

Letter, George Stoff to Florence Stoff, Somewhere in France, December 25, 1944 [Transcriber: Kathryn Manning]

[Envelope]

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[Letter]

Somewhere in France,
25 December 1944

Florence, dearest:

This has been as happy a Xmas as one could be with so much distance between you and me. I hope that you and Jim feel as proud about me on this holiday, as I do about the two sweetest people in the world. It is possible for a man to complain about his lot when he has a beautiful, understanding wife, and a handsome, bright child? Well, my adorable one, I am not griping and don't intend to. I know I am one of the more fortunate humans, and I do not hesitate to proclaim it to the world, or to you. In addition to being blessed with you and Jim, so many fine things have happened in the past 2 days that my cup overfloweth, but I still miss you – too much.

Expect this to grow into a long letter so I guess I'd better start at the beginning. At mail call Saturday night I received the registered package containing the 2 photos. Truly, sweetheart, both you and Jim looked so real and so well, that I sat for fully 30 minutes without once removing my groping eyes off the countenance of a beautiful wife and a precious, handsome son. The sparkle in your eyes, your smiles. The expression of your thoughts made me feel so happy and proud that I could not remove my gaze from the photos. It was the

sweetest kind of a gift and perfectly timed. The note accompanying the photos also did much to relieve the homesick feeling that had been growing on me for the past week, but I feel ever so much better now.

The next day being Sunday 3 others and myself repaired to our newly found friends home for a Xmas dinner party. Well, honey, it is difficult to understand how people with so little to offer could have made such a wonderful spread, but they did. We had a grand time with the children, Xmas tree, and the dinner. It seems these folks love to eat and don't know when to stop. Dinner had 4 meat courses, soup vegetables, cognac, beer, and many kinds of cake, cookies and tarts. Of course all the food was prepared simply due to the impossibility of obtaining many culinary necessities but it sure tasted elegant, and we were stuffed a-plenty. Oh, it was a delightful feeling to be among home folks and kids, and sweetheart I know you would have preferred it this way since I can't be with you at present. At our departure they filled a bag for each of us containing apples and cookies, to say nothing of making us promise to visit often, at least 8 times weekly. This is not possible, of course, but as long as I remain in the vicinity I will endeavor to see them. Having seen Jim's and your snapshots they really joined me in being thrilled by your latest photo. My chest has not subsided one bit since yesterday! The man being a cabinet-maker made a bowling set for our Jim, in a very fine oak box. I am sending this to him in a few days.

After yesterday's grand time I hardly thought it possible that any more could happen to me to increase my joy, but each day for the past three days seems to have brought its own bliss. In to-day's mail I received Jim's letter acknowledging receipt of my birthday letter to him. It is dated Oct. 25th, and must have been lost en route. He wrote a wonderful reply, and once again I was happy to learn that not only is he and his mother a handsome pair, but also they have what it takes – yes, darling, it has been a truly fine Xmas, under the circumstances, and most of the credit is due you.

Also received a letter from Bob dated Dec., 7th, advising his appointment as an instructor at the Deming Air Field. I feel as though he got a pretty good break, but he is not sure. Anything that keeps him away from a theatre of operations is

all right with me, and I hope he's there for many months. To-day also I among others in the company were awarded the "Good conduct Ribbon" for one year's "exemplary behavior, efficiency and fidelity." This entitles me to wear this ribbon in addition the European theatre ribbon, so please ask Don if he can get one bar to cover both. Please forward several of these to me, and see that my Jim also wears one for his daddy.

I promised this cabinetmaker that I'd ask you to forward several trade (interior decorating) journals showing the latest styles and trend in furniture. Could you try to send these to me real soon. Since he can read English I'm sure he will get a tremendous amount of ideas from these periodicals. Did you ever read that article in Life, August 14th issue?

Have spent all evening writing mail as I'm putting change of Quarters for a buddy in another company. His company is having a Xmas party. Wrote the folks a letter, as well as Bob and Pincus, and when I complete this I'll try to get some sleep.

Patiently awaiting word about Joel's condition, and how you and Jim faced this Xmas. Hope my folks are well, and that your family is bearing up under the strain of the kid's illness. Please write about all of them. Weather is nippy but still not wearing my woolen underwear. Hope the cold spell at home has subsided and that you and Jim are enjoying a pleasant winter.

Stay well, beloved, make with the cheerful notes, kiss Jim and my mom and pop for me, and I'll kiss you in mind. I hope next year finds us together in a peaceful world, obsessed with only one thought – to be happy and gay – My very best to everyone, and to you, my adorable queen, all my love.

As ever

George