

March 29 1943

Most darling Mama:

March is depressing like a lion in the Sierra Country – Angry persistent wind, cold rain and, for a while today, blinding snow.

The 340th Co. is [illegible] at Reno Air Base & I pity the soldiers – although the officers are undergoing the same hardships – I have been down there all day long & am not warm yet – It was bivouac when I left at 330 am this morning (got up at 2am) & I only took my field jacket – Had my first real run in with the captain today – maternal partiality – I know wouldn't cause you to see my side as common sense is all that is necessary- He the [illegible] left the air base during the afternoon & went to Reno 10 miles away; it started raining a cold rain – wind blew the men's prep tents down – Then it came up a blinding snow storm; so I went to the air base (the [illegible] about 6 miles away from it) and made complete arrangements for the entire company (200 miles) to spend the nights at the base – sleep in a gym – [illegible] also arranged for 20 trucks for transportation – but I held up the actual executing of the plan pending approval from Capt. Duffey – I found him out at the bivouac area & told him what I had done, and told him in the course of conversation, that he had not returned within a couple of hours that I would have sent the company in – said he – that's when you would have made hell of a mistake – Don't even contemplate such a move without my express consent – He kept questioning me about it & I stuck to my guns – so finally the damned medical officer - & young, sexual perverts looking ill from [illegible], on the captain asking me a third time "What should I have done if I didn't have the medical responsibility for the co.?" said "There's only one answer – I said "I'm not sure there's only one answer, and I still think if my opinion is asked that I should have brought them in" On my saying this the Capt. blew up & called me over to one side & said "Harrod if you had have [sic] moved that company this afternoon I'd have put you off my staff – is that clear & blah blah-!" – So, of course, my only answer as a junior officer was "yes sir" – But darn his sole, I stared him eye for eye – He said he appreciated my courage in making such a decision (I didn't see a darned thing courageous about it) but that moving a company was a senior officers prerogative.

I told Lt. Balling about it, and he complimented me on the decision concerning the troops – [illegible] Duffey raises unmitigated hell from daylight until dark & doesn't stop for meals – He doesn't worry me or make me nervous as [illegible] I would have been in the past, but he is tiresome as hell – which reminds me to say that an officer earns every cent he makes – one literally loses ones self – identity – usual interest – in one's work and one really works.

To a more pleasant topic – I had an exceptionally good time Saturday night [sic] the Post officers gave a military Ball- in honor of the departure of the Post Commanders – It was the first program dance I've been to since I took Shirley [illegible] to the Rattler club dinner dance at The Gunter in the spring of 38 – It was pretty elegant – I had a date with a very good looking girl Aretha Shields who I am going with now – went to an apartment for Breakfast after the dance worked most of Sunday & got up at 2am this morning – and I feel not especially tired – I think my constitution is becoming stranger

Mary Ellen sent me a five point box of chocolate candy for an Easter present – I've got to send her something

Mother I've been thinking about my money, and I think maybe I'd rather not invest in anything - I may get a furlough sometime - goodness knows when, and I'd had a considerable sum for train fare - Just keep it in the bank - except when you need some

In re [illegible] Ruth: my decision, which was really not such since no factors of thinking or emotion conflicted necessitating a decision was based on the fact that I have no desire to marry [illegible] R or anyone else at present - and even if I liked someone well enough to marry them, I wouldn't marry during the war - one has no time for a wife - absolutely no time - Sometime you write as if you think I ought to get married.

Received a long long letter from you today which I enjoyed - I missed you exceedingly yesterday - when I get home I shall never act distraught again, but shall talk & talk, and I shall never be overly apprehensive about my future when I am home again - That is a form of selfishness - It really is - Besides life is too short to be too concerned over most things

Your remark concerning Tom Hughes was beautifully written & somewhat made me a bit sad on reading them

Had a letter from Leo - well the hour approaches nine pm & I shall [illegible] to bed - I worship you above all the world & wish you & I were in San Francisco

Your loving son,
John Harrod