the two new dresses from Lane Bryant and is going to help me make the other two new ones that I have on hands which I haven't started yet. She just loves my powder blue one, the one which I sent you the sample of and you liked best. She is going to help me finish it. She is pretty handy with the needle and her mother used to have a dress shop in Chicago.

I must write to Upchurch's because if we go back with the car we will go around by Texas and maybe have the opportunity of calling on them.

Now about your point ration book. I cannot get you one without the sugar book which I sent you, that is I can't get it here without the book and I don't know whether I would have any luck doing it now that the date is passed for applying, unless I would go to the ration board and beg of them to get you one. I come nearly getting it when I got mine, or rather Betty got mine for me, and then I thought you wouldn't need it but you can take it to one of the boards near you and see if you can get it down there, otherwise you will have to send your sugar book back and I will see what can be done for you here. I am glad that Killebrew is a good guy and I hope he says a good word for you to Cartwright because you are the one and only perfect boy in the world and I would tell anyone so. So there.

I don't see how the people can eat cream with molasses in it, but I guess that is the way of the south. I am a Northerner. I will take mine plain.

We are, or we did not have communion Sunday as the O.B.I. bunch was there and had charge of the services but we will have it next Sunday. The revival meetings run another week and then comes Convention. it is to be held at the church only this year. I want to go to communion services next Sunday. If we go to Des Moines Sat we cannot stay away over Sunday.

If you have 15 hours from Baton Rouge to Chicago, it is only 4½ from Chicago to Ottumwa. You must be careful in Chicago and don't leave the station for Betty said it was the worst town on the map, there is nothing to mean or too lowdown for them to do there even to murder. She just hates the place and said she would not live in it for all the money in the country if she had to live there alone. She told me of places that it was not safe for your life in the daytime much less at night.

Yes I know just how you feel when you are homesick and I also know how it feels to have an empty home with the most precious person on earth removed from it. Bobby is lonesome for you too and Betty speaks of it so much when he sits with that dejected look or a certain expression that tells us that he is longing for you. He loves Jack so much and I acted like I was going to hit Jack and he got right up on his lap on his Navy blues between Jack and I and told the world that I wasn't going to hit him. It tickled Jack to pieces. Betty thinks he is the most wonderful behaved dog that she ever saw. She loves him too and he likes her but he wants to go in and wake them all up every morning when I get up and he wants the Baby to get up too. He gets so many hugs and kisses that his face must be sore and his sides ache.

I can't feature you eating pork chops, pork of all things, what has happened to you anyhow? and okra, what a funny boy of mine. I know you have gone off the deep end now. So the itchy foot has stopped itching? Well we will see. I just hope that it don't get to itching in some other place where results will be worse. Get what I mean? So you are going to clean up for the "big shot", so it is. Well then you all let it get plenty dirty afterwards I suppose, is that it.

I haven't done anything about your income tax yet as I just phoned Morrells again because they hadn't sent me the amount of your earnings. They said it was \$1312.13 . \$1312.13. Now maybe you can read that. So I think I will do something about it yet this week and if I have enough on hand I will take care of it, in full, if not pay 1/4 now and the rest later on. I don't want any bills against you to pile up.

I am glad that you are not going to have to go to Mobile and I think you had better have someone write to N.O. about the allotment or wherever it is to be written to and if you get over to N.O. before your leave see about getting the gas to drive the car with, of course this "B" card if I save it all will do the jigger, as there will be 64 gallons on it to be used between now and Oct. 16., in addition to the "A" book. Jack eats out to the base now as they have their own mess hall and fine eats too. So we don't have to cook for him. Betty and I batch.

Well I don't know any special news but I do know this much that I am going to get busy on clothes and things I will need for the time when you come and we go back together.

If such a thing would happen that you get a leave and come home and we are in Des Moines Sat the key would be on top of the little white closet in the vestibule but Bobby is going with me. No leaving that little darling at home alone and to freeze as he did that New Year's time. Jack is going to have to sit in the parking lot with the baby and Bobby while Betty and I shop. Betty said she would not carry the Baby around in the crowds and Jack would have to be nurse maid to both of them. We will go out to see Auntie for a little while before leaving for home and call on Marion at the store but outside of that it is strictly business for both of us ladies.

Bobby is rolled up in his quilt in the rocker by my side now and he is asleep part of the time and the rest of the time with his eye on me. When he has to go out doors he comes in just crawling with his little feet so cold that he can't hardly get in the house and then I have to hold him over the register or in my arms to get his little feet warm. I've got him too rotten to live with or around anymore, but he is so sweet.

Well I must close now and get to bed before the kids come in for if I am up they will never get to bed, they just love to talk and visit with me and always bring something home to eat so if I am up it just means a couple of hours more. So here I go and I am going to be very happy when you come but I do know that our blessed Lord and saviour knows when it is best for you to come so we will commit it to his hands and pray that we are ready to respond in every way when he sends you to me. Bless and praise his name.

Oh, yes, I got thro my song fine Sunday morning for I was singing it strait to you and there were plenty of Amens when I was singing it. Welshons gave it a build up for he said that this mother had a son in service and he was sure that I had found the Lord precious to me many times and would those out in radio land look to him also. I sang without a quiver, or should I have said, shiver. Well I sang it to you and for you and that is all that matters.

Jack got word today that his brother is in Afráca. He taxés planes to the war fronts all over the land. He is hoping that he comes back safely. He is stationed in Florida. Well I must close as it is after ten and I want to fix the fire for night and turn in before they come home. So precious darling I will say Good night and God Bless you and keep you and send you safe home to me. Love and bushels of it from,

*Mother + Bobby*

P.S. Earl Shepherd is due home this week on furlough.