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Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Archives

Correspondence of A. Roy Knabenshue, 1954

Extracted on Apr-18-2024 06:06:57

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Hail 1956

Dear Roy,

As the hundreds of Holiday Greetings come, I am embarrassed because I am unable to reply to them as I would wish. After a wonderful three months on the West Coast, I found that I had done too much and had to have a hospital visit and am now at home looked after by a nurse. I would like to send each of you a special message but as that is impossible, I will have to use one of my group letters.

Some of you received two group letters about my visiting Albuquerque, Phoenix, La Jolla, the opening of the Air Academy at Denver and a peek at Las Vegas.

The trip continued with a week's visit with Lt. Col. Ned Goodier at lovely Santa Barbara. We motored over 600 miles in and around the city which gave me a splendid idea of this beauty spot of California.

Then I visited Frank and Mabel Coffyn at Palo Alto. We motored down to Monterey and Carmel which vie with La Jolla and Santa Barbara as the most attractive show cities of California. The shore drive south of Carmel to San Simeon, the fabulous Hearst Estate, is in my opinion the most scenic shore drive in this country.

Then I spent a few days sight seeing in San Francisco. Although I had been there many times, I never had time to see interesting Oakland, Berkeley and the big trees at Muir Woods.

A flight to Seattle on a clear day over Mt. Shasta, Crater Lake, Mt. Hood and Mt. Ranier brought me to one of the most interesting parts of my trip. On my 79th birthday I had the pleasure of celebrating the beginning of my eightieth year on a yacht chartered by the Boeing Company to view the famous Gold Cup boat races where speeds of 150 m.p.h. are reached. It was a rare opportunity and I enjoyed it with many old friends. Another high spot of the Summer was having a flight in the Allison - Convair turbojet airplane - the only such American type. I also saw the Boeing jet 707 which will be flying on our airlines by 1957. The officers of the Boeing from Bill Allen down were most hospitable. The Institute meeting and dinner completed a most enjoyable visit.

"Robbie" our Western manager, was driving down to San Francisco and I had the pleasure of accompanying him and his family. I had always wanted to see the coast-line of Washington, Oregon and North California and the drive of over a thousand miles in three days was one I shall always remember with pleasure.

The last day of the trip we drove 470 miles so that we could attend the banquet of the Air Force Association in San Francisco. It was at one of the meetings that Gill Robb Wilson, who was elected President, made such a complimentary reference to me.

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