

Ember Patterson, Jeremy Peña-Barrios, and Eduardo Ramírez (editors)

*Dear Mrs. Walkup ... Affectionately, Dinwiddie:  
A Young U.S. Soldier's Epistolary Connection to Pasadena (1941–1943)*

*Shelfmark*

California State University, Fullerton (CSUF).  
University Archives and Special Collections (UA&SC).  
SC-10-Correspondence.  
Dr. Fairfax Proudfit Walkup Theatre Collection.  
Letters from Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister to Fairfax Proudfit Walkup.  
4 letters (including 1 envelope), April 30, 1941, to November 2, 1943.

*Introduction*

Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister's four letters edited below belong to the "Dr. Fairfax Proudfit Walkup Theatre Collection" in the University Archives and Special Collections at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). This collection, donated to CSUF by Walkup herself in 1971, contains educational materials, books, manuscripts, drawings, costumes, dolls, and letters from her former students, including the ones presented here. Fuhrmeister's correspondences are written in ink, range from two to five pages in length, and are in good condition. Their individual formats and external characteristics are described in the edition below.

The author of these letters, Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister (1920–2002), a native of Billings, Montana, was a graduate of the Pasadena Playhouse, served as a bomber pilot in Europe during World War II, and afterwards worked as a host and producer for a local television station in Seattle and as an amateur actor and director for a community theatre in Tacoma, Washington (state). The recipient of these letters, Fairfax Proudfit Walkup (1887–1976), was an actress, designer, administrator, writer, and—as evidenced by the quantity and quality of the correspondences addressed to her—a passionate educator at the Pasadena Playhouse. She went on to earn a Ph.D. from the University of Utah (1951) and subsequently taught in CSUF's Department of Theatre and Dance.

The set of Fuhrmeister letters starts "locally" with a thank-you note for a lovely evening at Walkup's home in Pasadena (No. 1, April 30, 1941). Seven month later (and just a few days after "Pearl Harbor"), Fuhrmeister was in uniform and writing from the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he was visiting the local club of the United Service Organizations (USO), directing a blackout exercise, and commenting favorably on Southern hospitality (No. 2, December 13, 1941). Eight month on, Fuhrmeister found himself at Geiger Field in Spokane, Washington (state), reminiscing about a cross-country trip, training to be a bomber pilot on the B-24D "Liberator," and appreciating a thoughtful book Walkup had sent him (No. 3, August 16, 1942). Finally, a good fourteen months later, Fuhrmeister contacted Walkup from his deployment in England, calling his "work" both "exciting" and expressing his "extreme dislike" for it. According to the [online](#)

*American Air Museum in Britain*, he flew approximately 25 missions in 1943/1944, including the significant Schweinsburg-Regensburg mission (August 17, 1943).

This small collection of letters should be of particular interest to scholars studying U.S. history, World War II, unique civilian-soldier connections, personal experiences, wartime realities, military psychology, mental health, and coping mechanisms. It reflects, rather beautifully, Fairfax Proudfit Walkup's care for her former students in times of adversity, as well as Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister's youthful energy, appreciation for artistic and intellectual pursuits, and hope that the war will end soon.

The correspondences have been arranged chronologically. The spelling and punctuation of the original texts has been retained. All editorial insertions, including expanded abbreviations and page numbers, appear in square brackets. The paragraph structure of the original texts has been retained. Identifiable individuals, locations, and technical terms have been referenced in the footnotes, usually when they first appear.

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*The primary-source edition published below originated in the "History and Editing" course offered by CSUF's Department of History.*

*Edition No. 01: Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister to Fairfax Proudfit Walkup,  
no location, April 30, 1941.*

*[paper, 28 by 21.5 cm (11 by 8.5 inches), fold marks, hand/blue ink, writing on right half of pages only,  
[1] first page, [2] second page]*

[1] April 30, 1941

My dear Mrs. Walkup,<sup>1</sup>

I want to thank you so very much for the swell time I had at your home<sup>2</sup> last Monday evening. If ever I want a good time in Pasadena,<sup>3</sup> I know now where to find it. The cake was delicious, the ice cream superb,<sup>4</sup> and the coffee, well, I [2] haven't had better since the last time I was at your home.

Thanks a gain for swell hospitality,  
Lovingly,  
Dinwid die<sup>5</sup>

*Edition No. 02: Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister to Fairfax Proudfit Walkup,  
Fort Bragg, North Carolina, December 13, 1941.*

*[paper, 21 by 14 cm (8.25 by 5.5 inches), fold marks, hand/grey or black ink, writing on front and back,  
[1] first page/front, [2] first page/back, [3] second page/front, [4] second page/back; printed letterhead  
of 7 logos at the top of [1] and [3], featuring, from left to right: J[ewish]. W[elfare]. B[oard]. (blue,  
encircled Star of David) / National Catholic Community Service (blue, encircled Christian Cross) /  
Y[oung]. M[en's]. C[hristian]. A[ssociation]. (inverted red triangle with blue acronym on crossbar) /  
U[nited] S[ervice] O[rganizations] (large blue letters, center logo) / Y[oung]. W[omen's]. C[hristian].  
A[ssociation]. (inverted blue triangle with blue acronym on crossbar) / THE SALVATION ARMY (red  
shield) / TRAVELERS AID (both world hemispheres in blue with red border and organization's name  
written across)]*

[1] December 13, 1941

Dear Mrs. Walkup,

Just a few hours ago, I received your second letter this week. I feel very honored.

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<sup>1</sup> Fairfax Proudfit Walkup (1887–1976), theatrical educator at the Pasadena Playhouse, later a faculty member in the Department of Theatre and Dance at California State University, Fullerton.

<sup>2</sup> 369 California Terrace, Pasadena, California 91105, was Walkup's residential address at this time. The home was built in 1924 and is still standing (as of 2025). See *The Welebaethan: A Journal of History* 46 (2019): 350–66, 357–73, [online](#).

<sup>3</sup> City in Los Angeles County, California.

<sup>4</sup> Superb.

<sup>5</sup> Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister (1920–2002), Walkup's former student at the Pasadena Playhouse. He was "a cowboy, World War II bomber pilot, an amateur actor and director [e.g., at the Tacoma Little Theatre], a local TV host and producer, and one of the founders of the Sound to Narrows race. [...] Fuhrmeister went on to work for the Tribune Publishing Co., at a time when the company still owned KTNT-TV, Channel 11. Among other things, he hosted a children's show during the 1950s called "Din's Dandy Time." See his biographical sketch, [online](#).

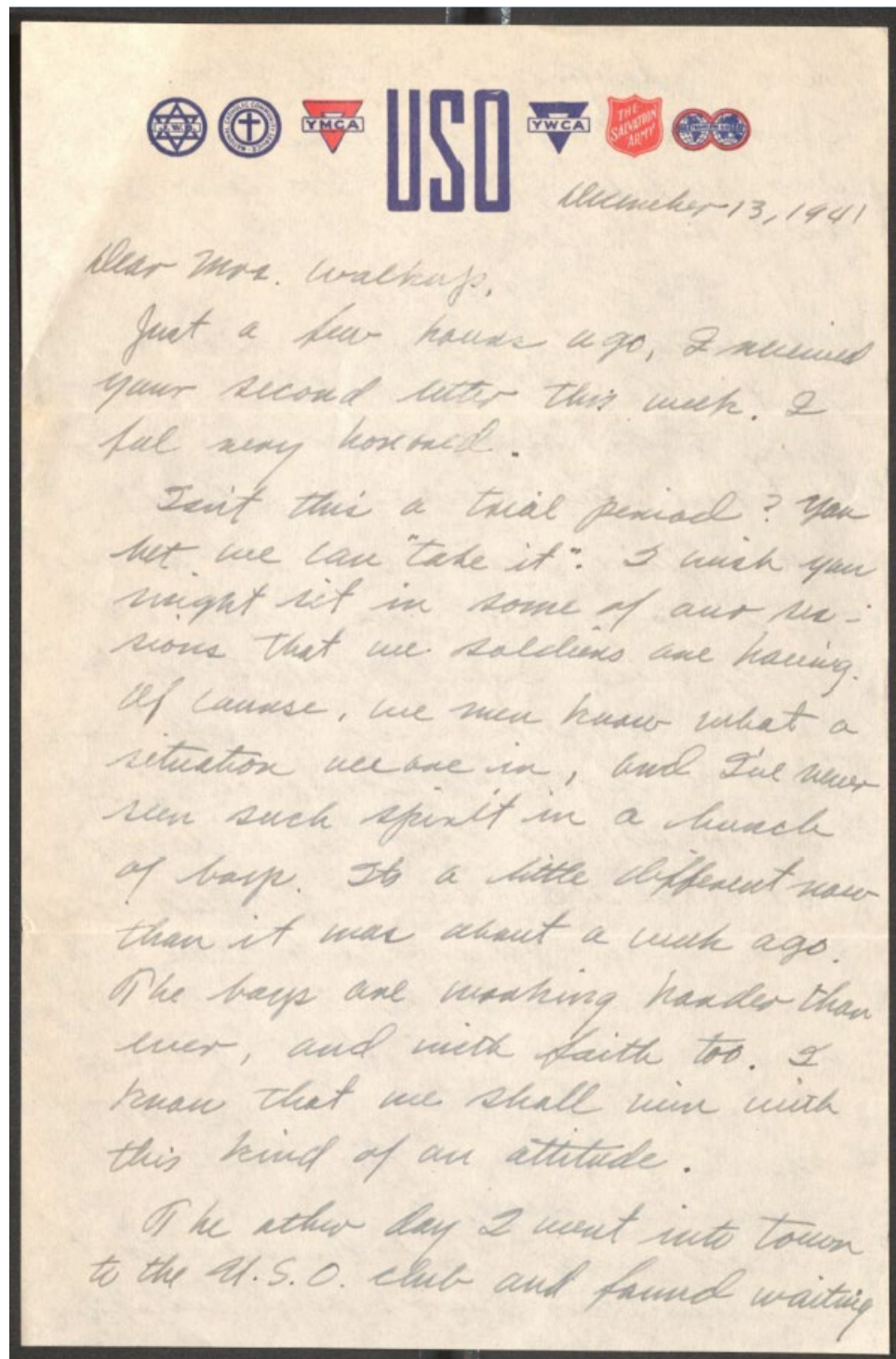


Figure 1: Manuscript letter. Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister to Fairfax Proudfit Walkup, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, December 13, 1941, page 1.  
UA&SC, CSUF. See Edition No. 2.

Isn't this a trial period?<sup>6</sup> You bet we can "take it." I wish you might sit in some of our sessions that we soldiers are having. Of course, we men know what a situation we are in, and I've never seen such spirit in a bunch of boys. Its a little different now than it was about a week ago. The boys are working harder than ever, and with faith too. I know that we shall win with this kind of attitude.

The other day I went into town to the U[nited]. S[ervice]. O[rganizations].<sup>7</sup> club and found waiting [2] there a program of the new Will Saroyan's<sup>8</sup> play "Jim Dandy."<sup>9</sup> I was awfully glad to get something from my alma mater.<sup>10</sup> It kind of helps to keep up on things.

Tomorrow I'm going to read a part in a play that the U[nited]. S[ervice]. O[rganizations]. is going to give over the radio, directed by none other than James S. O'Neill.<sup>11</sup> He certainly deserves credit for what he is doing. And he's doing it well. I only wish I had time to help out in his line. I've thought several times of starting a dramatics<sup>12</sup> club here on the post,<sup>13</sup> but have decided that it wouldn't work because of the lack of time. That is something we ~~soldiers~~ soldiers know nothing about—time. We don't have any of it. But just the same, our minds find time for these swell remembrances.

Last night Fort Bragg<sup>14</sup> and surrounding towns and villages [3] witnessed their first "blackout,"<sup>15</sup> I was charge of quarters in the Recreation Hall<sup>16</sup> at that time. I gat my building cleaned and lights out in about 1 ½ minutes. That was quick time for a large building. It was a bad night. All day long it had been raining and at 7:45 it had turned into sleet. We stood out in the wind and sleet for about 10 minutes, waiting for the all clear signal. During those few minutes, a million thoughts ran thr[o]u[gh] my head. Now I know just what other peace loving people have witnessed. It really is terrifying but what a necessity!

In the past few days, we have really been working hard. We [4] have arrived at the stage where we go into actual maneuvers for 2–3 hours at a time. In the evenings we are glad to see the bed. We do have fun when we're working, and that is what makes work a treat.

I must close now, and wishing you a very merry Christmas. I've been invited to spend my 42 hours at a friends home. These southern people are very hospitable, and nice too, altho[ugh], I haven't seen any of their "beautiful southern blondes" yet. Do they grow them here? or are they all in the North west?

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<sup>6</sup> This letter was written just four day's after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941).

<sup>7</sup> American nonprofit corporation serving members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families, founded on February 4, 1941.

<sup>8</sup> William Saroyan (1908–1981), Armenian American writer and longtime California resident.

<sup>9</sup> 1941 play by William Saroyan.

<sup>10</sup> Latin phrase. English meaning: nourishing mother. Reference to Fuhrmeister's theatre background.

<sup>11</sup> Unidentified. Perhaps a relative of the American writer Eugene G. O'Neill (1888–1953).

<sup>12</sup> Theatre, acting.

<sup>13</sup> Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. Army military installation, founded in 1918, located east of Fayetteville, North Carolina.

<sup>15</sup> Wartime exercise, reducing lighting to prevent enemy aircraft from identifying targets.

<sup>16</sup> Venue at Fort Bragg's Field Artillery Replacement Training Center, featured on 1940s postcards.

Friendly yours,  
Dinwiddie

Acting Corp[oral].<sup>17</sup>

B[a]t[te]ry D, 11<sup>th</sup> B[attalion].

4<sup>th</sup> Reg[imen]t. 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon

F[ield]. A[rtil]lery. R[eplacement]. T[raining]. C[enter].

F[or]t. Bragg, N[orth]. C[arolina].

Edition No. 03: Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister to Fairfax Proudfit Walkup,  
Geiger Field [Spokane], Washington, August 16, 1942.

[paper, 25 by 16 cm (10 by 6.3 inches), fold marks, hand/blue ink, writing on front and back, [1] first page/front, [2] first page/back, [3] second page/front, [4] second page/back, [5] third page/front; printed blue letterhead at the top of [1], [3], and [5], featuring a winged shield, underneath: U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES / GEIGER FIELD, WASHINGTON; [1] top left, different hand (presumably Fairfax Proudfit Walkup)/grey or black ink: L[ieutenant]. D[inwiddie]. Fuhrmeister / 7<sup>th</sup> Bomb[ardment]. Squadron / 34<sup>th</sup> " [Bombardment] group (H) / Geiger Field, Spokane, Washington]

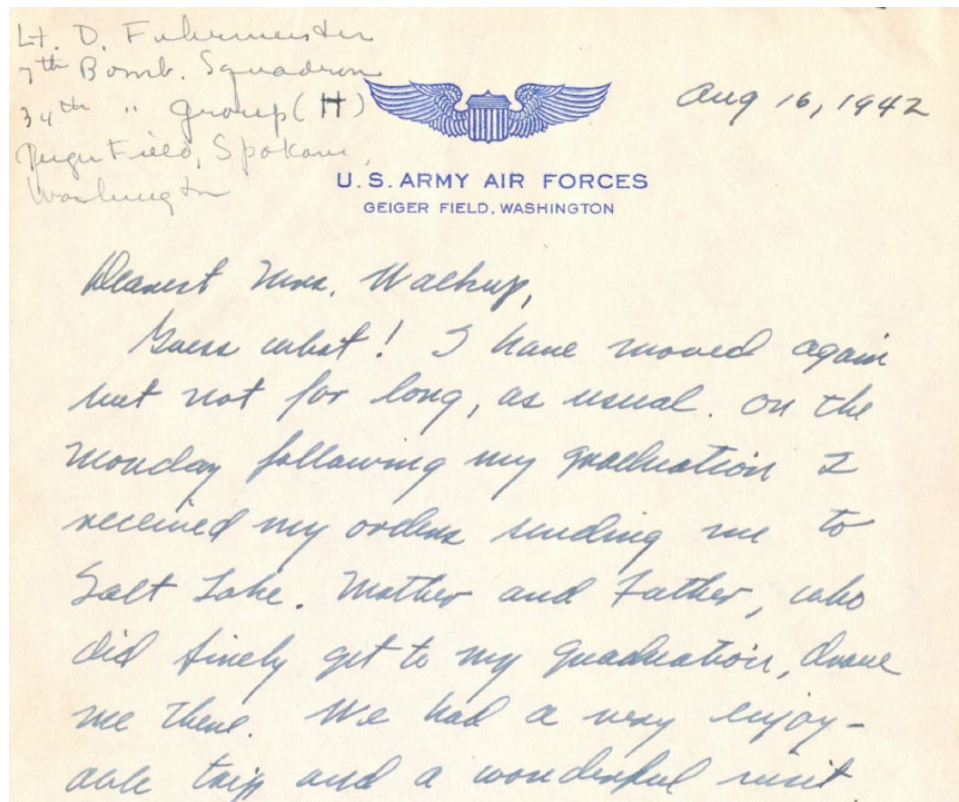


Figure 2: Manuscript letter. Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister to Fairfax Proudfit Walkup,  
Geiger Field [Spokane], Washington, August 16, 1942, page 1 (excerpt).  
UA&SC, CSUF. See Edition No. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Lower-ranking, non-commissioned officer.



[1] August 16, 1942

Dearest Mrs. Walkup,

Guess what! I have moved again but not for long, as usual. On the Monday following my graduation, I received my orders sending me to Salt Lake.<sup>18</sup> Mother and Father,<sup>19</sup> who did finely<sup>20</sup> get to my graduation, drove me there. We had a very enjoyable trip and a wonderful visit. We talked about how nice it would be for me to be so close to home. But the day following my arrival I reported to my new station only to be turned away with a new set of orders sending me here. I drove with a lieutenant friend and had a most scenic trip.

From Stockton,<sup>21</sup> I stopped in Reno<sup>22</sup> to see if Betty Cochran<sup>23</sup> was there. To my surprise. I found her home. [2] It was so good to see her—the same beautiful and almost doll-like Betty, only more so. The first thing I noticed about her was the voice. What a change for the best! It was so much richer and full. “Miss Kennedy wins again!”<sup>24</sup> We had lots to talk about. Mrs. Walkup, you’ll never know how much I long to get back.

I’m living a much different life now as an officer and I rather like it. Of course I do miss being a cadet. I had so much fun. Instead of being treated like children, and to think of it we really were, we are respected as an officer. Some one told me at one time that when becoming an officer, I would have much more responsibility and I believe them now. It isn’t just a tea party! I think I can handle any of those responsives tho[ugh].

As for flying. Our first three days on this new post was devoted to [3] ground school—an understanding of what we were about to fly. Its the army bomber—the B-24D<sup>25</sup>—a four motored job. Its quite large, but fun as well as work to fly. We will get only transition work here at the field. Lots of night flying, cross countries and the like. We get about a hundred hours flying time in a month then go to our secondary phase for another month. I hear we get regular tactical bombing missions and gunnery. Then our third and final course consists of mostly navigational trips. We fly all over the U[nited]. S[tates]. As yet I don’t know the where abouts of these schools. Then to combat. The sooner we get over there and win, the sooner we can come back [4] and enjoy the American way of living.

As for my social life. It really hasn’t been much lately. We’ve been too busy. We get our 24 h[ou]r. pass weekly at which time we can forget about flying, ground school, and the army. The other six days we are confined. As yet I can’t see that being confined has its disadvantages. So far I haven’t had time to notice that I am confined. It’s a 2<sup>nd</sup> air Force

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<sup>18</sup> Salt Lake City, city in Salt Lake County, Utah.

<sup>19</sup> Ralph S. Fuhrmeister (1885–1968) and Helen K. Dinwiddie (1890–1965).

<sup>20</sup> Finally.

<sup>21</sup> City in San Joaquin County, California.

<sup>22</sup> City in Washoe County, Nevada.

<sup>23</sup> Unidentified. Several individuals by this name are attested in the 1940s.

<sup>24</sup> Unattributed quote.

<sup>25</sup> “The Liberator,” American heavy bomber (aircraft), introduced in 1941.

ruling. I have seen Spokane<sup>26</sup> tho[ugh] and rather like the city. People are so friendly it seems. Its in the foot hills<sup>27</sup> and has lots of trees and I like that. I'm just a hill-billy<sup>28</sup> at heart.

Day before yesterday the postman was very kind to me. He brought me all sorts of mail—mail that has been trying to catch me but didn't until then. In the assortment I found a packet from you. Instead [5] of sitting down and acknowledging it, I read "The Courage of Ignorance"<sup>29</sup> first. What a wonderful philosophy that is to have. He is right in so many ways. I know my subconscious mind thinks like that—all that is needed now is application. Thank you so very much and you'll always know that I shall hold it very dear to me. Your son<sup>30</sup> certainly is fortunate in having you for his mother.

I must go to soar<sup>31</sup> now. I really like it.

Please remember me to everyone there and thanks again,  
Affectionately,  
Dinwiddie

*Edition No. 04: Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister to Fairfax Proudfit Walkup,  
[Thurleigh (Bedfordshire)?] England, November 2, 1943.*

*[paper, 26.5 by 18.5 cm (10.5 by 7.3 inches), possibly with plane-shaped/written watermark, fold marks, hand/grey or black ink, [1] first page, [2] second page, [3] third page; [3] different hand (presumably Fairfax Proudfit Walkup)/pencil: [illegible, underlined word or acronym] enclosed]*

[1] November 2, 1943  
England<sup>32</sup>

Dear Mrs. Walkup,

Very recently I got wind that Christmas is just around the corner. For me its hard to realize that a whole year has passed so quickly. Altho[ugh] I am quite distant from where I'd like to be, I find my heart and mind there constantly. I'm not giving up hope thinking I won't be home for that wonderful time but things will have to happen awfully fast to make a dream come true. I shan't complain because I won't be the only one away. The arrangements already in the process for Christmas day appear to be very promising and I'm not worrying about where I'll be.

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<sup>26</sup> City in Spokane County, Washington.

<sup>27</sup> Reference to the Rocky Mountain foothills or the Selkirk Mountains, or both.

<sup>28</sup> Term for white people from mountainous areas. Fuhrmeister originally hailed from Billings, Montana.

<sup>29</sup> William Lyon Phelps, *The Courage of Ignorance* (E. P. Dutton & Company, 1933).

<sup>30</sup> John Proudfit Williamson (1912–1970).

<sup>31</sup> Fly.

<sup>32</sup> Based on the data provided on this letter's envelope (367<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group H; see below), Fuhrmeister was presumably stationed at Thurleigh(Bedfordshire).



About all I can say considering my work is that its plenty exciting however, I have an extreme dislike for this particular job.<sup>33</sup>

I consider myself very fortunate being stationed in England for truly, I'm enjoying myself—seeing things I've always heard about and read about, meeting all sorts of [2] interesting people and having fun in general. I've found London such a fascinating city and spend my passes there.<sup>34</sup> I've visited Wales<sup>35</sup> and Scotland<sup>36</sup> and find them equally as beautiful and interesting.

Glory be the day when "Jerry"<sup>37</sup> "hollers" "Uncle!"<sup>38</sup> Hope its soon.

A very merry Christmas Mrs. Walkup, and best wishes for the coming year. My regards to the entire play house.<sup>39</sup>

Affectionately,  
Dinwiddie

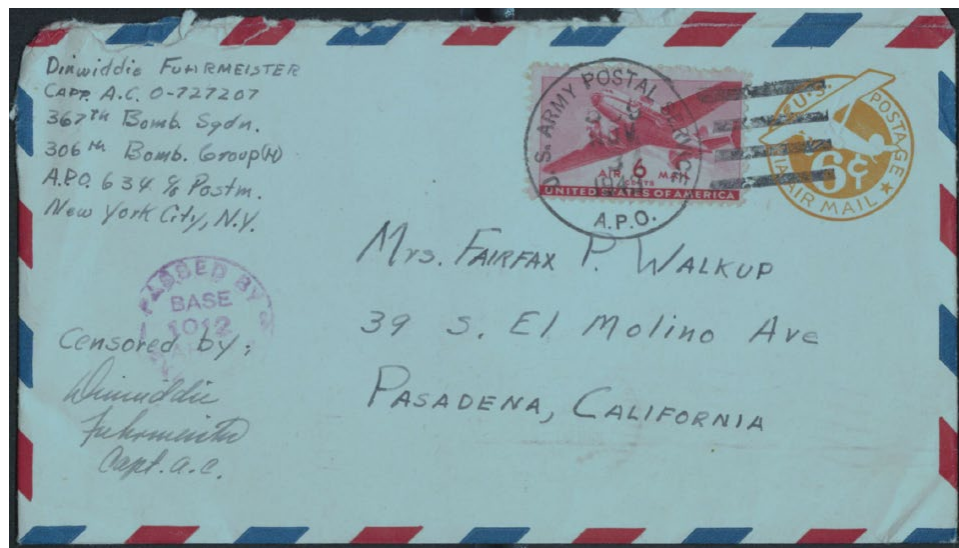


Figure 3: Envelope. Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister to Fairfax Proudfit Walkup, [Thurleigh (Bedfordshire)?] England, November 2, 1943. UA&SC, CSUF. See Edition No. 4.

<sup>33</sup> In 1943/1944, Fuhrmeister flew approximately 25 missions, including the significant Schweinsburg-Regensburg mission (August 17, 1943). See "Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister," *American Air Museum in Britain*, [online](#).

<sup>34</sup> See above, note 32. Thurleigh (Bedfordshire) is located about 60 miles (or 96.5 kilometers) north of London, meaning that Fuhrmeister would have been able to travel there rather easily (from Bedford).

<sup>35</sup> Wales, country in the western part of the United Kingdom.

<sup>36</sup> Scotland, country in the northern part of the United Kingdom.

<sup>37</sup> Derogatory term referring to a German.

<sup>38</sup> To cry "Uncle!" means to admit defeat and ask for mercy.

<sup>39</sup> Pasadena Playhouse, entertainment venue, founded in 1924.

*[airmail envelope with red-and-blue border, 17 by 9.5 mm (6.7 by 3.75 inches), hand/grey or black ink; printed stamp/orange featuring a plane: U.S. POSTAGE / VIA AIR MAIL / 6¢; physical stamp/red featuring a plane: AIR MAIL / 6 CENTS / UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; round postmark/black (covering the red stamp): U.S. ARMY POSTAL SERVICE / 5[?]9 / NOV 31 / 1943 / A[rmy]. P[ost]. O[ffice].; striped postmark/black (covering both stamps); round inspection postmark/purple: PASSED BY/ BASE 1012 / [illegible]]*

Dinwiddie Fuhrmeister

CAPT[AIN]. A[rmy Air]. C[orps]. 0-727207

367<sup>th</sup> Bomb[ardment] Sq[ua]d[ro]n.

306<sup>th</sup> Bomb[ardment]. Group (H)

A[rmy]. P[ost]. O[ffice]. 634<sup>40</sup> c/o Postm[aster].

New York City, N[ew]. Y[ork].<sup>41</sup>

Mrs. Fairfax P[roudfit]. Walkup

39 S. El Molino Ave

Pasadena, California<sup>42</sup>

Censored by:

Dinwiddie

Fuhrmeister

Capt[ain]. A[rmy Air]. C[orps].

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<sup>40</sup> U.S. Army Post Office in Wellingborough, England, United Kingdom, located only about 15 miles (or 24 kilometers) northeast of Thurleigh (Bedfordshire) where Fuhrmeister was stationed at this time.

<sup>41</sup> During World War II, most transatlantic mail between the United Kingdom and the United States still traveled by ship and via New York City, New York.

<sup>42</sup> As of 2025, this is still the address of the historic Pasadena Playhouse.