

Butch Geetter and the Hot Rock



A POW Love Story

Part 1: Flight School (1943)

by Sylvia Geetter Levy and Lt. Leonard Levy

Edited by Alan Neal Levy

Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana¹
Saturday
[February 27, 1943]

Dearest [Butch]-

Here I am writing to you from my third camp. This is by far the nicest looking of them all. We all had the premonition that we were to be shipped here but when the official notice came five hours out of Nashville we were all a bit disappointed...

The trip down here was uneventful but knowing that you would like to hear about it I'll describe as much of it as I can remember. We boarded the train at Camp at 3:15 yesterday afternoon. We felt pretty good when we saw the train as it was made of eight Pullman cars² and two drivers. Thinking this meant a long trip, our hopes were renewed.

At 5:00 o'clock we went into the diner and had a very good meal in which the main dish was roast beef. 9:30 came and with it came our Porter to make up our berths... I drew a lower berth and had to sleep with Mitch, the fellow from Texas. As you thought, it is very difficult for two to sleep in one berth. There is absolutely no room to move around... unless you want to disturb your bed companion. Mitch and I sat in bed talking and smoking until 11:00 when we hit Birmingham, Alabama. We watched the lights of the city as we went by, then shut off our bed lights and went to sleep.

At 7:00 in the morning the Porter woke us. We got out of bed, washed, dressed and sat around until 8:00 when we arrived in Jackson Mississippi.

Here the train stopped and we were told to get off... and eat in the town. We lined up on the platform in groups according to the car we were in and each marched to a different restaurant. The group I was in went to... a real joint, but the food was really good.

¹ All five sheets were written on United States Army Air Corps stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the five-pointed star with Navigation Wings

² **Pullman** constructed the first troop sleeper **cars** in 1943 to help ease the burden on the standard Pullman fleet. To increase the troop movement capacity of the railroads, the U.S. Office of Defense Transportation contracted with Pullman-Standard Car Company to build 2,400 troop sleepers.



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“Okay, guys – this is it!”

Assembly in 20 minutes. Full kit and no farewells. Their next letters home will be V-mail; their address an APO. That's what travel orders mean.

To Pullman, those orders mean that sleeping cars must be waiting when the boys are ready to roll. 20 cars here—40 there—100 somewhere else. Every night, special trains of Pullmans move an average of almost 30,000 troops.

That takes a lot of cars. It leaves only *part* of the Pullman fleet to handle regular passenger travel that is far heavier than in peacetime, when the whole fleet was available. So no wonder trains are crowded and accommodations sometimes scarce.

But most passengers understand the situation. And the fact that boys in uniform come first with them, as they do with Pullman, is not the only reason for the tolerance with which they take whatever space is open. It's also that wartime

travelers seem to look on Pullman in a different light. A Pullman trip, to them, is no longer simply the gay adventure in good living that it was before the war. Now, Pullman privacy and comfort are a means to an end instead of an end in themselves.

They help a harassed man relax after a troubled day. They give him a few restful hours—undisturbed—in which to think things over. Then, when bed-time comes, they invite the deep, refreshing sleep from which a wartime traveler wakes with the new energy and vigor he needs to do the kind of job that Uncle Sam expects of him.

These things, though they may not themselves win battles, are *important* to those whom war keeps on the go. So please:

Cancel promptly, when plans change, and make the Pullman bed reserved for you available to someone else.

Travel light and give yourself and fellow passengers the room that excess luggage would take up.

Ask your Ticket Agent on which days trains may be least crowded on the route you want to take. Try to go on one of those days if you can.

PULLMAN

America's Most Comfortable Way To Travel

— THE SURE WAY TO GET WHERE YOU WANT TO GO



We were served ham and eggs, grits (a food... [that] looks and tastes like Cream of Wheat) toast, coffee, and doughnuts. Everything was all right until we heard the price, 75 cents per cadet... This time we had to pay for our meals, and someday the Army will reimburse us. Jackson is a fairly nice city and the capital of the state...

We were back on the train by 9:00 and rode straight to Monroe through the most poverty stricken towns I've ever seen. The towns in Mississippi are *Tobacco Road*³ come to life in Technicolor... The homes look like a good wind would blow them down. They have no paint on them, no electricity, no plumbing and no cellars.

Crossing the Mississippi River we were in Louisiana and there I saw the most level ground ever. The land just stretches out for miles without the slightest hill... The roads are just as straight as a dice table, no curves or anything. The ground... is swampy and... about 2:30 we caught our first look at Selman Field, our home for the next few months. The place was a sight for sore eyes because the barracks were painted white instead of the usual army olive drab, they were small and best of all there was no smoke, indicating that the heating system did not use soft coal as the majority of Army camps do.



³ *Tobacco Road* is a 1941 American comedy drama film directed by John Ford and starring Charley Grapewin, Marjorie Rambeau, Gene Tierney and William Tracy.

Later we found to my surprise that they use natural gas piped from Texas for heating and cooking purposes. The first thing we did after leaving the train was go to *Chow*. After eating my first meal here, all I can say is that there must be a catch somewhere. No Army *chow* can be this good. We had baked ham, four vegetables plus potatoes, real rye bread, butter, jam, milk, iced tea, water, and real apple pie. The only bad feature here is the water. It is so soft that when you shower you never feel that the soap is completely washed off, you can imagine how it tastes.

After *Chow* we were taken to our barracks and it was there that I got my real surprise. The barracks are divided into two suites of four rooms, each room containing only two beds. I picked one of the boys from my barracks in Nashville, Nat Lichtenholtz, as a roommate, and we got the best room in the barracks. Besides the usual two... cots we have a very modern writing table... upon which this letter is being written. (Just think, no more latrine or shower letters!) Each room has its own light and gas heater - no more freezing in the morning or tending fires. The barracks are fairly new, therefore they are easy to clean and keep clean.

Believe it or not but we've already started our training. After getting situated in our room we were called out in *formation* and marched to a classroom where we met our Tactical Officer Lt⁴. Sparks who gave us six forms that have to be filled out tonight. He gave us some more information about the training here and sprung another surprise on us. Not only are we to be trained as Navigators, but also as Bombardiers. A new Army regulation just came through the other day stating that all Navigators are also to be Bombardiers and vice versa. Isn't that wonderful?

As new men... we have to undergo another two weeks *quarantine* before we can leave the post on an *Open Post* pass. There is only one a week but it runs from 2:00 Saturday afternoon until 2:30 Sunday morning and from 8:30 that morning until sometime Sunday night. That's all one pass. From what the older men on the Field tell us, even if there were *Open Posts* during the week, we wouldn't go, as there is so

⁴ Lieutenant

much studying to do. During the course of our training here we will acquire 48 textbooks plus numerous pamphlets. From this you can see that I'll have my hands and my mind full for the next nine weeks... of Pre-flight training. When the nine weeks are up we either remain here for Advanced training or go to another Field.

The weather here is extremely mild right now. It is 9:45 and one can walk around in shirt sleeves without feeling cold.

Another wonderful part of this camp is that we will never have KP. They have civilian help in the kitchen. We don't even have to pick up our used dishes from the table when we're through eating. Pinch me Butch, I think I'm dreaming all this - it all sounds too good to be true.

Your last few letters were swell dear. They were so full of news and you seemed so happy that they really made me feel wonderful. By the way - just after I mailed my last letter to you I received a letter from Boomey containing some bad news. He washed out of pilot training due to the fact that his eyes started to go bad on him. He couldn't judge distances accurately enough and consequently couldn't land a plane properly. Now, to put it in his words, the tables are turned and instead of him being *my* upperclassman I will be *his*. The chances are very good that he will be at this Field in three or four weeks, as he has asked to be reclassified as a Navigator and this is where most of the Navigators are sent. From the talk I've heard, this is the best place I could have been sent to, as it is the oldest school of its type with the best teachers and equipment. All I have to do now is 'keep on the ball'!

Butch dearest, tonight I'm at least 1600 miles from you and yet somehow I feel very very close to you. It is probably because I love you so very very much and also because in five months we are to be together - you had better start saving your pennies. I may not get a furlough and you'll have to come down here; that would give us an added excuse for having the small wedding we have talked about.

Incidentally Butch, you don't ever have to think of repaying Mom and Pop for the little kindnesses that they show or give you; it is just their way of showing that they approve of [you as] my wife. You see... they love you as a daughter already - all your fears of them not liking you

- remember - were certainly [misplaced.] I assure you that they like you for yourself and not simply because you are my girlfriend.

Goodnight my sweet

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

PS Upon seeing the length of this letter, Nat warned me to be sure and tell you not to expect letters of this length after the first three weeks - in fact he said to tell you not to expect more than one or two letters a week after the first month as there will be absolutely no time to write and from what I hear he is right - however I'll do my best and please keep writing to me every day.

Love
Lenny

The address⁵ stands for Air Force Preflight School (Bombardier-Navigator). The 43- 12 I think stands for the fact that we are the 12th class of the year 1943.

Love,
Lenny

⁵ Lenny is describing his new address at Selman Field

Monroe, Louisiana⁶
Monday
[February 28, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

My first full day here has gone by the boards and being a Sunday nothing much of interest has happened. The schedule here on a Sunday is about the same as it was at Nashville, meaning that the only *formations* we have to make are those for the *mess hall*. Those... are a pleasure, especially here, so the day was a pleasant one.

Most of the morning was spent trying to place a call through to home but as in all Army camps it was impossible. At 11:30 I gave it up as a lost cause and went back to my room to wash up for *Chow*. After a very pleasant meal of Chicken a la King with plenty of real chicken... I dozed off for an hour... until Nat⁷ woke me up and then we took a walk over to the Recreation Hall.



⁶ All three sheets were written on United States Army Air Corps stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the five-pointed star with Navigation Wings

⁷ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's from Nashville

The building was a combined PX⁸, Day room, game room and guest lounge. The place is... three barracks in an I-formation and beautifully furnished. The PX takes care of our personal needs, besides selling Cokes and candy, the game room has three new billiard tables and a regular size ping pong set. The lounge is moderately furnished and is a place where we cadets can bring our girlfriends if they are near enough to us to spend the day. All in all, they see to it that we keep up our morale. Nat and I played two or three games of pool, I lost, and then we went to supper... We came back to our room, sorted our dirty laundry in preparation for tomorrow's laundry call, got our clothing ready for the dry cleaners, unpacked our barracks bags, hung up our clothing, and then dusted and swept, so that we wouldn't have to rush it tomorrow.

After straightening things out, I set out to look for Mitch⁹, from whom I had become separated. I knew he had been looking for me because I found the enclosed note when I came back from the PX. When I found him, we sat in his room talking for a while and then went over and spent a pleasant few hours over a couple of Cokes talking about the time we had at Nashville. Mitch is quite a character, a college graduate and a possessor of a very good sense of humor. He keeps us doubled over with his stories which he spins in that Texan [accent] of his. One regret in mind is that we are not bunking together. He would be a very good influence on me and I think a very good friend. We have promised to keep in touch with each other despite the fact that we are in different squadrons, in fact we have already made plans to spend our first *Open Post* together.

It has started to rain here, which means plenty of mud tomorrow. The soil here is just made for it, Louisiana Gumbo they call it down here. When it doesn't rain, it is very dusty, I'll have to find out which is the lesser of two evils.

This morning we were given a list of 40 textbooks that we are to receive tomorrow morning. That is only the start. I've been talking to a few of the upper classmen and they said that [for] a while you just walk around with your head spinning.... They also say that no matter what

⁸ Post Express

⁹ Mitch is an unmarried classmate of Lenny's from Nashville

happens, it is all worth it; there is no finer training given to anyone than that given to a Cadet.

A graduate of the Air Corps is in every sense of the word a gentleman and an officer. God pray that I'm one of them.

Syl dearest, What I'm going to say now would probably better be left unsaid but here goes anyway. If you ever get really fed up with your job or life at home, why not seriously consider coming down here to live and work? Of course we couldn't see each other more than twice a week but at least we would be close to each other... I know nothing about living or working conditions down here but if ever you get the urge to travel again look towards Louisiana. Don't just pull up roots and come but, if ever the urge comes and life is unbearable, come running and I'll be waiting with open arms. Life with you so close to me would really be a Heaven on Earth. God Syl, but I love you so much that I'm kicking myself for not getting married before coming into this. Graduation seems so far away that it is going to be very hard to wait. If this idea of mine sounds fantastic just laugh it off, if not write to me about it and what you think of it.

I've given you enough to think about for one letter so I'll say goodnight now.

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

The following note from Mitch was enclosed:

Dear Wolf -

It's my understanding that gentlemen under confinement should not be
gad about - am I right?

Mitch.

If you're ever curious about your Area run up to F 2 Bks. 22- 8 There
you'll find your uncle fudd - Please?

Love and kisses

By the way Sylvia the wolf has no special meaning

Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁰
Monday
[March 1, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

If I thought that the classes I attended while in the Medical Corp were tough, or that they threw the stuff at us in a rather hurried manner, I was sadly mistaken¹¹. Compared to this outfit, all that was a snap. To show you how much stuff they gave us in one period, let me quote the saying they have here, "If you sneeze during a class you miss a day's work..."

I am really going to school now and they wasted no time in getting us started. If today was an example of the daily routine here... I'll have plenty to write about, if only I have the time to write. Right after class we marched down to the Theater, where we had a period of *Orientation...* addressed by some of the officers of the Post. Next we were taken to one of the Academic buildings and issued the 40 textbooks I mentioned in my last letter and that is when the fun started.

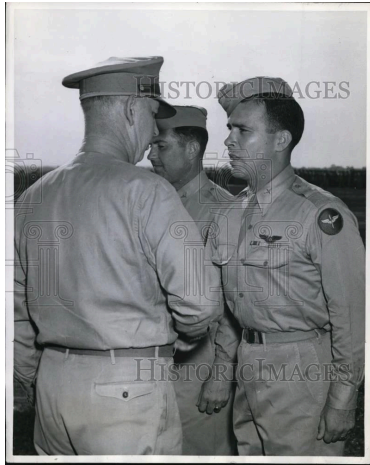
Our first real class¹² was *Mathematics* in relation to [*Airplane Navigation*]. That wasn't bad as the instructor talked mainly on what the course was all about. The next hour dealt with *Naval Forces* and our instructor, a civilian and the head of the Academic Department, is just about the most cynical person I've ever met up with. From his manner he hates just about everything... he doesn't even laugh at his own jokes and most of them are pretty good. He can't see what good the Navy is doing in this war and says so in no uncertain terms. He claims that the only time you hear of a Destroyer is when it is either being launched or being sunk. His definition of words are a scream - talking about the waist of a ship he said, "you know, waist as in girdle," Or the word soft "as in soap." After 50 minutes of rapid fire lecturing he told us to prepare for a

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¹¹ In Pre-flight School, the navigation cadet received nine weeks of intensive physical and mental conditioning for the arduous fifteen-week course which confronted him in the Advanced Navigation School.

¹² In Academic classes, he was instructed in Morse Code, meteorology, mathematics, physics, naval forces, organization of the Army Air Forces, aircraft identification, and basic military science.

quiz! Can you imagine, after less than a full hour he gave us a test on what he had told us? Luckily I had been paying strict attention to him and got most of the questions right.



Immediately after dinner we had a class on the Army *Ground Forces* and the makeup of the Army. I had most of this at [Camp] Pickett so it should be fairly easy to me.

The next class was on *Military Discipline and Courtesy*, a subject that every soldier should know cold. It is given mainly for the benefit of those fellows coming in from civilian life.

After that came the class on *Radio* where we are to learn how to send and receive messages by means of dots and dashes, or *dits* and *dabs* as the Army calls them. Before graduating we are required to send and receive a minimum of six words a minute. Man, oh man, have I got my work cut out for me?

The last class was on *Close Order Drill*, or marching to you civilians¹³. It is a subject that I like, so the hour went fast. This is... a rather full day but I found out that, due to the orientation this morning, we missed an hour and a half of callisthenics that we will get every day from now on. Each night from 8:30 to 9:30 is study period. I can see where each one of those 60 minutes will be put to full use.

The food is still superb, the weather, though cloudy, is warm and, all in all, being a Cadet is a wonderful life. The rain stopped during the night and thanks to the fact that the place has been graded, it wasn't so very muddy.

This afternoon while waiting for my class in *Radio* I met a fellow from Hartford; he has been here three weeks and already knows the ropes. He told me that there are quite a few fellows here from home and

¹³ The Military Training was carried out onto the drill field, where daily he studied **close order drill** by doing it. He received instruction in voice and command, uniform and insignia, discipline and military conduct. And then he marched some more.

one, George Goldstein, got his wings last week and is home on leave.
Lucky fellow!

It's almost impossible for me to write and tell you just how much I love you, Syl, because... I am not a letter writer. One would think that by now I would be an accomplished man in that field, but somehow I can't put my thoughts on paper.

It is time I did some studying, my sweet, so without further ado I'll say goodnight. Regards to the family

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



From Now You are an Officer Navigator
Army Air Forces Navigation School

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁴

Tuesday

[March 2, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

Another day has gone by but during it your boyfriend has gained some knowledge. By merely sitting in class taking notes I'll be able to absorb enough to pass the course, for what at first seemed to be so much isn't. The fact that the subjects are all new is what made them seem hard the first day. Things went along fairly smoothly today, but tomorrow we are to have three tests. *Naval Forces*, *Ground Forces* and *Military Discipline* are the three subjects to be tested.

The fellows in the suite gathered around and held a six-man forum discussing the stuff we had today. By this means, we expect to gain enough knowledge from each other, plus what we learn in class to make a good showing in all our subjects... The one course that I think is going to be hard is *Radio*¹⁵, I never could learn the Morse Code and now I have to do it in a hurry.



¹⁴ All three sheets were written on Navigation School stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

¹⁵ A 15-week curriculum that also includes Communication and Visual Code

This morning¹⁶ we had our first test of Calisthenics¹⁷ as they are given here. We started to run at 10:00 and stopped at 10:30 only to do setting-up exercises in rapid order for 15 minutes and then ran until 11:15. All in all I think we ran a good 5 miles. Surprisingly my wind was very good... outside of a little tightening of my leg muscles I didn't mind the run at all, despite the fact that it was cold.

Speaking of the cold, why is it that every place I go to in the south is experiencing its coldest weather in years? Today it is snowing here - whoever heard of snow in Louisiana?

My squadron is a rather small one, so they added F squadron to our classes and now Mitch¹⁸ takes his subjects with me and we are together the entire day. He's rather unhappy because the fellows in his barracks don't appreciate his sense of humor and so he has to remain sane Until he is with Nat¹⁹ and myself.

from what I've been learning less than 5% of the Fellows who really try are *washed out* of school here. The fact that they need so many Navigators, they give us every possible break. Instead of *washing* a cadet when he fails to grasp a subject they merely put him *back a class* and let him take the course over. This can happen time after time, until he can't help but graduate. Each fellow has a different story as to what subject is the hardest depending on which one he failed to get. I may not be the smartest fellow here but I fail to see how a fellow can attend every class and not learn enough to pass. True, they give us the stuff rather fast, but it is given in such a clear, concise manner that it sinks in.

The food here is still as good as it was the first day. I am amazed at the number of vegetables given with each meal... there are always three kinds of bread to choose from, plenty of fresh milk and always two

¹⁶ Physical Training, or PT, was the first period of the day. By a series of graduated exercises the cadet was brought to a peak of condition.

¹⁷ The calisthenics prescribed were the result of a special study with regard to the requirements of an air navigator. The exercises were devised by PT directors and physicians who studied the kinesiology of a man performing the duties of a navigator while in flight. From this research it was possible to determine what muscles and reactions come into play. Special exercises targeting these conditions were used.

¹⁸ Mitch is an unmarried classmate of Lenny's

¹⁹ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field

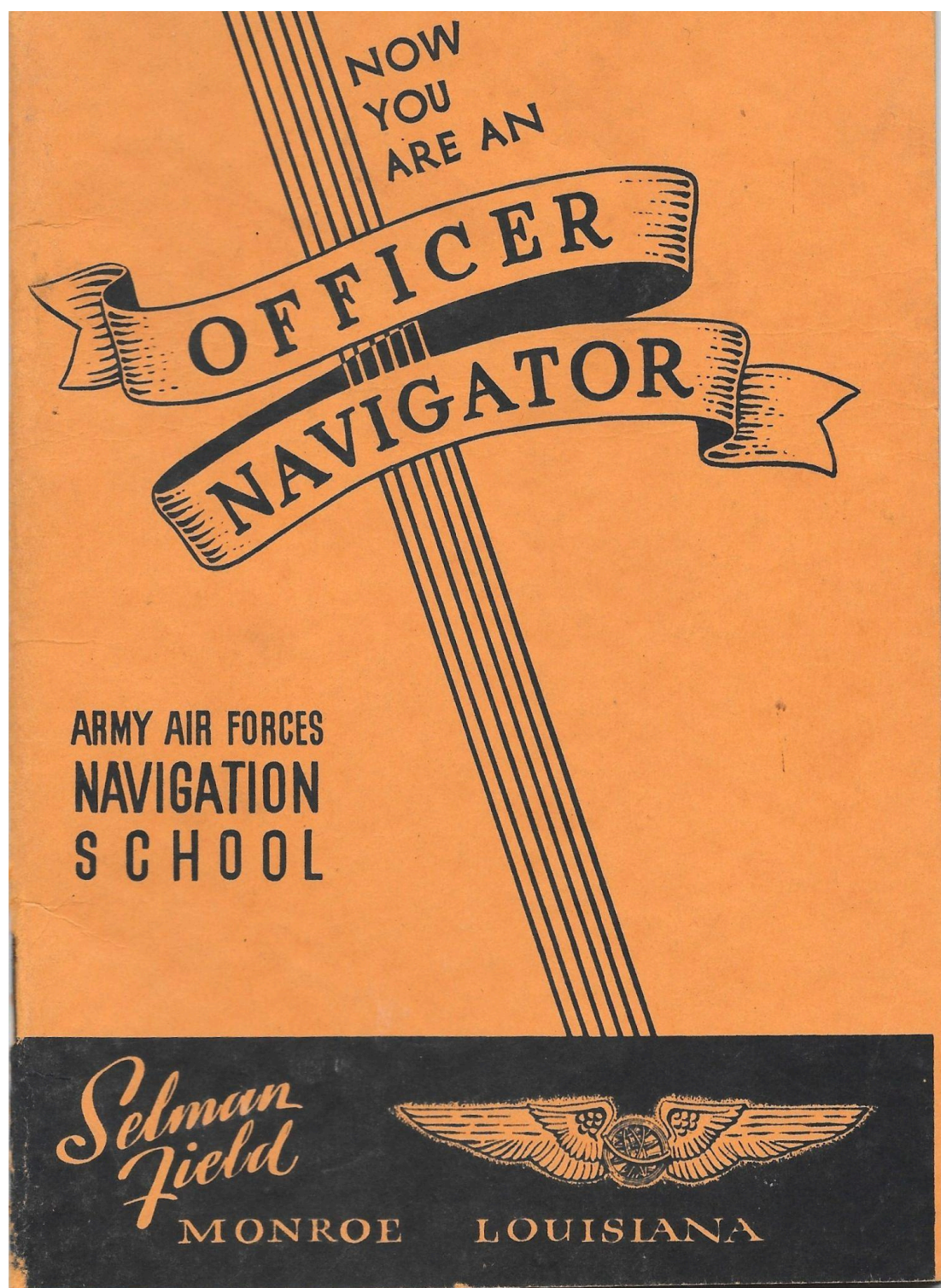
different drinks at each meal. The part that I like best about the mess here is that we don't have to remove our tray when we're finished, we just leave them on the table and let the waiters clear them up.

For some reason or other I find it hard to concentrate tonight so rather than make this just a jumble up affair I'll cut it short.

There is no doubt a lot I... should say but somehow I just can't put the words on paper. One thing I can say and mean with all my heart is that I love you very much, Syl. You are the one reason why I want to make a success of myself.

Goodnight dearest

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



From Now You are an Officer Navigator
Army Air Forces Navigation School

Monroe, Louisiana²⁰
Wednesday
[March 3, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

As usual I miss you more on this, our night, than at any time during the week. Why this is so I can't explain but believe me it is. The only time during the day that your picture was not on my mind was during a test when I was concentrating on the business at hand in order to make a good showing. Right now... you are staring at me, as I've placed your picture on the writing table and intend to leave it there until told otherwise by my Tactical Officer.

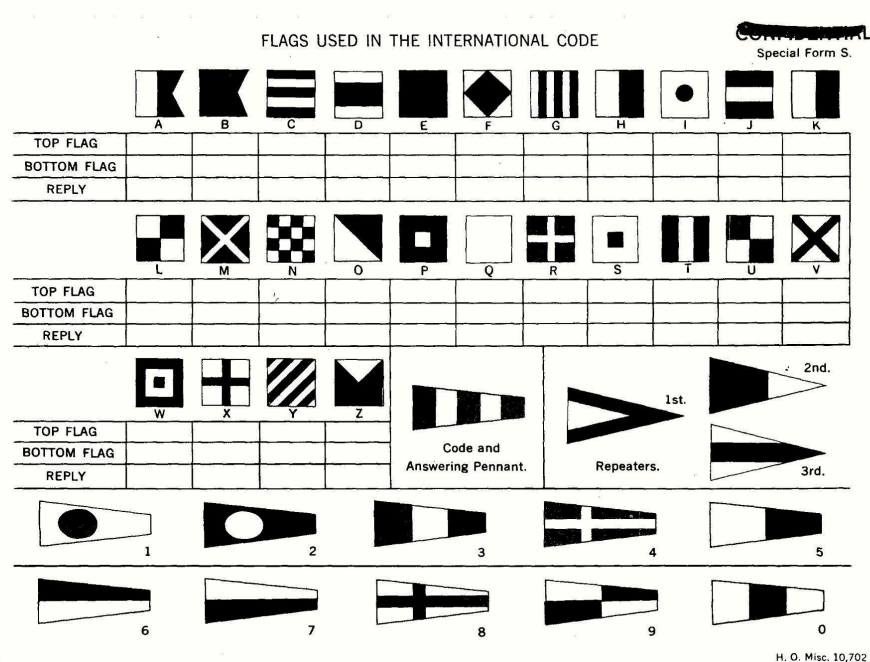
The third day is finished here and the first of many courses has been completed. This afternoon we had our final exam in *Military Discipline* and... I did pretty well on it... The subject is a snap, one that every soldier should know cold. The stuff that they taught us in three days here took eleven weeks at [Camp] Pickett and I thought they went fast in the Medical Corps!



²⁰ All three sheets were written on Navigation School stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

The course in *Math* is still in the elementary stages so there is nothing to report from there. *Naval Forces* continues to be the most interesting course, due mainly to the instructor we have... I find the course interesting, so I am able to absorb stuff very easily. On the test today I did very well, getting a cool 100 on it. Calisthenics was canceled today due to the extreme cold. You can bet that none of us were very disappointed. In place of that class we were fingerprinted; that makes two sets of prints the Army has of me. While in the same building we were issued briefcases so that now we even look like *students* as we go from one class to another.

After the... good noonday meal, we went to what is probably the driest course given, *Ground Forces*. Most of us have to fight ourselves to keep from falling asleep. The penalty... for falling asleep during a lecture is to stand at attention for the entire hour. Next came the final hour of *Military Discipline* and due to the fact that the officer in charge is an infantry man, we have any number of arguments. He doesn't think that the Air Corps turns out as good an officer as the infantry and that is the base for many a hot verbal battle. The final hour of the classroom day is devoted to what will probably be my nemesis - *Radio Code*. For the life of me I can't distinguish one character from another.



From 4:00 to 5:15, we had a *close order drill* and as it had warmed up considerably I enjoyed it. There is something about marching in a group of men and making military movements that appeals to me.

Each Post has its own customs and as some of them contradict we have a merry time keeping up with them. In Nashville, we were not allowed to wear our wing insignia on our flight hat, as it was supposed to signify that a fellow had *soloed*, here it is considered part of the uniform and they must be worn. In every other Army camp, all beds must be made up according to Army regulations. Here everything is folded up on one end of the bed leaving the springs, if we had any, exposed. The bed cannot be made up until 9:30 at night which means that no matter how tired we are we can't sleep until that hour.

This evening after *Chow* we were issued our foot-lockers and it is a relief to have all my clothing where I can see it instead of in the barracks bag where, every time I wanted something, I had to grope for it and hope that I grabbed it. A foot-locker... is about the size of a steamer trunk and holds everything but our shoes and outer clothing.

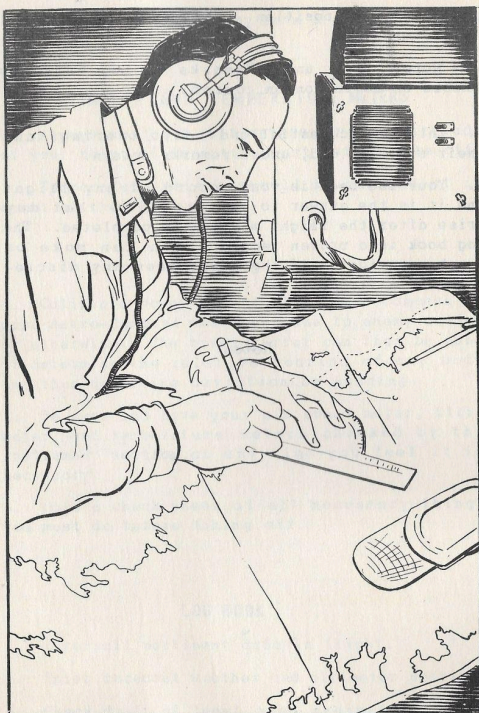
The enclosed papers are orders relative to my appointment as a Cadet and orders to *ship* to Nashville. I thought that they might make a good addition to our scrapbook. The names marked with an (x) are those fellows that were disqualified, those marked with (-) are here with me. The others are either pilots or navigators.

Speaking of strange customs at different posts there is one here that I like immensely. We do not have to leave the barracks to mail our letters as the CQ comes around each night and collects the mail.

Tonight marks our 17th week of engagement, five [are] the ones spent with you... which were the happiest ones of my life. The way the time is flying down here, it won't be long until we are together again forever. I repeat what I said at the opening of this letter, tonight I love you and miss you more than ever.

Goodnight, my Butch

Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



NAVIGATION SUPPLIES

1. Case, Navigation, Dead Reckoning, Type A-4, Spec. 40258.

a. The Type A-4, Navigation Dead Reckoning Case will be assembled with an insert, compass and drafting equipment to be used exclusively by personnel for only navigation purposes.

b. The basis of issue is set forth in:

(1) Indirectly in the Table of Basic allowances, Number 1, section II, Army Air Forces Equipment. The Type A-4 Navigation Dead Reckoning Case, complete with its contents is a part of the Kit Navigation. Celestial, see T.O. No. OO-3C-64 and the Kit, Navigation, Dead Reckoning, see T.O.No. OO-3C-62. For the Basis of Issue of the Kit, Navigation, Celestial, and the Kit, Navigation, Dead Reckoning, see Table of Basic Allowances, Number 1, section II, Army Air Forces Equipment.

(2) The Table of Allowances, Army Air Forces Advanced Flying School (Single Engine and Twin Engine), Basic Flying School, and Air Navigation School, Number 4-2, section II, Army Air Forces Equipment, which authorizes the issuance of one hundred and twenty-one of these cases to each one hundred students assigned to a school.

From Now You are an Officer Navigator
Army Air Forces Navigation School

Monroe, Louisiana²¹
Thursday
[March 4, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

Just a short note to let you know that I am still alive and kicking.

There isn't much to write this evening. Nothing of interest has happened since yesterday. It is still bitter cold here and we again got out of calisthenics for that reason. In its place we were given part of the *Manual of Arms* and that was the first time I ever held an Army gun.

In one course we had to learn the various parts of a gun, how to take it apart and put it together again. At the end of the period we had a test - that's all they give here.

The course in radio is getting easier now or at least I seem to have gotten the hang of it. I can readily distinguish characters. There are still 21 to go so I still have a long way to go before I can pass the 10 word a minute test.

The reason for the shortness of this letter is I have a major test in *Ground Forces* tomorrow and I haven't looked at my notes yet. I also want to take a shower and it is already 9:30.

Mail is starting to come in for us so I expect mail from you tomorrow. I did receive a letter today from Marvin, the fellow from New York who worked in Hartford this past summer. He is in Texas in the ground crew of the Air Corps.

Goodnight my sweet, give yourself a few hundred kisses for me for I love you so much -

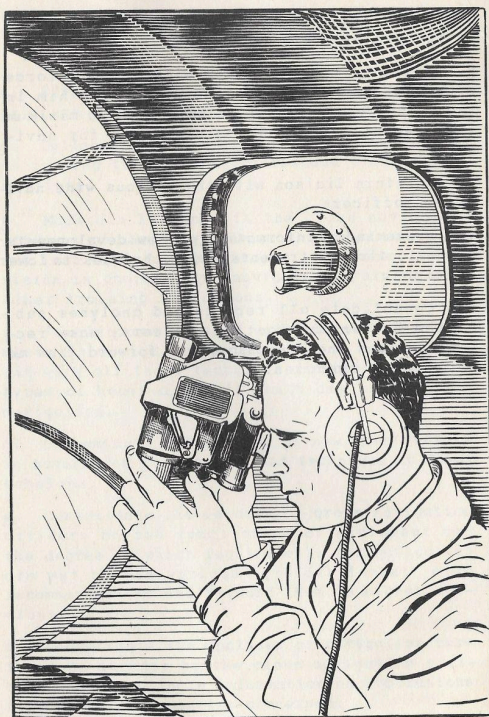
Hartford and you seem so very far away until I sat down to write and then with your picture in front of me I feel so much better

²¹ All three sheets were written on Navigation School stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

PS tell mom I'll Write to her tomorrow -

Love,
Lenny



NAVIGATION INSTRUMENTS

CHRONOMETER

1. Have your chronometer rated.
2. Wind your chronometer at the same time every day (to assure that the rate will not change.)
3. Do not depend upon getting a time tick while in flight. Many a navigator has gotten hopelessly lost due to negligence in not getting his time tick on the ground, and was unable to get it in the air. There are numerous reasons which may be given from actual experience why time ticks could not be gotten while in flight:

Frequency jammed due to electrical disturbances or enemy action.

Radio message being sent to plane at time of tick.

Radio operator unable to pick up station.

Radio operator ordered to stay tuned to a set frequency for duration of flight.

SEXTANT

1. Check Sextant for accuracy on ground before every flight.
2. If Sextant has a constant error, correct the instrument for this error before flight.

From Now You are an Officer Navigator
Army Air Forces Navigation School

Monroe, Louisiana²²
Saturday
[March 6, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

I know you'll forgive me for not writing yesterday when I tell you that we had three tests to study for. Saturday, at this camp, is a short day. We are all through at 11:00 am, but from 8:00 until then we have three classes and today each instructor hit us with a test. The first class this morning was *Math* and we had a 40-minute test in that subject. 40 minutes for a test means that it is an important one. Luckily for me I studied the right stuff and I think I made out all right.



Next came *Squadron Administration*, part of our Officer Training and... as it was the last lecture on the subject, that meant a final exam there; this course is not too important but... the marks have to be good. I did fairly well answering all the questions right, as near as I can figure it.

²² All three sheets were written on Navigation School stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

The final subject of the day was *Safeguarding Military Information*, still another part of our Officer Training. The course is only one hour in length and consists mainly of a Training film plus a short lecture by a Captain. After the lecture he allotted us 20 minutes for a test... Again I think I did fairly well as most of the stuff was taught to me at Camp Pickett. The Medical Corps is coming in handy after all. There are quite a few subjects taught here of which I have a basic knowledge thanks to the *Medicos*.

This morning two of my professors posted the marks of tests taken during the past week. In the two tests on *Naval Forces* I got 100 and a 90 and, in the test on *Ground Forces* ... I got a 90. I... feel good over these results as they prove to me that I haven't forgotten how to study or to assimilate new material. Most of the marks are high but not because the tests are easy. A majority of the fellows here are grown up *Quiz Kids*. Everyone that I have talked to got a higher mark than me on the entrance exam, but so far I am managing to hold my own.

Did you notice the change of the address on this letter? For quite some time, the Post has been working on a new setup and they finally perfected it. Heretofore, the three classes were all mixed together (i.e. one squadron were fellows from 43-10, 43-11, and 43-12.) The new systems provide for the activation of three new squadrons, I, K, L, devoted solely to the class of which I am a part of²³. Because of this... this afternoon was a general Moving Day. At 1:10 sharp the mad rush of moving all of our belongings started, and it was a mad rush.

²³ Lenny was in the class of 43-12.



The barracks are the same but instead of getting a room with only two beds in it, I am now in one of the larger end rooms with two double-decker beds in it. Nat²⁴ sleeps over me and in the other side of the room are two fellows of the same name, Levine. Of course we aren't as cozy as before but this time I sleep next to the heater... and all I have to do when it gets cold is reach out and turn the switch on. Mitch²⁵... is now in my squadron,[and] due to his long service in the Army, he has been made a Cadet Lieutenant in charge of the Squadron²⁶. No sooner were we situated and the beds made up, when our new TO²⁷ came in and held an inspection. Because of the fact that we had just moved in, there were several things wrong and he let us know about it. They say... that he isn't a bad sort of fellow and is seldom around during the week.

²⁴ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field

²⁵ Mitch is an unmarried classmate of Lenny's

²⁶ Cadet officers commanded the squadrons and higher units, under the supervision of tactical officers of the staff of the Pre-Flight School.

²⁷ Tactical Officer

About 3:00, we had a formation and a list of names were read off, mine included. I couldn't figure it out until it was announced that we had shots coming, then I remembered that I never completed my tetanus series. I went to the dispensary... and received my last shot for a while - I hope.

Yesterday, with the bad news [about moving], we got some [news] that was very good. The course in *Meteorology* will not be given to us until we reach Advanced School. The news is good for two reasons: one being that as a Pre-flight subject it was quite tough... [and] second because one less subject [means] a slight change in schedule, [and] from now on there will only be five days of school per week. Saturday's, outside of the usual SMI (Saturday morning inspection) will be free. What grand weekends we'll have just as soon as the quarantine is lifted which should be sometime this week.

I tried again to call you this evening but as usual there was at least a two hour delay on all calls. I was thinking of calling tomorrow but remembered that you are going to New York with the folks for the day - I hope you... had a good time.

I don't know whether or not you are getting my mail because as yet there has only been one letter for me and that was from Mom forwarded from Nashville. I am going to try sending my letter via Air Mail... in hopes that they will get to you more quickly.

I'm going to bed now in hopes of dreaming of you so that I can hold you in my arms once again and just smother you with kisses, for I do love you so much

Goodnight, Butch -

Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



SOME PRACTICAL HINTS

1. Special Orders.

a. Among the papers which you receive upon being appointed a second lieutenant or flight officer are the special orders assigning you to a permanent duty station. They read like this:

"SPECIAL ORDERS) HEADQUARTERS, SELMAN FIELD
: Monroe, Louisiana
NUMBER-----) September 25, 1942

E-X-T-R-A-C-T

1. It is directed that the following personnel having satisfactorily completed the prescribed course of instruction as Navigation Cadets be discharged from the AUS for the convenience of the Government eff this date. Eff 26 Sept 42, the following 2ND LIEUTENANTS or FLIGHT OFFICERS Air AUS and DP are ordered to active duty at stas indicated. ASN indicated prior to discharge and O serial number indicated upon acceptance of commission, EA O will rank fr 26 Sept 42. Auth: Par 10a and 13a Cir 22 WCAAFTC 7 May 42. Sec VII Cir 173 WD 42. Ltr WD Subj "Orders", dated 23 Sept 42.

Adequate grs have not been furnished the above named Os, by this Hq.

The FD will pay the above named Os the uniform alws per Act of 2 June 41 (Public Law 97, 77 Congress) payment of which when made

From Now You are an Officer Navigator
Army Air Forces Navigation School

Monroe, Louisiana²⁸

Monday

[March 8, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

Today started my second week here and also brought our new schedule into effect... The schedule isn't bad and after the wrinkles are ironed out I think it will be all right. We now have calisthenics first thing in the morning 7:30 to 8:30 and believe you me it is cold. We aren't allowed to wear gloves [so] my hands were blue from the cold, when the period was over. We got the results of our *Math* test today and I did just fair, getting an 83. As usual, we had a test today in *Naval Forces* - they don't waste any time - just as soon as they think we have learned something they test us.

**NAMES of
U. S. Planes**

NOTE: NOT ALL THESE ARE REPRESENTED IN THIS MANUAL

	ARMY.	NAVY AND MARINE CORPS	NAME	ORIGINAL MANUFACTURER
SCOUTING OBSERVATION (SEAPLANES)		SO3C OS2U	Seagull Kingfisher	Curtiss Chance Vought
TRANSPORT	C-43. C-45A. C-46. C-47. C-53. C-54. C-60 (C-56, C-57, C-59). C-61. C-69. C-76. C-87.	GB. JRB. R5C. R4D. R5D. R5O. GK. R2S.	Traveler Voyager Commando Skytrain. Skytrooper Skymaster. Lodestar. Forwarder. Constellation Caravan. Liberator Express Excalibur	Beech Beech Curtiss Douglas Douglas Douglas Lockheed Fairchild Lockheed Curtiss Consolidated Chance Vought
TRAINERS	PT-13 & 17 PT-19 & 23 PT-22 BT-13 & 15 AT-6 AT-7 AT-8 & 17. AT-10. AT-11. AT-13 & 14 AT-15. AT-19.	N2S-1 & 3 N2T. NR. SNV. SNJ. SNC. SNB-2 SNB-1	Caydet Cornell Tutor. Recruit Valiant Texan. Falcon Navigator. Bobcat Wichita Kansas Yankee-Doodle Crewmaker Reliant	Boeing Fairchild Timm Ryan Vultee North American Curtiss Beech Cessna Beech Beech Fairchild Boeing Vultee
LIAISON	L-1 L-2 L-3C L-4B L-5	NE	Vigilant. Taylorcraft Grasshopper Aeronca Grasshopper Piper Grasshopper Sentinel	Vultee Taylorcraft Aeronca Piper Vultee

10

A new subject was started today... on *Airplane Identification* and *Nomenclature*. It looks like a hard course and that means I'll have to add some time to my study hour.

²⁸ All three sheets were written on Navigation School stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

Due to the changing... of squadrons, the mail is all balled up. As yet I haven't received any from you, not because you don't write, but simply because it hasn't gone through the camp post office [or PX.] When it does come, it will no doubt come in bunches so just keep on writing.

Yesterday was a real old-fashioned lazy Sunday. After breakfast I wrote a few letters that I should have written a long time ago and then Nat²⁹, Mitch³⁰ and I went over to the rec room and played a few games of billiards. The usual good dinner was partaken of and then Nat and I indulged in a few hours of *bunk fatigue* (sleep to you) until Mitch came over and woke us up. We sat in the PX³¹ over a Coke until time for *Chow* and after eating decided to go to the show and see Bob Hope in *They Got Me Covered*. When we [arrived] there was a terrifically long line, so we went down the *Line* to watch the planes come in.

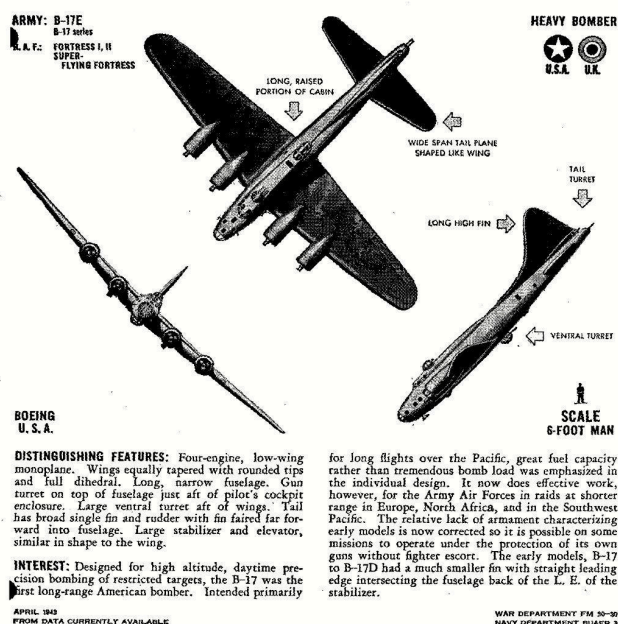


There I saw, for the first time, a B-17, *Flying Fortress*, the plane that I'll navigate, if and when I receive my wings.

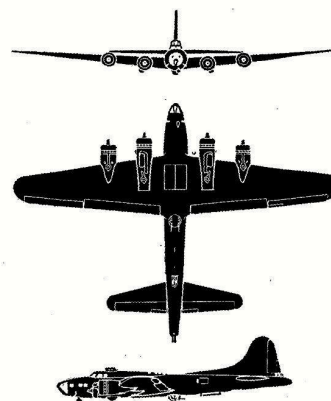
²⁹ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field

³⁰ Mitch is an unmarried classmate of Lenny's

³¹ Post Exchange



B-17 "FLYING FORTRESS"



SPAN: 103 ft. 10 in.
LENGTH: 74 ft. 9 in.
APPROX. MAX. SPEED: 310 m. p. h.

SERVICE CEILING:
over 35,000 ft.

RESTRICTED

The [*Flying Fortress*] is tremendous yet rises off the ground with the ease of a bird. It was a real thrill... watching them come in and take off, knowing that [soon] I'd be in one of them, and some other cadets would be in my place watching... We went back to the theater and the line had thinned out. We got to the... end just in time, for we got the last three tickets to be sold. We had a real good laugh and then came back here to do some studying.

In my last letter I neglected to mention the peculiar but beautiful weather we had that day. It was raining that day yet only half the sky was dark, the rest being a beautiful blue. As the sun set it gave the sky a bright yellow tint and then there in the sky were two of the most perfectly shaped and colored rainbows I've ever seen. If only they allowed us the use of a camera... it would have been the best picture of the year.

Say Butch, do you remember a Charlotte Greenberg³²? Her husband is here at Advanced School and she is down here living in Monroe. They came down here earlier this evening but I was out of the barracks and so missed them. They left word that they would be around some other night this week.

³² Charlotte Greenberg is a close friend of Sylvia's, whose husband Bob is finishing his training at Selman Field.

Mom tells me that the ring (made out of my pin) is ready. I do hope it looks nice. Bring it down so I can get a look at it, huh?

I was tempted to call you in New York yesterday but was afraid you wouldn't be at [my Aunt] Claire's. Did you have a nice time or didn't you have the heart to stay and watch the ceremony? Someday we'll have one of our own³³ so I hope you noticed everything that took place.

It won't be long before I go up in the pressure chamber. That is a device where we get the sensation of flying without even leaving the ground. The pressure in the chamber is decreased until it reaches that of a high altitude. The effects are that of being drunk: you get a one track mind and every question is given the same answer. The ability to withstand low pressure is a prime requirement of any air crew member.

Butch dearest, I love you and miss you so much that it is impossible to write it down on paper. You'll just have to wait until we are together so that I can hold you in my arms and tell you just how much I do -

Love you
XXXXXXXXXXXX
Lenny

**NAMES of
U. S. Planes**

NOTE: NOT ALL THESE ARE REPRESENTED IN THIS MANUAL

ARMY	NAVY AND MARINE CORPS	NAME	ORIGINAL MANUFACTURER	
B-17 B-24	PB4Y	Flying Fortress Liberator	Boeing Consolidated	HEAVY BOMBERS
B-18 B-23 B-25 B-26 B-34	PBJ PV	Bolo Dragon Mitchell Marauder Ventura	Douglas Douglas North American Martin Vega	MEDIUM BOMBERS
A-20 A-24 A-25 A-29 A-34 A-35, A-31	BD SBD SB2C PBO SB2A SB2U TBD TBF	Havoc (Attack) Boston (Bomber) Dauntless (Dive) Helldiver (Dive) Hudson (Patrol) Buccaneer (Dive) Vengeance (Dive) Vindicator (Dive) Devastator (Torpedo) Avenger (Torpedo)	Douglas Douglas Curtiss Lockheed Erector Vultee Chance Vought Douglas Grumman	LIGHT BOMBERS
OA-10	PBY PB2Y PBM	Catalina Coronado Mariner	Consolidated Consolidated Martin	PATROL BOMBERS (FLYING BOATS)
P-38 P-39 P-40 P-43 P-47 P-51 F2A F4F F4U F6F		Lightning Aircobra Warhawk Lancer Thunderbolt Mustang Buffalo Wildcat Corsair Hellcat	Lockheed Bell Curtiss Republic Republic North American Brewster Grumman Chance Vought Grumman	FIGHTERS

³³ Baby shower

Monroe, Louisiana³⁴

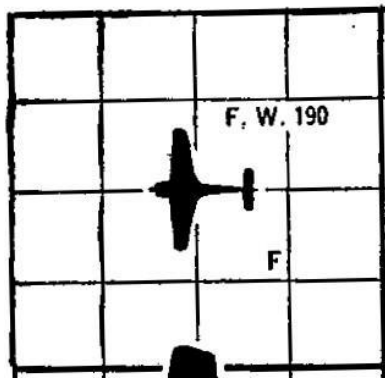
Tuesday

[March 9, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

Today was jackpot day for me at *Mail Call*. There were three letters from you, one from Ebner³⁵, and the enclosed letter from Betty May.³⁶ Naturally, all this mail made me very happy and the envy of quite a few fellows.

My studies are, with one exception, the same; the exception being that they are getting tougher.



The *Math* instructor is really getting down to business and the other subjects - the various branches of the service - are going deeper.

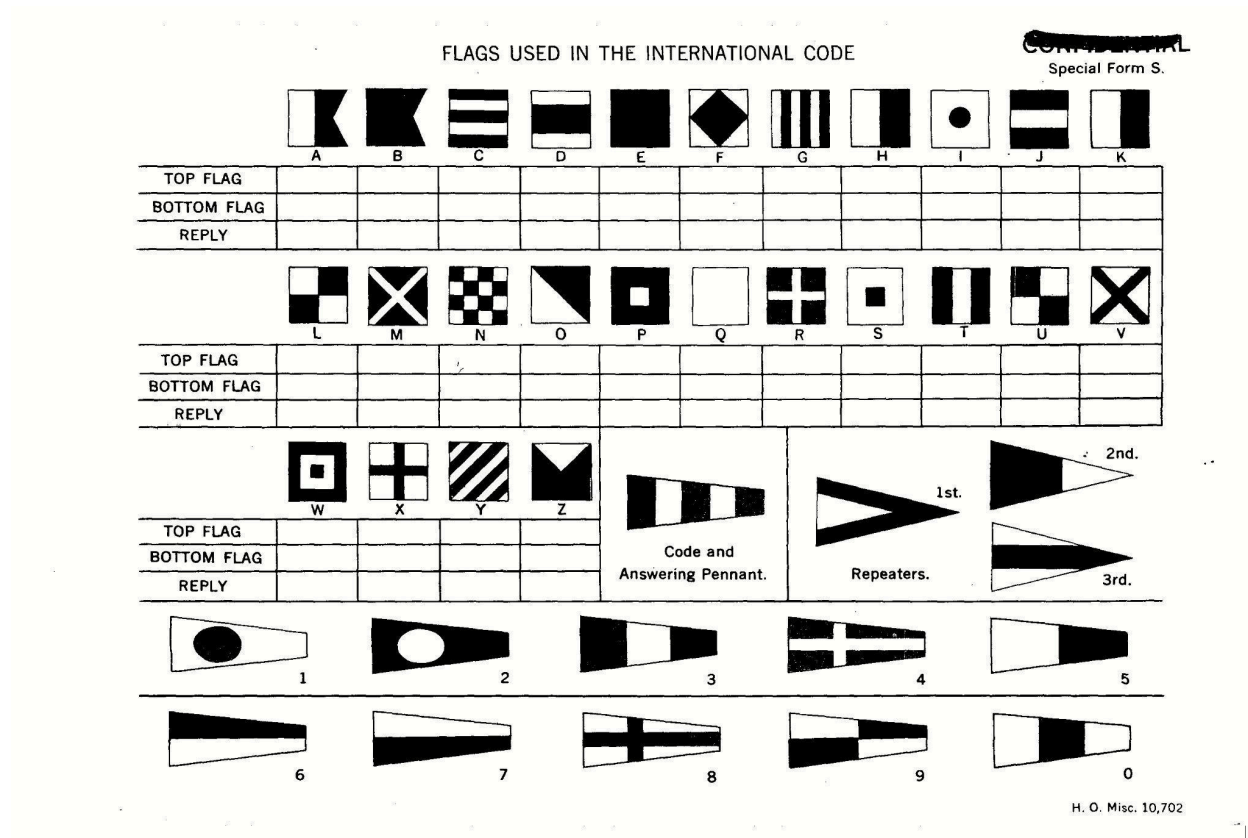
The Lieutenant who teaches us *Identification of Planes* told us that we would be required to identify a plane in 1/5 of a second or less.

There were no tests today for a change, so everything went along all right.

³⁴ All three sheets were written on Selman Field stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

³⁵ Ebner Glooskin was a former boyfriend of Sylvia's who graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia in 1938 and his brother Boomey was a friend of Lenny's since they also attended Weaver..

³⁶ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman, age five, and Holly Weidman, who was two months old at the time this was written.



My *Code* class is beginning to make sense to me, I can distinguish one character from another - almost!

PT (Physical Training) was a pleasure this morning. The weather has taken a decided turn for the better and the instructor went easy on us; we exercised for half an hour and only ran two miles, which I didn't mind at all.



You were right about my eating twice as much, at least the scales say so. Since leaving Virginia I've gained thirteen pounds. I now weigh 155 and none of it is fat. I have three good meals a day plus two or three cokes and a bar of candy at the PX each night.

Your news about Norm³⁷ and Marge³⁸ doesn't hit me just right. In my opinion they are going into something with their eyes shut. If she intends to live near his camp she evidently doesn't realize the hardships she is going to have to go through... Being an enlisted man without a rating means that Norm will not be able to live in town with her and fifty dollars a month is not enough to support a wife on.

Perhaps I shouldn't talk so much as I may be defeating my own argument of the near future. I am still of the opinion... that they are too young.

The fellow you met in Wynn's the other day is George Greenberg. Did he mention whether or not he is still working at the shop?

So, now you tell me about your relatives huh? I guess it's time I spilled the beans about the other side of our family. It makes no difference who or what your relatives are - it's you I'm marrying not them...

With the dark streets and the crowded buses, I should be home. I could make love to you right on Main Street or in a bus and nobody would be the wiser. Seriously though Butch, please be careful you know how things just happen to you, things like the soldier in the hallway or that man in the park long ago. I guess it's your beauty that attracts all the wolves including me.

It pleases me no end to know that my letter made a hit with Betty³⁹; I shall make every effort to continue my correspondence with her... I want your family to like me as well as mine like you and you can be sure that they like you very much. By the way drop your sister in law a hint that I'm waiting for an answer to my letter.

In your letter written Thursday you mentioned a letter that you typed out to me - did you mail it or change your mind? I didn't get it and was wondering if I should look for it.

³⁷ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy enlisted in the Army. He has not been offered a route to Officer or Specialized Training and may have medical issues that keep him at his Reception Camp.

³⁸ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman's Levy and is pregnant with twins.

³⁹ Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman is Lenny and Sylvia's five year old niece.



The wings upon which the plane is superimposed on the stationery⁴⁰ is the kind that I will wear when I graduate. The center is a globe with the lines representing the trailways of the sky.

It's time to say goodnight now Butch so with all my love I'll say -
Goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁴⁰ Lenny is referring to the Selman Field letterhead on the paper he's using, which has a faint image of the Navigator wings Lenny expects to earn, which are pictured above.

which too closely resembles the Rising (or rather falling) Sun that Japan marks her planes with.



The star with the wings is the insignia that all officers and enlisted men of the Air Force wear on their right shoulder.

The propeller and wings are worn only by officers and cadets.

We wear them in the same place as the officers do on the right side of our shirt collar, with the US on the other side.

When we are wearing our [Dress] blouse, we wear [a pin] on each lapel... directly under and centered on the US pins.

They really improve our appearance and besides they set us off from the regular enlisted men.



The big event of the day took place at three o'clock right after our last class. Today was payday here; they paid us in full up to the first of the month. My pay was \$53.54; that plus the \$20 we received in Nashville really makes being in the Army a paying proposition. All the fellows are eagerly awaiting Saturday so that they can go to town - literally and figuratively.

Classes went along as usual today by that I mean there was no trouble in any of them. For the second successive day there were no tests and we feel pretty good about it. My [Visual] Code is coming along fine, it is now almost as good as your typing, which incidentally is very good. There wasn't one error in the entire letter. One fellow standing next to me during *Mail Call*, caught a glimpse of the letterhead and looked at me... wondering who I was to be getting such important looking mail.

It begins to look like the course in *Aircraft Recognition* will be the toughest of the few we have gotten. We are to have thirty lectures and by the end we have to recognize thirty different types of planes in a split second; by split second I mean just that. The instructor has a timing device whereby he flashes silhouettes of planes on a screen in time

intervals down to $\frac{1}{100}$ of a second. We are supposed to see them in at least $\frac{1}{15}$ of a second. Today we had a group of twenty planes flashed on the screen for a length of $\frac{1}{5}$ of a second and all I could get were five. That isn't very good for me, it isn't very bad either.

Math isn't giving me much trouble and *Ground Forces* is almost finished. The latter course is the driest of them all and a majority of us have a hard time keeping awake. During the lectures. The PT⁴³ we get every morning is really good - after the class and a hot and cold shower, I really feel like doing a good day's work - which is just what we do.

The weather here has been very mild. So far this week, we wear no coats or blouses all day, which is really a pleasure. I always did like warm weather and if I remain here for all my schooling I'll certainly get my fill of it.

You mentioned Margie⁴⁴'s new ring in one of your letters but make no mention of the ring you made from the pin. Didn't you get it yet or what? Speaking of Margie, is it she who attracts the attention of the *gendarmes* or just a combination of the two of you?

It is a Wednesday night and it is raining - A double reminder of you dear. The rain reminding me of those moods of yours; how I would like to be with you once again - rain or no rain - and Wednesday meaning that it is one week shy of five months since we became engaged. A lot of things have happened in the past nineteen weeks, but the best of all, has been my ever increasing love for you. Once I stop writing how much I love you and how much I miss you (very very much, my sweet) I start to get homesick for you and can't think of any more to write so it looks like I'll have to say goodnight -

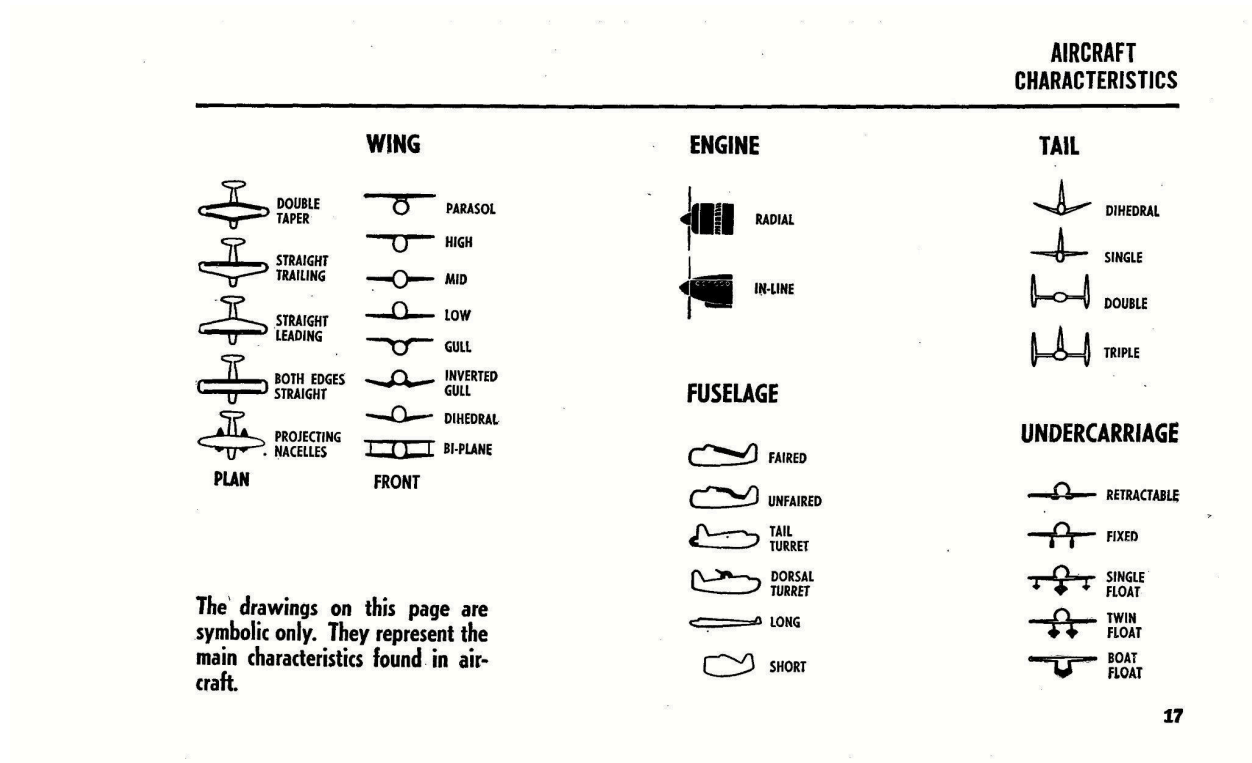
I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁴³ Physical Training

⁴⁴ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman's Levy and is pregnant with twins.

I'm eagerly awaiting those cookies

Love
Lenny



From the Pictorial Manual used at Selman Field

Monroe, Louisiana⁴⁵
Thursday
[March 11, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

I should have known that getting letters from you in bunches was too good to last. Today saw the [last] of it. In fact there was no letter at all from you, due no doubt to your not writing over the weekend. I wasn't shut out completely... as there were letters from Norm⁴⁶, Faye⁴⁷, and Mom, The one from mom was postmarked February 26th more proof as to the lousy mail service we get.

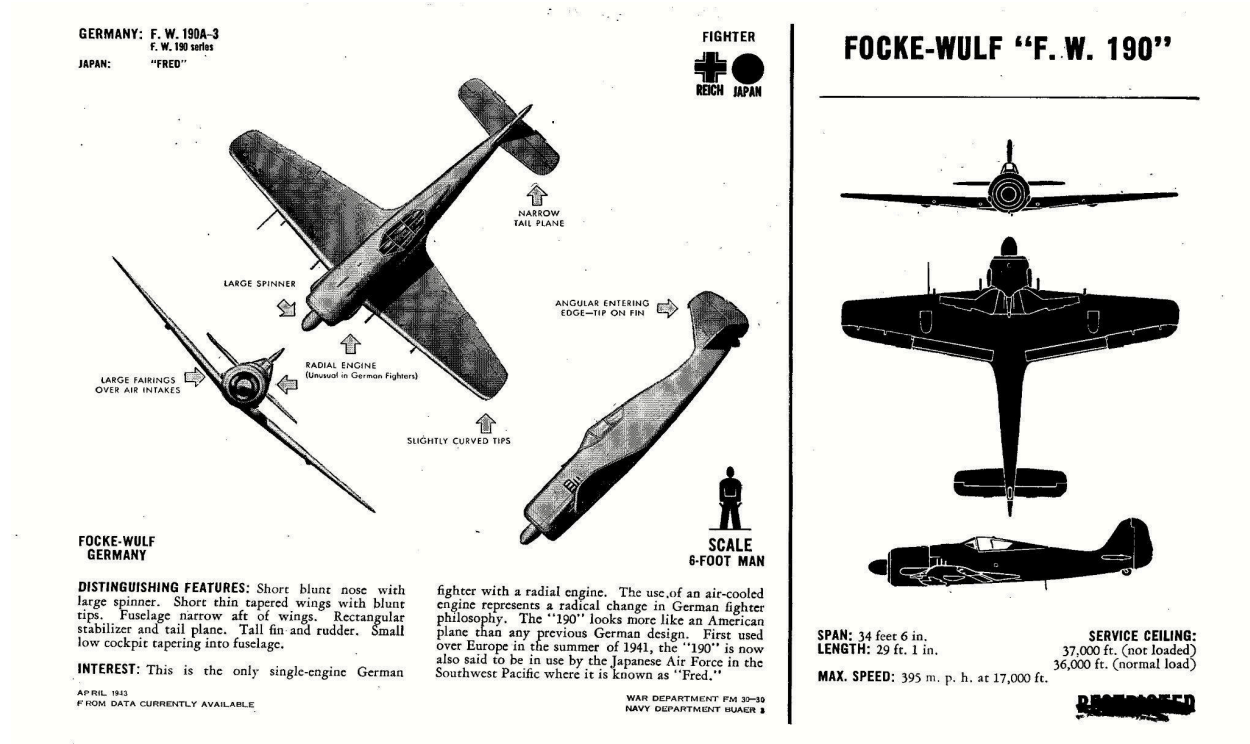
I've finally discovered a bad feature of this camp. There seems to be a paper mill located just outside of Monroe and when the weather is damp, as it is today, and the wind is blowing from the right direction, the camp is blanketed with a terrific odor. When I say that the odor makes you think... the doors of all the latrines have been left open, you can well imagine what I mean.

Classes again went along without a hitch and still no tests. Tomorrow however we are getting a final in *Ground Forces* and we were given fair warning that it is going to be a tough one. It is to be an hour in length and that... is unusual as the majority of the tests usually run no longer than half an hour. We also expect a short test in *Naval Forces* although our instructor said nothing. *Aircraft Recognition* is going to be a tough nut to crack - I can't for the life of me distinguish between one type of plane and another.

⁴⁵ All three sheets were written on Selman Field stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

⁴⁶ N. Norman Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He enlisted and has been at his Replacement Base for an extended period of time.

⁴⁷ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth Weidman, age five, and Holly Weidman, who was two months old at the time this was written.



They tell me that recognition comes with practice so there is some help for me. *Code*⁴⁸ much to my surprise is coming along fine. Some time next week. I'll try to pass my six-word test and get a free period. The PT⁴⁹. was really a grind this morning. It poured all night just as it is now so that the drill fields were just one large puddle. Because of this we couldn't do sitting up exercises, so the instructor had us run instead. We ran for half an hour without stopping once when at the end of the period I asked how far we had gone the instructor told me we had covered over three miles. Just thinking of it makes me tired all over again.

I mentioned Faye's letter - although it was, as she remarked, a little late in getting here, it was extremely interesting... I don't have too much time to myself but I will make time to answer her sometime over the weekend. What did you think of the picture your niece drew of you?

In my last two letters I meant to clear up the smoking in a berth situation. There is a rule stating that there will be no smoking in a berth

⁴⁸ *Visual Code* includes hand, flag or light symbols used in Communication.

⁴⁹ Physical Training

but in the Army there is an adage that nobody is wrong until he is caught at it.

Nat's wife arrived in Monroe today and he's been as excited as a school kid all day. Right now he's down at the gate waiting for her. He had to meet her there in order to get her past through the gate. Mitch and I threatened to tape him into bed, if he didn't stop talking about her coming in. Mitch and I are going over to the lounge soon to meet her and make life miserable for Nat. Don't think that I don't wish it were you coming down to visit me.

I'm going to say goodnight now darling - knowing you won't mind - realizing that I have quite a bit of studying to do.

Goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

PS I knew there was something important to say to you. This afternoon we were told that our original bond allotment had been canceled by the government and new ones had to be made out. In the form we were asked to name a co-owner. I took the liberty of putting down your name. After all the bonds are going to be used for the two of us, so both our names might as well be on them from the start.

Goodnight Butch

I love you
xx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana⁵⁰
Saturday
[March 13, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

... I want to make a humble apology to you. When I came to that part of the letter wherein you described what happened in New York, I stopped and thought for a long time... I thought... I had mentioned the fact... of Lou⁵¹ once being married. It seems... that I didn't, but please believe me when I say that it was sheer forgetfulness on my part and nothing else. There isn't a thing in the world that I would keep from you intentionally, Butch.

As you can see from the stationery, I'm on my first *Open Post* at my new camp... Nat and I arrived here about an hour ago, it is now three PM. He went to meet his wife and I've been walking around the town taking in the sights.

The place is a typical small city, reminding me a bit of New Britain. The population is around thirty-thousand... The stores are built in true southern style nine out of ten of them having a marquee sort of effect in the front.



The hotel is the home of the Cadet Club from where this is being written. The Club room is a ballroom on the mezzanine and very nice. It is for the exclusive use of Pre-flight Cadets, consequently it is rather empty [with] most of the boys being still in camp.

⁵⁰ All three sheets were written on Hotel stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a matching envelope.

⁵¹ Louis (Lou) Wisotsky is the brother of Sarah W. Levy and Lenny's uncle.



This letter should have been written last night but I spent from seven until ten o' clock by the phone, trying to get through a call. The operator got the call as far as New York but that was as far as it went. I canceled the call intending to go back to the barracks and write a letter but when I got there the boys were having a Miniature GI party, as today was *Inspection Day*. Of course, I had to do my share and we didn't finish until ten-forty-five which is time for *Lights Out*... I'm doing the next best thing and doing it on my day off.

Yesterday, saw the end of the subject *Ground Forces*; we had our final on it and I'm pretty sure I got a mark in the high eighties. In its place we... get an equally hard subject *Physics*. Having had a year of it in high school I don't think I'll find it too hard. Having left the Medical Corp, I thought I was through with *First Aid* but yesterday we started a ten hour course in it. Having learned the stuff well while at [Camp] Pickett, I won't have any trouble with it here; the only trouble is that I'll have to attend all the lectures and listen to them all... again.

Up until yesterday we were under the impression that we were to have all day Saturday to ourselves but not in this man's Army. We had PT⁵² at the usual time and at nine o'clock we went to the theater for what was supposed to be a one-hour lecture. To our surprise and disappointment it turned out to be a three-hour lecture on *High Altitude Flying* and the use of oxygen masks. The lecture consisted of two hours of discourse by an officer and one hour of training films; it was absolutely the driest I've ever listened to. We were through at twelve, and went directly to *Chow*. After eating, we rushed back to the barracks to prepare for the standby inspection given by our Tactical Officer (leader) Lt. Moss. Stand by simply means that we have to be by our beds while the inspection is taking place, so that we, too, can be given the *once over*. Our suite was given the ok and granted *Open Post*.

⁵² Physical Training

The other night while standing in the PX⁵³, I met Bob and Charlotte Greenberg⁵⁴. As I mentioned before, she is living in town while he is attending school. During the conversation she extended an invitation to you to visit her at any time and by way of added inducement said she knows a very nice rabbi here in town. So dearest, you name the time and I'll be waiting.

This morning I received a letter you mailed the twenty-fifth of last month. It contained the first news of Lenny and Helen being the proud parents of a baby boy... I had surmised as much from a previous letter... where you mentioned the fact that you had bought the baby a present... There was also a letter from Francis (Larry's mother) mailed the same time as yours and she enclosed a snapshot of Larry -what a guy he's getting to be.

I'm going to close now and see if I can't get my picture taken. I will write tomorrow and tell you just what I did on my first night off.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



⁵³ Post Express

⁵⁴ Charlotte Greenberg is a childhood friend of Sylvia's, whose husband is also training at Selma Field.

Monroe, Louisiana⁵⁵
Sunday
[March 14, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

Since talking to you this evening, I've been experiencing the worst case of 'down in the dumps...' I can see why you feel as you do, but you have made one mistake... of putting us in the same category as Norman⁵⁶ and Margie⁵⁷. Butch dearest, the cases are as different as day and night. I don't know the complete story so I can't comment on Mom's actions, she may be right, and... she may have made a gross error. You mentioned that she has never commented on our coming marriage. Believe me dearest... it was only because I asked her not to say anything. In reply to my letter telling them of our plans, both Mom and Pop were overjoyed to say the least. Butch sweet, you can't possibly compare us to Norm and Margie. It is just two different cases.

I've been living in a state of complete happiness, thinking solely of our coming marriage, and now you tell me that you are thinking of changing your mind. Can you possibly imagine what effect that has had on me? I have been going around in a trance since the phone calls, trying to think of ways to tell you how mistaken you were in your thoughts - I can assure you that if I were to write home and tell the folks that we were to be married just as soon as you could get here, there would be nothing but happiness.

For the past six weeks I've been busy readjusting myself to this new life and have therefore not had the time to do any real thinking about home. Last night and today... I've had ample time to think and the fact that I'm completely homesick has just stuck me. Not homesick for my home... Butch, but for you. I miss you and love you so darn much that I'm miserable. I *need* you darling. For the same reason you

⁵⁵ All four sheets were written on embossed stationery with a US Army Air Forces letterhead with a missing envelope.

⁵⁶ N. Norman Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He enlisted and has been at his Replacement Base for an extended period of time.

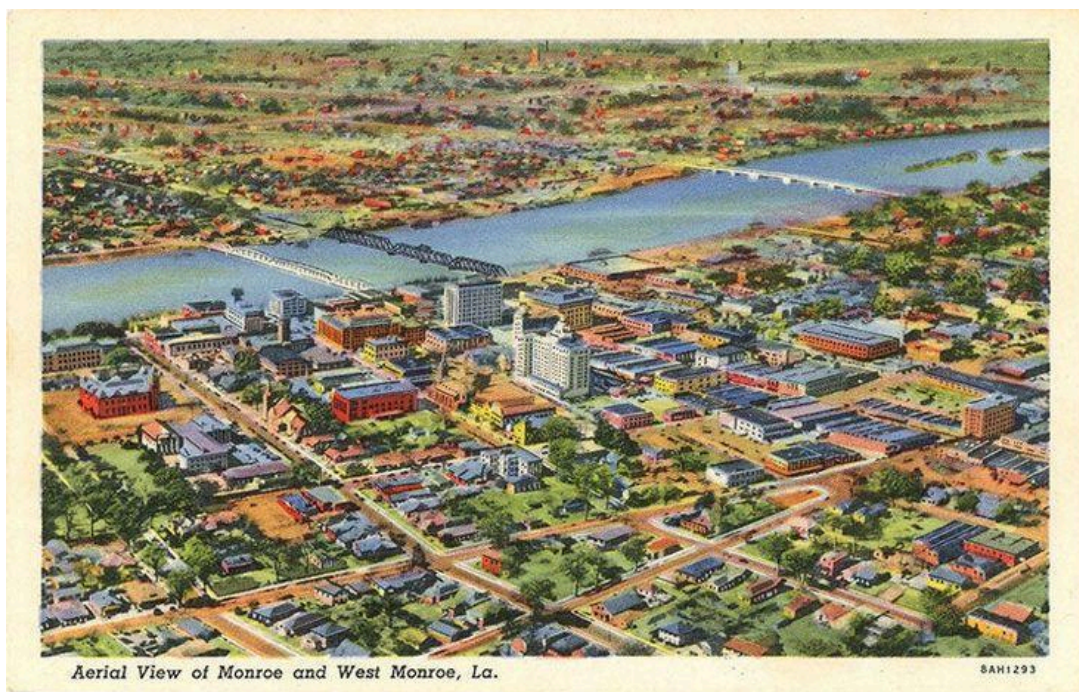
⁵⁷ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Norman.

oftentimes said you needed me - without you I'm lost - I can't think eat or sleep. Please believe me when I say that these are not mere words.

I have... only one solution and that is to abandon all previous plans and ask you to come down here as soon as possible so that we can get married.

I mean this, Butch - don't think that it was only the phone call that set me to thinking along these lines, for it wasn't. I've been thinking about it ever since I arrived... but thinking it was the way you wanted it, I decided to try and wait until school is over - I can't do it though, Butch, unless you... come here now.

I fully realize that there are two sides to every situation and this one is no exception. There are many arguments that can be made against your coming here and the only one I can offer against them all is that I love you very very much. You say... being near me would distract me from my studies; it can't darling, because visiting hours are from six-thirty to eight-thirty... [and on] *Open Post* [days.] All other arguments can just as simply be disposed of. If you have... questions... don't hesitate to ask them. I'm sure that everything can be cleared up.



To change the tone of the letter, I'll tell you what happened on my first *Open Post* in Louisiana. After mailing the letter to you, I scouted around and located a photographer who was willing to risk his camera and take my picture. The proofs will be mailed to me tomorrow and you should have the picture some time next week... I decided to take care of the inner man and had something to eat; then went to meet Mitch⁵⁸, Nat⁵⁹ and his wife as arranged. When we were together Nat told us that it was their first anniversary so we decided to have a party. We went to *the* night spot in town, a modernly furnished Grill and proceeded to have a very enjoyable evening⁶⁰.



The Three Mile Inn - with its glass dance floor

5201 Desiard St.

⁵⁸ Mitch is an unmarried classmate of Lenny's At Selman Field in Monroe.

⁵⁹ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field, whose wife lives in the same neighborhood as Sylvia will.

⁶⁰ Most likely, *The Three Mile Inn*, which refers to its distance from *Five-Points* where Louisville Avenue and DeSiard Street meet. In the 1940s, when Selman Field became the Navigator Flight School, the venue became the No.1 local R&R spot for soldiers who deemed it the NCO (Non-Commissioned Officers Club). It featured a glass-bottom dance floor just above water level and provided a great atmosphere for young servicemen throughout the country. It also often displayed the talents of such visiting mega stars as Tommy Dorsey, Glen Miller, and Ozzie & Harriett, all eager to entertain our country's troops.

Quite a few friends happened in from time to time, and the liquor flowed pretty freely - you don't mind do you, Butch? After all, it was a special occasion. About ten o'clock, Mitch and I decided to leave them to themselves so we left and went over to the USO⁶¹ where a dance was being held. The first girl I danced with happened to mention Connecticut. I stopped dancing and asked her where she came from and she said Southington; she is living here because her husband is stationed on the field⁶² in the regular Army. We had a grand time talking about things in common, such as Lake Compounce⁶³, the State Theater⁶⁴, etc. Before I knew it the time was twelve o'clock. Mitch and I decided it was time to leave for camp, not wanting to come in at the last minute. So we left, stopped for a sandwich, [stopped] to pick up Nat, and then took a cab back to camp.

This morning I was up for Reveille, had breakfast and *made tracks* for town and a phone booth. I placed the call at a quarter to nine and then started to 'sweat it out.' That, dear, is an Army expression used when you have to wait for something good to happen, for example you *sweat out* the pay line, or you *sweat out* a *mail call*, hoping and praying for at least one *sugar sport* (a letter from the girlfriend.) Ground crews also *sweat out* the safe return of their Bombers.

Talking to you was like being in heaven until *that* part of the conversation was reached. The call completed, I joined Nat, his wife and Mitch for dinner and they immediately noticed the change. When they asked me what was wrong, and not being able to tell them, I explained that it was the after effects of last night's celebration. Knowing that I didn't have so much to drink, the alibi didn't work, but they must have sensed that I didn't want to talk about it, so nothing more was said. After the meal, Mitch and I tactfully withdrew, and he suggested a movie to get me out of what he unknowingly... called my mood. After the show, I don't even remember what played, and not wanting to walk around the town

⁶¹ United Service Organization

⁶² Selman Field

⁶³ an Amusement Park in Southington, Connecticut

⁶⁴ a large performing arts venue in Hartford, Connecticut

feeling as I did, we decided to come back, and here I am. I went straight to my barracks and started to write - *Chow Call* sounded, but I didn't even bother to go. I just can't eat.

The letter you wrote last Monday, the one you referred to on the telephone today - only I was too thick to understand - was really a pleasure to get... That night's sleep must have been torture - I shall see to it, that you have no bars running along your back, when you sleep with me. If anything, it will be my arm.

In explanation of the springs on the bed: the first week here we slept on Army cots so there were no springs. Now, however, we have regular double decker beds with springs. By the way, what are fascinators? I intend sending Annette⁶⁵ out an insignia this week, and if possible an arm insignia for Newty⁶⁶.

But the ten dollars is for you to spend on yourself. I wanted to get something for you but, not knowing just what you needed or wanted, decided to send you the money and let you get what you need.

Having written to you how I feel, I feel a little better, but I won't be completely happy until I hear from you saying that you are on your way. Please, please Butch make me happy once again.

I'm going to say goodnight now because I want to write to the folks telling them that I have asked you to marry me now instead of waiting.

Goodnight my sweet - I love you so very very very much and miss you as much.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁶⁵ Annette Paletz is Lenny's first cousin.

⁶⁶ Newton (Newty) Paletz is Lenny's first cousin.

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Dining and Dancing



WE CATER TO PARTIES AND BANQUETS

Monroe, Louisiana⁶⁷

Monday

[March 15, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

I hope that by now the shock and surprise of yesterday's letter has abated enough so as to allow you to think clearly... The only thing I want to stress is that I meant every word that was written - I miss you and love you, as I'm miserable away from you.^a

Two letters from you today and also the stationary. The letters were written the... evening of the shower and the following day. I'm glad... you had a nice time at the shower and also that Sonny gave you a ride home... I was glad to hear that Florence⁶⁸ decided to cancel her proposed trip to Florida solely because it means that you won't have to loan her the money she asked for... You would have been very foolish to lend it to her... I have the feeling that you would never have seen the thirty dollars again. Distance makes some people forget their debts.

Today was a long hard day for me. I must have eaten something that didn't agree with me yesterday and I went to sleep with a severe case of cramps. I didn't sleep very well and this morning's calisthenics consisted of a half hour of hard sitting up exercises and then a long run for half an hour without a break. The weather has been very warm the past three days and I really perspired. I felt very weak at the end of the hour but didn't want to go on *sick call*, not wanting to miss any of the classes. We started a new subject today *Physics* and also we had a full hour test in *Math* today. I really don't know how I made out on the test as I was too sick to remember. The rest of the classes went along without a hitch and the day finally got over.

They have at last caught up with me... tomorrow evening I pull *Guard Duty*. It is only a twelve hour job here and I was slated for the

⁶⁷ Both sheets were written on embossed stationery with a US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

⁶⁸ One of Sylvia's closest childhood friends from Hartford, Connecticut

third relief (ten to twelve and four to six.) I say was because I've switched with Nat⁶⁹ who had the second relief, so that he could spend some time with his wife during visitor's hours. It doesn't make any difference to me what relief I pull but it means a lot to him.



It is a common belief... that all soldiers handle a gun, but such is not the case. This county is the only one that does not issue arms to its medical men, so consequently I had no opportunity to use one. Tomorrow, I'll see enough of a gun... as we have to walk *Guard* carrying a nine pound rifle. Of course there are no shells in them but at least it looks good...

There is a lot of studying in front of me and I also want to get to bed early in preparation for tomorrow night's "ordeal" so I guess I better say goodnight, but before I do, I want to tell you again that I love you so very very much

Goodnight Butch

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Tell Mom, I'll write to her tomorrow

I love you
Lenny

⁶⁹ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field.

Monroe, Louisiana⁷⁰
Tuesday
[March 16, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

Your boyfriend is really a lucky fellow... tonight is my turn for *Guard Duty*... and I'm writing this letter, while doing my job. I drew Post #8, which is guarding *Pre-flight Headquarters*. All I have to do is sit in the office of the Cadet Commandant for four hours and write letters or do my studying, no walking, and no carrying a gun. I'm all alone in *Headquarters* and I have the run of the place. My hours are from ten until two, then Nat⁷¹ will relieve me and stay until six. There is a Coke machine right near me and also a phone booth. If it weren't so late I would... call you but, due to the difference in time, it is 11:30 in Hartford.

I have tried to find a good definition of *nomenclature* for you, but the best I can do is: a systematic listing of things, by their names. In... Airplane [Identification], we are learning to recognize planes by [both] nicknames... and their official names... A P-38 becomes a *Lightning* or an F-4U becomes a *Corsair*. The pictures are flashed on a screen for one-tenth of a second and we are supposed to recognize them by special characteristics.

Things went along smoothly today - no tests. Our *Physics* instructor is really rushing us and we got quite a few formulae to learn today... *Math* is moving into Geometry now and strangely enough it is a subject I like and if the old saying "what you like you do well" holds true I'll have no trouble. [*Visual*] *Code* is still giving me a bit of trouble and it is beginning to look as if I'll spend another week or so in the class. There is no particular rush on my part to get to the Advanced class as we only have to pass a six-word check to move on... There was a class in *Chemical Warfare* scheduled for today but for some unknown reason the

⁷⁰ All three sheets were written on embossed stationery with a US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

⁷¹ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field.

instructor didn't show up, so we had a free period. Drill was also canceled and instead, we signed the payroll, a pleasant job anytime.

You asked what being a Cadet Lieutenant meant - that is equal to being a sergeant in the army; he marches his squad to and from *Mess* and reports any absences at a formation... A cadet sergeant ranks higher than a cadet Lieutenant and wears more stripes. The job is more of a headache than anything else.

In regards to that clipping of the barbershop you sent, what would you say if I told you I shaved as often as twice a day without anyone telling me to do so? It is a major crime to be unshaven in the Cadets.

I realize that your letter hasn't had time to reach me yet, but I am anxiously waiting to read your answer so please don't wait too long... I pray each night that your answer will be the one I want to hear for I am convinced that is the way for us to be. I can understand now why Lou told Mom that we were foolish for not getting married before I left. The cadets who are married have just a little more incentive to make good than the single fellows.

Tomorrow night marks our fifth month engagement anniversary. How does it feel to be an old engaged woman?

I think I'll say goodnight Butch and try to catch forty winks before reporting in at the Guard Room -

Goodnight my darling - I do love you so *very* much

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana⁷²
Wednesday
[March 17, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Today marks two celebrations: our anniversary and St. Patrick's Day... While the latter celebration has been going on for a longer time, the first is much more important... Five months ago, we were eating our engagement dinner - remember those delicious steaks, and the excitement Mom and Pop caused when they gave you and Margie⁷³ the watches?... Even though I'm waiting for the most important letter of my life... the time for us to be together again is... much farther. Maybe it's my melancholia but I miss you so very much Syl that I honestly feel like crying (and I don't mean actors' tears. Remember that night I got silly and cried?

The proofs of the pictures I took Saturday came this morning and, much to my surprise, they look fairly good. I don't know how long it will take for the pictures but they will be on the way just as soon as possible.

Outside of the last hour, *Guard Duty* was all right last night. From one to two [o'clock] I had a pretty hard time keeping awake. At two when Nat⁷⁴ relieved me, I went to the *Guard Room*, where they had steaming hot coffee, bread, butter, jam and apples. I ate my fill and went back to the barracks for a few hours of shut eye. No sooner had I shut my eyes, than it was 6:00 o'clock and *Reveille*. After standing *Reveille*, I did a very foolish thing - I went back to bed, forgetting about *Chow* and calisthenics. About eight, the Sergeant came into my room and saw me in bed; he asked me my name and why I was in bed. When I told him I was tired he looked at me and walked out. This afternoon, after classes my name along with some others was called off stating that I was to report to the Lieutenant. It so happened that he was busy all afternoon and I didn't get a chance to see him, but I have a very good idea what my punishment will be: he will no doubt take away my *Open Post* for this

⁷² All three sheets were written on embossed stationery with a US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

⁷³ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf is married to Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy.

⁷⁴ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field.

weekend, Or at the most for the next two weeks. I realized what I was doing, but was so doggone tired, that I didn't care.

We [received] our *Math* marks today. I got an eighty which was... what I expected, having left out one problem and messing up two others. The final marks in *Ground Forces* were also posted and in that I got a ninety, which was... more than I expected. I seem to have reached a plateau in [Visual] Code. The more I listen to it, the less I understand. I asked the instructor about it and he said not to worry - one of these days it will come to me without any trouble. *Aircraft Identification* is quite interesting now. I'm beginning to be able to recognize planes and also read six digit numbers in one-tenth of a second. The other two subjects are coming along fine, so... there is nothing to worry about.

Tomorrow morning, I'm *going up for a ride* that is what they call the *Pressure Chamber*⁷⁵. We go into the *Chamber* around eight tomorrow morning and stay there for three hours. The process gives you the sensation of flying at altitudes up to and including 38,000 feet. Not everyone can stand the change in pressure and that is what they want to find out, as the modern bombers fly at 30,000 feet... We've been told that the war is going to be won by the country whose planes and crew members can go the highest. This sounds very logical when you realize that the higher a plane goes, the faster and easier it flies⁷⁶.



We are also going through the *Gas Chamber* tomorrow afternoon but that is old stuff to me, as I did it while in Virginia. It is done... to give us confidence in our gas masks. By the way, did I tell you that Monday is gas mask day here? We carry our masks all morning and when the gas alarm is given, we put them on regardless of what we are doing... Last Monday, we were in *Physics* when the alarm sounded, and we wore them all through that class and

⁷⁵ Cadets prepare to go "up" in the low pressure chamber, where air pressure in the chamber is reduced to simulate an 18,000 foot altitude.

⁷⁶ It is also safer from enemy anti-aircraft weapons fired from the ground. Lenny is hoping to get a Navigator assignment on the newer model of the *Flying Fortress* (Boeing 17-G) that is rated at 30,000 feet .

the next. Outside of the fact... they get mighty hot, there is nothing noticeable about them.

So, you're a butterfingers when it comes to handling cheap jewelry - that's probably because you're used to expensive stuff now. It's a good thing *Steiger's*⁷⁷ doesn't take the breakage out of your pay or you'd be working full time paying them back.

I'm glad... that you couldn't buy the chocolates to send me, for we have all the candy we can eat here, but I'm still waiting for those cookies you said you were going to bake at Faye⁷⁸'s.



Have I ever told you the intellectual people I associate with here? Among the fellows in the crowd are two lawyers, a chemical engineer and... an ex-New York Fireman. The longer I'm here, the more it reminds me of college life. Our barracks are just like a dorm - the fellows are all very friendly and of a high grade of intelligence - can you tell me what I'm doing here?

⁷⁷ Sylvia works at *Steiger's*, a department store in Hartford, Connecticut.

⁷⁸ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth Weidman and Holly Weidman, who were six and one at the time this was written.

In preparation for tomorrow's ordeal I think I'll get a good night's sleep which in other words means that it is time for me to say goodnight - I hate to do it because this is the only time of the day that I feel like myself. When I write to you looking at your picture I feel so much better.

Goodnight my darling wife-to-be

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

.. · _ · _ _ _ · · _ · _ · _ _ _ _ · · ⁷⁹
I L O V E Y O U

⁷⁹ As a post script, Lenny offers a creative use of his increasing fluency of Morse Code which provides the code that cadets must communicate visually using flags and/or lights in *Visual Code*.

Monroe, Louisiana⁸⁰
Thursday
[March 18, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

I've just come from the shower room and I feel like a million after taking a long and leisurely hot... shower followed by a shave. The weather has been miserably hot lately and it is impossible to keep clean... Down here there is hot water at all times, something that is sadly lacking at other Army camps...

I was scheduled to go to the Pressure Chamber⁸¹ this morning, but when we got there, there was room for only eighteen so yours truly plus five others have to wait for some future date. The talk all day has been of the happenings in the chamber, out of the original eighteen only thirteen survived the flight, the others getting the bends or just passing out cold due to the lack of oxygen, Anoxia is the term applied to it. I'm really sorry that I couldn't go up, as I would have liked very much to get it over with.



I went in to see my Lieutenant and received the punishment I expected, plus a little more. He took my pass away for the weekend and also told me to report to him at two o'clock Saturday afternoon for four hours of *fatigue duty* - that is the part that hurts, as I had planned to make good use of the afternoon.

We didn't go through the gas chamber today as planned but we did have something more interesting in place. We went out to an open field where they exploded real gas cylinders and we walked through the

⁸⁰ All three sheets were written on embossed stationery with a US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

⁸¹ Cadets prepare to go "up" in the low pressure chamber, where air pressure in the chamber is reduced to simulate an 18,000 foot altitude.

resultant gas cloud. Of course it is a mild concentration just enough to acquaint us with the different odors of different gasses. For instance, Lewisite⁸² smells like geraniums, Chlorpieri⁸³ smells like fly paper or licorice, and Phosgene⁸⁴ like fresh cut hay.

The first period this morning *Naval Forces* consisted of not one but two tests. One was given at the start of the period, followed by a short lecture and then a test on the lecture... We got notice that tomorrow, we will have our final test on the subject. The *Physics* class consisted of still more formulae to learn, it's really amazing how much a person's mind can absorb. *Air Forces* went very well today and I actually... recognized eleven out of twenty planes, the best I've done so far. I really believe I'm getting on to [Visual] Code and it shouldn't be long before I pass the six-word check. The math class was way over my head today, partly because the topic of the lecture was new to me and partly because I was asleep on my feet - I don't know why but every day at that time I get very tired.

The proofs that are enclosed are the ones that I didn't take. Down here, they give you the proofs that you don't use, a practice I thought very strange, remembering how careful the photographers are of proofs back home. Nat⁸⁵'s wife took them in for me today and I'll have the pictures April third.

I do hope that my letter of Sunday answered your question, but if it didn't, please write and ask me those questions. Otherwise they will go unanswered and, as I know very well, will bother you no end. Butch dearest, if at any time you have a question of any kind please don't hesitate to ask. Promise?

⁸² Lewisite gas is a highly toxic chemical warfare agent that acts as a blistering agent, causing severe skin and respiratory damage upon exposure. It is colorless or brown and has a distinctive odor similar to geraniums, but it has no practical applications outside of warfare.

⁸³ Chloropicrin, also known as PS and nitrochloroform, is a chemical compound currently used as a broad-spectrum antimicrobial, fungicide, herbicide, insecticide, and nematicide. It was used as a poison gas in World War I and the Russian military has been accused of using it in the Russo-Ukrainian War.

⁸⁴ Phosgene gas is a toxic, colorless gas with a musty odor similar to freshly cut hay. It is used in the production of chemicals like plastics and pesticides, but exposure can cause severe respiratory issues and other health problems.

⁸⁵ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field.

The fellows are sitting around discussing the test for tomorrow and it is very hard to concentrate - any minute I expect to write down part of the conversation. Because of this and the fact that I should do some studying myself, I think I'll close for tonight.

As you say Butch, the past few months have seemed so long mainly because I love you so much and miss you so much. Some day soon, we'll be together again and then everything will be right again - Please don't make this just wishful thinking on my part - good night Butch.

I love you
XXXXXXXXXXXX
Lenny



Monroe, Louisiana⁸⁶
Friday
[March 19, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Have you noticed how our letters seem to cross in the mails? What I mean is that I'll ask you a question in a letter and the very next day your letter contains the answer; for instance last night I wrote and asked about the cookies you promised to bake and send. In today's letter you explained the delay. It is probably just a coincidence and then again, it could be *telepathy*.

The first third of Pre-flight School is over... and we are no longer underclassmen. Tomorrow, the *Class of 43-13* arrives... The past three weeks went by remarkably fast and... I have absorbed quite a bit of knowledge. Regardless of whether or not I ever get to be a Navigator... this is one phase of my life that I'll always be thankful for... There was a time when I really wanted to go to school, but had given up hope; this *is* college... The courses are very condensed, but we do get the stuff that will enable us to do the job we are training for. You can be sure that if the Army didn't think we had enough time here, the course would be lengthened.

Today was graduation day... and I envy the fellows that are leaving here for Advanced. Most of them received furloughs as the Advanced Schools are crowded. God pray that the same condition exists in six more weeks when the time comes for me to graduate.

This was a good day for me as far as my studies went. The final test in *Naval Forces* consisted of fifty true and false questions and I answered them just as fast as I could write... I knew everything cold, and should get a very good first mark in the subject. The *Physics* and *Air Forces* classes passed without incident and after a fish dinner (more about this later), it was time for the afternoon classes. The first period was *Codes* and I think I passed the six-word check. We had two different checks and

⁸⁶ Both sheets were written on embossed stationery with a US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

I had a maximum of nine mistakes on both; we are allowed ten on each check, so I don't think I'll have to worry about that anymore.



The next class was *Math* and we had two training films and *Celestial Navigation* instead of a lecture. That subject is way over my head and I'll have to do quite a bit of studying to catch on to it. The subject just doesn't seem to click in my head. After the films, we had whatever soldier, GI or cadet, hated; the Articles of War were read to us again. When I tell you that there are one hundred and four of them, you can readily see why we hate it. Although we are supposed to hear them only once every six months, this makes the fourth time I've gone through the torture. It seems that every time I get to a post it is time for the articles to be read. After that, we had an hour of drill [and] retreat formation, which we have to stand every day. And that was the end of the day.

The remainder of this letter is being written Saturday.

A heated argument on physics came up and before we knew it it was time to put the lights out. There is no such thing as writing in the latrine, as at [Camp] Pickett, so I had to put this aside until today.

Yesterday morning during PT⁸⁷ we played a game called Box Ball. It is a combination of football, basketball and field hockey. As a result of a kick received during the game I am the possessor of a swollen knee. I aggravated it this morning, playing football and went on sick call to find out if it was anything serious. The doctor said I had a bad bone bruise and that it would be all right by the first part of the week.

Today after PT, the squadron went to the gas chamber but I was at the hospital so I can't describe the tears the boys probably had when they walked through the tear gas... We had our weekly stand-by inspection and then just hung around until it was time for *Chow*. After eating, the boys hurried off to town and I changed into my fatigue clothes in preparation for my punishment. There were twenty-seven of us altogether, so I wasn't lonesome. The Lieutenant asked if there was any one who could operate a power saw. I said that I could and he told me to go to the carpentry shop and cut one hundred fifty pickets for a fence; he detailed three other fellows to carry the lumber for me. When I got to the carpentry shop, they told me that only enlisted men are allowed to operate the saw and they detailed one of their men to do the work. All I did was hang around and watch, while the other fellows carted the lumber. It only took the enlisted men two hours to do the job and as my Lieutenant had left for the weekend, that was the end of the job. It is now four-fifteen and it looks like a long weekend.

The mail just came in and there were three letters for me, one each from you, Mom And Boomey who is now at Nashville. He writes that he half expects to be shipped here, and if so, he expects Leona to make him a visit. He asked me to have you get in touch with her, in the event that you would like to make the trip; little knowing that I have already written to you about it.

In Mom's letter she says that you were to go over to the house to have a talk about my letter from last Sunday. By now you have reached a decision and the suspense of waiting for the answer is driving me crazy.

⁸⁷ Physical Training

There isn't much more to write about now, but in the event that something should come up between now and tonight, I'll have plenty of time to write to you about it.

Oh yes, about the fish dinner mentioned in the early part of the letter. Both you and mom would be astounded to see the way I eat that particular food - and with relish. Somehow or other everything in the Army tastes good -even fish.

So until later in the day - not goodbye but so long. I love you so very much my sweet (even if you didn't bake the cookies.) Seriously though, Butch, I love you more today than I did last Sunday and God only knows how much I loved you then. It was so *very* much

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana⁸⁸
Sunday
[March 21, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Today has been one of the longest of my short Army life; up at seven, for *Reveille*... [and] done nothing but loaf around, except for eating and trying to put through a call to you. As usual, the lines are busy and there are only two phones... It is next to impossible to get... a phone.

Just after mailing my letter to you yesterday, I thought that I would see Boomey⁸⁹. A group of over five hundred arrived here yesterday from Nashville and quite a few of them were from his squadron. He will... go to Santa Ana, Cal. as the newly arrived cadets are the last class to be trained here in Pre-flight [Training School.] From now on all Pre-flight is to take place in a college.

Today seemed just like a Sunday at home with but two exceptions; one being that you weren't with me and the fact that I had to get up early also spoiled the effect. After breakfast I wrote a few letters and took a nap. Getting up just in time for *Chow* in the afternoon, I tried to put the call through, gave up and played a short game of billiards. After the game I tried the call again and then went back to bed, getting up only when one of the boys woke me for *Chow*. After the meal I tried again to speak to you but decided that a letter would get to you sooner.

I don't recollect explaining to you what Ground Forces consisted of, so I'll do it now. During the course we learned the make up of such units as the infantry, the artillery and the anti-aircraft, in other words the branches of the army that move on the ground. We also were told what constituted a good attack and... a good defense; also how a March of men is made up of, how many guns and/or searchlights, plus the motorized equipment each unit has. The course... could have been very interesting but we had a very dry lecture for an instructor and he gave us so many needless figures to remember that it made the course boring.

⁸⁸ Both sheets were written on embossed stationery with a US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

⁸⁹ Boomey Siegel is a friend of Sylvia's from Hartford, Connecticut who graduated in the same class at Weaver High School. He is training in the US Army Air Forces.

After spending a weekend in camp, you have my word that I'll meet every formation as long as I'm a soldier; it is no fun hanging around with nothing to do. I would really like to make this a long interesting letter but so little has happened over the weekend that there is nothing to write about.

Butch dearest... my love for you increases every day. The love I felt for you last Sunday, which I really thought was the ultimate in love for a person, has dwindled to a mere nothing in comparison to the way I feel for you now.

As yet, I haven't received your answer... The truth is I'll love you just as much, if not more, even if your answer is the opposite of what I want to hear. I know that you will decide for the best. But if you haven't made a definite decision yet, please please decide my way.

Goodnight Butch my sweet

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana⁹⁰
Tuesday
[March 23, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

I've been sitting at the desk with the paper in front of me for quite a while trying to think of words... to tell you how happy your letter made me; the best I can do is quote you and say 'I'm floating on air!' I guess that prayers are answered, when a person prays hard enough... Your answer has made a different person out of me, I am no longer grouchy or irritable and I can even think more clearly now. To prove the latter point I had two... tests today - one in *Physics*, the other in *Math*. Until I read your letter, the two subjects were just gibberish... but after reading the good news, my mind was so... clear, that if I didn't get a hundred in *Math* and at least a ninety in *Physics* I shall be sadly disappointed.

As far as living quarters are concerned, you needn't worry Butch, in the two months before you arrive I'll have plenty of time to find a suitable place for you to live. Then again, I can have Nat⁹¹'s wife look for a place, she is living in a private home, or even arrange with Nat... to get an apartment. His wife is very nice and I'm sure that you'll like her. Don't you worry about the room, I'll take care of that, Butch. About a job sweet, we'll have to *let that ride* until you get here, so that you can apply in person (I think.) The USO⁹² has a placement Bureau and... the camp itself has need of civilian stenographers and typists. I'll get more information about both and let you know. Jobs are not too hard to get. Nat's wife got a very good job two days after arriving here in the office of a Defense plant just outside of Monroe...

I hadn't thought of waiting so long for you to come down, but I realize... that there are so many things that you have to do before leaving. The coming two months will fly Butch, and before you know it

⁹⁰ Both pages are written on embossed stationery with the US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

⁹¹ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field, whose wife lives in the same neighborhood that Sylvia will reside in.

⁹² The United Service Organizations (USO) center from 1943 to 1945. It served mostly Navy officers who were stationed at Louisiana Tech University and were in the V-12 program.

we'll be Mr. and Mrs... I think it's best... we wait until June 9th for we should be married by a rabbi. I think that I'll leave it up to you to decide whether we should get married on the weekend [of the 12th] or the one after that...

Remember my telling you about the bunch that came in from Nashville last Saturday? The fellow you met at my house that day (Leo Mascolo) was in it. I went over to the PX⁹³ and there he was sitting in one of the booths. Something went wrong with his classification and they made him a Navigator instead of a Bombardier.

An excuse is forthcoming for my not writing yesterday after reading your all important letter and I have a very good one... I had two important tests today and in preparation for them I went to a night class that lasted well over an hour. The class was in *Physics* and that plus your letter cleared up all my blind spots in that subject., Coming back from the class I had to study my *Math* [which] is getting deeper and deeper, so I had quite a bit to study. Knowing that you wouldn't mind my not writing if I had a good excuse I didn't feel too guilty. I did... try to call this evening but all the new fellows were crowded around the two booths and it would have taken a good hour just to get a phone. I am sorry Butch but knowing you wouldn't want me to neglect my studies I feel that you'll understand.

I received Faye⁹⁴'s cookies today And they are truly delicious - this is not only my opinion but that of the boys too. I shall write to her tomorrow but, if you should see or speak to her, tell her thanks very much.

The subject⁹⁵ that was thought to be my *bugaboo* is a thing of the past... and I'm now in the eight-word class. I don't have to go any higher than six [words], so that is one less worry I have.

My mind was so upset the past week that I did two very dumb things. First of all, I went into the shower room with my wristwatch on,

⁹³ Postal Express

⁹⁴ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty) Weidman, age 5, and Holly Weidman, who was two months old at the time this was written.

⁹⁵ Visual Code

and it didn't do it any good. I [also] filled my lighter, the one the Goralnicks gave me, with the wrong kind of fluid and now it is useless to me. Matches being what they are I guess I'll have to go out and buy myself another. Incidentally, that lighter has been a source of amazement. Whenever I used it... nobody could understand how, or why, it worked.

The PT⁹⁶ instructors are organizing teams in various sports and that is all the conversation is about tonight. All the fellows, including yours truly, are bragging about how good they were, and it really is flying thick and fast. The idea is a very good one... Eliminating the nemesis of all cadets - cross country running, which is really grueling [here.] One fellow collapsed today and is still in the hospital.

Syl, dearest, each passing day now has only one meaning - that there is that much less time between us. Your answer has made me so happy Butch, that every time I think of it I want to cry... I love you so very very much and miss you, but in a different sort of way.

It's getting late now Syl, so I guess I'll say goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁹⁶ Physical Training (PT) during Pre-flight included a series of graduated exercises. Calisthenics and running long distances were the norm. The calisthenics prescribed were the result of a special study with regard to the requirements of an air Navigator. The prospect of playing a competitive sport was appealing to Lenny and his squadron..

Monroe, Louisiana⁹⁷
Wednesday
[March 24, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

Today's mail cleared up a lot of small questions that had been in my mind for almost a month and this letter will no doubt do the same for you. Perhaps I had better explain: This afternoon the mail clerk handed me six letters, including four from you: they were dated February 24th, 26th, 28th and March 22nd. The one postmarked on the 26th traveled all the way to Maxwell Field, Alabama before coming here, and the... two dated last month looked like they were kicked around Nashville before they... sent them on to me.

I couldn't imagine why you never told me what you thought I should do with all the letters I had accumulated, or why you never answered my questions about our first-born, or why you never made any comment on my use of skin lotion or powder, or why a hundred other things. My news to you about Boomey *washing out* was old stuff to you, but how was I to know with all your precious letters wasting away in the mail room back at Nashville. No doubt you too have wondered why I never made mention of things contained in these letters, well the above is the answer.

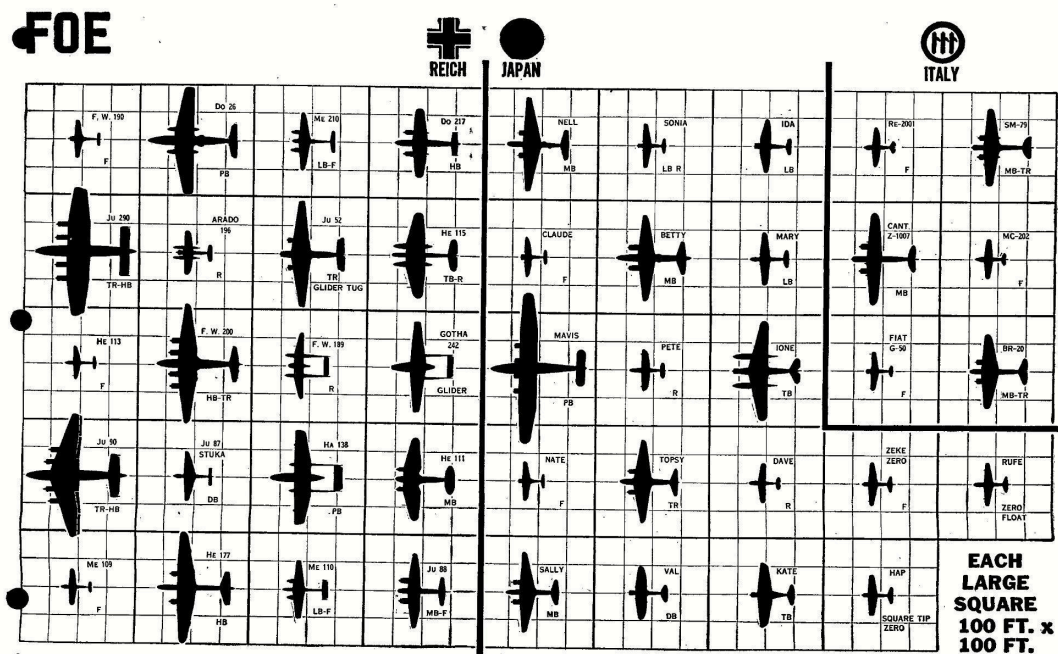
So, Natie⁹⁸ is going to the Army? You had better tell him to learn to curb his appetite because the Army will definitely not feed him as Lil does. About Lou Greenberg, I agree with you. I can't see him taking orders from a hard-boiled sergeant, but he'll learn. As far as I can find out, this state doesn't require a blood test so you needn't worry about it.

We were given back our *Math* tests today and I *dood* it, yep - a perfect hundred. I was really proud of the paper and planned to send it to you but the instructor collected them at the end of the period. The *Physics* tests had not been corrected yet, so I can't report any news from that front. The various subjects are beginning to show signs of

⁹⁷ Both pages are written on embossed stationery with the US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

⁹⁸ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and they live in Hartford, Connecticut.

connections with each other, and the work is honestly becoming very interesting⁹⁹.



We had a test in [*Aircraft*] *Identification* the other day and my mark in itself is nothing to brag about but in comparison to the rest it was average. I got a sixty-four, the others ranged all the way down to thirty¹⁰⁰.

We started a new subject this week: *Maps and Charts*... will enable us to read any kind of map or chart and also to pick out any named object on any map given the necessary reading. Tomorrow we are having our first test... and in this subject, it is more a matter of speed than anything else. This is training... us to plot a course while flying thousands of feet in the air with just maps and instruments to rely on. I am beginning to

⁹⁹ Lenny has a keen interest in Navigation. In the **air** this science, centuries old on the sea, takes on new complexities. There are **three dimensions** about which one can be wrong instead of two. Positions must be determined and navigational decisions taken at 300 miles an hour--- the time required for corrections results in considerable progress of the aircraft in the wrong direction if the first determination is wrong. The **radius of action** of an aircraft is determined by how much gas it has left--it plunges and is wrecked, or is at least incapacitated, if it runs out of fuel, whereas a ship does not face this problem. Estimated times of arrival must therefore be pretty near right.

¹⁰⁰ Selman Field employed the use of slide projectors and involved presenting the **aircraft** images in a brief **flash** on the screen until the trainee was able to identify it accurately. Then the exposures were gradually reduced to 1/75 or even 1/100 of a second. It was assumed that shorter exposure intervals for the images translated to speedy IDs in the air.

believe more and more that the Navigator is the top man in any Bomber Crew, for without him the Pilot would not know where to go and the Bombardier would be absolutely useless.

Dearest, I hate to do this but I'm going to have to cut this letter short because I want to write to Mom tonight. I haven't written yet this week and then I want to do some studying. Forgive me please?

Tonight is our night, my sweetheart, the twenty-first¹⁰¹ one, in fact. very soon now we'll start counting them for a more important event - Our marriage. Until then though Butch, we will count these and until tomorrow night, when I can tell you again

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



¹⁰¹ Sylvia Geetter and Lenny Levy celebrate the day of the week they were engaged.

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁰²

Friday

[March 25, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

When it rains down here, there is no mistaking what it is doing. It started this morning at seven and didn't let up until just before supper. There wasn't one fellow who didn't look like a drowned rat at the end of the day. The raincoats... the Army issued are so cheap that they are really no help at all. When I went to dinner today, my shirt was all wet.



I received a letter from Norman¹⁰³ today and it has made me rather blue. His address now has an Army Post Office Number (A.P.O. #.) Although he doesn't mention it, that is a... good sign of shipping *across*.¹⁰⁴ Don't mention this fact to Mom, as it may not be so. The poor kid is really working hard. According to his letter, he is up all hours of the day and night, driving the new recruits around.

We were told our marks in *Physics* today and I didn't do quite as well as I expected, getting an eighty-eight. I made two very foolish mistakes, which brought my mark down... I almost passed my eight-word check in *Code*¹⁰⁵ today but blew up near the end. Tomorrow there is a test in [*Aircraft*] *Identification* and I don't think I'll do very well in it. I went to a night class today but it

¹⁰² Written on plain stationery with no US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁰³ N. Norman Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He enlisted and has been at his Replacement Base for an extended period of time.

¹⁰⁴ Lenny is hoping that his brother will be stationed at the same air base in England.

¹⁰⁵ Visual Code includes hand, flag or light symbols used in Communication.

doesn't seem to do me any good - I just don't have the knack of recognizing the various types of planes. We had a test in *Maps and Charts* today but I really can't say how I made out. As I mentioned yesterday, speed counts and I rushed through it without being able to check my work. The work is entirely different from anything I've ever done before and very interesting.

From the above, you can see that they really keep us busy; if my letters don't come as regularly, or are as long as before, it is only because I'm so busy trying to keep up with the studies.

Included in my mail today were two very pleasant items. One was the package from Mom - the other a complete surprise - a copy of the *Jewish Ledger*. It was... good to read it, as it contained... people and things I know so well. It is evidently going to come every week and it will be something to look forward to.

The school has started a modified *gig* (demerit) system to improve the discipline. If a cadet is late, or absent from a formation, or talks while in ranks, or shows signs of insubordination, he will receive *gigs* in proportion to the offense. When a certain amount is reached he will have to appear before a Court Martial and the punishment ranges anywhere from one day in confinement to being *washed*. Speaking of confinement, I got my pass back today which means that I'll be able to go into town this weekend. If at all possible, I'll call you Sunday.

I really should do some studying on my *Math* and *Physics* so... 'll say good night.

June seems so very far away, my sweet, but only because it won't be until then that I'll see you and be able to hold you in my arms. By the way, you better put twenty dollars away, so that you can pay off on that bet we once made. You're going to lose it, the first full day we are together, after getting married!

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁰⁶

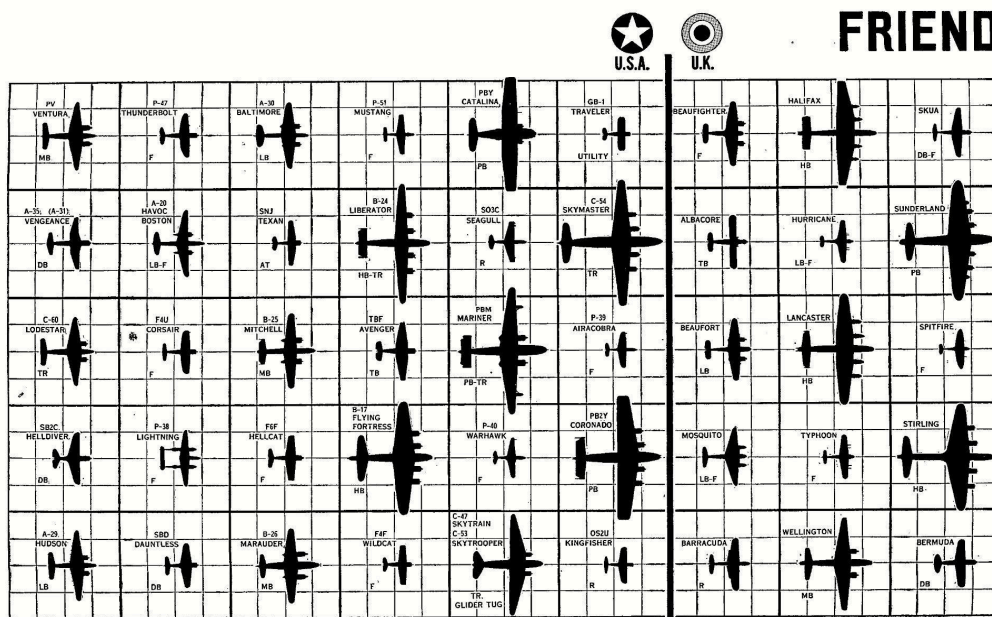
Friday

[March 26, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

If this letter doesn't sound like me it is only because we just got some very disheartening news and the entire school is really *burned up*. An order just came from headquarters stating... from now on we will be allowed only one *Open Post* day a week instead of... two, alternating Saturdays [and] Sundays... The reason behind the order is a mystery... We will probably be delayed from two to three hours on our *Open Post* for tomorrow, due to an unexpected visit by General Royce, the Commanding Officer of the Southeast Training Forces has set us all to *itching*. A great many of the fellows are really thinking of going back to the regular Army to get away from what is gradually turning out to be one grand mess.

The rain has finally stopped, I hope, leaving mud inches deep and not a pressed uniform in camp. It rained so hard during the night that it came through the walls, leaving a pool of water in the middle of the floor.



¹⁰⁶ Both pages are written on embossed stationery with the US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

Classes went along as usual today with only one test, the one in *Aircraft Identification*; I think that I did a little better in this one than in the last. *Math* and *Physics* are now directly concerned with our future work and are increasingly interesting. It is remarkable what one can do with figures, when given the know-how.

Our TO¹⁰⁷ Lieutenant Moss is getting more strict in his daily inspections and today I received two warnings - one because the top of my foot-locker was dirty, the other because the package from Faye was not directly under my bed. Each error, if not corrected at once, takes off an hour of open post.

Sitting in the lounge with Nat¹⁰⁸ and his wife tonight, I watched the cadets and their wives or girlfriends. I didn't feel jealous or envious because I knew that very shortly we would be sitting there doing as they were doing - holding hands and stealing a kiss now and then. Nat's wife asked me when you were coming, and... said that if you arrive during the week, she would... meet you, as it is very disheartening to arrive in a strange city with no one to meet [you]. One thing you'll find out, Butch, the wives of soldiers are drawn together by some mutual feeling.

It is time for the weekly GI party, so I'm going to close.

I'm going to use the same old closing but with a great deal more meaning than ever before, Butch - I love you so very very much and think of the time when we shall be together -

Goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁰⁷ Tactical Officer: Cadet officers commanded the squadrons and higher units, under the supervision of the Tactical Officer of the staff of the Pre-flight School.

¹⁰⁸ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field, whose wife lives in the same neighborhood as Sylvia will.



Monroe, Louisiana¹⁰⁹
Sunday
[March 28, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

By now I've probably got you pretty well confused as to whether or not I'm going to stay here for *Advanced* school¹¹⁰, or if I'll get a furlough, or what the story is. A bit of explanation... will keep you from going in circles. When I mention the Cadets who were *leaving on a furlough* I should have mentioned that they were only a small portion of the class. At [Pre-flight] graduation 75% of the class is kept here for *Advanced* and the other 25% are sent to Coral Gables, Florida... One third of the [Cadets] kept here are given furloughs because there is no room for them *across the street*.¹¹¹

This privilege is usually reserved for the cadet officers and a few others. Knowing my luck I have almost given up hope of getting one of them but I will know... let you know... As for going to Florida, the chances are so slim that I'm not even thinking about it. So until you hear otherwise, Butch... continue with your plans of coming down here.

I purposely put off calling home until late because I had a feeling that you were going to be there today. So, what happened - I had... no wait for the call to go through! [However]... I wouldn't reverse the charges, as the toll runs very high. Wednesday however is payday and I'll be flush again and able to call you next Sunday. Mom said you would be disappointed but it hurt me to know that had I waited long enough, I could have talked to you too.

I met Charlotte¹¹² and Bob Greenberg in town last night and she said that when a definite date for your arrival is set... let her know and

¹⁰⁹ All three pages are written on embossed stationery with the US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹¹⁰ Of the hundreds of fields that were operated by the Army Air Forces, it was only at Selman that a cadet could get his entire training—pre-flight and advanced—and wind up with a commission and navigators wings without ever leaving the field.

¹¹¹ The bottom of the class of graduating Cadets were put on hold before completing their Advanced training. The US Army Air Forces was creating/converting more bases to meet the growing number of recruits.

¹¹² Charlotte Greenberg is a close friend of Sylvia's, whose husband Bob is finishing his training at Selman Field.

she will... help get a place for you to live. They also told me that it is possible to get a special dispensation from the rabbi so that if we want we can get married during the holidays. I'm going to see the Jewish Chaplain this week and get more information about it. Just as soon as I know... when you will get here, I will file an application for you for both a job and a place to live.

They've had us going crazy here this weekend as far as *Open Post* is concerned. As I told you... the General is on the field for a tour of inspection. A notice came out yesterday morning that there would be none Saturday, until the inspection was over. At two-thirty another bulletin came out stating that we were granted *Open Post*, and the inspection would be held today (Sunday) and that the regular schedule would be adhered to including PT¹¹³. Half a loaf is better than none, so we went into town. The fellows coming in later, told us that the whole thing was called off and we would be free today. This morning at *Reveille* they told us the same thing so after *Chow* and a good shower I got on the bus and started to town. At the gate the MP¹¹⁴s, after checking our passes, told us that we had to be in by four o'clock, as the inspection was to be held today. After making the [phone] call and having a delicious pork chop dinner, I came back to camp and I've been hanging around since four o'clock, only to find out that the inspection is to be held tomorrow. It is now seven o'clock, so you can imagine what we've gone through the past three hours.

It doesn't pay for me to go into town over the weekend because it only makes me realize all the more how much I miss you. I walked around the town last night thinking only of how much nicer it would be if you were with me. When I got tired of walking I went into a bar, but didn't stay, because I was so lonely that I would have had too much to drink... I bumped into Mitch¹¹⁵ and a few of the fellows at the Cadet Club and being in his usual good humor he cheered me up some.

There is nothing new to report for my studies simply because there have been no classes. Tuesday however there is to be a *Physics* test and

¹¹³ Physical Training

¹¹⁴ Military Police

¹¹⁵ Mitch is a fellow cadet, and barracks-mate at Selman Field

I'm starting to worry about it already. They gave us so much to learn in so little a time, that it is almost impossible to get it all.

Butch darling, I love you so very much. Please make the days from now until you get here pass quickly. As I told you two weeks ago, I miss you so very much that I just can't be happy without you near me. Hurry down Syl -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana¹¹⁶

Tuesday

[March 30, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Could it be that the reason there was no mail from you today was because I failed to call you on Sunday? If so, let me again say that I too felt badly about not being able to talk to you; by now you know the reasons why I didn't or couldn't - please forgive me.

... There [is] a town... Ruston, about 30 miles from Monroe, where a WAAC¹¹⁷ camp... will eventually hold 6000 women... The stories have always been on the same theme, that they were nothing more than GI prostitutes.

This past weekend, they took rooms in the various hotels, allowed themselves to be picked up - took the boys up to their rooms and need I say more? The boys have been talking of nothing but the *time* they had Saturday night.

Today I was taking a very tough exam in *Physics*. The course right now deals with the releasing of bombs, how long they will take to reach the ground from various altitudes, how fast they will travel in the air, and just where they will land. It also deals with the centrifugal force a person in a plane is



¹¹⁶ Written on plain stationery with no US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹¹⁷ The Women's Army Corps was the women's branch of the United States Army. It was created as an auxiliary unit, the **Women's Army Auxiliary Corps**, on 15 May 1942, and converted to an active duty status in the Army of the United States as the WAC on 1 July 1943.

subjected to when the plane *dives* or makes a *turn*. As you can imagine, there are a great deal of formulas needed to work out this stuff, and all I can think of the past few days is $F = MA$ ¹¹⁸, Or $C.F. = \frac{M \cdot V^2}{R}$ ¹¹⁹ or $P = 2\pi\sqrt{\quad}$ ¹²⁰.

The *Math* course is also dealing with a very interesting phase now. Have you ever wondered how a pilot taking off from a carrier knows in what direction to fly, so he will meet the carrier in some predetermined location, after completing his mission? The plotting of these courses determines a *Radius of Action*¹²¹, in this... problem we have to take into consideration the force and directions of the wind, the course we want to make, the heading we have to take, the amount of gas available, the airspeed, the ground speed and the distance of the target.

From the last paragraph you can understand why I didn't write last night... The boys in my room spent well over three hours racking our brains trying to get all these formulas into our heads. Besides that, we had *Maps and Charts* to study which deals with still another type of course plotting. Speaking of my studies here is a good part. I think I passed my eight-word check in code today, another week and I hope to have a free period.

The weather has become very warm, in fact I should say hot. When you start packing, take all your summer clothing and very little else. Don't forget to include your bathing suit, mine too as the city has a beautiful outdoor swimming pool, or natatorium, they call it, situated in a very nice park at the edge of town. As yet, I haven't seen it but some of

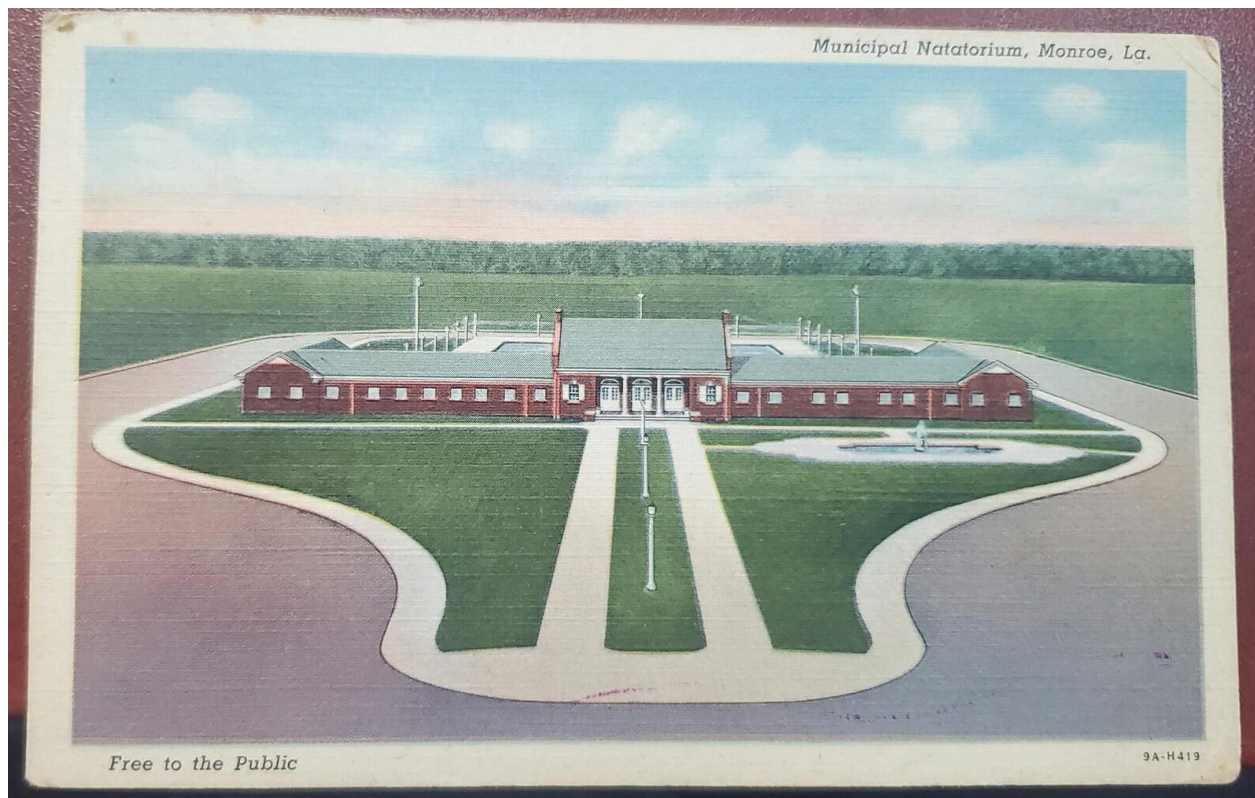
¹¹⁸ This equation, represented as $F = ma$, is Newton's Second Law of Motion, which states that the force acting on an object is equal to the mass of that object multiplied by its acceleration.

¹¹⁹ The formula for centripetal force, where F_c is the centripetal force, m is the mass of the object, v is its velocity, and r is the radius of the circular path. This force acts towards the center of the circle to keep the object moving in a curved path.

¹²⁰ The formula for the **pendulum period** where: P is the **period** of oscillations - the time that it takes for the pendulum to complete one full back-and-forth movement; L is the length of the pendulum (of the string from which the mass is suspended); and; g is the acceleration of gravity.

¹²¹ **Radius of action, combat radius, or combat range** in military terms, refers to the maximum distance a ship, aircraft, or vehicle can travel away from its base along a given course with normal load and return without refueling, allowing for all safety and operating factors.

the boys were out there Saturday and they tell me the park is really nice. There is a golf course there and there is no charge to Cadets for the use of either the pool or the course.



Municipal Natatorium - Monroe, Louisiana

I hope Betty is feeling much better. It's just like a kid to be happy over the thought of going to the hospital. I was the same way.

The official order came through yesterday that we will have only one *Open Post* a week from now on. There were too many Cadets in town over the weekend so they are splitting us into two groups, allowing one to have Saturday off and the other half Sunday... This weekend, I'll have Sunday so I'll be able to make the call to you. Payday can't be far off as we had our monthly *short arm inspection* today. The one bad feature is that my squadron is scheduled to have guard duty Sunday night and I'm due to get it again.

There is a great deal of stuff told to us here that would make interesting *copy* if we were permitted to tell it. For instance we know just

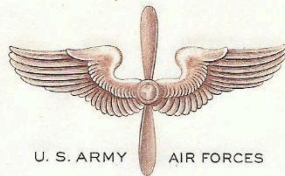
where Shangri La is or was, we also have been given a slight hint to the plans of their country in the carrying out of the war.

The general, about whom all the commotion was made this past weekend, never did show up - thank God. His non-appearance meant that we didn't have to *parade* in the hot sun, in full uniform. I'm running out of words so I'll say goodnight but before I do let me tell you once again that I love you so very much

Good night my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny





Wednesday - 3/rd

Dearest wife-to-be -

The time down here just seems to fly by. Here it is Wednesday night again and another anniversary of ours is marked off, and with each added week I love you and miss you just so much more. Had you been with me the past month or so life would indeed have been the happiest any fellow could ask for; as it is though I'm not truly happy because of the fact that I miss you so much.

Today was a good one all around; it got a good start this morning when we were given our marks in the Physics test we took yesterday. Your 'smutt' boy friend got the second highest mark in the class, ninety-eight, just about eighteen points more than I expected. Then

Monroe, Louisiana¹²²
Wednesday
[March 31, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

The time down here just seems to fly by. Here it is Wednesday night again and another anniversary¹²³ of ours is marked off, and with each added week I love you and miss you just so much more. Had you been with me the past month or so, life would have been the happiest any fellow could ask for; as it is... I'm not truly happy because of the fact that I miss you so much.

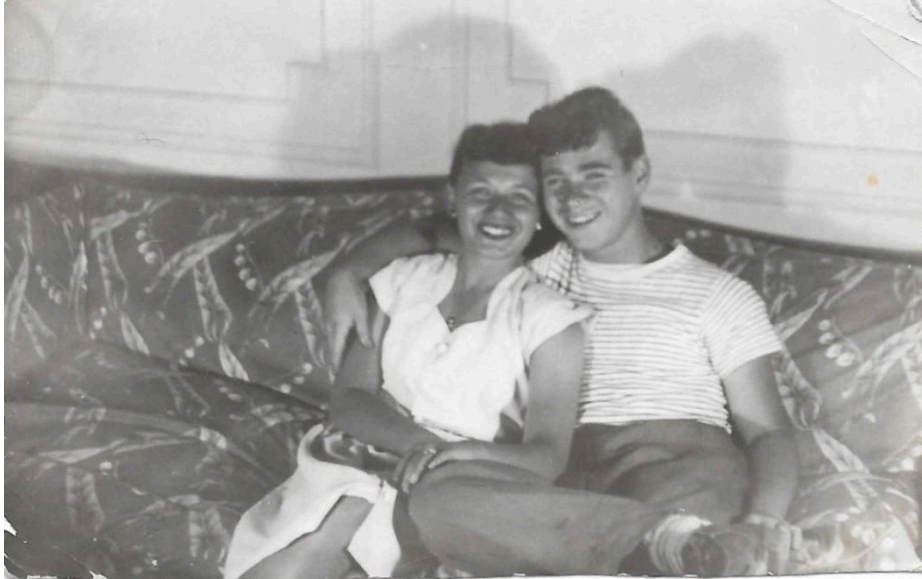
Today was a good one all around. It got a good start this morning when we were given our marks in the physics test we took yesterday. Your *smaht* boyfriend got the second highest mark in the class, ninety-eight, Just about eighteen points more than I expected. Then right after dinner the big event of the day took place - we got paid. In the afternoon my name was read off as having passed the eight-word check in code. I'm now in the ten-word class; if and when I pass that check, it means that I'll have a free period every day.

This evening the boys, including me, went on a buying splurge at the PX¹²⁴ buying all the small things that we've needed the past month. I bought socks, hair tonic, a ready made tie (to save time in the morning), a pair of sunglasses because of the terrific glare of the sun and a new cigarette lighter. The lighter is only a cheap one, but is... handier to carry around than a box of matches.

¹²² Written on embossed stationery US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹²³ Lenny Levy and Sylvia Geetter celebrate the day of the week that they got engaged.

¹²⁴ Postal Exchange



Annette Paletz and Newton (Newtie) Paletz
Lenny's first cousins

The insignias were also bought tonight - one is for you the other for Annette¹²⁵. I'm too lazy to write her a letter and enclose it - will you please do it for me? Besides, she owes me a letter and this will give her a good excuse to write to me. Tell Newton¹²⁶ that the next time I go into town on a Saturday I'll get a hold of an arm patch to add to his collection.

I had thought that you'd forgotten all about the aftershave lotion but didn't mention it because I still have a little left. I should have known better than to think that you'd forget.

You certainly are taking in enough pictures lately, you are more than making up for the ones I'm missing. I suppose... that this is all one can do at home, so I really don't blame you or Margie for doing it.

Tonight is our night again, my sweet, and if the next two months pass as quickly as the last two it will be no time before I can hold you in

¹²⁵ Annette Paletz is Lenny's first cousin.

¹²⁶ Newton (Newtie) Paletz is Lenny's first cousin.

my arms and kiss you in celebration of our *nights*; I say nights because when we are together, there will be another and more important *day* to celebrate.

When I sat down I thought I had a lot to write but I just can't think of anymore, so rather than drag it out I'll say goodnight. But not before I tell you again how much I love you - I do Butch, so very very much

Goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

I just noticed that the rest of my stationary is without the insignia at the top of the page, evidently I was supposed to use the bottom sheets for my second and third pages - I'm not as *schmatt* as I thought.

I love you
xxx (these are extra)
Lenny



Lenny's Maternal Family - Wisotsky
108 Colebrook St. Hartford Connecticut

Back row: Leonard Levy

Middle row: Annette Paletz and Claire Paletz

Front row: Bubie Levy, Aunt Claire, Aunt Molly

Missing: Anne Ginsburg

Monroe, Louisiana¹²⁷

Friday

[April 2, 1943]

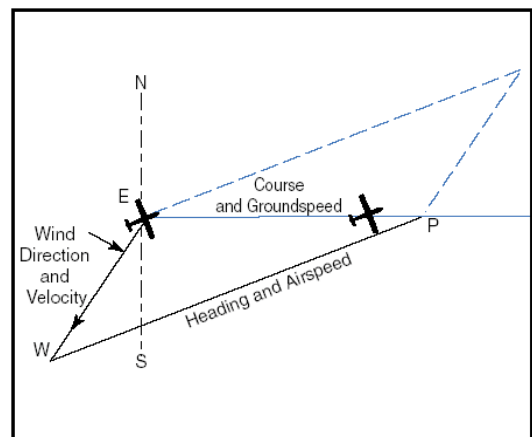
Dearest Butch -

I've been to four mail calls in the past two days and have come away from them empty handed and disappointed. Is there something wrong at home? Are you sick or is it something else that kept you from writing? I was sorely tempted to call tonight but feared that you wouldn't be home. I intend to know the answer before you even receive this letter, through my call to you this Sunday.



Speaking of letters, my sweet, I had to forgo the pleasure of writing to you last night because of the studying I had to do... for two hard tests today; one in *Maps and Charts*, the other in *Math*. The first was a final so you can realize the importance of my wanting to get a good mark.

The test in *Math* dealt with Triangles¹²⁸ of Velocity, a part of the subject I didn't fully understand so I had to do quite a bit of cramming¹²⁹.



¹²⁷ Written on plain stationery with no US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹²⁸ The triangles describe the relationships among the quantities used in air navigation. When two of the three vectors, or four of the six components, are known, the remaining quantities can be derived.

¹²⁹ Lenny is not struggling with the advanced mathematics that is required of Navigators.

The test in *Maps and Charts*¹³⁰ was a long, tough one and nobody completed it... Speed, as well as accuracy, is a prime requisite in this subject; but in going fast, many simple mistakes are made. A foolish mistake will no doubt keep me from getting a high mark in the *Math* test also. A simple mistake in multiplication through two of my answer's way off.

This afternoon I was part of a detail sent out to the firing line, presumably for... target practice. When we arrived the work... was complete, so all we did was sit around in the hot sun and watch the boys shoot at targets with their .45 pistols. Next week my squadron is scheduled to go out on the range and I picked up a few pointers today.

The Physical Training we are getting here must have its good features; I don't mind getting out and running five or six miles in the morning. The PT schedule has been arranged, so that we only run two or three times a week - the other mornings we have an hour of rugged calisthenics or, like this morning, play intra-squadron athletics¹³¹.

Butch darling, I may not have shown it in my letters but our plans for the immediate future have made me extremely happy... I'm not much at expressing my thoughts and writing, consequently you'll have to wait until I can hold you in my arms and really tell you just how happy I am and how much I love you. Until then... my sweet, you'll just have to read between the lines of my letter to find out how much I love you.

The weather here is really hot; sitting in class today the perspiration just rolled off of us. I hope you can stand hot days because... I hear the summers here are real scorchers. Let me stress again that when you start to pack, take only your real summer clothes and possibly a light coat and a rain coat.

Tomorrow is Saturday but, because of the new ruling, we will spend the day in camp. Not only do we have to stay in, but a full schedule has been arranged for us including two hours of drill - it is no joke under the hot sun, either. Sunday is *Open-Post* but I'm not leaving here until I talk to you on the phone - if only I have the luck to get the call through as easily as last week when I called Mom.

¹³⁰ See Lenny's notes from the *Maps and Charts* course, at the end of this letter.

¹³¹ Basketball or Lenny's favorite, baseball.

Just before starting this letter, we held our weekly GI party and, after I mail this, I have to start on my shoes, as tomorrow... is our weekly Saturday inspection and the place must really shine - or else.

As in every letter, my sweet, there comes the time... when I have to say goodnight to you. Do you remember how I used to hate to leave you at night? I have the same feeling when it comes time to say goodnight in my letters.

I love you so very much my darling. I pray that the time between now and when you are to get here will pass so very quickly and you are once again in my arms.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

MAPS + CHARTS

J.M. 21-26

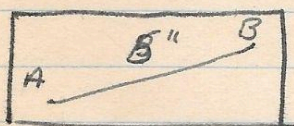
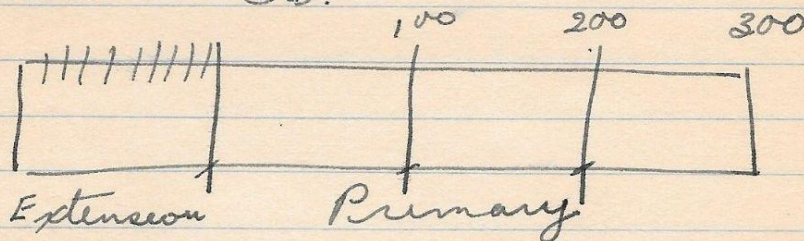
1-205

5-230

$$W + F = 1'' = 1 \text{ mile}$$

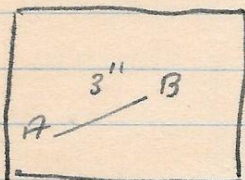
$$R.F. = \frac{1}{1000} = \frac{M.D.}{G.D.} \quad \text{pure number}$$

G.S.

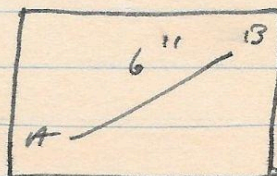


$$R.F. = \frac{1}{10000} = \frac{5}{G.D.} \quad G.D. = 50,000$$

Known



unknown



$$R.F. = \frac{M.D.}{G.D.}$$

$$\frac{1}{20000} = \frac{3}{G.D.}$$

$$G.D. = 60000''$$

$$R.F. = \frac{6''}{60,000}$$

$$R.F. = \frac{1}{10,000}$$

Monroe, Louisiana¹³²

Thursday

[April 4, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Hearing your voice today *more* than made up for the long wait I had this morning trying to get the call through. I placed it at nine this morning and - well you know what time it was completed.

Syl dearest, you may not have realized it but when I said that I was trying so hard only *because of you*, it was one of the truest things I ever said. The only other thing I've ever said to you that was truer is that I love you so very very much... Syl, you misunderstood me when I wrote... about [having] only one *Open-Post* here... It wasn't me who felt so disgusted but the other fellows who have been in the Army for quite a while, and who gave up good positions... to come here. To fellows like Mitch, who was off every night of the week and all day Saturday and Sunday, it was quite a blow to have half of what few privileges we do have taken away... When you realize that from Monday morning *Reveille* until the inspection on Saturday we have very little... time to ourselves you can understand why we felt so bad...

One of the fellows in my room was very happy today. His wife came into town yesterday to live and he spent all day yesterday and today with her. When you arrive I too shall get a weekend pass and also one when we get married. Now, do you see why I want you to hurry down?

Having a Sunday for *Open-Post* is strictly no good, as in all towns everything is closed up. The only thing to do is sit in the Cadet Club and listen to the jukebox and drink cokes. Next week it is on Saturday and already the fellows are making plans for it.

There is nothing new to report on my studies. The marks on the two tests I took Friday haven't been posted yet, so I can't tell you the good or bad news. Tomorrow, we have a test in *Air Forces* for which a bit of cramming has to be done tonight. The course is getting very tough but

¹³² Written on plain stationery and mailed in a plain envelope.

only because we are so close to the end of Pre-flight. [In] three weeks... we graduate and from what I hear, it is really done up right.

I received a letter from Boomey¹³³ and it contained some good news. In the first place he is not a Navigator, but a Bombardier stationed at Ellington Field, Texas... His course is three to four weeks shorter than mine... We [may] meet in combat training as a member of the same air crew on a Flying Fortress¹³⁴. The other bit of news is really surprising but... he wants it kept secret so please keep it to yourself. While Leona was in Nashville... they became engaged. Because it was done on such short notice he didn't have time to buy her a ring. They plan to take the final step when he graduates - by then we shall be old married people.

Syl darling, have you ever stopped to think what speaking to you if only for five minutes once in a while means to me. It brings you so much closer to me but I get so excited that I can't think of the things I wanted to say. Again, you had to prompt me into saying that which is uppermost in my mind, that I love you so very much. As usual, just after I hung up, all the questions and things I wanted to say came to my mind, but now they are gone again. You asked if I *hit the jackpot* after putting all that money in the phone - I certainly did - your voice is my jackpot - having you say that you love me is worth double the time and money I put into it. I'm going to do some studying now so I'll say goodnight.

I told it to you this morning and I've mentioned it twice in this letter already but I'll never be able to say it too often -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

PS I got the pictures - will send them out tomorrow

Love
Lenny

¹³³ Adolf (Boomey) Siegel is a friend of Sylvia Geetter's from Hartford, Connecticut.

¹³⁴ The term "Flying Fortress" refers to the Boeing B-17G, a four-engine heavy bomber used by the United States during World War II, known for its durability and heavy armament.

Monroe, Louisiana¹³⁵
Wednesday
[April 6, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

The mail today made me feel rather ashamed. There were, not one but three letters from you, while I've been only writing an average of every other day lately. You understand of course that this is not my own making - the tests are coming at us so furiously that there just isn't time for correspondence of any sort. Since writing to you last, I've taken two very tough tests - one in Air Forces, the other in physics; the results of both are still in doubt - tomorrow should bring the glad or sorry tidings.

Today saw the happening of a long-looked-for event. I went out on the pistol range and shot my first Army gun. We used the Colt 45 caliber automatic pistol which can do a lot of damage at short range. It is the type of gun that officers carry when in a combat zone. We shot twenty rounds of ammunition (the same as saying twenty shots) each and I made a score of [120] out of a possible two hundred. This is... not good shooting but would have qualified me for a marksman's medal had we been shooting for score instead of just for practice. The noise of twenty guns shooting simultaneously was terrific. My ears are still ringing. I have taken a liking to target shooting and really hope we get more of it.

Reading the parts of your letters where you mention the cold almost makes me envious. The heat here really is something. Just sitting in class listening to a lecture the presentation just rolls off of us. The only consolation we have is the fact that the nights are cool, permitting us to sleep. The heat being what it is now I can't imagine what July and August will be like. I'm almost hoping that they ship me to Coral Gables for Advanced. How would you like to spend your honeymoon in Florida?

One of the fellows down here from Hartford receives the Times¹³⁶ and he lets me see them every day; I don't think I've ever read a paper more thoroughly than I had in the past few days. The clipping you sent

¹³⁵ Written on plain stationery and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹³⁶ *The Hartford Times* is the evening paper in Hartford, Connecticut.

was very interesting. As you guessed, I knew a few of the fellows mentioned and it was good to read about them.



Bubie Levy Uncle Lou Aunt Renee

The enclosed letter is... from Uncle Lou¹³⁷. The reasons for my sending it...are first because I want you to read for yourself what a member of my family thinks of you and secondly because I think his letter writing is superb. He is really a very brilliant fellow and his letters show it very clearly. If I had his ability to write I could really tell you in my letters just how much I love and miss you.

¹³⁷ Louis (Lou) Wisotsky is the brother of Sarah W. Levy and Lenny's uncle.

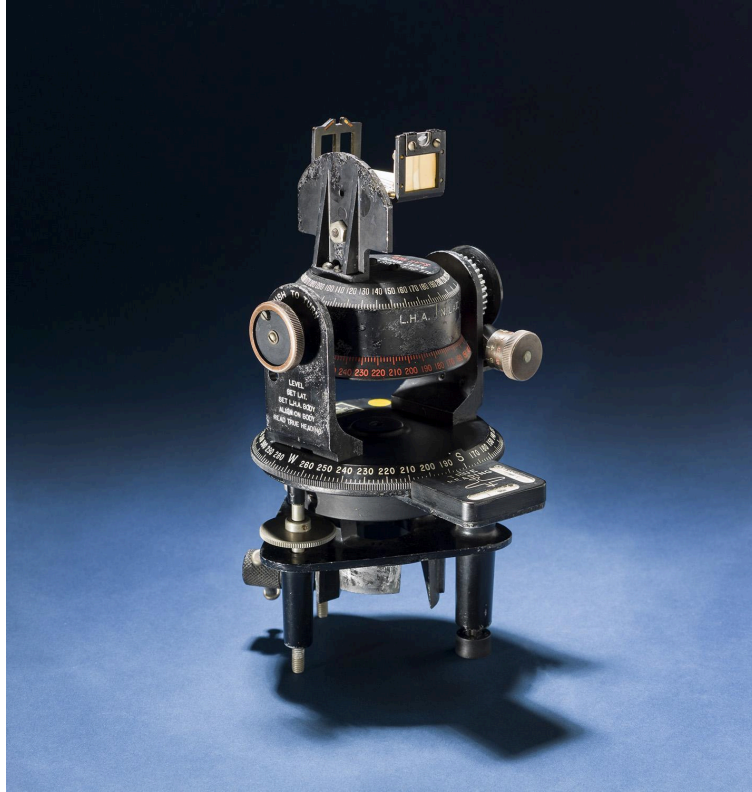


We have been issued our E6B computers¹³⁸ in math which reduces the math work for navigators to simple addition and subtraction. It is an ingenious device which does all of our work... we have been told that without it a navigator would be lost in the air. It does the work quicker and more accurately than we could ever do it on paper.

The physics is dealing with a subject that has always fascinated me but could never find out much about - gyro scopes and instruments making use of the gyro such as the gyro-pilot¹³⁹ or the turn indicator. The reason we learn about the gyro is not because we have to know about it itself, but so we can understand more fully how and why the various instruments we use work.

¹³⁸ Pictured above

¹³⁹ Pictured on next page



So Natie¹⁴⁰ is now Pvt. Geetter. Tell him, if after he leaves Devons, there is anything I can tell him that will make GI life more bearable, not to hesitate... to ask any questions. If I can't answer it from my own experiences I'm sure that I can get the information from one of the boys here... I hope he gets what he wants as Lou so aptly puts it: "It is better to know that you belong from the start!"

Tonight I plan to catch up on my Letter writing O I'm going to say goodnight -

Until tomorrow then when I hope to have more to say, I'll say good night with all my love and I do mean all my love

Goodnight Butch

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁴⁰ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan (Nate) A. Geetter is married to Lillian R. Geetter and recently enlisted in the Army.

Letter from Uncle Lou¹⁴¹
[April 6, 1943]

Dearest Lenny -

I know that I owed you a letter but also I did not know where you were. You boys do get around and it is difficult to keep tabs on your meanderings. Certainly you will forgive your rapidly graying uncle.

It is a real pleasure for me to know that you are really interested in your branch of the service. So many of the men are "put out" because they feel that they've been miscast in their military effort. In time, all seem to adjust themselves more or less but it is so much nicer to feel that you belong from the beginning. I know that the work is difficult but I have no fear that you'll make the grade and all that.

I have not yet heard from the ex-supervisor of bricks, to wit your brother¹⁴². Does he think that the Medicals are beneath his level as a quarter-master? You get in touch with that minor brass hat and tell him that he ought to write to me once in a while.

Of course I am with you wholeheartedly in your decision to get married. You do remember that my advice was to go right ahead as soon as you entered the service. I do not think you are making a mistake. Every time I meet Syl I am further taken with her charm and gentility... I am happy for both of you. There is much I can say but you don't need advice from an old fogey... The best of everything to both of you. I would like to see you kids soon; best of all I'd like to be around on the grand day but that seems like an impossibility. Let's hope we can all have a real celebration soon. If anything you might kiss the bride for me. Make certain that you send me Syl's address after she gets settled. I expect she will stay somewhere near you.

Poor me still at Camp Kilmer¹⁴³. It is now well over four months since I arrived at this post and my status hasn't changed one iota. Your guess is as good as mine as to when I'll see active duty as a

¹⁴¹ Louis (Lou) Wisotsky is the brother of Sarah W. Levy and Lenny's uncle.

¹⁴² Lenny's younger brother, N. Norman Levy has enlisted in the US Army.

¹⁴³ Camp Kilmer is a former United States Army camp in Central New Jersey that was activated in June 1942 as a staging area and part of an installation of the New York Port of Embarkation.

ship's surgeon. My men and I are raring to go and we haven't lost hope that soon our call will come. In the meantime I am attached to the station hospital and manage to keep busy the greater part of the day. Due to a rather rigid TO¹⁴⁴, I am still a one-bar man, with little chance to get any further. There remains only an appeal to the Chief of Staff or the president, before something can be done for me. I've tried almost every other channel with no success. The bitterness I feel at the beginning has changed to a fatalistic attitude and I no longer care about it. It is an extremely unfair scheme of things but that's how it is - and what can one do about it?

I get to Brooklyn every once in a while and I am well supplied with all the pertinent family gossip. Have you heard about your old uncle deciding to take another flyer at this marriage business? My choice is meeting with some opposition from the rest of the family but from all appearances all the difficulties will be ironed out soon. So, don't be surprised if you hear that I am no longer a bachelor. I would like to have you meet Renee - the person in question - sometime. Maybe that will work out soon - I hope.

Please write sometime soon. I like to hear from you and I want to know all about the wedding, etc. etc.

Yours

Lou

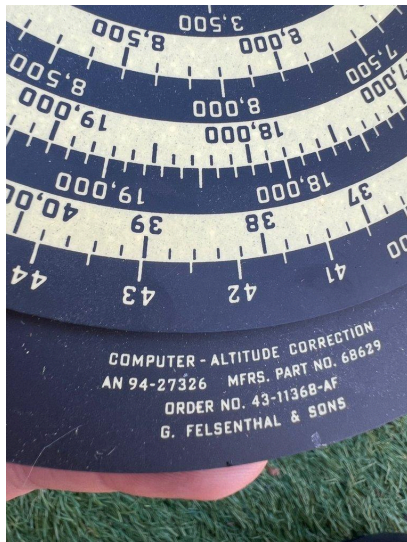
¹⁴⁴ Tactical Officer

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁴⁵
Wednesday
[April 7, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

As I sit writing this letter you are... at Pearl's shower having a nice time. Knowing that you have chances such as tonight's to go out and enjoy yourself, makes me feel good, and that... makes being away from you a little easier to take. I should really hate to think of you sitting home night after night.

Your *smatt* boyfriend has let both you and himself down; the marks from the latest test were handed out today and I got a seventy-eight in *Physics* today and a seventy in *Air Forces*. The mark in *Physics* was due to three simple mistakes that cost me ten points. The *Air Forces* test was... tough and also very ambiguous. The questions were stated so that... it was very easy to put down the wrong answer... There is no use crying over spilt milk. I'll just have to try harder next time.



We had our first lesson on the computer¹⁴⁶ today and the thing does everything but cook! Simply by moving the dials on it, we can add, subtract, multiply, divide or work out various problems in less time than it takes to talk about it.

If only we had an instructor who was better able to explain things to us. Our 'professor' is a civilian who very closely resembles Donald Meek of the movies; all during the period we sit and laugh at the expressions that appear on his face. He also has the corniest salute I've

ever seen.

¹⁴⁵ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁴⁶ The E6B flight computer is a form of circular slide rule used in aviation.

The wish I made in last night's letter was answered.

We went out on the range again to do some more firing.

This time we used bobbing targets in the shape of a man.



They were in sight for three seconds at a time, during which we were supposed to get in one shot. Standing on the line it seems almost impossible to miss but there were very few perfect scores. I got a six out of a possible ten which was just average. This was the last day on the range for us only because there is no available time.

My picture is finally on its way to you. The reason for the delay was the lack of a suitable envelope in which to send it. Nat's wife, Florence, brought me the envelope... I sent; as you can see it is just the thing.

In answer to your question about the furlough. If I am one of the lucky ones, I will know about it... weeks in advance, which will give you and Mom plenty of time to prepare the fatted calf.

Sitting here writing, June seems so very far away. Butch dearest, if it weren't for the fact that I know you are coming here, life would be so very empty, in spite of all the work I have.

It's impossible to continue this letter right now, as there is a terrific argument going on in my room on the merits of our various instructors, so I'll have to close soon.

Tonight... is our special night¹⁴⁷, the twenty-second of such nights. Each succeeding week brings out more and more of my love for you. After thinking about it for quite a while, I have come to the conclusion that it

¹⁴⁷ Sylvia Geetter and Leonard Levy are celebrating the day of the week they got engaged.

is impossible to put down in words just how much I really love you. You'll have to wait my darling until we're man and wife so that I can show you.

By the way there is no law against taking money away from a soldier but do you honestly think you're going to win? After being away from you so long I'd almost be willing to make the bet cover forty-eight hours, but I'm afraid you'd back out! Seriously though... if we were to be locked up together in one room for the rest of our lives it still wouldn't be long enough for me to tell you, or show you, just how much I love and miss you.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁴⁸
Thursday, [April 8, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Hurray! Hurray! The first is because today I did what six weeks ago I thought... impossible - I passed my ten word check in *Visual Code*¹⁴⁹. The second one is because starting Monday we go into summer uniforms, and... ties are not part of the uniform... You can't possibly realize what a relief it will be to discard our woolen *ODs*.

Today went by in the usual manner: too quickly to realize what was going on with but one exception - there were no tests today. Tomorrow we have one on *Photography* and then they start piling up again the first part of next week.

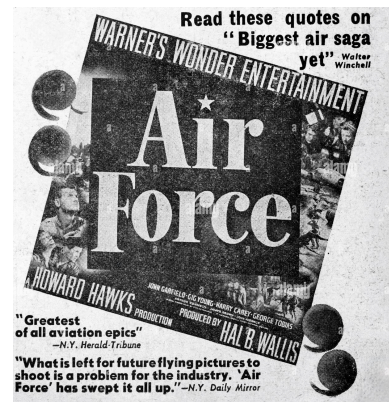
I didn't plan on writing tonight, meaning to spend the evening studying, but there'll be no time tomorrow. It's my turn to do *guard duty* again and, not wanting to have too long a lapse between letters, I decided to write even if it's only a few words. Believe it or not Butch, but I don't feel right unless I write to you.

Syl, if you want to really find out just what a navigator really does go see the picture *Air Force*. I haven't seen it myself but the fellows who have seen it say that it describes our work to a T. If you get the chance and let me know what you think of it.

I'm going to say goodnight now my sweet it's getting late and I have to study for the test and also shave. It's raining outside just another way of nature making me realize how much I love you and miss you -

Goodnight my darling

I love you
XXXXXXXXXXXX
Lenny



¹⁴⁸ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁴⁹ Using visual signals to communicate in an alphabetic code.

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁵⁰

Tuesday

[April 13, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

For some unexplainable reason we don't have a test to study for tonight and consequently I have plenty of time to write but there isn't too much to say.

Last night we started something that we've long been waiting for with dread. We now go to classes three nights a week to study Visual Code¹⁵¹. I thought that *time code* was hard to get, but watching a light blink on and off and trying to make letters or numbers out of what we see is out of this world. Luckily we work in pairs and, having a good partner, I should pass the six word check shortly and not have to go to class any more.

We had a surprise test in *Physics* today and it caught us all unprepared. It concerned itself with the subject of heat - one that is far from easy - and unless the test is graded on a curve I'm afraid there are going to be a lot of low numbers. Other than this one class the rest of the day was rather pleasant.

For *Target Identification* today we were shown the picture *Target for Tonight*, a picture made by the RAF.

The picture depicts a bombing mission being planned and



¹⁵⁰ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁵¹ Using visual signals to communicate in an alphabetic code.

put into execution over Germany. It was very interesting from our point of view as it showed just what a navigator has to do on such a trip. In *Math* class, we [saw] another picture [which] showed us just how to make use of all the instruments a navigator uses on a trip. The more... pictures I see on navigation, the more interested I'm getting in inventing an *automatic* navigator. The navigator seems to do all the work, while the Bombardier sleeps and the Pilot lets the gyro-pilot do all his work. If you've seen the picture, *Air Forces*, you know what I mean.



Yesterday, they inaugurated a new custom here - every afternoon we hold a formal *Retreat* parade. They really do it up right here. We all wear white gloves and the cadet officers carry sabers. It all makes for a very impressive ceremony but I'm afraid that in time the novelty will wear off and it will all become very monotonous.

Last night just as I got into bed Hank, one of my roommates, turned on his radio and much to my surprise we heard the program *Information Please*¹⁵² coming from the Bushnell Memorial¹⁵³. It gave me a

¹⁵² Information Please is an American radio quiz show, created by Dan Golenpaul, which aired on NBC from May 17, 1938, to April 22, 1951. The title was the contemporary phrase used to request from telephone operators what was then called "information" and later called "directory assistance"

¹⁵³ Bushnell Memorial Hall is a performing arts venue in Hartford, Connecticut

thrill especially when the announcer stated that Hartford was doing so well in its bond purchases.

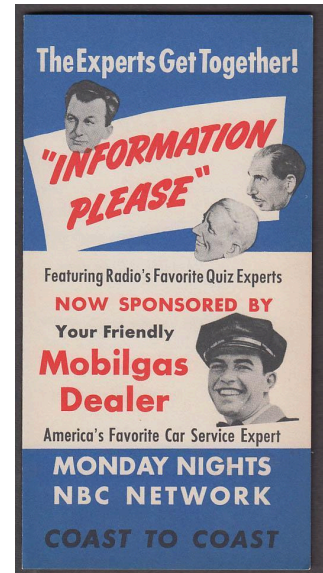
Last night I mentioned the fact that you were coming here shortly to one of the fellows, and also said that I was wondering if you'd have any trouble in finding a job.

He said he knows quite a few of the big businessmen in town and that I should remind him just before you get here; and he would speak to them in reference to a job for you...

Everything is going to work out fine for us - if only time would pass more quickly.

I promised some of the fellows that I would help them with the E 6B computer¹⁵⁴ and as it's getting late I'll have to close now if I'm to keep my promise.

Goodnight my darling until tomorrow when it will again be our night.



I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁵⁴ The E6B flight computer is a form of circular slide rule used in aviation. It is an instance of an analog calculating device still being used in the 21st century. They are mostly used in flight training, because these flight computers have been replaced with electronic planning tools or software and websites that make these calculations for the pilots.

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁵⁵
Wednesday
[April 14, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

This is of necessity going to be a very short letter. I've been studying the past two hours in preparation for a *Math* test after going to a night class in Visual Code¹⁵⁶. lights are going out very shortly; I only hope that I can finish before then.

You are no doubt puzzled over two remarks I made - one over the phone and one in my letter of Sunday... my class is now the upper or senior class of Pre-flight School by virtue of our length of stay. In two weeks, we graduate and a gala event it is. The exercises are held in the PostTheater, there is a guest speaker and we are given diplomas.

Graduation night there is a formal dance... held on the Roof terrace of the Virginia Hotel in town. Naturally, I'm not planning on going to it, for the simple reason that you can't be here... with me. Instead I shall go into town with some of the boys, who are in the same predicament as I, and spend a quiet evening somewhere.

Our *Physics* tests were handed back to us today uncorrected. The answers were read off to us and I think I got either a ninety-six or a hundred.

It is our night again, Butch - It won't be long before we'll have two nights to celebrate, with the one to come the most important, by far.

There are just two minutes left to make my bed and address the envelope, so I'll have to say a very abrupt goodnight.

Please forgive me for such a very short letter. I'll more than make up for it Friday. I can't do it tomorrow as I'll have three tests to study for then - goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁵⁵ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁵⁶ Hand and/or Flag Signals made visually

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁵⁷

Friday

[April 16, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

First of all let me apologize for my last letter. I realize that it wasn't even a poor excuse for one but at the same time I thought it would be better than none at all. After all, dearest, it was our night and I didn't want you to think I had forgotten.

Since last I wrote, many a test have fallen by the wayside. Yesterday we had tests in *Math* and *Communication Procedure* and today we had them in *Target Identification* and *Aircraft Identification*. These last two were finals meaning that Monday we start two new subjects. The marks for Thursday's tests were given to us today, and I'm still surprisingly on the top. The mark in *Math* was 98 with only a simple mistake keeping me from a perfect paper. My other mark was 88, just about what I expected. For some unknown reason our professor had us correct our own papers in *Aircraft* today and I gave myself a seventy-nine; the highest mark I've ever gotten in that subject. I just can't seem to be able to tell one type of plane from the other. This subject is one that need not be passed, in order to graduate, so I'm not worried about it.

As you can see from the clipping I'll not be without my Seder¹⁵⁸ this Pesach¹⁵⁹. All the fellows are going and we expect to have a nice time because the Jewish people here in town are very nice - going out of their way to assure us of good times when in town. Both small clippings come from the camp paper *True Drift*, a truly fine one with plenty to read in it. Today's issue had two announcements of great interest to us. One was the... coming of Bob Hope and his show, to broadcast from this field on the twenty-seventh. The other item told of the swimming pool the

¹⁵⁷ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁵⁸ The Passover Seder is a ritual feast at the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. It is conducted throughout the world on the eve of the 15th day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar. The day falls in late March or in April of the Gregorian calendar. Passover lasts for seven days in Israel and, among most customs, eight days in the Jewish diaspora.

¹⁵⁹ Pesach, also known as Passover, is a major Jewish holiday that commemorates the Exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It is celebrated with rituals, including the Seder meal, and involves the prohibition of leavened foods during the holiday.

camp is building for the use of cadets. It is just across the street from my squadron area and will accommodate over four hundred men at one time. I'm going to try and arrange to send you a copy of the paper each week.



The larger article¹⁶⁰ and excerpt from *Esquire* will explain to you more clearly than I can just what type of training we are undergoing and what we will do with our training.

The weather in Louisiana is like that of any other state - crazy. Now that we are in khaki, it has turned not cool but cold. The other morning it was so cold we wore overcoats at *Reveille*. It's been raining all day and right now it's pouring, reminding me more and more of you and that wonderful mood of yours.

There is a strong *latrine-o-gram* (GI, for rumor) making the rounds that we are not going to stay here for Advanced Training¹⁶¹. The rumor has

us going to Coral Gables, Florida.¹⁶² The part that makes it sound good is the one giving us an eight day furlough before reporting there. So, again dearest keep those fingers crossed.

Rationing has finally hit the Army. We are no longer able to buy as much candy, gum, cigars, etc. from the PX¹⁶³ as before. We are now limited to either two packs or bars as the case may be. Not only will I have to cut down on my candy eating, but you'll have to be content with fewer sticks of gum in my letters.

¹⁶⁰ *Bomber Back-Seat Driver* by Sigmund Sameth appeared in the April 1943 *Esquire* magazine.

¹⁶¹ This proves to be true...

¹⁶² ... but this does not transpire.

¹⁶³ Post Express

We were supposed to hold a Contest in Marching tomorrow with the winning squadron getting an extra day of *Open-Post*, but due to the rain, I doubt very much that it will be held.

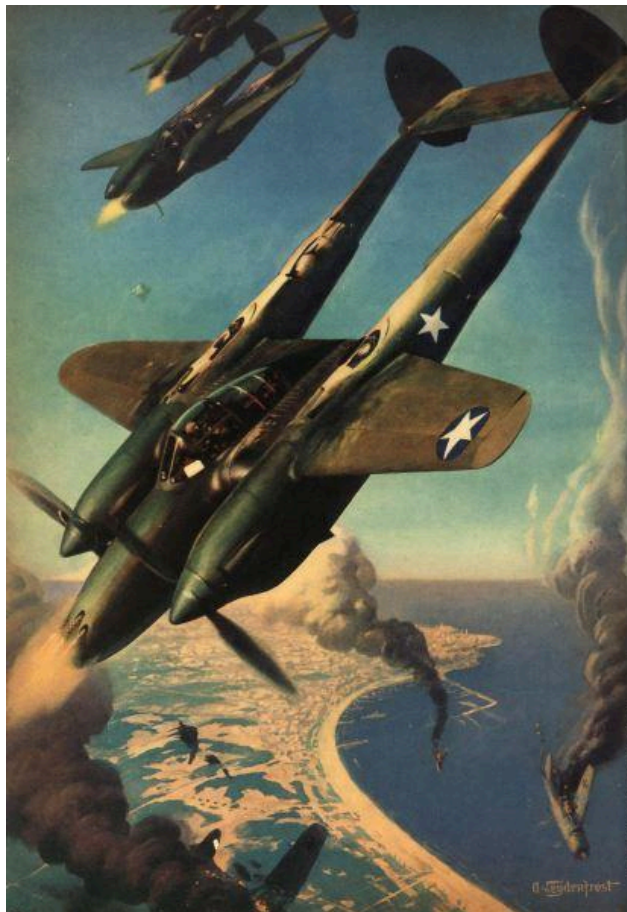
Don't understand why you haven't received my picture yet. It was mailed over a week ago.

It's time to say goodnight my sweet and as in all my letters with my good night I send all my love

I love you

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Lenny



April, 1942

Bomber Back-Seat Driver

What it takes to be a navigator, that cool guy behind the bubble sextant who directs the pilot to the Axis target

by SIGMUND SAMETH

ARTICLE

When Col. Kelly blamed the ship's bottling, Hanna, in December, 1941 and drove his foot to the door, Hanna's men were supposed to find out. They saw their lives in a serious young lieutenant who crowded through the inferno of a blazing engine system to release a jammed engine hatch. He explained his second-degree burns.

"Someday had to do it. I figured it might as well be the navigator."

In every theatre of operations, "Maze," the sweet full-bodied member of the aerial combat team, is chafing up his score of glory. Cool heads in the face of danger is part of his team's tradition. The bomber back-seat drivers have proved they don't lack it.

Navigators used to be the forgotten men of the stratosphere. They were the guys who got the big ship there—and got them back. They played board games, read novels or followed for a mission as much as a bombardier's aim or a pilot's actions in shooting "bat."

Leading a big ship into the ocean through solid overcast from five miles up, setting a pilot back once after minutes of tortured dodging, back-seat driving a crippled bomber to disaster, with only the last gallon of fuel between you and the enemy—these are vital air-war jobs today.

Occasionally in his unassuming way "Maze" does earn the front page. When the newspaper starts to lay aside his bubble sextant in

a padded seat and those machine gun sights on a Zero or a Messer's tail. The man with the lifeless and double in hands too, and between looking runs, under first aid in the ship's life. The navigator at Maze, who had never handled a big plane's controls before, brought the ship home himself instead of letting the pilot back because of his own.

If you are a navigator you report at the ready room a few minutes early. Out on the flight line the ground crew is getting your ship—a long-range bomber already loaded with its deadly cargo.

You get your "briefing" from the meteorologist, a carbon copy of the weather report. By the time you've finished studying it your pilot has been "briefed" by the Operations Officer. You learn the details of the mission and select charts accordingly. It's going to be a routine attack bombing.

The B-17's engine are silent as you walk onto the field. Machines are "starting-up." Flaring the tanks with the last drop they can hold. You wriggle your shoulders against the "chain straps." You're hot and excited. Nervous. Flying tags will be easy at 22,000, and that bombardier feeling that this isn't playing for marbles will leave you when you get in the air.

You climb aboard and help the bombardier in with his bomb-sight. The belly gunner has rounded into the last target. The engine are roaring. Two ships of the squadron have already taken

off. You risk a fresh but short to your desk with a couple of adhesive tape tabs. You just do as the Army's twenty-four-hour clock. You're in the air now. The pilot closes eyes as you give him his compass course. He won't change course save until you instruct him to do so.

Navigators can't nap. When you left the airframe your finger showed wind speed and direction at 5,000 feet. It's changed up-stairs. Better take a double-drift reading while there's still light to see by.

A plane doesn't really fly the way its nose is pointed any more than a robot does when you set it to work. The effects of wind on true course and speed must be allowed for in the form of drift correction. Your pilot operates in this well-endowed routine by flying 45° off course for a few seconds while you fiddle with dials and watch the head-range slide through the parallel lines of your drift meter. A second is there at right angles for a few seconds. You compute the drift. . . . enough charts again. . . .

put the pilot on an altered course to bring him over the target at the exact moment called for by your minutes. Time is the fourth dimension in the navigator's air world. If you reach your objective ahead of your squadron you'll split the share. Moreover the most direct route is not always best for a bomber. It gives enemy interceptors all the breaks. That's why

you fly a thousand mile dog's leg on this mission. The two flights of the squadron take different routes. You won't meet your half-die until you're over the target area. It's up to you to keep that machine.

You bend to your plotting board. . . . Read the compass heading. . . . Correct for deviation. It varies on each course. . . . You begin your magnetic heading. . . . Now correct for variation. . . . Set the true heading on the log chart. . . . Mark your double drift on scratch paper. . . . Compute the true course. . . . Take a quick glance at your sound-sensing "wireless" badge of the navigator. . . . Now what war that last position. . . . Your computer

most of its nose and working course. . . . "Land your sight bar out your compass." . . . The position the end of the navigator's route. . . . Time to give the pilot a course correction and the estimated time of arrival.

There's no landing for "Maze." Flying straight and level above the clouds you get a celestial "fix" to supplement dead reckoning. You catch sight through the sextant telescope and bring it down until it touches the bubble. . . .

Now you correct your DR. . . . That heavy air at 10,000 feet has thrown you off. . . . You've been flying over in haze. . . . Time for another weather memo. . . . It will help tomorrow's flight. . . . You're on, course and on time. That's the way it ought to be. The ship runs smooth.

You knock off five minutes for a process job—extra-pointers, pearls. Most fountain pens play too many tricks at high altitudes and ink writing is apt to be a water. . . . Only four minutes to go now. You're five miles above enemy territory. You wear the pilot's and the bombardier. Gotta move down a little.

Suddenly the sonic detectors have picked you up and the look-out crew. There's a crackly noise. The whole world seems to be ready-bell shipping port even alive with redoubts of fire. A look-out from the air is thrillingly beautiful—until you realize it's aimed at you. But the gunners haven't got the range and your flame are hiding them. Your pilot sideways out of the searchlights in a clever maneuver and the beam is groping off in the sky. Pyrotechnics of a different type are beginning to light up the clouds

Continued on page 122

Lockheed P-38 Lightning Fighters Polish Off Nazi Bombers

From left-hand Berlin attack across the sky with a whirling whir, P-38s in clouds. Just before pilot brings enemy plane to a halt, enemy plane is shot down. The P-38 is a fast, agile, and powerful fighter. It is the only American fighter to have been designed to fly at 30,000 feet. It is the only American fighter to have been designed to fly at 30,000 feet. It is the only American fighter to have been designed to fly at 30,000 feet.

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Monroe, Louisiana¹⁶⁴
Saturday
[April 17, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Now I've seen just about all there is to see. After tonight's *Chow*, it was more of a party than anything else, there can be few... surprises in store for me. As we walked into the Mess Hall we saw beer - yes beer bottles - on the table! Midway through the meal, which consisted mainly of drinking and not eating, a Captain came in and told us that we were to consider tonight's meal as more of a party... than anything else. It seems that our CO, Major Perkins, feeling sorry for us... decided that life could be made a bit happier if we could have a little fun in the Mess Hall. Consequently, we were allowed to smoke in the Mess Hall, we had... a most welcomed drink, and we also had an impromptu show - which included a Harmonica player, groups singing, a magician, a recitation of poems that only a soldier can appreciate and, best of all, a hypnotist. The entertainers were all cadets and a pleasant two hours were spent by all.

Despite the party, my darling, I feel bad because I wanted to call you this evening as a surprise. I wrote to Mom asking her where the shower was to be held but... she received my letter too late. I do hope... you are having a very nice time but also, missing me as much as I miss you. I've often thought... how nice it would be to come after you at the end of your shower and carry all your gifts home for you. Was it a nice shower? What sort of gifts did you get? Be sure and write to me all about it, don't leave out a single thing.

It is one of those rare times in the life of a cadet - we had very little to do, with plenty of time to ourselves. True we had an hour of physical training¹⁶⁵ (because of the miserable weather we ran four miles instead of the competitive athletics scheduled, a very dry lecture on *Government Publications* through which I slept, and a test on the lecture on which I got a hundred, and also the weekly inspection. Oh yes, we also had an hour of drill. How could I forget about that! Then... we had nothing to do - a rare day indeed.

¹⁶⁴ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁶⁵ Six hours of **Physical Training** is required each week.

This is one of those nights that makes me miss you more than ever; it's pouring outside and every once in a while I stop writing to listen to the rain on the roof and let it bring back those ever so pleasant memories of you. Just as love goes with kisses, or ham with eggs, so you go with rain. It's strange... that the happiest things that happened between us were always on clear sunny days. That day in July, for instance, when all that I thought was lost came back to me. The one thing in all my life I ever really wanted... is your love, and until that afternoon... I had almost given up hope of ever having it. Have I ever told you that I love you so very much my sweet? If not, let me do so now - I do love you Syl, very very much and as we've said so many times before, we are going to be so very happy after we're married and together.

Did I tell you that I got the shaving lotion? It came during the week; it's much better than the stuff I've been using, as it's not as perfumed. Thanks ~~Butch~~¹⁶⁶ Butch, (I don't know what happened here) You are so good to, and for, me.

I'm going to say goodnight now and see if I can't write a few letters that I've owed for so long. Keep those fingers crossed for that furlough and always remember that

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁶⁶ a wet mark, is seen

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁶⁷
Sunday
[May 18, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

A lot has happened since my last letter to you, the most pleasant being our talk this morning. Your mention of how much you were hoping that I would call made it well worth my while, *sweating* it out.

Friday night I had guard duty as you know. My luck wasn't with me and I didn't get the same soft *post* that I had last time, sitting in the Pre-flight headquarters. Instead, I had to walk a regular *post* carrying a heavy rifle. I was on the first relief, meaning that I was on duty from 6:00 to 8:00 and from 12:00 till 2:00. The first *tour* was one of misery due to many factors. First of all, the sun was still shining and consequently it was very hot. Being daylight I had to walk in a military manner and also keep the gun on my shoulder. It weighs nine pounds when we start off but, after walking an hour, it seems more like ninety. Being early there were many officers around, which necessitated my coming to *post* arms and then *present* arms to each and every one I saw.

After coming off duty at 8:00, I helped mop the floor for Saturday's inspections, took a shower and went to sleep. The Corporal of the Guard woke me up at 11:45 for the second and last tour. This one was more to my liking. It was much cooler and no one was around. Two other guards and myself met at a corner and we spent a good part of the two hours standing around talking. About 1:30, the graduating class started to come back from their dance and being slightly under the influence they raised hell. There wasn't much we could do with them except gently ease them off to bed. 2:00 came around and guard duty was once more a thing of the past.

At *chow formation* yesterday morning my name was called off as a member of the group who were to go up in the pressure chamber at 7:15, so after a good breakfast I picked up some reading matter and took off for the hospital and the *tank*.

¹⁶⁷ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.



Going up certainly has its effects both during and after the trip. The first thing we did was to go up to 5000 feet without the aid of oxygen to see if we could clear our ears upon descending. After this we were fitted to oxygen masks and then we started our trip up to 38,000 feet where we were to stay for three hours. After reaching 20,000, the fun started...

One fellow had terrific gas pains due to the decrease in pressure (at that height your stomach begins to pop out as though you were pregnant) and they had to take him out. Then the fellow opposite me became dizzy because he couldn't get enough oxygen through his mask and out he went. At 38,000 we leveled off and prepared for a long three hours.

I played Gin Rummy with a fellow next to me for a while, and then read *The Coronet* from cover to cover.

About the time I finished reading, I got the *bends* (nitrogen in the blood system) in my right wrist and then in my left leg. It is something that happens to nine out of ten that *go up*, so it didn't worry me.

Just 15 minutes before time to go down, one of the fellows got it in his left leg and the pain was so bad that they had to take him out.

At last the three hours were up and down we went, only to find out that we had to go up again without oxygen, to see what our reactions would be. At 15,000 feet our finger nails, lips and ears started to turn blue and I became slightly lightheaded. It felt like I had one drink too many. All but one of us were told to put our masks back on; he wants... the guinea pig [to] go still higher. At 20,000 feet, his coloring became a bright blue and he couldn't think clearly. He was unable to subtract 6 from 88 without becoming extremely nervous. At 23,000 he was about to pass out from anoxia (lack of oxygen.) When they put his mask on, in no time he became himself. During this time the *bends* had left me and I felt fine.

After we were down and out of the chamber we went to *Chow*. It was just after eating that the after effects hit me; I felt all washed out and so very weak - I couldn't lift my arms. Because I had to *stand guard mount* (changing of the *guard*) At 5:30 I couldn't go into town with the rest of the fellows, Instead I went to sleep. I woke up at 4:30, took a shower and felt much better.

After *guard mount*, Mitch and I went into town and headed straight for the Cadet Club. After saying hello to all the boys we went out and had a good steak dinner and then went back to the club for dancing and an occasional drink. At 10:30 we left and went over to the USO¹⁶⁸ where a dance was being held. At 12:00, it was over and after... a cup of coffee, I went back to camp.

On every *Open Post* night the MP¹⁶⁹s stop the buses and search everybody for liquor. The search is a very thorough one and they get

¹⁶⁸ The United Service Organizations Inc. is an American nonprofit-charitable corporation that provides live entertainment, such as comedians, actors and musicians, social facilities, and other programs to members of the United States Armed Forces and their families.

¹⁶⁹ Military Police

about 20 bottles off of the bus I came in on. The faces of those fellows on whom the liquor was found was really pathetic, as they saw their precious liquid being carted off.

This morning was spent in a very leisurely manner. I stayed in bed until 10:00 and then went over to the PX¹⁷⁰ to place the call. After talking to you I went to *Chow* and had steak for dinner, the first we've had here.

At 2:00 we had a ball game with our rivals, *I* squadron. I am very sorry to have to report that they beat us by the awful score of 21 to 14. The ball game ended, I took a shower, had a bite to eat at the PX and then came back to my room to write this letter.

From the stories going around today I doubt if there were very many sober Cadets in town last night. Each was drunker than the next. According to their stories and from the looks of some of them, there is more truth than poetry in their stories.

I was glad to hear that another of your friends is down here, at least now I know that you won't be too lonely during the times that we won't be together. Aside from that, Ruth may be of some help in locating a job for you. If you have her address send it to me and I'll look her up when I'm in town.

Butch darling, talking to you each week means so very much to me. I'm going to make it a weekly event if possible. by that I mean if I can get the call through each Sunday.

Sunday night means lots of work for me, especially tonight. I have to get my laundry and dry cleaning ready for the morning then I have to get my summer uniforms ready. On top of all that, I have to study for a test in *Air Forces* for tomorrow...

I'm just about at the end of this letter. My darling, I'm counting the days between now and the time you are due to come down here - there are 56 days between us (not counting on the furlough which seems too good to come true.)

¹⁷⁰ Post Express

I love you very much my sweet - With that I'm going to say
goodnight -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Monroe, Louisiana¹⁷¹
Wednesday
[May 19, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Today your letter came ... about your luggage... I'm glad that you like them because, darling, you're going to use them for an awfully long time.



You may have a talent for drawing (checks), but I too have a latent talent which the army has brought to light - sewing.

I've just gotten through altering my fourth pair of khaki pants - they were inches too long, so I calmly sat down and shortened them myself, and not a bad job, even if I say so myself.

This afternoon I spoke to my Lieutenant in reference to the coming 'big event'¹⁷² because I had heard somewhere that a soldier must have the permission of his immediate commanding officer... to get married. As far as he knew, I only needed his verbal permission, [which] he gave... at the same time wishing me the best of luck, and telling me to come to him if I ran into any difficulty at all. While talking to him, he gave me an idea that I'll try to carry through only if you, too, think it's a good idea. He asked me if we were getting married here on the post in the Chapel. Truthfully I had never even thought of it, and if you like the idea, and the rabbi will consent to come out here on that night, it might be arranged; Otherwise the ceremony will no doubt be held in the Rabbi's study.

I got a kick out of the clipping about Boomey that you sent, calling him a Lieutenant. I thought that when he saw the clipping, he felt rather bad because it is just about the time that he would be graduating, had he not *washed*¹⁷³.

¹⁷¹ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁷² Sylvia and Lenny will marry on June 12, 1943.

¹⁷³ Slang for a person who has failed a course of training or study in the Air Corp.

Classwork is just about the same as usual - we learn something new every day and spend quite a bit of time reviewing our Computer¹⁷⁴ work.

This computer is more or less a circular slide rule plus one hundred other things¹⁷⁵. Because of the many operations¹⁷⁶ that can be done on it, it is sometimes called the confuser - but all in all it is a wonderful instrument, more like an extra right hand than anything else - without it a navigator would be lost in the air¹⁷⁷.



Today, we learned how to keep our second type of *log* (there are three in all¹⁷⁸) and it was of special interest to me, because it is the kind that I will keep on my second flight. It's rather difficult to explain these in a letter, so you'll just have to wait until you get here, when I can actually show it to you and explain it step by step.

It's our night again my darling - the 27th¹⁷⁹ to be specific, and when I think that in three weeks, I'll be able to kiss you at least once for every day since we've been apart, I really get a thrill. Not only that, but in a very short time we'll start a new series of the anniversary, and you'll be with me, so that we can celebrate them together. Golly, but I miss you and love you so very much -

Once again it is time to take my nightly shower and try to get cool enough to sleep and so I'll say goodnight. Until tomorrow

I love you
XXXXXXXXXXXX
Lenny

¹⁷⁴ The **AN-5835** flight computer is a form of circular slide rule used in aviation.

¹⁷⁵ The front side of the flight computer is a logarithmic slide rule that also performs multiplication and division.

¹⁷⁶ The wheel on the back of the calculator is used for calculating the effects of wind on cruise flight.

¹⁷⁷ A typical calculation done by this wheel answers the question: "If I want to fly on course A at a speed of B, but I encounter wind coming from direction WD at a speed of WV, then how many degrees must I adjust my heading, and what will my ground speed be?"

¹⁷⁸ In 1943, USAAF navigators used three main types of logs: the **pilotage** log, which recorded visual references to the ground; the **dead reckoning** log, which tracked the aircraft's position based on speed and heading; and the **radio navigation** log, which utilized radio aids to determine the aircraft's location.

¹⁷⁹ Lenny and Sylvia celebrate the day of the week they got engaged for the 27th time.

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁸⁰

Tuesday
[April 20, 1943]

Dearest -

From now on I'm going to play all my hunches. While sitting and writing to you Saturday night, something kept telling me that the shower was being held at Tootsies but not being sure I hesitated in calling. Regardless of how excited you were at the time, it would have been so good to have been able to talk to you then. Speaking of calls, it seems that the longer I have to wait for a call to go through, the nicer it is. We covered just about everything Sunday, in those five short minutes and when I hung up I knew that my day was complete. Don't feel bad about my spending the afternoon waiting for the call because that is the only reason for... going into town on a Sunday.

The Seder¹⁸¹ was very nice considering the size of the group that attended.

There were over five hundred soldiers and WAACs. The services were conducted by three fellows stationed [at Selman] Field.

They were neither Orthodox nor reformed, but a happy medium which satisfied most. The meal was surprisingly good. To the people of Monroe, I say a very hearty 'thank you.' There was even wine for all. I



¹⁸⁰ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁸¹ The Passover **Seder** is a ritual feast at the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. It is conducted throughout the world on the eve of the 15th day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar. The day falls in late March or in April of the Gregorian calendar. Passover lasts for seven days in Israel and, among most customs, eight days in the Jewish diaspora.

met Charlotte¹⁸² at the dinner and she said that her mother-in-law is thinking of making a trip down here about the same time as you, if you want company why not contact her?

We are on a new schedule now and it is just what a soldier dreams of. We have plenty of time to ourselves, classes are from seven-thirty to ten-thirty, P.T.¹⁸³ at 10:45, *Chow* at twelve-thirty and afternoon classes start at one-thirty and end at three-thirty. In as much as code is the third. In the morning and I am excused having passed the 10 word check I am free every day from 9:30 until 10:45. chow Only takes 20 minutes so there is another 40 minutes free time.

It is my turn to be CQ¹⁸⁴ (Charge of Quarters) today which means that I am a very busy fellow. I was up at five-thirty in order to get everyone else up for *Reveille*. It is my job to [ensure] that... formations are [completed] by all of the fellows in the squadron, on time. I have charge of the office to see that it is kept clean, take care of all messages to and from headquarters... and see that the fellows on *fatigue details* do their job. Today is also the day for signing the payroll, which means that I have to go to the hospital to get the signatures of those fellows from my squadron who are there. Of course I'm excused from all formations and classes for the *day*, which means that tomorrow I'll be a *month* behind in my work.

Today I took the one and only step possible towards getting a furlough. We were told that if we wanted one, we would have to send in a letter in military form requesting it, stating the reason,... date, number of days of last furlough, and date of enlistment. Then, if there are any to be had, preference will be shown to those with good reasons, length of service and lack of previous furloughs. All that is left now is to *sweat it out*.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Charlotte Greenberg is one of Sylvia's closest childhood friends from Hartford, Connecticut. Her husband Bob is also training in Monroe, Louisiana.

¹⁸³ Six hours of **Physical Training** is required each week.

¹⁸⁴ Military Training includes opportunities to like this for assuming short-term, leadership duty assignments

¹⁸⁵ Slang for anxiously awaiting

I'm sure glad that Mom likes my picture. She says that she is going to put it in the *Times*¹⁸⁶. won't that be something!

There's a lot of work to be done and besides my Lieutenant just walked in, so I better say goodbye.

Keep those fingers crossed

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁸⁶ *The Hartford Times* was the evening paper in Hartford, Connecticut

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁸⁷

Friday

[April 23, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

The 'blues' have worn off, and I feel more like myself again. It was foolish of me to let myself get to feeling that way but the furlough meant so much - to you and to me that I just couldn't help feeling disappointed. However a good night's sleep will cure most of anything. Here it is a new day and I'm back to normal. For the first time since I've been in the Army a *latrine-o-gram* had some truth in it. The parade I mentioned in yesterday's letter is to be held and all the cadets from [Selman] Field are to march in it. The line of the March is to be well over two miles; you can be assured... we are not looking forward to it too eagerly. However to make up for the extra duty and also because it is Easter Sunday we have been granted a double *Open-Post* for the weekend, meaning that I'll be in town two days instead of the usual one.

Despite the fact that we have but one week to go, we are starting a new subject: *Cryptography*. It is the science of making up and decoding secret messages, as used by the Army. It appears to be a very interesting subject, but time will tell. When I first started going to classes I could see no connection at all between the various subjects... being taught but now, in the final week, I can see how they all come together, and I thank my stars... I didn't fool around the first two or three weeks because it was then... we got the fundamentals for the entire course.

This has been a very poor week as far as mail is concerned. Up 'til today there have been only two letters for me, one from you and one from Mom. Knowing, however, why the mail has been so scarce, I don't feel bad about it.

Today instead of PT the entire squadron is going to the Dental Clinic to have our teeth examined again. The army doesn't let the teeth of its men get bad. They evidently believe the same way I do that a great many sicknesses are due to bad teeth.

¹⁸⁷ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

More news about the parade: we are to march well over five miles instead of the former two. We are to leave here at 7:45 tomorrow morning - why, nobody knows - the parade doesn't start until 11:00. This afternoon, we had a practice parade and that Southern sun sure gets hot after a while.

During the *Code* class tonight, I spoke to a fellow who just recently got married here... and he told me that there is no blood test necessary. In fact, you don't even have to sign the license until after the ceremony... [I only need a physical exam and payment] to get the license. The physical is nothing more than a *short arm inspection* due, no doubt, to the prevalence of syphilis [here.] As far as you are concerned all you have to do is get here - no tests - no exams.

Selman Field has a baseball team. Because of that fact, we didn't have a mail call today. All the enlisted men, including the post office help, went to see the opening game against LSU. There will be no mail tomorrow because of the parade, and there never is a mail call on Sunday. All this means that I have to wait 'til Monday to read your letter.

The squadron has decided to hold a stag dinner next Friday evening as a sort of farewell. I say farewell because those fellows who are going on furloughs will not be with us in the upperclass... It is also being held so that those of us who are not going to the dance will have some sort of celebration over our graduation. I have been named as one of the members of the committee; on arrangements this means that I'll be going into town during next week. between this and studying for three or four finals I'll be a busy fellow. I'm going to do a little studying on *Math* now so this is almost the close of the letter.

Syl darling, there are only forty-eight days between us. Pray that they are short ones. I've been writing to you for a long time now, but I've yet to come across a better way of telling you how much I love you than this I love you *very, very* much my darling.

Good night

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁸⁸

Tuesday

[April 27, 1943]

Dearest Butch

It's been a long time since my last letter but only because there has been no time to write... Saturday morning we left camp early for the parade and I didn't get back to camp until very late. Sunday morning we were told that because we made such a good showing in the parade we would be allowed to stay in town all day; just as I was leaving my barracks, the mail was delivered and your letter telling me not to call was among those I got, so I didn't. I stayed in town until almost seven, then came back and studied the rest of the evening for tests in *Math* and *Physics*. Today we had our first final in *Math* and also a test in *Cryptography* that took care of my time for last night.

While in town Saturday I met Ruth and her husband as I was leaving the dining room of the hotel. We talked for a while about nothing in particular; then they went in to eat and I went back to the Cadet Club to spend the evening.



Tonight is the big night as far as the camp is concerned for it marks the appearance of Bob Hope¹⁸⁹.

Only nine hundred will be able to see the broadcast¹⁹⁰ - that is the capacity of the Post Theater. My squadron was allowed twenty-four seats, so we held a lottery to see who the lucky ones would be. One of the last names to be pulled was mine and just as soon as I mail this I'll be on

¹⁸⁸ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁸⁹ On April 27, 1943, Bob Hope and his company performed three shows at Selman Field, followed by a bond rally at Neville High School. The auditorium was packed with hundreds standing and another thousand listening via a loudspeaker outside. The event helped raise more than \$1 million in war bonds.

¹⁹⁰ The first show was broadcast live as part of Bob Hope's weekly radio program. The radio show was advertised as being broadcast from "Air Corp Navigators School Selman Field, Monroe, Louisiana." The broadcast was heard by Sylvia Geetter and a large audience of Hartford, Connecticut radio listeners.

my way¹⁹¹. In order for the rest of the men to be able to see him, Bob Hope has consented to put on an extra show outdoors right after the broadcast. Darn nice of him, I think.

Tomorrow night is my turn for guard duty again. This will be my last time [because] we do not get it as [upperclassmen] and, if all goes well, I'll be an officer when I leave there. And officers do not go on guard duty

While nothing definite has been said about it, I'm quite sure of graduating Friday because those who are *working back* or *out* have already been notified. There were four from my squadron and we all felt rather bad about it for they are swell fellows. I have one more final test to *sweat out* in *Physics*, but my marks are rather good and I'm not worried about it.

The weather has turned towards the heat and it really is boiling down here. The perspiration is just rolling off of me and even sitting in the... coolest part of the barracks, you made a wise decision in not buying a rubber-less girdle. Not only will you be too hot to wear one down here but, as I've said time and time again, you don't need one.

If you want me to, I'll get in touch with Charlotte and get her mother in law's address and, or, telephone number, so that you can have it... Shall I?

Butch, the clippings you sent were very welcome. It's good to read about the fellows you know back home and to find out just what they are doing now. As for sending me a package, you just sent me the skin lotion... so don't feel bad about buying everything for yourself and nothing for me. After all, you'll need plenty of stuff when you get here, while the Army is supplying me with just about everything I need.

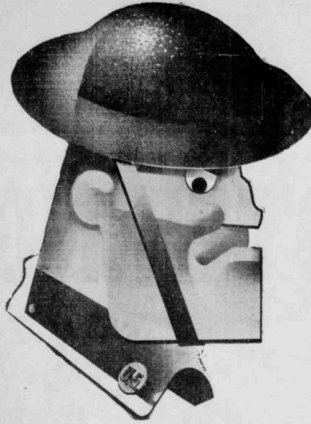
It's time to leave for the show now my sweet, so with every last bit of my love I'll say goodnight until tomorrow when it will again be our night!

Goodnight darling

¹⁹¹ Leonard (Lenny) Levy would certainly have telephoned his wife, and probably his Mom and Dad) that he was about to attend the live show of *The Pepsodent Show*, where Bob Hope usually selected a serviceman from the local base to perform with him.

I love you
XXXXXXXXXXXX
Lenny

PAGE EIGHT MONROE (LA) MORNING WORLD APRIL 25, 1945



"You Got Your Orders!"
EVERYBODY
Left! Right! Left! Right!
Forward... March!
TO THE NEAREST BANK OR ISSUING AGENCY
AND BUY A 2ND WAR LOAN BOND TO SEE

BOB HOPE

This Famous Radio and Screen Comedian in A
PERSONAL APPEARANCE

At Neville High School Auditorium
Tuesday Night, April 27th, At 9 P. M.



Here's What You Do to Attend This 2nd War Bond Rally and See BOB HOPE

Go to your nearest bank or issuing agency Monday and Tuesday and buy a BOND in any denomination and you will be given a ticket of admittance to see the big show or buy your BOND Tuesday night at the Auditorium.

BUY YOUR BOND AT

Any Bank or Building and Loan Association in Monroe or West Monroe or Selman Field, KMLB, Paramount, Capitol or Delta Theaters, Postoffice or at Sears, Roebuck and Co.

Bob Hope of radio and screen fame is coming to Monroe and his Tuesday night show will be broadcast over 125 NBC Red Network stations from Selman Field. After the broadcast he will be rushed to the Neville High School Auditorium where a rousing War Bond crowd will be on hand to welcome this famous star in a personal appearance. There will be music and other entertainment until Bob Hope's arrival at about 10:15 P. M. However, everyone will want to be on hand promptly at 9 P. M. to hear the broadcast from loud speakers placed in the auditorium. Bob Hope is giving freely of his time to entertain you and put in a personal appearance, so let's welcome him with a gigantic packed auditorium. All you need do is BUY A BOND to help put over the 2nd War Loan Drive. You Buy a BOND—Bob Hope will do the rest!

Civilians, Service Men, EVERYBODY!
Let's Be Patriotic And All Turn Out Tuesday
To Welcome Bob Hope! BUY A BOND!

STRAND THEATER	RIALTO THEATER	JOY THEATER	RITZ THEATER
PALACE	BERT COVERDALE	MAYOR D. C. GOLSON, City of West Monroe	
MONROE FURNITURE CO.	MONROE WHOLESALE DRUG	BUTTER-KRUST BREAD	
HOTEL FRANCES	KEENE'S SHOE STORE	HOLSUM BREAD	
TOM HICKS	ACME BEVERAGE CO.	MEL-O-TOAST BREAD	
MILTON COVERDALE	BELLA SCHERCK DAVIDSON	DUDLEY MOTORS	

"They Give Their Lives - - - - You Lend Your Money"

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁹²
Wednesday
[April 28, 1943]

Dearest Butch

Outside of the weather, there isn't much to write about this evening. The heat we are having would make headlines in mid-July back home. Just sitting around, the perspiration comes out all over. To top it off, we had a Cross country run this morning and when we finished, we were soaked. One fellow passed out from the heat and quite a few never did finish running, they just cut across the field and went back to the barracks.

Did you hear me during the broadcast¹⁹³ last night? I don't know how it sounded over the air but he sure was funny to watch. His actions are funnier than his gags. The show he put on after the broadcast was marvelous. He had more time and no unseen audience, which enabled him to tell jokes which were slightly off... He is really a grand guy and he gave us a night we'll remember for a long time.

¹⁹² Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁹³ On April 27, 1943, Bob Hope and his company performed three shows at Selman Field, followed by a bond rally at Neville High School. The first show was broadcast live as part of Bob Hope's weekly radio program. The radio show was advertised as being broadcast from "Air Corp Navigators School Selman Field, Monroe, Louisiana."



The marks for the two tests we took in *Math* were given back to us. I got an eighty-three in each, which means that my final mark... is close to ninety. We also received our marks in two other tests: *Cryptography*, in which I got a hundred and *Communication Procedure* in which I got a ninety-four. Two more tests, one in *Physics* and the other in *Cryptography* and my preflight days are over.

I wish you had sent me Natie's address so I could tell him about the Air Corp and also about applying for training as a navigator in the cadets. Tell Lil that in her next letter to him she should tell him to apply *immediately* while he is still in Miami. You see he is in a camp similar to the one I was in in Virginia. It's only a replacement center where he will get his basic training and then be skipped to some airfield. If... he applies to be a cadet, he will more than likely remain there until it's time to go to Nashville.

Our swimming pool is rapidly nearing completion and it won't be long before hot days like this will see us all in the pool enjoying ourselves - providing we can find the time. They crowd the work in... with only today and tomorrow left for classes, we started a course in *Star Identification* this afternoon, in which we... must learn fifty-five stars and their names and places in the Celestial Sphere. The instructor is a captain in the Navy, and he started off his lecture by saying this is a

course in the study of heavenly bodies, but not the kind we've been accustomed to studying.

I want to write a letter to Mom and take a shower, before going on guard duty. I drew the *third relief* which means very little sleep for me tonight. My *tours* run from ten to twelve and from four to six. Because of these factors I'm going to close now. Goodnight, my darling. I'm sure that you're quite right in saying that our love for each other is to be the basis for our happiness in married life. We are going to be the happiest couple in the world.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana¹⁹⁴
Saturday
[May 1, 1943]

Dearest Butch

Thanks for putting the blame of no letters on the mail system, but I'm afraid that this time it is my fault. The simple truth is that with studying for my finals, making arrangements for our party, and all the rehearsals for our graduation¹⁹⁵, I just haven't had five minutes to myself the past few days...

Wednesday, I had guard duty and in my hurry to mail your letter, I completely forgot to... mention it... was *our*¹⁹⁶ night. It wasn't until I was on my *post* did it... strike me... what I had so absent-mindedly forgotten to do. Please forgive me darling. I promise that it won't happen again.

Outside of two final tests and a night class lasting until after ten in Star Identification, I don't remember what happened on Thursday so I'll just skip it and go on to Friday, the [last] day of Pre-flight¹⁹⁷. We had two classes that morning, one of which was our final test in physics. It was tough, but I seemed to know just the right things, so I made out quite well.

After classes we went back to our barracks and packed our clothing and stuff in preparation for today. By the time that was done it was time for Chow after eating we had just enough time to take a shower before

¹⁹⁴ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹⁹⁵ The graduation ceremony for **pre-flight navigators** at Selman Field in 1943 was a significant event, marking the completion of the initial training phase for these military personnel. The ceremony typically included several key elements:

1. **Formal Attire:** Graduates wore their military uniforms, often adorned with insignia indicating their new status as navigators. This attire symbolized their readiness to take on their roles in the Army Air Force.
2. **Ceremonial Activities**
3. **Presentation of Diplomas**
4. **Parade** or March

¹⁹⁶ Sylvia and Lenny celebrate the day of the week they got engaged.

¹⁹⁷ **Pre-Flight Training** is the initial phase of Flight School Training and involves basic military training and instruction in navigation principles, including map reading, celestial navigation, and the use of navigational instruments.

the start of our graduation parade¹⁹⁸ we marched from the squadron area to the Post Theater and all the way down, I kept thinking of a day eighteen weeks from now, when I'll march again to the same place for another graduation¹⁹⁹, but... that will be... different. In the first place, you'll be there²⁰⁰ and it will mark... the end of my schooling and the beginning of actual work.



The graduation exercises were short²⁰¹ and to the point which pleased us no end. After a speech by the Commandant of Pre-flight²⁰², which like a

¹⁹⁸ The ceremony often included a parade or march of the graduates, showcasing their discipline and camaraderie. This display was a traditional military practice that added to the ceremony's formality.

¹⁹⁹ Lenny does graduate from his Advanced Training on September 3, 1943 - precisely 18 weeks later, but at a different Post - not Selman Field.

²⁰⁰ The presence of family and friends was common, as they gathered to celebrate the achievements of the graduates. Sylvia did not attend. She was busy preparing for her own train trip to Monroe, Louisiana to get married on June 12. She does attend the September 3 affair.

²⁰¹ The event usually featured a formal program that included speeches from commanding officers and instructors. These speeches often highlighted the importance of the navigator's role in military operations and the skills they had acquired during training.

²⁰² Colonel William A. McCulloch played a significant role in overseeing the training of navigators during World War II, ensuring that the program met the needs of the US Army Air Forces.

lady's skirt was short enough to be interesting but long enough to cover the subject. He handed out our diplomas and then we marched out of the theater and back to the squadron area.

By then it was time to go into town for our 'stag,' So off we went to prove to be a most enjoyable party. As our guests, we had Lt.²⁰³ Moss, our Tactical Officer, Lt. Westcott, the fellow who took us on all those long runs and two of our instructors. With Mitch as emcee, the room was in a gale of laughter at all times. That boy sure has a gift for gab. Around eight, when the jokes were getting dirtier and the bottles emptier, we had to call the festivities to a halt, because the fellows going on furloughs had to leave to catch their train. It was then that Joe and Hank, two of the fellows in my room, pulled a surprise on me. I don't know whether to call it a pleasant surprise or a dirty trick, so I'll just tell you the story and let you decide.

As we left the place where the party was held, I said goodbye to Hank knowing that he had a date to go to the dance. He insisted on my going with him to the hotel, so I went along. When we got there he introduced me to a girl in a gown. Thinking it was his date I said hello, said a few words, and started to leave, but Hank called me back; and told me that the girl was my date for the evening! It seems that they felt sorry for me. I don't know why. So - unknown to me, they made this date for me. Naturally, I couldn't back out so I went to the dance. I imagine that if I hadn't felt so strange taking another girl to a dance, I might have had a nice time, but all I could think of the whole evening was you. How much better and nicer I would have felt if you were the girl in my arms. The fellows thought they were doing me a good turn, but they only caused me to miss you so much more.

Today has been a very busy and full one for me, as you can see from the new address on the envelope, I've moved... to the Advanced²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Lieutenant

²⁰⁴ In 1943, the Army Air Forces Training Command (AAFTC) had a dedicated training program for navigators, which typically included the following stages:

1. **Pre-Flight Training:** 4 to 6 weeks
2. **Basic** Navigation Training: 8 to 12 weeks
3. **Advanced** Navigation Training: 6 to 8 weeks
4. **Operational** Training: 4 to 6 weeks

Lenny was now in Basic Navigation Training after graduating from his Pre-Flight training.

section of the school. Our day started at eight this morning, when we carried our equipment from Pre-flight, across the street, to here. After taking a quick look at our new home for the next four or five months, we started on another *Processing* trip.



We were issued new lockers, filled out more forms, had our pictures taken, ate in the [upperclass] mess hall, where we are served by waitresses, had our bedding issued to us and then went to *Supply* to get the books and equipment that we'll need to pursue our studies.

We were each given a new briefcase that contained technical manuals and Almanacs peculiar to the training of a navigator.

The case also contained such instruments as a Computer²⁰⁵, platter, dividers identification charts, pencils and angles, all of it new.



From *Supply* we went to our new classroom, where we met our new instructors and were issued more books and over a dozen maps, that we shall be using constantly.

²⁰⁵ The Altitude Correction Computer is seen on the next page.



Our instructors gave us an hour of orientation... an assignment for Monday, [and] dismissed us. I almost forgot one of the most important pieces of equipment issued. Each of us was given a watch - a regular Elgin wristwatch with a sweep-second hand. It certainly comes in handy as mine has not been running for well over a month.

Syl, ten dollars is in place of the five you suggested I send. Buy the cut-glass dish for Mom and something equally as nice for your Mom. Due to the press of my studies I had almost forgotten Mother's Day. Thanks for reminding me. If the ten isn't enough, let me know and I'll send more. Friday was payday.

I looked in a few places for an iron to no avail. I'll look again, for I think... I'll be able to find one someplace in town.

By now you must know how long it will take to get here and also how much, so if there are any questions just fire away and I'll try to answer them.

My arm is getting tired Butch, so I'll say goodnight - tomorrow being a free day, I'll finish up where I left off. Goodnight my darling I love you so very much - make the next month go by fast!

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana²⁰⁶
Sunday
[May 2, 1943]

Dearest Butch

Just got through talking to Mom and because she was angry at me, I just got through writing a letter to her. While I'm waiting for a call from you, I'll write to you because I somehow have the feeling that you too are angry at me for not writing as often as I have been. The truth of the whole matter is as I've already told you in last night's letter...

I've just come out of the phone booth after talking to you, I was right you were angry and I don't blame you. The least I could have done was drop a card while in town, but I don't feel right unless I can write a whole letter. After you broke down and forgave me, I felt much better and I promise that unless it really is impossible, you'll get a letter from me every day. From what we were told yesterday our work is really cut out for us, but I think that I can manage five minutes to at least let you know that I'm still alive, and loving you with all my heart.

Just as soon as I get your letter telling what day you expect to arrive, I'll make all the necessary arrangements for a room for you. I think the best thing... is to make reservations for you at a hotel until after the weekend.

Butch dearest, there is one thing that you'll have to do for me. Despite the fact that I know just what kind of ring you want, I'm afraid that having only every other weekend off is going to hinder me in being able to pick out a suitable one and besides I think you should pick out the one you want, so what if... you pick out the ring? If you don't care for the idea, tell me so and this coming weekend I'll get to a jeweler's and pick out one that I hope you like.

Despite the hard work that we are going to get here, I believe that I'm going to like it here in Advanced²⁰⁷ if only for one reason we do not have *Reveille* on Sundays, meaning that we can sleep as late as we want to. I took full advantage of this fact and slept until ten this morning, a

²⁰⁶ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²⁰⁷ Lenny is not yet in Advanced Navigator Training. He is in a nine-week **Primary** and **Basic Training** program.

luxury I had almost forgotten. Seriously though, the work has every indication of being very interesting and not too tough if I stay *on the ball*.

You needn't worry about not seeing me during the week because on the nights that I'm not flying, you'll be able to come into camp and we can spend a few hours together in the Rec Hall. On the Sundays I'm not in town, you can spend the entire day here...

Until tomorrow then, my darling, I'm going to say goodbye. Just remember that if you don't hear from me once in a while, it is only because the work is getting me down and I've got some extra studying to do.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

The reason for free mail instead of airmail is only because I've run out of stamps and can't borrow any

Love
xx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana²⁰⁸

Monday

[May 3, 1943]

Dearest Butch

My first day of Advanced²⁰⁹ is now in the book, and a hectic day it was. If you can recollect what I wrote to you about the work we had at Preflight, just multiply it by four and you'll have an idea of what we are going through. Our schedule starts at 8:00 in the morning, when we walk into the classroom. Except for five minute breaks every hour or so, we do not leave until eleven-thirty, when it is time for *Chow*.

At 1:00, we go back and stay until 4:00, when we are through with our academic studies, but not through for the day. We have... three instructors who will be with us for our entire course. From the little information that we can pick up, our instructors are just about the best the school has to offer...

... The schedule and the plans you have made for the trip are all right except for one thing. I think you would be much wiser in coming by Pullman²¹⁰, from what I have heard it is well worth the difference. As for your baggage, send it by Express. I'll let you know in advance just where to ship them to - if it is impossible to get a room due to the lack of time I have available, you will go to a hotel, where I have a reservation for you...

As you have guessed it will be impossible for me to meet you at the train, but Joe²¹¹ (one of my roommates) said that his wife would surely meet you, provided that she is still here. If... I can't arrange for someone



²⁰⁸ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²⁰⁹ Lenny is not yet in Advanced Navigator Training. He is in a nine-week **Primary** and **Basic Training** program.

²¹⁰ **Pullman** is a troop sleeper car designed for transporting soldiers during World War II, built by the Pullman Company. These cars were equipped with stacked bunks and could accommodate 29 servicemen, providing essential overnight accommodations for military personnel.

²¹¹ Jonas I. Lipman is another married classmate of Lenny's

to meet you, it will be a very simple matter to take a taxi to wherever you are to stay. Don't worry about this... I'll take care of it.

Just one word of advice in regards to the present you are buying for Mom. Be sure and tell Pop - if I know him - Mom will wind up with two of them on Sunday. I'm planning to call Mom this weekend and if you can arrange to be there, it would be swell, for I can be sure of talking to you then.

Syl darling, I hate to keep harping on the same subject but I don't want you to come down here unprepared. The weather here is miserably hot and it becomes continuously hotter as the months go by. Come here expecting to live in a *hot-box* and you'll not be disappointed.

On top of all our woes of studying, they have just instituted a system that is the dread of all cadets wherever they may be stationed. This system²¹² is known as the upper and lower class system. It operates on the idea that the top two classes in school are our Lords and Masters and they have the right to boss us around as they see fit. They have the authority to *gig* us, can make us stand at a *staff attention* for as long as they feel (known as a *brace*) and make life miserable for us in dozens of ways. Our only hope of salvation is that they will be too busy with their flying to bother us.

It is nine-thirty now, dear, and I want to take a shower before *Taps*, which is ten o'clock here, instead of eleven at Preflight, so I better close now.

I love you very much my darling - the only thing that makes the heat, miserable as it is, bearable is the fact that I know you are going to be here very soon.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

²¹² Each 9 week stage of flight training was divided into two 4.5 week (63 day) halves: a *lower* half and an *upper* half. The lower half was made up of students just beginning the stage and the upper half was made up of the students who were half-finished. The more experienced cadets would (hopefully) help the new cadets get through the section, before they were promoted to the next stage of training.

Monroe, Louisiana²¹³

Tuesday

[May 4, 1943]

Dearest Butch

Just came back from what we were explicitly told we would not have - a night class. It lasted for an hour and consisted of a training film in meteorology, a subject that we started today. To say that the picture was dry would be putting it mildly but only because we have not had enough of the subject to fully understand it.



We had our first test today. It covered Definitions on *Navigation* and *Maps and Charts* and despite the fact that it required a lot of memorizing I did fairly well, getting an eighty-six. The work we are getting now is more on the practical side and therefore more interesting. We do a lot of work with maps now and by the time we are ready for our first flight, I'll be able to look at a map and see just what I'm supposed to.

One more fact in favor of your coming by Pullman²¹⁴: there is no such thing as a reservation on a Day Coach, the only reason the fellow told you to buy your ticket in advance is so that you'll be sure to get a ticket. As far as the seats are concerned, it is first-come first-served... Please, for my sake, if not for your own, come down by Pullman.

²¹³ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²¹⁴ The troop sleeper car designed for transporting soldiers during World War II, built by the Pullman Company.

I've got lots to say but it is almost ten and I haven't even started to make my bed, besides showering and shaving. Please excuse me for writing such a short letter - but you do understand don't you?

There is one thing that I'll always have time for, and that is to tell you that I do love you so very, very much

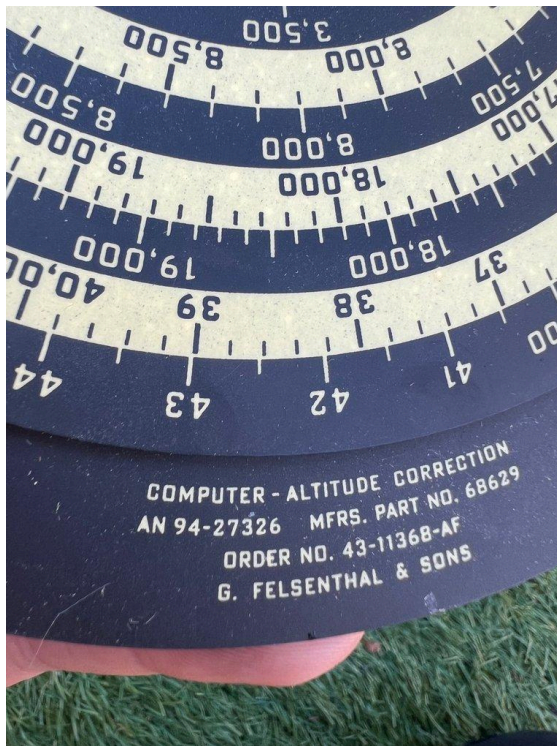
Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana²¹⁵
Wednesday
[May 5, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

As is usual on a Wednesday, my love for you is greatly increased. As much as you are in my mind during the week, on this day you are there incessantly but not in such a way as to interfere with my work. [So] when I think of you so constantly, it gives me a lift.



For instance, today we had two tests, one on the Computer²¹⁶ and the other on Pilotage (plotting courses on a map and seeing how close in position and time we can come to our target.)

Tests required speed and accuracy, as they were two examples of the type of work we'll be doing in a plane, and in both I got a cool hundred, which even if I say so myself, is pretty good.

Butch darling, I can't begin to tell you just how interesting the subject of Navigation is becoming to me... If, when you get here, I talk incessantly on the subject, you'll just have to forgive me, and learn as much about

the subject as possible, from me or other sources, so that you'll know just what I'm talking about.

Syl, have I mentioned in any of my previous letters that friend Ebner²¹⁷ is thinking of taking a trip down here about the same time as you? He is going into the army sometime in June and, just before his

²¹⁵ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²¹⁶ The **AN-5835** flight computer is a form of circular slide rule used in aviation. It is an instance of an analog calculating device still being used in the 21st century.

²¹⁷ Ebner (Eb) Glooskin, was a former high school classmate of Sylvia's from Hartford, Connecticut. who became friends with Lenny when Lenny and Sylvia were dating. Ebner has recently enlisted in the US Army.

induction, he wants to come down to this part of the country and see both me and [his brother] Boomey. In my letter to him tonight, I told him that if he decides definitely to come down here, to get in touch with you and maybe you'll have company after all.

The *class* system we have here is becoming truly obnoxious²¹⁸. In the PX²¹⁹ they have a line painted, over which we are not permitted to step, in order to get waited on. Of course this causes a jam, and we have to wait an awfully long time to purchase anything.

In the mess hall this evening, I was sitting with my left hand resting on the table and before I knew it an *upper* classman was on my neck, making me sit at attention for the rest of the meal.

It is petty things like this... they pull on us that makes us so irritated. The only thing that can be done about it, and the one thing that we do, is take it with a smile, hoping that when they see said smile they'll leave us alone.

Being an Advanced student²²⁰ has its advantages too. Once in a while we are given an extra *Open-Post* during the week, which means... much more time that I'll have to spend with you. How would you like to increase that bet, or better still make another one, under the same conditions for a second time?

Butch sweet, over the phone this last Sunday, you made a statement that has me a little puzzled. You said something about things being the way they are at home. Does that mean the same old trouble or



²¹⁸ The *lower* half was made up of students just beginning the stage and the *upper* half was made up of the students who were half-finished. The more experienced cadets would (hopefully) help the new cadets get through the section, before they were promoted to the next stage of training.

²¹⁹ The Post Exchange

²²⁰ Lenny is not yet in Advanced Navigator Training. He is in a nine-week **Primary and Basic Training** program.

something else again? Please write to me all about it, dear, because your troubles are mine and your happiness is likewise mine.

Meeting Formations, which is a must in most Army camps, is really a joke here at Advanced. This morning, I was the only one from the suite, out of eight, that got up for *Reveille*. Why I did so is beyond me and it won't happen again if I can help it.

It's our night again Butch. It won't be long now... I'll be able to hold you in my arms again and kiss you, not as my girlfriend, but as my wife. The time is growing shorter every day and yet it seems so far away.

I'm going to try and squeeze a letter in to Margie²²¹ tonight so I'll say goodnight now.

Regards to the family and everybody else

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Still no stamps²²² - are the letters taking much longer?

Love
xx
Lenny

²²¹ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's younger brother.

²²² Lenny mailed this with "Free" written in place of a postage stamp.

Monroe, Louisiana²²³

Thursday

[May 6, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

There should be quite a bit for me to write about, but for the life of me I can't think of a thing. This is possibly due to the fact that I'm so tired both mentally and physically. We learned quite a bit in class today and my brain just refuses to function anymore... On top of all this brain work, we went on a six-mile run today without stopping. To say that I was tired and wet at the end would be putting it very mildly.

If we get 'open-post' this Saturday, one of the first things I'm going to do is make a reservation for you at the Francis Hotel²²⁴, then I'm going to see about a room for you. This may sound like I'm rushing things... but the hotels here are crowded weeks in advance and... I want you to have an address to send your trunk to. As for the room, the earlier I start looking, the better the room... Jonas²²⁵, the fellow who promised to speak to some people about a job, is going one better than that. He is going to introduce me to some very influential people...



So, Natie²²⁶ is one of the lucky AAF boys getting to barrack in one of the *hotels* in Florida. Compared to the place we are living in... he is like a king, our place being so damn hot during the day, that it is impossible to sit in it. Our latrine is a separate building situated between

²²³ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²²⁴ This is for Lenny and Sylvia's upcoming wedding on June 12, 1943.

²²⁵ Jonas I. Lipman is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field

²²⁶ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan (Natie) A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter who was pregnant with their first child. Natie was finishing his active duty at an USAAF post in Florida..

six barracks, you can imagine the *jam* in the morning, and after P.T.²²⁷. IC Bob Greenberg²²⁸ everyday as we both... get in the line, waiting for a place to wash.

Speaking of Natie, it is very ironic, the way things²²⁹ worked out for Lil and him. And speaking of this did you get the *thing* from Dr. Kaschmann that you mentioned in a letter long ago? I ask this only because I know how adverse you are to having children for a year or two. And I can't say that I blame you, in fact I think it is a very smart thing to do.

Butch, darling there will be no letter tomorrow, as I'll be ever so busy studying for my first four hour test on Saturday. It's going to cover a lot of ground and there'll be a lot of *midnight oil* burned tomorrow.

Today, I pulled my first faux pas of Advanced: being so very tired after the run, I stayed under the shower until it was too late to go out for *Retreat*. Sure enough, just as I was about to leave, a lieutenant came in and asked why I wasn't in the formation. There was of course no excuse so he took my name. As to what is going to develop, I have no idea but I will keep you posted.

I'm going to say goodnight now and *hit the hay* early.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

²²⁷ The athletic component, or Physical Training (P. T.)

²²⁸ Robert (Bob) Greenberg is married to one of Sylvia's closest of childhood friends, Charlotte, and is an upper classman at Selman Field.

²²⁹ Lil was pregnant with their first child.

Monroe, Louisiana²³⁰

Sunday

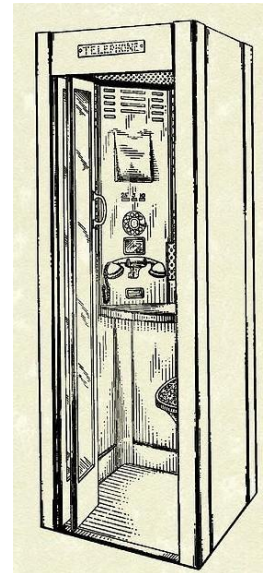
[May 9, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

It's a good thing that a person doesn't use his ears to write a letter, otherwise I'd do a rather bum job on this one, for I've got an ear [poised] for the ring of the phone and my name being called out. Placing the call today was very profitable; when the operator told me that she was returning my money, instead of the nickel I put in the slot I got back over two dollars in change - hitting the jackpot again.

At last I've reasoned out why I miss you so much more on Sundays than on any other day, with the exception of Wednesdays²³¹. It is when I have time to sit down and think - when I think, it is naturally of you and when I think of you, I become so terribly lonesome for you.

I've just come out of that *hat box* they use for a phone booth here, after having that swell talk with you, Mom and Dad. Dad's gift to Mom will prove somewhat of a gift to all of us. Not only will Mom have the pleasure of coming down here and seeing us get married, but he will get a much needed rest. You will have plenty of company on the way down and... I'll be very happy the day you all arrive.



As I told you on the phone, your worries - or should I say mine - about a room are all over... When I spoke to Charlotte this morning she told me about a room near her that will be vacant just about the time you get here. Right now a Bombardier who is studying Navigation lives there and he is graduating at the end of this month. Charlotte hasn't seen the room, but she was talking to the lady of the house - Charlotte says she is very nice - and she also told me that the house itself is very nice. The next Saturday that I get into town I'm going to look at it, and if it is nice I'll make all necessary arrangements. As for

²³⁰ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²³¹ Sylvia and Lenny celebrate weekly anniversaries on the day they were engaged.

the *flat iron* I don't know what's going to be - I did look for one yesterday, but not too thoroughly, I'll admit. So next weekend, I'll really search for one, if there is one to be had. If however you find one in New York, buy it.

About the date of our wedding Butch, I thought that by mentioning that you wanted to get married the weekend after you arrived, you meant the twelfth. If that isn't the day you had planned on, say so and I'll make the necessary changes. Just as soon as I hear from you, I'll talk to the rabbi and make all the arrangements with him.

Yesterday's classes lasted only four hours, but they were by far the toughest four hours I've ever spent in a classroom. We had our first weekly exam and it was tough with questions on every last bit of information we were given. I can just imagine what those seven-hour exams will be like when we get them every third week. The exam was in two parts and if I didn't mess up the second part I should get a fairly good mark.

I can't send you Charlotte²³²'s address today as I don't know it but I see Bob every day now - we use the same latrine - so in my next letter, tomorrow, I'll send it to you. I'm rather glad that you are going to ask her to be Maid of Honor as they both have been swell. This morning she asked again when you are coming, and she wants to meet you at the train.

Your conversation with Ebner²³³ was typical of him. Despite the fact we were such close friends, I must say that he is without a doubt the biggest money squeezer I've run into. The Army will change him, for no GI likes a fellow who is afraid to spend once in a while.

Just as the *days* between us grow shorter, my *love* for you increases - and I mean that with all my heart my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

²³² Charlotte Greenberg is a friend of Sylvia's from Hartford, Connecticut whose husband Robert (Bob) is finishing his training at Selman Field.

²³³ Lenny asked Ebner (Eb) Glooskin, a friend from Hartford, Connecticut to be his Best Man. Ebner has recently enlisted in the Army.

Monroe, Louisiana²³⁴

Monday

[May 10, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

I've been sitting for quite some time thinking of what to say to make this an interesting letter, but for the life of me I can't.

Your letter carrying your work of art arrived today and I must say that I had no idea my future wife possessed such artistic talent! I'm really glad that you decided to get the ring in Hartford, for that is the one way you can be sure of having just what you want. I do hope that Mr. Kurland can get you what you want. By the way, from your description of the band it sounds very nice. Just as soon as you pick out the one you want, let me know and you'll have the money by return mail.

We got our exams back today and much to my surprise - and joy - I got an eighty-eight. There were no perfect papers... so I feel proud of myself - if the rest of my exams have marks as good as this one I'll be well satisfied.

It rained today - no it didn't rain it poured but P.T.²³⁵ was held anyway, and we gave the appearance of a bunch of drowned rats when the period was over...



As the saying goes, "it's an ill wind that blows nobody good." Because of the downpour, we didn't have to rush to get dressed and

²³⁴ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²³⁵ The athletics program, or physical training (P.T.) Physical conditioning was developed with calisthenics, in varying amounts, mixed with competitive sports, cross-country hikes, and obstacle courses. In 1943, a weekly minimum of six hours of physical training was established for all aviation cadets.

stand retreat; and what is much more important, it has cooled off considerably.

In my spare time... I have been reading the book *Anna Karenina* - Have you read it? It is to me, very interesting because the life, or rather the love, of Konstantin Levin, one of the characters, so strongly reminds me of an incident in our lives. If you've read the book, you'll understand what I'm talking about - if not, you'll have to wait until you get here to read it for yourself.

... Bob Greenberg wasn't around today - he was probably on a flight, but just as soon as I do see him, I will get his address in town and send it on to you.

Tonight my darling, there is less than a month between us. Each passing day sees me getting happier and prouder - if I have a swelled head when you get here, you'll have nobody to blame but yourself -

Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana²³⁶
Thursday
[May 13, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Because of the schedule²³⁷ this week, I surely thought that I was going to go two days without writing, but the class we had tonight was not quite as long as we expected... I have about half an hour before lights go out to tell you of the happenings of the past two days and to tell you how much I love you.



Classes²³⁸ are the same seven long hours of intense study each day, interrupted only by the noon meal and the occasional test, of which we've had two this week. I seem to be in a very lucky streak getting two perfect papers. If only my luck would continue, when we get into the middle of the course when, according to our instructor, the marks usually drop...

Last night we had a class in Visual [Signaling] Code - if only I can pass my six word check, I would then have more time to myself.

²³⁶ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²³⁷ The training program is in three major categories, athletics, military and academic work. They are given one hour a day in athletics and one hour is devoted to military training.

²³⁸ The academic work places heavy emphasis on mathematics. The other studies include Morse code, air forces, flags of all nations, ground forces, physics, naval forces, meteorology, photography, maps and charts, communication, procedure, cryptography, and target identification.



Tonight's class was held in the weather station... and it was very interesting. We studied the various weather maps - saw all the machines working - and finally looked at the moon through one of the instruments²³⁹ which brought it so close you could almost put your finger into one of the craters.

This morning just after waking I bumped into Bob Greenberg and he gave me the address here it is 510 Auburn Ave.

Today, instead of going to P.T.²⁴⁰, I got permission to go to the Barber shop where I got the fastest haircut anybody ever got. I swear he just spun the chair, snipped his sheers a couple of times, and then said 'next.' How he did it I don't know, but my hair is just a bit longer than an inch now. Cadet rules state that we must have our haircut every week, and they really check on us. Each day, we have an inspection at

²³⁹ The A-10 sextant, pictured above, was one of the most commonly used sextants in the Army Air Forces. Tens of thousands were made during World War II, and many remained in service with the Air Force through the 1950s. Key features include a lighted bubble and a recording disk to determine averages.

²⁴⁰ A weekly minimum of six hours of physical training (P.T.) was required of all aviation cadets.

Retreat and yesterday I was warned to get one very soon or suffer the consequences²⁴¹. So I 'dood' it.

Received a letter from Boomey²⁴² yesterday and he sounds like he is down in the dumps... He doesn't like Bombardier training and is only waiting for graduation, when he can go into Navigation training. He also says that he feels very bad about not being able to be at our wedding for, according to him, he was the one who brought us together. It was he, who double-dated with me, back in the good old days. I must admit that what he has to say has some truth in it, and I, too, feel bad about him not being able to be here.

It's our night again, Syl, but what is more important, one month from tonight we'll be a happily married couple for one whole day! The time while in class passes very quickly, but when I sit down at night, it seems so very far away to the day when we shall be together again; and I can hold you in my arms and kiss you at least once for every minute that we've been apart.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

²⁴¹ The military training consists of close order drill which tends to improve military carriage and to teach discipline. Each man is drilled in the elements of military courtesy and receives actual practice in firing the 45 caliber pistol.

²⁴² Adolf (Boomey) Siegel is a friend of Sylvia's who is also in the cadet training program.

Monroe, Louisiana²⁴³
Saturday
[May 15, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Today has been with the exception of this morning the longest Saturday I've spent in the army. After the weekly exam that we took this morning, there wasn't a thing to do but eat and sleep and I got my full share of both.



Right after the noon meal, which like all the other meals here was delicious, I went to sleep and didn't get up until it was time to eat again.

The... story behind why I'm so tired... is: last night, after spending a good three hours in class cramming for the exam, the fellows in the suite... felt like blowing off some steam. It started when I decided to put my new bed together - it comes in three parts, the ends and the spring. One of the fellows

calmly walked off with one of the ends and also one of the bolts. They refused to tell me where it was, so I had to make up my cot, when *taps* blew around ten-thirty. They gave it back and I got up to finish the job. Just then, Nat²⁴⁴ decided to go to the latrine, and when he did Joe and I took his bed apart and hid his pillow. He spent the night on the floor and Matt went looking for his bed at about eleven. After things settled down a bit, we had quite a session of shooting the breeze and it was way after twelve, before we got to sleep.

²⁴³ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²⁴⁴ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field, whose wife lives in the same neighborhood as Sylvia will.

In the past two days, you've made me the envy of all the fellows. As is usual, when I move from one place to another, some of your mail gets misplaced. It all caught up with me Friday, when I got five letters from you and... it explained why you hadn't mentioned some things in the letters I had received.

Thursday we had another night class, this time it was a training film on Maps and Charts. It was very similar to those we had already seen, and this, plus the miserable heat, made for a very boring evening. On top of this, they pulled a test on us at the end of the picture and nobody was prepared for it.

The test today was another grueling affair that lasted almost four hours. Somehow or other they manage to ask us about everything that we've been lectured on since the beginning of school and it requires a powerful memory to get through it.

The laundry and dry cleaning service we get here is lousy. Two weeks ago, I gave out a bundle and it hasn't come back yet. The only way we have... clean clothes is either doing our own washing, which is practically impossible as there are no facilities for it, or buying new clothing... Despite all the extra stuff I had Issued to me at Nashville, I've had to buy more underwear, socks, and tonight I bought a new shirt. Because of the heat here, it is impossible to wear anything more than two days - you can imagine what we are going through.

Tonight after *chow* I went to the Post Theatre and saw *Cabin in the Sky* and then treated myself to a milkshake. Most of the fellows are in town tonight, having gotten passes through devious means. Not having anything of importance to do there, I decided not to take the chance but instead to stay here... and take things easy. Tomorrow, when I'm in town, I'm going to reserve a room for Mom and Dad, and then see a party about where we can hold the wedding. I understand that some fellows get the use of a home for the ceremony rather than holding it in the rabbi's study. Would you like that?

I'm sure glad that you were able to locate a flat iron, because it is almost impossible to find one here.

About your luggage, I think you have a very good idea in shipping it down ahead... that way, you can be sure of having it when you arrive. Just as soon as I get the address of your room... you'll know where to send it. Don't expect to arrive here on time, for the train... from St Louis are always off. For example, one of the fellows expected his wife here yesterday morning, the same time yours is scheduled... and she didn't arrive until ten last night. He almost went nuts until he heard from her this morning. I know it's a long way off but, if you should be delayed en route send me a telegram. That is the one sure way of getting in touch with me, as they deliver wires to us even if we're in school. Also send one the minute you get into Monroe.

Taps just blew - so I'll have to say goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

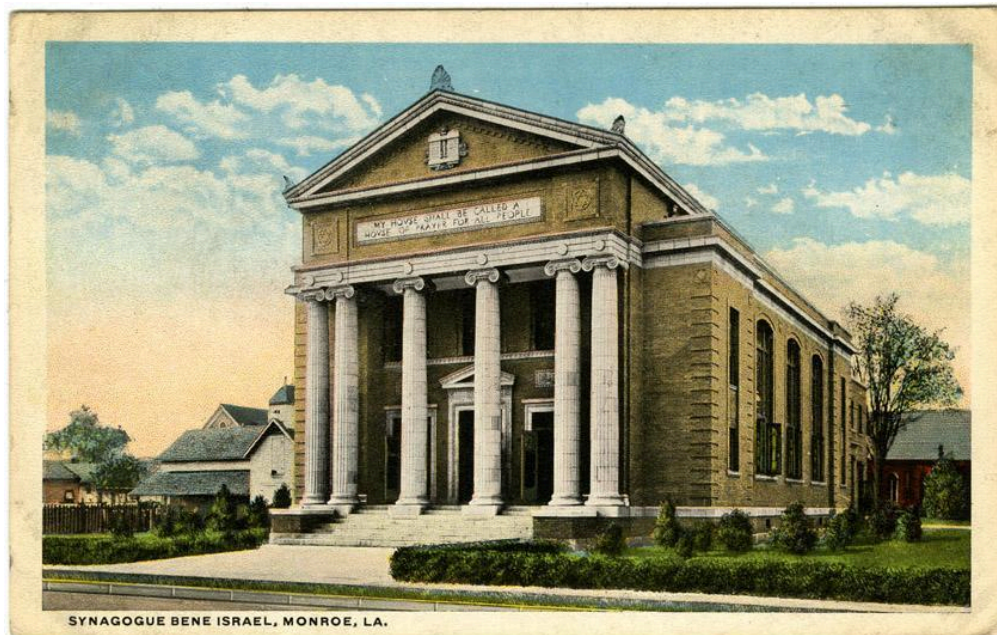
Monroe, Louisiana²⁴⁵

Sunday

[May 16, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

From the stationery you can very well see where I'm writing this from. I came here expressly to see the fellow I wrote about last night, but he is out for the day. This afternoon I'm going to try and see the rabbi at the synagogue, where they have open-post²⁴⁶ every Sunday afternoon.



This morning I did something that was farthest from my mind when I left camp. I took pictures! I walked into the Virginia Hotel and met a fellow from Hartford who called me over to meet his folks, who are here for the weekend. I knew his father back home and after talking for a while they decided to take some pictures and ask me to come along. We went to the lawn of the courthouse, and there I had a couple of pictures taken. Just as soon as they are developed I'll send them on to you.

Mom and Pop have to come here now, as I've made reservations for them at the hotel on June the eighth. That is the day you are supposed

²⁴⁵ Written on USO (United Service Organization) stationery with an embossed logo and mailed in a matching envelope. "Idle Gossip Sinks Ships" is printed on the bottom of each page.

²⁴⁶ with free food for cadets and wives

to arrive isn't it? I thought it best to make it so far in advance because that is a graduation week and rooms will be scarce if I wait too long.

Nothing of importance has happened since I wrote goodnight to you last night, as all I did was sleep.

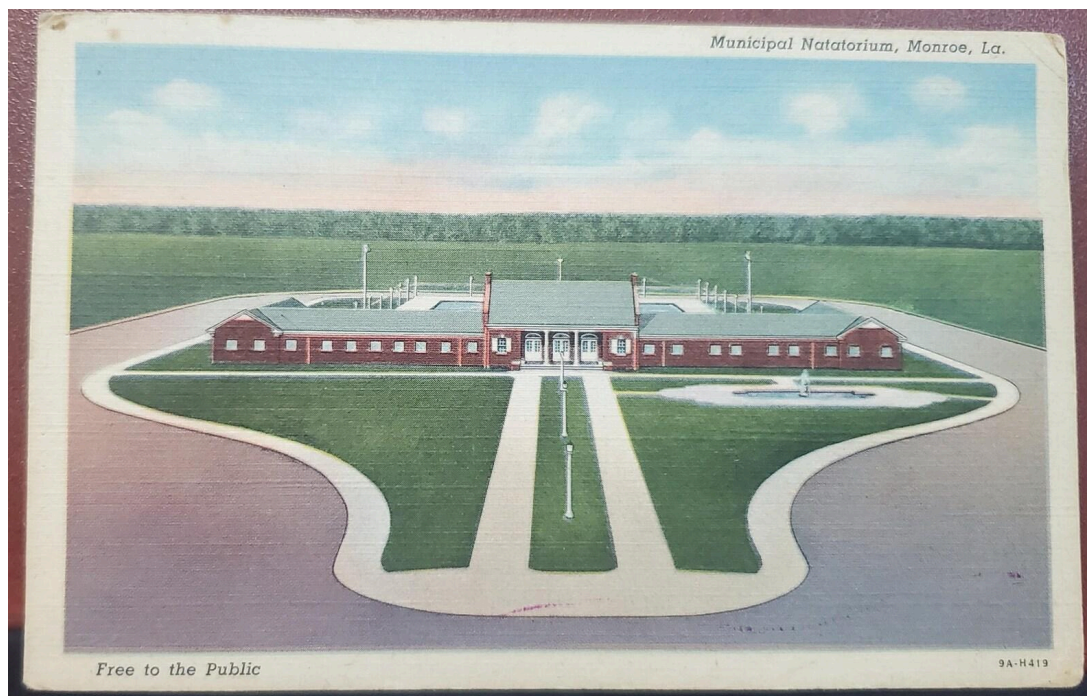
The municipal pool opens up today and after I dash off a few lines to the folks, I'm going out there possibly for a dip.

That's all I can think of right now, if more comes to my mind during the day I'll write again tonight when I get back to camp.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

As I write this you are in New York - if you are having half the fun I wish you, are having a very enjoyable time.

Love
Lenny



Monroe, Louisiana²⁴⁷

Monday

[May 17, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

There was no letter last night, only because of the one thing that could keep me from writing - study. We had a meteorology test scheduled for today and I spent the evening in the classroom studying clouds. We had the test and to say the least it was a stickler. Even Nat²⁴⁸, who was in the weather service before coming here, had trouble with it. Speaking of tests I didn't do so well on the exam we had Saturday, getting a seventy-eight. It wasn't that I didn't know the work, it was making foolish, simple mistakes that brought my mark down, and that is worse than not knowing what to do.

Today we finally got into a plane. We went down to the *flight line* this afternoon to look over the planes we are to fly in... next week, and to familiarize ourselves with the various instruments.

While we were on the *line*, a plane came in to land and forgot to lower its landing gear - there was quite a bit of excitement for a while... with the ambulance tearing around, etc.



Sunday seemed to be Hartford day here in Monroe - besides meeting Dick's mother and father, I met another couple from home, [but] I've forgotten the name. Then, in the early evening, I saw a familiar face in a WAAC Uniform. Do you know or remember Rosalynn Katy? She has been in the WAAC for almost a year now and is a First Lieutenant.

²⁴⁷ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²⁴⁸ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field, whose wife lives in the same neighborhood as Sylvia will.

I didn't get to the pool Sunday after all. On my way to the bus station, I passed by the theater and decided to go in; before doing so I went to dinner and had the biggest and best steak I've yet to eat while in the Army. About the picture, all I can say is - I should have gone swimming.

After the show, I went up to take a look at the new Advanced Cadet Club - it is truly a beautiful place. Our commanding officer claims that it is the best club in the Southeast. We now have a place to spend some of our evenings, when you get here in a very congenial atmosphere.

By now, I hope you've got all your troubles, umbrella pins, and traveling cases straightened out. You seem to have the same luck as me, when it comes to gifts and such. There is always something wrong with whatever I receive or even buy for myself.

The weather has really turned for the worst. This part of the country certainly has the dampest heat I've ever met up with. It is impossible to keep dry, even when sitting still.

That's all I have to say for tonight my darling - so until tomorrow -
goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

W A A C



THIS IS MY WAR TOO!
WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS
UNITED • STATES • ARMY

Monroe, Louisiana²⁴⁹
Wednesday
[May 19, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Today your letter came ... about your luggage... I'm glad that you like them because, darling, you're going to use them for an awfully long time.



You may have a talent for drawing (checks), but I too have a latent talent which the army has brought to light - sewing.

I've just gotten through altering my fourth pair of khaki pants - they were inches too long, so I calmly sat down and shortened them myself, and not a bad job, even if I say so myself.

This afternoon I spoke to my Lieutenant in reference to the coming 'big event'²⁵⁰ because I had heard somewhere that a soldier must have the permission of his immediate commanding officer... to get married. As far as he knew, I only needed his verbal permission, [which] he gave... at the same time wishing me the best of luck, and telling me to come to him if I ran into any difficulty at all. While talking to him, he gave me an idea that I'll try to carry through only if you, too, think it's a good idea. He asked me if we were getting married here on the post in the Chapel. Truthfully I had never even thought of it, and if you like the idea, and the rabbi will consent to come out here on that night, it might be arranged; Otherwise the ceremony will no doubt be held in the Rabbi's study.

I got a kick out of the clipping about Boomey that you sent, calling him a Lieutenant. I thought that when he saw the clipping, he felt rather bad because it is just about the time that he would be graduating, had he not *washed*²⁵¹.

²⁴⁹ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²⁵⁰ Sylvia and Lenny will marry on June 12, 1943.

²⁵¹ Slang for a person who has failed a course of training or study in the Air Corp.

Classwork is just about the same as usual - we learn something new every day and spend quite a bit of time reviewing our Computer²⁵² work.

This computer is more or less a circular slide rule plus one hundred other things²⁵³. Because of the many operations²⁵⁴ that can be done on it, it is sometimes called the confuser - but all in all it is a wonderful instrument, more like an extra right hand than anything else - without it a navigator would be lost in the air²⁵⁵.

Today, we learned how to keep our second type of *log* (there are three in all²⁵⁶) and it was of special interest to me, because it is the kind that I will keep on my second flight. It's rather difficult to explain these in a letter, so you'll just have to wait until you get here, when I can actually show it to you and explain it step by step.

It's our night again my darling - the 27th²⁵⁷ to be specific, and when I think that in three weeks, I'll be able to kiss you at least once for every day since we've been apart, I really get a thrill. Not only that, but in a very short time we'll start a new series of the anniversary, and you'll be with me, so that we can celebrate them together. Golly, but I miss you and love you so very much -

Once again it is time to take my nightly shower and try to get cool enough to sleep and so I'll say goodnight. Until tomorrow

I love you
XXXXXXXXXXXX
Lenny



²⁵² The **AN-5835** flight computer is a form of circular slide rule used in aviation.

²⁵³ The front side of the flight computer is a logarithmic slide rule that also performs multiplication and division.

²⁵⁴ The wheel on the back of the calculator is used for calculating the effects of wind on cruise flight.

²⁵⁵ A typical calculation done by this wheel answers the question: "If I want to fly on course A at a speed of B, but I encounter wind coming from direction WD at a speed of WV, then how many degrees must I adjust my heading, and what will my ground speed be?"

²⁵⁶ In 1943, USAAF navigators used three main types of logs: the **pilotage** log, which recorded visual references to the ground; the **dead reckoning** log, which tracked the aircraft's position based on speed and heading; and the **radio navigation** log, which utilized radio aids to determine the aircraft's location.

²⁵⁷ Lenny and Sylvia celebrate the day of the week they got engaged for the 27th time.

Monroe, Louisiana²⁵⁸

Thursday

[May 20, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

You've received letters written in strange places (latrines, shower-rooms, etc.) from me, but tonight I have a new place - this letter is being written in my classroom²⁵⁹.

I came here mainly to work on my 'Metro'²⁶⁰. We are supposed to have a weather map colored in for our next period and having finished up sooner than I expected, decided to write to you here, rather than wait until I got back to my room. Working on my weather map brought back memories of my early school days as we work with colored pencils, coloring in the various types of weather, fronts, air masses and hazards. Thank God that Nat²⁶¹ is a former Army Weatherman - his help, to all of us, is invaluable. As of now *Metro* is my poorest subject and so I expect to do quite a bit of extra 'boning' in the subject.



Today's letter from Mom told me that you had a good time over the weekend - but that was all. Mom seems to be getting lazy - she writes only the barest minimum and then

²⁵⁸ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

²⁵⁹ The Pre-Flight Navigator undergoes nine weeks of training which is basically the same as the preflight pilot. There the work is divided into the same three categories with their academic work placing more stress on mathematics. Their other studies include Morse code, air forces, flags of all nations, ground forces, physics, naval forces, meteorology, photography, maps and charts, communication, procedure, cryptography, and target identification.

²⁶⁰ Meteorology

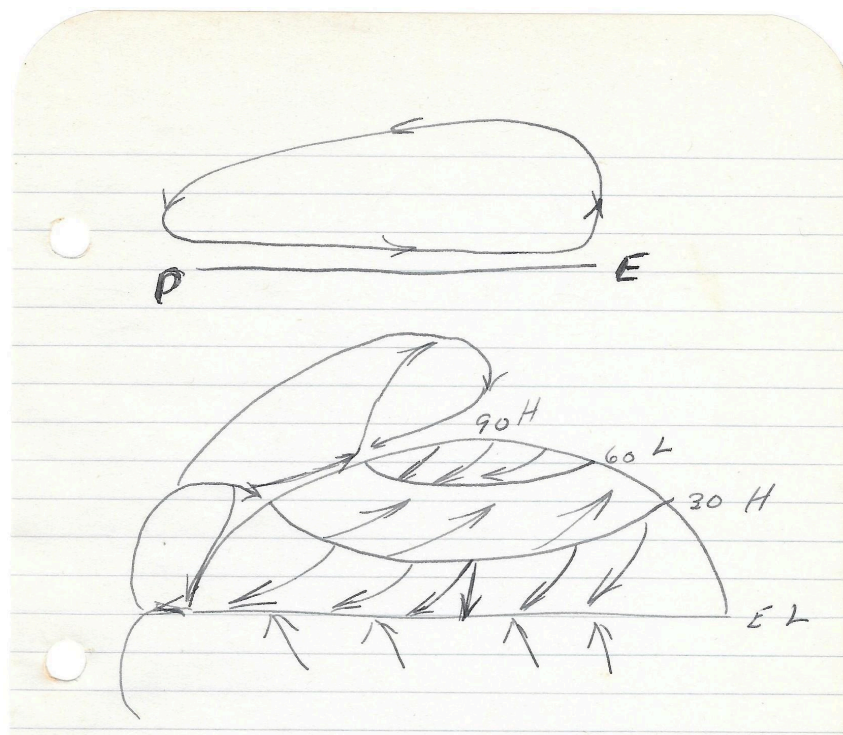
²⁶¹ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field, whose wife lives in the same neighborhood as Sylvia will.

says that you will write the details. So if you left out anything about the trip, write again... so that I'll know all the details.

Nothing unusual happened today, and for the life of me I can't think of a thing to write. Please, please forgive the shortness of this letter, but I guess it's just a case of an overworked brain.

Goodnight my darling - short letter to the contrary, I love you very, very much.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Lenny's notes from his Meteorology class at Selman Field

Monroe, Louisiana²⁶²

Sunday

[May 23, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Are you wondering why there has been a lapse of two days between letters? As you know, yesterday was the day of our first seven-hour exam; consequently I spent all of Friday night studying. From the roughness of the exam I could've spent another week studying - it seems that every test I take in the Air Corp is tougher than the one before it. At the end of the seven hours, we all felt, and looked, like we had worked a week at manual labor without any sleep. We were under such a terrific mental strain during the whole time, that we very nearly collapsed at the end. How I made out, I won't know 'til tomorrow but, needless to say, I've got my fingers, toes and eyes crossed.



After napping for an hour and then taking a shower, I dressed and decided to call Charlotte²⁶³ to find out if she had heard any more about the room. She had, and was glad that I called because the woman told her that she would hold it until I took a look at it. The couple that was living there moved out yesterday. Charlotte gave me the woman's telephone number and I called and made arrangements to see the room last night. Syl, dearest, I could write paragraphs about it telling you how

²⁶² Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in an Air Mail envelope.

²⁶³ Charlotte Lipman is the wife of fellow Selman Field cadet Jonas I. Lipman.

nice it is, but in order to save some of the surprise for you, I'll just tell you a minimum of facts. The house itself is a single frame house, single family, [and] white in color. It is one of the newer houses in town. It is on the north side of town, right near Charlotte... Your room is a big corner one, with three big windows in the front of the house. The bath is situated similarly to the one at my house, between two bedrooms. (If you can picture *your* room as the *corner* one at home, you'll know what I mean. The woman of the house, Mrs. Mulhearn, is a very nice person; she has three children, one of whom you'll be crazy about - a tot of about a year.

Financially... I made what I think was a very shrewd bargain. I paid her for a month in advance - the month beginning the day you get here... She also told me that, if and when she can get the help, she has a girl clean up the house and that includes your room. From what I could learn through asking, they are in the funeral business and are very nice people. The only bad feature is that the house is four blocks from the bus line and fourteen from the center of town. If, however you still like to walk, it only takes ten to fifteen minutes, as we, Jonas²⁶⁴ and I, found out yesterday.

Now that the room situation is cleared up, there [are] only two more details - the... [marriage] license and making arrangements with the rabbi. I was talking with the people that Jonas introduced me to a few weeks ago, and they said that if it were agreeable to you, it would be nicer to have the ceremony at the rabbis study, so that is the arrangement I'll make - ok? As for the license, I'll speak to my Tactical Officer during the week about getting out of camp early someday to enable me to get it.

Other than this, everything at my end is just about cleared up. Oh yes, there is the question of a best man - if I knew for certain that Ebner²⁶⁵ was coming, I would naturally have him, otherwise I'll ask one of the boys here. Please call Ebner and tell him to answer my last letter telling me whether or not he's coming.

²⁶⁴ Jonas I. Lipman is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field.

²⁶⁵ Ebner Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia in 1938.



After looking at the room, Jonas and I went to eat, having a delicious steak dinner, and then we went to the Cadet Club, where we spent the rest of the evening listening to the music, having a dance or two with the stag WAAC²⁶⁶s, and having a drink or two trying to forget about the grueling exam.

Despite the fact that I own seven towels, I had to buy more yesterday, so we went shopping in one of the department stores. Jonas got in a crazy mood and bought one of those big wrap-around Bath Sheets - he's probably the only one in camp that owns one.

I tried to place a call before but there was the usual three to four hours wait, so I decided to wait until next week, and maybe you can be at the house when the call comes through.

By now, you must have heard something about your reservations - did you get them? Also the wedding band, did Mr. Kurland get you what you wanted?

That's about all for today, Butch. Regards to the family and until tomorrow, remember that

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

²⁶⁶ The Women's Army Corps (WAC) was the women's branch of the United States Army from 1942 to 1978. It was created as an auxiliary unit, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (**WAAC**), during World War II and became an active duty status in 1943.

Monroe, Louisiana²⁶⁷

Monday

[May 24, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

This is one of those nights that I'd give almost anything to be home; it is raining now, a nice steady rain. (Ah, that mood you get into when it rains.)



After seeing my mark on my exam I feel rather low. My grade was a seventy-five - not good and it all comes from not being able to work my computer accurately enough when time is pressing.

As far as my written work was concerned I was practically perfect. I suppose that there is no use worrying over it, but instead to bear down and do better next time, which is just what I intend to do.

²⁶⁷ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in an Air Mail envelope.



Tomorrow we go up for our first flight, weather permitting, and needless to say we're all excited over it. Outside of a hot bridge game going on in my room, all the conversation is about what to do while in the air. The flight will take four hours in all, and outside of the time when we are doing Pilotage²⁶⁸ navigation, where we are required to look out of the window, we won't even have a look at the countryside that we are going over, not because it isn't allowed, but because we will be too busy watching our instruments and filling out our log²⁶⁹. We are scheduled to fly from two to six in the afternoon, have supper and then go to two night classes - all in all I expect to have a full day tomorrow.

So, you were going to have a party Sunday? I wish I knew Claire²⁷⁰'s phone number, so that I could call you there but as it is, it looks like I'll not be able to speak to you until you get here, unless I call sometime during the week - how would that be? Suppose I make an appointment, through the operator, to have a call go through next Wednesday - if the call never does come through, it will only be because I

²⁶⁸ The science of navigation offered four methods of accomplishing this. The first is **pilotage**, or navigating by landmarks, using maps and charts. The second is **dead reckoning**, which consists of keeping track of how far you have gone and in what direction since you started, using instruments which measure various aspects of the plane in motion, such as speed, deviation, and wind drift. The third method is **radio** navigation which consists of "riding the beam" from one station to another until you progress to where you want to go. The final way to navigate is by **celestial** navigation — by the stars and other celestial bodies.

²⁶⁹ "Zero Zero" was the navigator's ultimate objective. It means navigating through hundreds of thousands of miles of space, cloud rack, wind, and weather and hitting a dime-sized objective "on the nose" at the precise second you said you would hit it on the nose. One inch off is not Zero Zero. It means right on the button, right on time — perfection.

²⁷⁰ Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly Geetter Shephard and Marilyn Geetter Horowitz, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

have a class that night, something we never know about, until the night before.

I was very relieved to hear that you finally got your reservations on the Jeffersonian, but it is the trip from St. Louis, to hear that I'm thinking about, that part of the trip is why I wanted you to come by Pullman²⁷¹, but so long as Mom and Pop will be with you, I don't imagine that it will be too bad.

I don't remember giving you the address of the room in yesterday's letter, It is 1000 N Seventh St²⁷², just in case you want to send some of your luggage down ahead. If and when you do, dear, let me know and I'll call Mrs. Mulhearn and tell her about it. Every time I think of the room, I marvel at how nice it is, and when I talk about the financial deal I made, the fellows tell me that I'm very lucky. Nat²⁷³'s wife moved into the same neighborhood yesterday, Joe²⁷⁴'s wife lives there, Charlotte²⁷⁵ lives very near there and Jonas²⁷⁶ told me that he met a couple yesterday that lives across the street - the fellow is an instructor on the flight line - who are anxious to meet somebody, so you can see that you'll not be wanting for friends.

In Mom's letter today, she gave me holy hell for the short letters that I've been writing to her, so I guess I had better write her a nice long one tonight.

That's just about the story for tonight, Butch, so with all my love i'll say goodnight, with the thought that there are only fourteen days between us now -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

²⁷¹ The Pullman 1943 refers to a troop sleeper car designed for transporting soldiers during World War II, built by the Pullman Company.

²⁷² The address of the hotel Lenny booked for his parents and Sylvia for their wedding on June 12, 1943.

²⁷³ Nathan (Nat) Lichtenholtz is a married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field, whose wife lives in the same neighborhood as Sylvia will.

²⁷⁴ Joseph (Joe) L. Levine is another married classmate of Lenny's at Selman Field.

²⁷⁵ Charlotte Greenberg is a friend of Sylvia's, whose husband Bob is finishing his training at Selman Field.

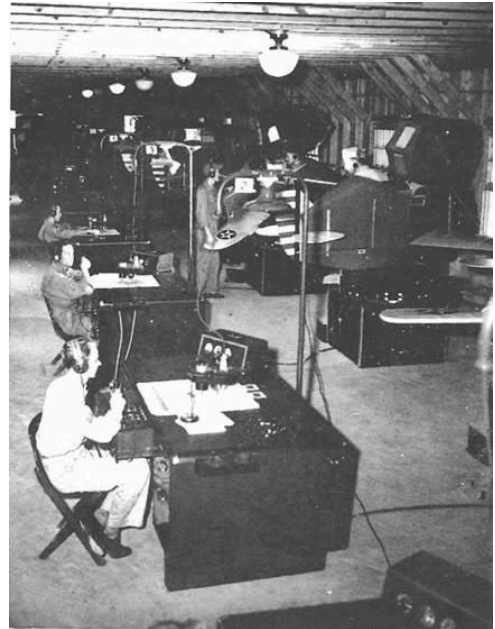
²⁷⁶ Jonas I. Lipman is another married classmate of Lenny's

Monroe, Louisiana²⁷⁷
Wednesday
[May 26, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

As each day passes, I come closer and closer to wearing a bar on my shoulder - in fact I'm so close now that I wear a button there. According to a new regulation, all lower classmen (my buddies and myself) must wear a green button on their left shoulder, the upper class wear a red one. It's a foolish idea, but it means tours²⁷⁸ if they are not worn, so there it sits proudly on my shoulder.

Due to bad weather we didn't fly yesterday. Instead we go up tomorrow morning and again Friday afternoon. I've just come from the classroom where I briefed my mission and took care of all the preliminary work that must be done prior to all flights. Our flight will take us from here to an airport in southern Arkansas, from there to Meridian Mississippi, and then back home, all in all a distance of almost 500 miles. Although this flight doesn't carry much weight as far as grades are concerned, I'm just a bit nervous as this will be one way of finding out whether I'm a *hot rock* or just a plain, ordinary Navigator. That bit of slang means, as you may have guessed, being extra good.



Yesterday I spoke to my T.O. about getting into town to get the license and he told me to write him a letter in military form requesting that I be given a special pass. He said that there would be no difficulty, but it had to be done that way. If I invite all the Fellows that want to come to the ceremony, I'll have to get the biggest hall in town. As it is, I'm just asking a very few as the study is not too large.

²⁷⁷ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in an Air Mail envelope.

²⁷⁸ Military slang for a punishment that involves marching around a military base.

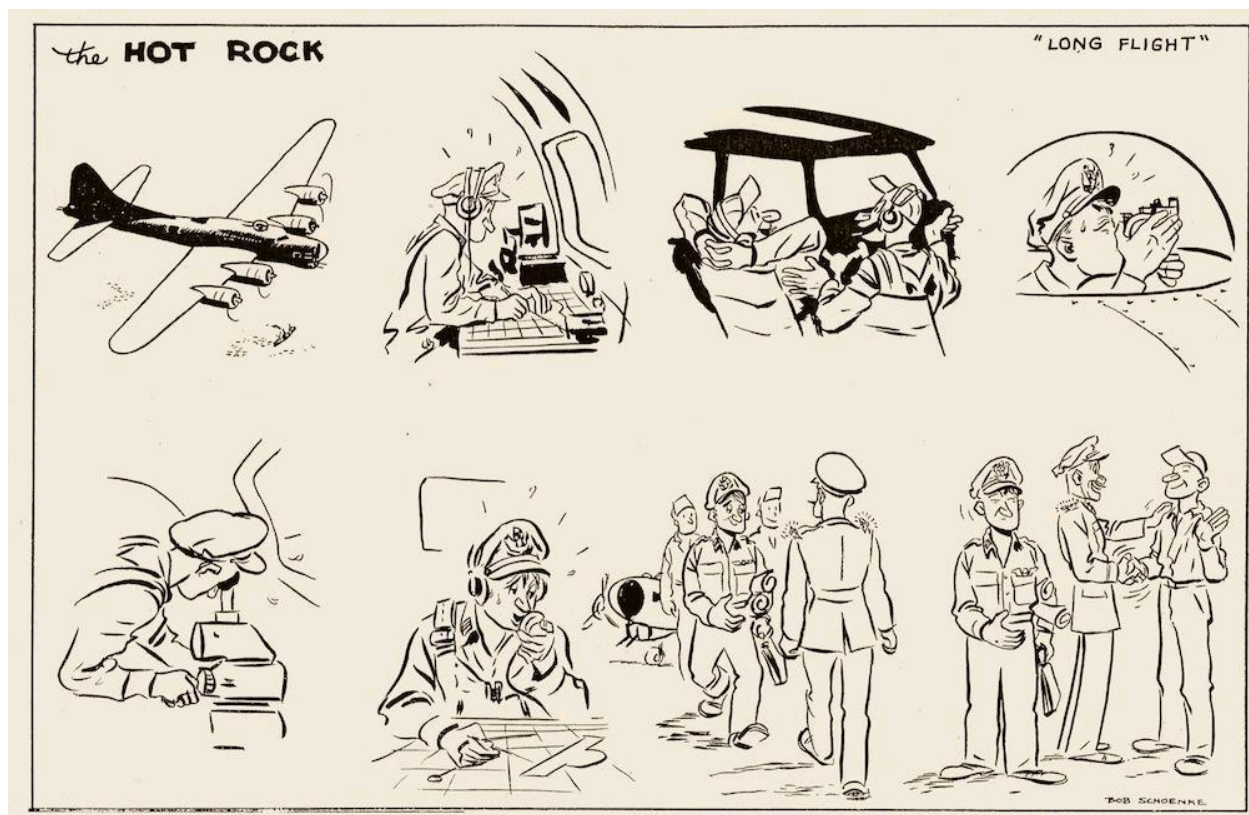
Don't you worry about not being able to see me during the week because of my studying. When you get here, things will work out, so that we'll see each other almost every night, except if I'm on a night flight.

Darling, tonight is our seventh anniversary - it feels good to be able to count them by the month instead of by the week. Somehow or other, it sounds better, plus tonight's anniversary date means that you are only twelve days away from me - What a great feeling. All I need now is a 0-0 mission tomorrow and everything will be perfect.

There are a few odds and ends to do before taps, So I'm going to say goodnight now. I'll write tomorrow and tell you all about the flight.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
XXXXXXXXXXXX
Lenny



Monroe, Louisiana²⁷⁹
Sunday
[May 30, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be,

Your voice today on the phone sounded as if you were very happy - perhaps it was the devilish mood that you were in, that made you sound so natural and good. It brought back happy memories - that mood - and made me all the more impatient to see you. I'm sorry that we couldn't clear up the questions you have and, inasmuch as you can't put them into a letter, we'll just have to wait until we're together to get straightened out. As for the one point that you did mention, don't worry about it. I appreciate your feelings and it will take care of itself.

After speaking to you, I took care of the last detail of our coming marriage; I went to the rabbi's home and made arrangements with him for the ceremony. After talking a while, he decided that it would be much nicer if it were held in a home, rather than in the study, which is very small, and he offered his home. I thought it was very nice of him and so we left it at that. The time decided on is seven-thirty - because he has another ceremony to perform that evening.

I haven't written since Thursday, only because there was no time Friday afternoon. We went up on another flight and that night we had a three hour class in preparation for our weekly exam yesterday morning. Saturday afternoon, instead of being free, we had classes. We spent over an hour compiling our data from Friday's flight... Then the flight instructor came over and we had our critique. The critique is the time when we are graded on our work in the air, and the instructors tell us what we did wrong - or sometimes good - while in the air. They go over the entire mission and tell us how to avoid them the next time. Our instructor gave us a seventy-five... which was good, considering that the biggest mark was an eighty. Lucky for us, nobody in our element got sick, for that can give us a failing mark, whether we do the work or not.

In your last letter you asked if you could see me out at the camp the day you arrive in town. I'm sorry to say that you can't but... I shall

²⁷⁹ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in an Air Mail envelope.

come into town to see you. I'll get into town around six o'clock and go directly to you - from there we can meet Mom and Pop at the hotel and spend three or four hours, some of it talking about what has happened in the past five months, but more of it in my telling you how much I missed you and more importantly how much I love you.

Now I have a question on my mind that you'll have to answer for me. I've been thinking about flowers - for the ceremony - I know that you'll want some, and I imagine that Charlotte should have some too, but I'll be damned if I know what kind to get, so you'll have to decide for me.

The weekend was spent in the usual manner. Last night Jonas²⁸⁰ and I went to the Cadet Club and sat around having a drink once in a while, when somebody came over to our table. We left around eleven-thirty and after having a bite to eat, I came back to camp.



Today, after speaking to the rabbi, I went out to see Joe²⁸¹ and his wife in their room.

After seeing the room she has I am even more impressed with yours, and after they had breakfast, we walked into town and looked at the windows

on De Seard St., the main street and then went to a show. After the show, we went to the temple and had something to eat. They have Open Houses every Sunday, for the boys and their wives and girlfriends. I've often thought of going, but never quite made it. We had a nice supper and then we left and here I am back at camp.

²⁸⁰ Jonas I. Lipman also trains at Selman Field in Monroe, Louisiana.

²⁸¹ Joseph L. Levine also trains at Selman Field.

I've decided to reserve a room in a hotel for us for Saturday night, so that we can have some semblance of a honeymoon. It won't be much of a honeymoon my darling, but only because things are what they are and, having no control in the matter, that is the way it will have to be.

Just as I got off the bus in camp today, it started to pour and by the time I got to my barracks my last pair of clean pants were soaked. Lucky for me I had my raincoat on or I too would have gotten wet.

That's about all for now my sweet so, until tomorrow night, goodnight - and more and more each day

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana²⁸²

Monday

[May 31, 1943]

Dearest Butch,

Another week on the merry go round²⁸³ has started, and this week... had a better start than last. We got our exams, the ones we took Saturday, back this afternoon and my mark was eighty-three. There were quite a few failing marks this week, so I feel a little proud of myself. Besides the test, my name was called off as having passed the six word Visual Code test, which means one less night class to go to when you get here.



You may think that you are getting kidded about our coming marriage - you should hear what goes on here... asking me what we are going to do with our two year old child... and asking if I'm having a military wedding - shotgun and all.

You are doing a nice thing about your luggage - just before you get here I'll call Mrs. Mulhearn to make sure that you'll be able to get into the house.

²⁸² Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in an Air Mail envelope.

²⁸³ "During basic flight training, a cadet received approximately 70 hours in the air during a nine-week period. The basic cadet made military pilots of those who had learned only the fundamentals of flight in primary school. In addition to operating an airplane of greater weight, horsepower and speed, such as the BT-9 or BT-13, the cadet was taught how to fly at night, by instruments, in formation and on cross-country from one point to another. Also, for the first time, he was operating an airplane equipped with a two-way radio and a two-pitch propeller. This was the point in his career where it was decided whether he would go to single-engine or twin-engine advanced flying school" (National Museum of the U.S. Air Force).

With all the aprons you got as gifts, you'll just have to learn how to cook, or do you already know how? You can at least make me some potato pancakes, something I know you can make but good, and they sure would hit the spot. I haven't had a real home cooked meal since leaving home, but this Sunday I expect to have one as the Blumenthals, the people Jonas²⁸⁴ introduced me to, invited me for Sunday dinner.

Seeing as how it is the first of the week, and I wrote a fairly long letter yesterday, there isn't much to say tonight. It won't be much longer until I can tell you, instead of writing all the things I want to. Come to think of it, I'll have to stop writing about the middle of the week as you won't be home to get any mail after Saturday; But don't you stop writing until you leave Hartford. No more until tomorrow darling so good night
And remember

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

PS You can get the eight dollars
from Mom - tell Sadie I'm taking
the four cent cash discount

Love
xx
Lenny

²⁸⁴ Jonas Lipman

Monroe, Louisiana²⁸⁵

Tuesday

[June 1, 1943]

Dearest Butch,

Just came back from town, where I cleared up the last of the details, by which I mean, I got the [marriage] license and also made reservations for us in the Hotel Francis for Saturday night.



It is in the same hotel as Mom and Pop but only because it is the hotel in the city. The others are just dumps.

I almost had a little trouble... getting the license because, unknown to me, I had to have a witness - the fellow that I spoke to in the office took me aside and told me to go into one of the other offices and ask somebody to be my witness - I went into the Sheriff's Office and had one of the Deputies act as the witness.

After leaving the clerk's office I went out and treated myself to a steak dinner and then went to see the picture *Bombadier*. As part of the

program they had a *March of Time*²⁸⁶ and lo and behold there was Hartford staring at me from the screen. The picture was evidently made during a Bond Drive when some movie people visited there. It sure felt good to see something familiar like that.

²⁸⁵ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in an Air Mail envelope.

²⁸⁶ *The March of Time* is an American newsreel series sponsored by Time Inc. and shown in movie theaters from 1935 to 1951. It was based on a radio news series broadcast from 1931 to 1945

Classes are coming along fine, we are learning quite a bit of new stuff this week, but our instructors have a knack of putting it across [well.] We fly again Thursday - to where I don't know, but it is just a simple navigation problem, and if I don't get air-sick or air-fright, I should do all right. Next week we fly twice, but all our missions are scheduled for the daytime, so they won't hinder me from seeing you. The only night that we definitely won't be able to see each other will be Fridays. I'll be busy cramming for the weekly exams then.

I have just 15 minutes to do some star gazing so I'll have to say goodnight now.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Monroe, Louisiana²⁸⁷
Wednesday
[June 2, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

Everything - good or bad - has always happened to me on a Wednesday, and today was no exception. I skipped PT to go to the Barber shop and today of all days they made a check, and Lenny had no slip - this means five gigs (demerits) and possibly a Tour, or two, to walk off Saturday afternoon.

Instead of standing retreat, we had a showdown inspection, why I don't know, but our lieutenant carried it out in such a way that it was a joke... We are supposed to display all of our issued clothing on our beds. He just walked through the barracks and looked at our open footlockers. I have an extra raincoat and to prevent it from being seen I put it under my bedding; it made quite a lump in the blankets, but he never noticed it and so I still have it.

Classroom work is going along at its usual fast clip, and today among other things we learned how to conduct a search mission. The tests and quizzes came quite frequently - so far this week we've had five - but as I said yesterday due to the fine work of my instructors, I clearly understand everything that is lectured on and consequently my marks are all above the passing grade. Tomorrow we go on another flight -



where to, we haven't been told, but I had the feeling that it will be out Texas way. You asked in one of your letters how it felt up in the clouds? The truth is, we are kept so busy figuring, that we don't even realize we're up until all of a sudden the air gets rough and we start to get nauseous.

It's a strange feeling getting air sick; it reminds me of how I felt the few times I got drunk and then sick. You can feel it coming on, and there is nothing you can do about it,

²⁸⁷ Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in an Air Mail envelope.

but grab a compass cover and let go. I received my grades on the first mission and they were much better than I thought they would be. They were seventy-five, eighty, and eighty. Inasmuch, as the top man got a straight eighty-five, my marks put me up near the top. On my first mission I got seventy-five, but the top grade there was only eighty.

Outside of the miserable weather nothing unusual has happened of late.

Tonight, my darling, besides being our night - the last one I'll be writing to you. and also marks the last letter I'll write to you for quite a while. I won't write anymore, as I don't think they'll arrive before you leave. In a way, this makes one sad because I rather enjoy writing to you, but on the other hand, I know I'll get much more enjoyment telling you the news rather than writing it.

Darling, it is less than a week until I'll see you - so not until tomorrow - but for every night until I see you - goodnight and I do love you very very much

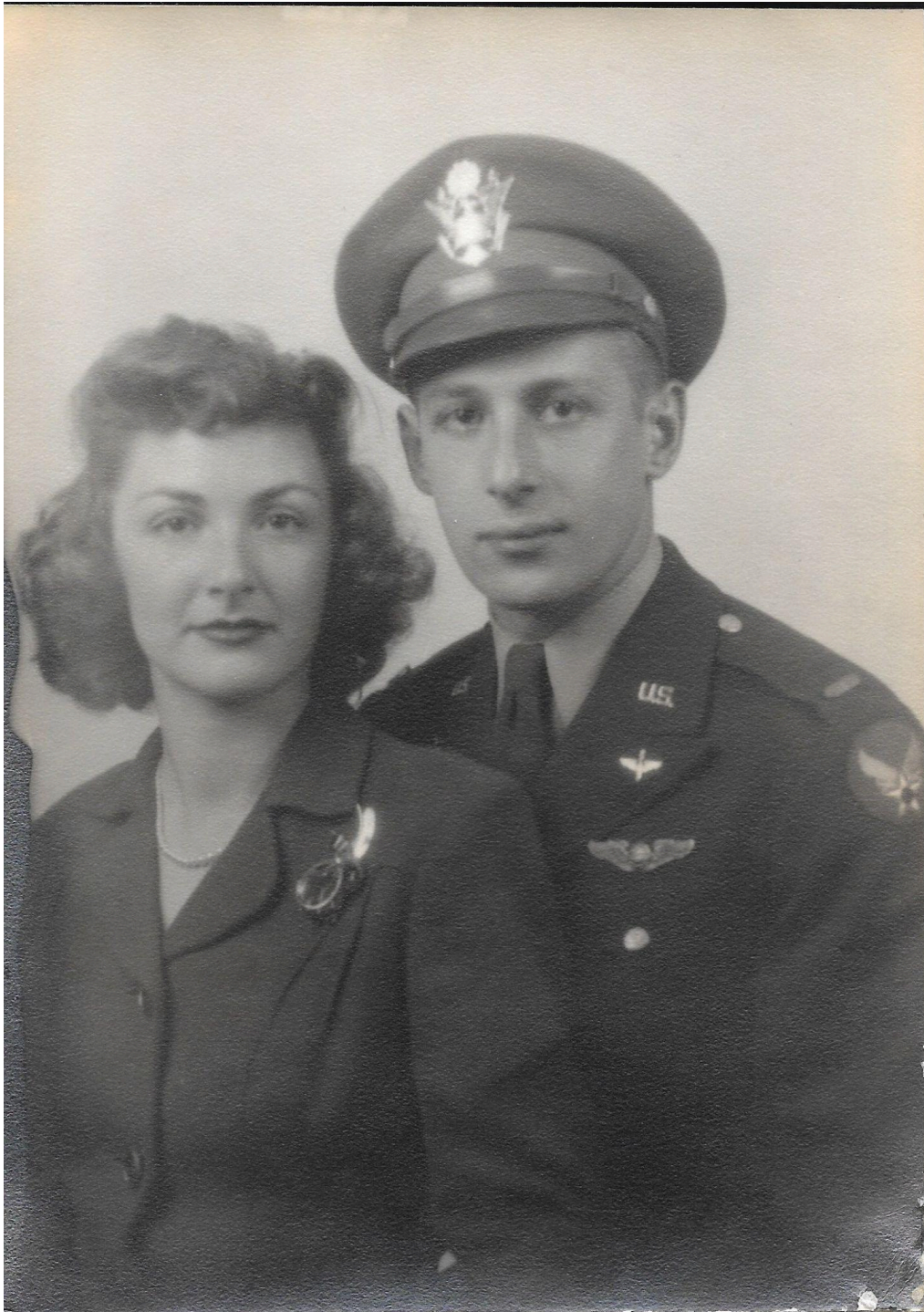
Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
(xxxxxx)
Lenny

The extra x's are For the nights between now and Tuesday

Love
x
Lenny

Sylvia Geetter and Leonard Levy married on June 12, 1944. Monroe, Louisiana.



Marriage License

State of Louisiana, Parish of Ouachita

CLERK'S OFFICE, FOURTH DISTRICT COURT

To Any Ordained Minister of the Gospel, Judge, or Any
Justice of the Peace—

Greeting:

You are hereby authorized and empowered to unite in the bonds of Matrimony and Holy
Wedlock, Mr. Leonard Levy
and Miss Sylvia Geetter
both residents of the State aforesaid, and to solemnize and celebrate said marriage between said
parties according to the laws and customs of this State, and to make your return hereof as the law
directs, and this is your authority for so doing.

Given under my hand and seal of office, this 1st
day of June, 1943

W. H. Hachon
Deputy Clerk District Court.

Book 51 Page 500

STATE OF LOUISIANA, }
PARISH OF OUACHITA. }

I HEREBY CERTIFY That I this day, in pursuance of the foregoing License, celebrated and
solemnized a marriage between
Mr. Leonard Levy
and Miss Sylvia Geetter
agreeably to the laws and customs of the State of Louisiana.

IN FAITH WHEREOF, I have, together with the parties and the undersigned witnesses, signed
this present on this 12th day of June, 1943,
at Mouroe, Louisiana.

Three Witnesses:

Nathan Lichtenhalt
Joseph L. Levine
Jonas D. Lyman

Leonard Levy
Sylvia Geetter
M. R. Church, Bethi

(Three witnesses should sign on the left. On the right: First, the groom; second, the bride, who should sign her

Basic Flight School Training Selman Field - Monroe, Louisiana



The U.S. Army Air Forces trained tens of thousands of inexperienced young men to do what only a handful of skilled air navigators a decade earlier could do. The Army Air Corps had only adopted the idea of the air navigator as a specialized crew member in 1939. Suddenly, tens of thousands were needed. Most navigators in the Army Air Forces started as pilot cadets who "washed out" of pilot training, often in PT-17s. Good math skills were considered essential for those who made the transition to navigator.

from The Wartime Navigator²⁸⁸

F/O Leonard Levy was reassigned to Selman Field and, presumably given a furlough after graduating from Pre-flight School and before resuming his Navigator training. Navigation cadets were sent to flying school following preflight where they spent from 15 to 20 weeks in specialized training. Emphasis was placed on precision dead-reckoning navigation with basic proficiency in pilotage, radio, and celestial navigation.

At the same time, navigators usually were sent to join operational training units to become part of a flying crew being readied for combat assignment.

Navigation is the art of determining geographic positions by means of (a) pilotage, (b) dead reckoning, (c) radio, or (d) celestial navigation, or any combination of these 4 methods.

²⁸⁸ <https://timeandnavigation.si.edu/navigating-air/navigation-at-war/wartime-navigator>

Navigation Training - Pilotage

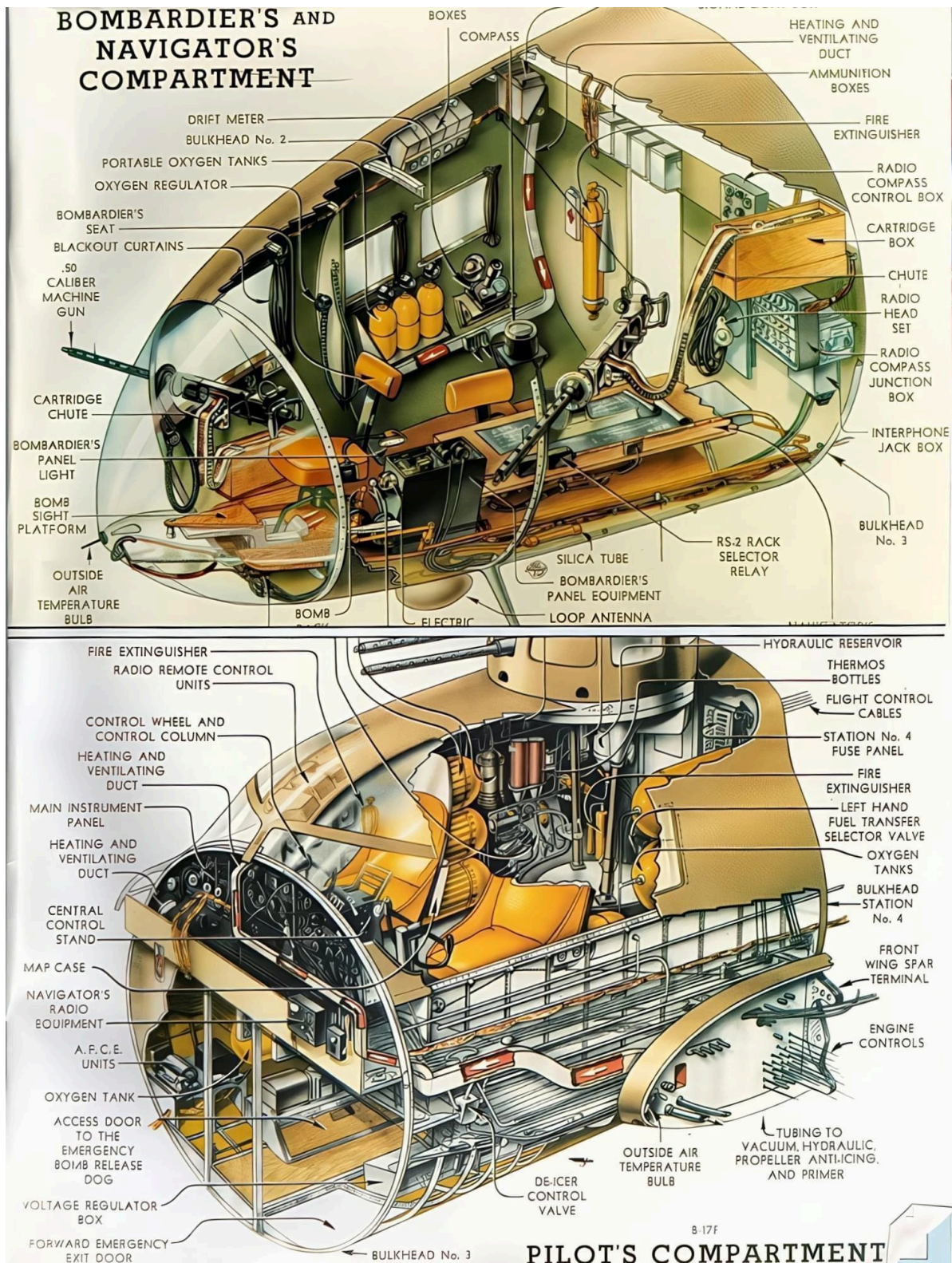
Selman Field - Monroe, Louisiana

Pilotage is the method of determining an airplane's position by visual reference to the ground. In combat navigation, all bombing targets are approached by pilotage, and the route is maintained by pilotage. The exact position of the airplane must be known.

The navigator does this by constant reference to groundspeeds and ETAs²⁸⁹ established for points ahead, the ground, and to his maps and charts. During the mission, so long as he can maintain visual contact with the ground, the navigator can establish these pin-point positions so that the exact track of the airplane will be known when the mission is completed.



²⁸⁹ Estimated Time of Arrival



Boeing B-17 Diagrams

Navigation Training - Celestial



Celestial navigation is the science of determining position by reference to 2 or more celestial bodies. The navigator uses a sextant, accurate time, and many tables to obtain what he calls a line of position. Actually this line is part of a circle on which the altitude of the particular body is constant for that instant of time. An intersection of 2 or more of these lines gives the navigator a fix.

These fixes can be relied on as being accurate within approximately 10 miles. One reason for inaccuracy is the instability of the airplane as it moves through space, causing acceleration of the sextant bubble (a level denoting the horizontal). Because of this acceleration, the navigator takes observations over a period of time so that the acceleration error will cancel out to some extent.



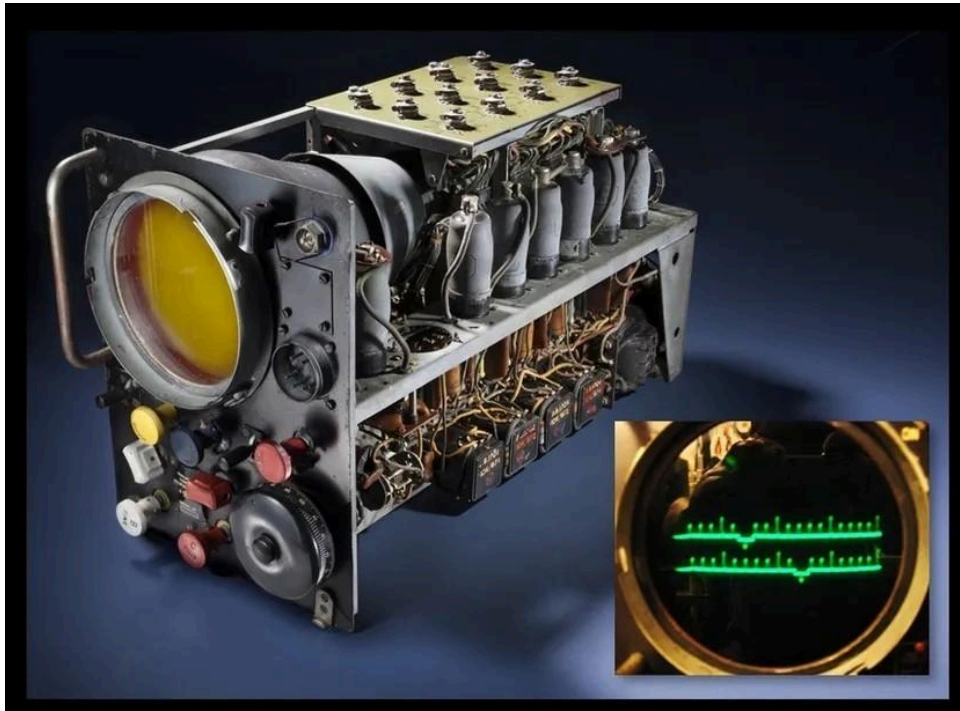
The A-10A Sextant

Celestial navigation was not well suited for use in all-weather military operations or by the tens of thousands of inexperienced young navigators entering military service. To remedy this, Great Britain and the United States created complex radio navigation systems that used advances in timing technologies and electronic computing. These systems revolutionized navigation.

*Navigation at War*²⁹⁰
Time and Navigation - Smithsonian

²⁹⁰ <https://timeandnavigation.si.edu/navigating-air/navigation-at-war>

Radio Navigation - *Flying the Beam*



Long Range Navigation Unit (LORAN)

Radio navigation became the most important air navigation technology.

Before World War II, radio navigation could only provide a course or a bearing to a station. The invention of timekeeping technologies, such as the crystal oscillator, led to a new era of systems that could fix position accurately and were easier to use. Each system of radio navigation uses time in a slightly different way and each requires its own type of navigational charting.

By World War II, a web of air navigation radio stations and beacons connected by “airways” began to cover the globe. When war broke out, new military equipment revolutionized air navigation. This allowed less experienced users to achieve the same results as highly trained celestial navigators and eventually decreased the need for professional navigators.

*Navigation at War*²⁹¹
Time and Navigation - Smithsonian

²⁹¹ <https://timeandnavigation.si.edu/navigating-air/navigation-at-war>

Flight Officer Appointment
Selman Field - Monroe, Louisiana
August 20, 1943

HEADQUARTERS
Army Air Forces Eastern Flying Training Command
Maxwell Field, Alabama

PERSONNEL ORDERS)
No. 39)

20 August 1943

EXTRACT

* * *

5. The following-named Flight Officers, Air Corps, Army of the United States, having completed the prescribed course of instructions as Aviation Cadets, are rated Aircraft Observer (Aerial Navigator), under the provisions of Army Regulations 95-60, dated 20 August 1942 and paragraph 3 K (2), Army Air Forces Regulation 50-7, dated 5 February 1943, effective 4 September 1943: (Class SE 43-12, Monroe, La.)

* * *
Flight Officer Leonard Levy T-61298 AC- AUS
* * *

Pursuant to authority contained in paragraph 2, Army Regulations 35-1480, dated 10 October 1942, the following-named Flight Officers Air Corps, Army of the United States, who hold an aeronautical rating, are hereby required to participate in regular and frequent aerial flights, at such times as they are called to active duty with the Army Air Forces, U. S. Army under competent authority and are authorized to participate in regular and frequent aerial flights while on an inactive status, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 52, Army Regulations 95-15, dated 21 April 1930, effective 4 September 1943: (Class SE 43-12, Monroe, La)

* * *
Flight Officer Leonard Levy T-61298 AC-AUS
* * *

By command of Major General HANLEY:

D. D. FITZGERALD,
Colonel, Air Corps
Actg Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

/s/ James W. Porter
/t/ JAMES W. PORTER
Lt. Colonel, A.G.D.
Asst Adjutant General

TRUE COPY:

Fred P. Pennington
FRED P. PENNINGTON
2nd Lt., Air Corps

F/O (Flight Officer) Leonard Levy

Selman Field - Monroe, Louisiana

September 3, 1943

NOTIFICATION OF TERMINATION OF AVIATION CADET OR AVIATION STUDENT STATUS			
National Service Life Insurance			
LEVY	LEONARD		
(Last name)	(First name)	(Middle initial)	(Army serial number)
Permanent home address			
108 Selman Field			
(Number and street or rural route)			
Hartsville			
(City, town, or post office)			
Conn			
(State)			
This is to furnish information of the termination of aviation cadet or student status on			
3 September 1943 (Date)			
in the case of the above-named insured because of			
discharge to accept commission			
(Reason for termination—indicate if discharged from service)			
The insured {will will not} continue in a status of active duty involving participation in regular and frequent aerial flights.			
C. SEIGLER,			
Capt., Air Corps,			
Asst. Personnel Officer			
(Signature and grade of commanding officer or personnel officer of the school)			
(Signature of insured)			
Copies of order terminating the status of aviation cadet or aviation student will be attached to the original of this form for the Chief of Finance, War Department, and to the copy for the Veterans Administration.			
If the insured is continued in the active service, but has been permanently relieved from duty involving participation in regular and frequent aerial flights he will complete and sign the following statement:			
I {desire do not desire} to continue my insurance in force and understand that if I do desire to continue my insurance I must either execute an authorization for allotment of my pay (W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 29) or tender premiums due within the grace period by remittance direct to the Veterans Administration, Washington, D. C., beginning			
28 September 1943			
Check whether premiums will be paid			
☐ By allotment.			
☒ By direct remittance.			
(Signature of insured)			
Distribution:			
Original with copy of order to Chief of Finance, War Department, direct. Copy with copy of order to Veterans Administration direct. Copy to insured.			
W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 30-4—December 1, 1942			
(Over)			
10-31917-1			

93409

ENLISTED RECORD OF

Levy, Leonard (Last name) (First name) (NMI) 31251913 A/C (Army serial number) (Grade)

Born in Hartford, in the State of Connecticut

Enlisted or inducted 1 24 November 1942, at Hartford, Connecticut.

When ~~enlisted~~ inducted he was Twenty-four and four-twelfths (24-4/12) years of age and by occupation a Lathe Hand.

He had Brown eyes, Brown hair, Ruddy complexion, and was Five feet Ten inches in height.

Completed None years, Nine months, Ten days service for longevity pay.

Prior service: 2 None

A. A. F. NAVIGATION SCH. MONROE, LA SEP 3 1943

Paid in full \$ 112.25 including travel pay at 5c per mile from AAF Navigation Sch. Monroe, La.

Noncommissioned officer None

Military qualifications 3 None

Army specialty Navigation

Attendance at Specialized Navigation Training School. (Name of noncommissioned officers' or special service school)

Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions None

Decorations, service medals, citations None

Wounds received in service None

Date and result of smallpox vaccination 4 12/9/42 - Immune.

Date of completion of all typhoid-paratyphoid vaccinations 4 12/23/42.

Date and result of diphtheria immunity test (Schick) 4 None

Date of other vaccinations (specify vaccine used) 4 Tetanus Toxoid - 3/6/43.

Physical condition when discharged Good Married or single Married

Honorably discharged by reason of 5 Par 25a, AR 615-160 to accept appointment Flight Officer AG-AUS

Character Excellent

Periods of active duty 6 None

Remarks 7 No time lost under 107th AW.



Signature of soldier

Leonard Levy
C. E. SEIGLER,
Capt., Air Corps,
Asst. Personnel Officer.
Commanding

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENLISTED RECORD

- 1 Enter date of induction only in case of trainee inducted under Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 (Bull. 25, W. D., 1940); in all other cases enter date of enlistment. Eliminate word not applicable.
- 2 For each enlistment give company, regiment, or arm or service with inclusive dates of service, grade, cause of discharge, number of days lost under AW 107 (if none, so state), and number of days retained and cause of retention in service for convenience of the Government, if any.
- 3 Enter qualifications in arms, horsemanship, etc. Show the qualification, date thereof; and number, date, and source of order announcing same.
- 4 See paragraph 12, AR 40-210.
- 5 If discharged prior to expiration of service, give number, date, and source of order or full description of authority therefor.
- 6 Enter periods of active duty of enlisted men of the Regular Army Reserve and the Enlisted Reserve Corps and dates of induction into Federal Service in the cases of members of the National Guard.
- 7 In all cases of men who are entitled to receive Certificates of Service under AR 345-500, enter here appointments and ratings held and all other items of special proficiency or merit other than those shown above.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE

AR 345-470.

Insert name; as, "John J. Doe," in center of form.

Insert Army serial number, grade, company, regiment, or arm or service; as "1620302"; "Corporal, Company A, 1st Infantry"; "Sergeant, Quartermaster Corps"; The name and grade of the officer signing the certificate will be typewritten or printed below the signature.

☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1943 O-508089

Document prepared in
State of Connecticut -
Hartford War Office



Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

LEONARD LEVY

31251913 Aviation Cadet

Aviation Cadet Detachment

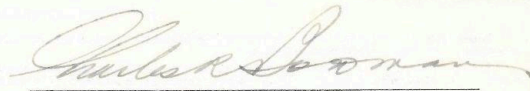
Army of the United States

*is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the
United States of America.*

*This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful
Service to his country.*

Given at Selman Field, Monroe, Louisiana.

Date 3 September, 1943.



CHARLES R. BOWMAN,
Major, Air Corps,
Executive Officer.

Flight Officer Assignment
Selman Field - Monroe, Louisiana
September 4, 1943

In reply
refer to

HEADQUARTERS
ARMY AIR FORCES SOUTHEAST TRAINING CENTER
MAXWELL FIELD
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

201- Levy, Leonard

4 September 1943

SUBJECT: Appointment as Flight Officer.

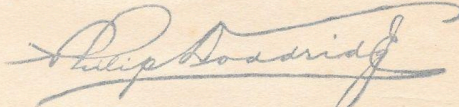
TO : Flight Officer Leonard Levy,
Army of the United States,
Selman Field, Monroe, Louisiana.

A - T- 61298

1. You are appointed a Flight Officer, Army of the United States, to rank from this date. Your serial number is shown after A above.
2. This appointment will continue in force for the duration of the war, and six (6) months thereafter unless sooner terminated.
3. There is inclosed herewith a form for Oath of Office, which you are requested to execute and return. The execution and return of the required Oath of Office constitutes an acceptance of your appointment. No other evidence is required.
4. This letter should be retained by you as evidence of your appointment.

By command of Major General ~~ROYCE~~ HANLEY:

Inclosure:
Form for Oath of Office.


Adjutant General.

Pre-flight Aviation School Graduation

Selman Field - Monroe, Louisiana

September 4, 1943



Pre-flight Aviation School Graduation



F/O Leonard (Lenny) Levy's USAAF Insignia²⁹² and Navigator Wings



²⁹² US Army Air Corps insignia were worn on the sleeve. The wings were worn above the breast pocket. Both items are from his personal collection.



We are happy to present...

The
**ZERO
ZERO**

CLASS OF FORTY-FOUR-6



ARMY AIR FORCES NAVIGATION SCHOOL
SELMAN FIELD, MONROE, LOUISIANA

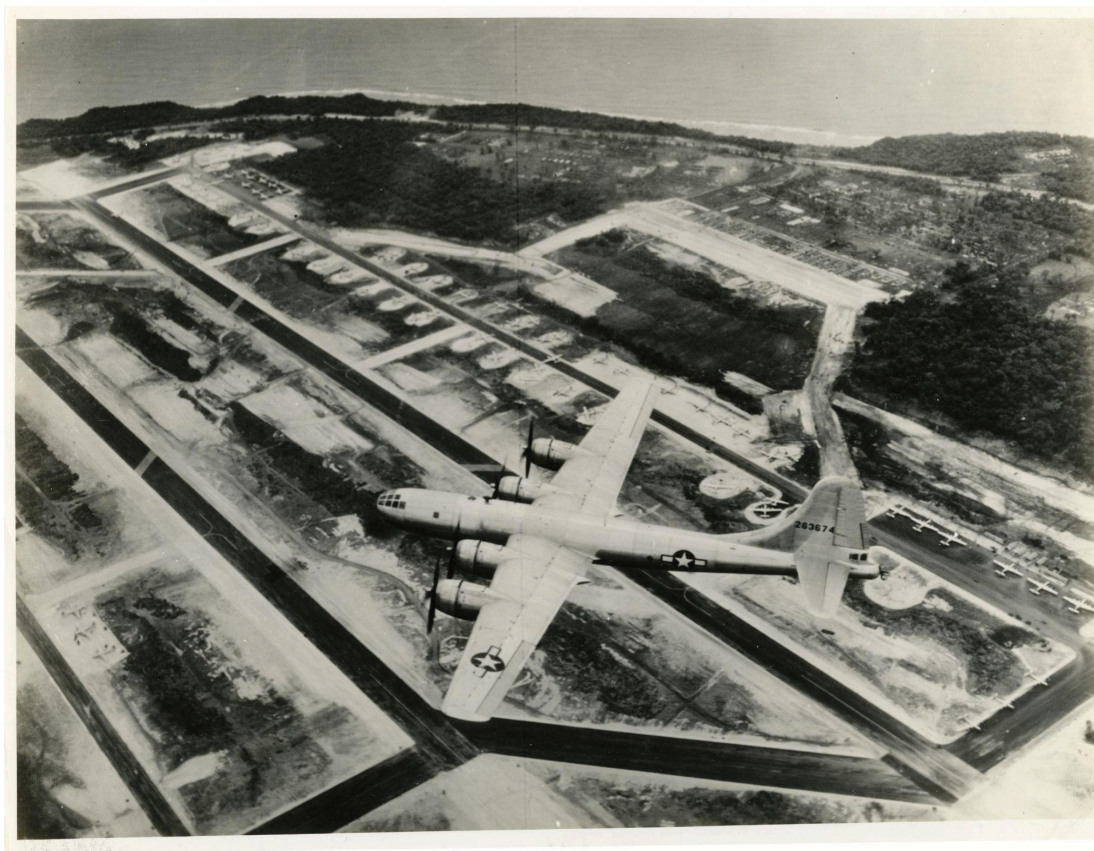
Alexandria, Louisiana²⁹³

Sunday

[September 19, 1943]

Dearest wife -

At last I have some time to myself and so, immediately after placing a call through to you, I went down to the PX²⁹⁴, bought some stationery and here I am writing to you.



As you know from my telegram and the return address I am stationed at the air base²⁹⁵ just outside of Alexandria, a city of the same size, if not larger than Monroe and about seventy-five miles south of there. Within our radius of 20 miles there are six camps and fields so

²⁹³ Written on US Army Air Force stationery in a plain envelope.

²⁹⁴ The Post Exchange

²⁹⁵ It was the Alexandria **Army Air Base** at its opening on October 21, 1942. The 799th Bombardment Squadron of the 2nd Air Force subsequently used the base for the training of Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress crews. In March of 1943, the base was reassigned to the 3rd Air Force under the command of Col. Quentin T. Quick.

you can see that the city does not lack for military personnel. In my telegram I told you not to make any plans yet, because I do not know what the housing situation in town is like. I am given to understand that it is pretty tough. Just as soon as I can get a place for you, my sweet, I'll let you know - Please don't become impatient.

This looks like a good setup - it is a fairly new field - as far as the Army is concerned - new barracks for officers, very good mess facilities, and a new officer's club, not yet completed. Being new, it is not too strong on discipline and is very muddy. As an officer I am free to come and go as I please, providing I am not "on duty." As far as duty goes... you can expect me to be in the air quite a bit. We are to take our *second* and *third* phases of training here, *skipping the first* by some stroke of luck.

Pyote²⁹⁶ was what we thought it to be - five or six houses and just as many stores stuck along the highway between Fort Worth and El Paso. One cannot even imagine the sort of place it really is. Seeing is believing.

Of the five stores in town three of them were off limits leaving just the drugstore and a beer joint. Strangely enough, there was a hotel there - a seven or eight room wood building, that was jammed with wives of officers.

The field itself was very nice - the quarters and food were excellent, plenty of recreational facilities and although the new officers club had burned down. There was still the old one left and it was there that I spent a good part of my only night at the post, waiting for my call to be put through - playing with the slot machines and taking an occasional drink - of Coke.



²⁹⁶ Pyote, Texas had an Army Base that Lenny spent one night at.

The trip out was miserable - will tell you about it in this letter, but save it for some other time or... for when I see you, which is going to be very soon. We have already been paid our mileage for the trip to Pyote and it came to fifty-three dollars. From there to here, they provided us with first class tickets, we bought an entire Pullman²⁹⁷ for our private use (at the cost of two dollars and twenty-five cents per man, and the government is going to reimburse us to the tune of five cents a mile or approximately thirty-five dollars.

Butch, dearest, I've missed you terribly from the moment I walked through the gate in Grand Central²⁹⁸. The truth is I cried on the train for well over three hours or until I took hold of myself - I do love you so very much my darling wife - the days can't possibly go by fast enough until we are together again, but until we are, remember the good times we had together and also remember that I promise more - much more of the same (if not better.)

The address:

F/O Leonard Levy AC
799th Bomb Squad, 469th Bomb Group
Army Air Base
Alexandria, La

I love you
xx
Lenny

²⁹⁷ Between December 1941 and June 1945 U.S. railroads carried almost 44 million armed services personnel. In spring 1943, about half of the **Pullman** Company's 7,000 sleeper cars were being used to transport troops.

²⁹⁸ Lenny is returning from leave in Hartford, Connecticut, where Sylvia awaits word of an apartment to reside in. He started his rail transportation at Grand Central Station in New York City.

Alexandria, Louisiana²⁹⁹

Monday

[September 20, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Since talking to you on the phone yesterday, nothing much of importance has happened to me. We were told to report to Operations this morning at eight, and when we did, we filled out one simple form and then [were] told that we were through until eight tomorrow morning. I then went over to Base Headquarters, signed in, and had my pay and allotment voucher filled in.

From there, I went over to the Sub Depot and withdrew... more flying clothing, namely an electrically heated flying suit³⁰⁰ (it's a beautiful baby blue color) plus the gloves and shoes that go with it, and also a summer flying suit. After this letter is sealed I'm going into town and getting a place for you. According to latest reports it will not be too bad to get a room as a Large division of men just left here for maneuvers leaving quite a few empty rooms.

This morning at breakfast a fellow told me that married officers are allowed to live off the post once they establish residence in the city - Things are finally looking up for us my sweet. You can be sure that the moment I get a place for you, you'll hear about it, for I miss you terribly. Tell you to come right away and stay in a hotel until we get a place but it is almost impossible to get a hotel room. (This being a very transient town. And anything decent costs \$10 a day per room - that's no exaggeration.)

As yet I haven't met any of my crew or been assigned to a plane partly because all of the planes were sent out of here because of a storm warning, partly due to I don't know what. I'm in no particular hurry - in fact I'm beginning to enjoy army life.

²⁹⁹ Written on US Army Air Force stationery in a plain envelope.

³⁰⁰ The two-piece Type F-2 Electrically-**Heated Flying Suit** was standardised by the US Army Air Forces on 13 August 1943, seeking to improve upon the fault-prone one-piece Type F-1 Flying Suit. Consisting of a jacket and trousers, both were made up of an outer layer and detachable inner layer,

As officers, we have nobody around bossing us - we do what we have to and nothing more. We come and go as we please, and meals are served all day. Of course this is only the beginning³⁰¹ - in a very short time we start flying again, and that means five and six hours a day, seven days a week... When you get here, if you don't see me as often as you (or I) would like, you'll know why. We, in the Air Corp are known as the fair haired boys, but at the same time we have our work cut out for us, and it must be done.

Butch darling, there is quite a bit more I could write to you, but I want to get into town early and make arrangements for a room. So until tonight, when you'll get a telegram or a phone call³⁰², I'll dare saying

I do love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



³⁰¹ Lenny is now in his Advanced Flight school training where cadets received at least 70 hours of flying, during a nine-week period, mastering the art of flying a multi-engine plane in formation and increasing their ability to fly on instruments at night. Upon completing advanced flying school, the cadet received his wings and commission.

³⁰² It must have been a phone call, with the news that Lenny had secured an apartment in Alexandria, Louisiana. Sylvia joined him shortly travelling by train.

Here's Your Complete High-flying Wardrobe

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Jacket | 6. Shoes, Felt | 11. Scarf |
| 2. Jacket Insert, Heated | 7. Shoe Insert, Heated | 12. Lead Cord |
| 3. Trouser | 8. Glove, Heated | 13. Woolen Shirt |
| 4. Trouser Insert, Heated | 9. Rayon Glove Inserts | 14. Light Socks |
| 5. Helmet | 10. A-12 Mittens | 15. Long Underwear |



THE electrically heated suit assembly is designed to maintain top body efficiency of the wearer during routine flight, training or combat flying for all temperature conditions to 40 degrees F. below zero regardless of the time duration of flight.

Advanced Navigation Training - Bombardier Relations

Alexandria Army Air Base - Alexandria , Louisiana

Working closely with the Bombardier is an important function of the Navigator, Accurate and effective bombing is the ultimate purpose of the entire airplane and crew. Every other function is preparatory to hitting and destroying the target. The success or failure of the mission depends upon what he accomplishes in that short interval of the bombing run. When the bombardier takes over the airplane for the run on the target, he is in absolute command. He will tell you what he wants done, and until he tells you "Bombs away," his word is law.

A great deal, therefore, depends on the understanding between bombardier and Navigator. You expect your bombardier to know his job when he takes over. Teamwork between pilot and bombardier is essential. Under any given set of conditions -- groundspeed, altitude, direction, etc. -- there is only one point in space where a bomb may be released from the airplane to hit a predetermined object on the ground.



Raymond (Rock) Newmark - Bombardier

Raymond Robert (Rock) Newmark was born on October 30, 1920, to Samuel and Yetta Newmark. Rock had two younger brothers, Arnold and Herbert. The family was Jewish and lived in New York, where Rocky also went to school. Rocky had a part-time job as a bookkeeper. In his spare time, Rocky often listened to opera music with his mother.

At the beginning of the war Rocky enlisted in the US Air Force. Rocky was accepted and started his training as a bombardier. After completing his training, Rocky was assigned to the 561st Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group, which was based at RAF Knettishall in England. From here, Rocky flew eight missions against Germany.

During Rock's last mission, he managed to leave the plane in time. He was captured in Neuringe with injuries to his arm and eyes. He was admitted to the POW hospital in Lingen, where he was helped with a complicated splinter fracture in his left forearm.

Rock was then taken to a POW camp, where he served the remainder of the war. Here, he was blinded for two months due to injuries to his eyes. During this time, Rocky spent his time listening to his favorite opera: *Sempre Libra* sung by Eleanor Steber.

After the liberation, Rocky returned to America. Here he was admitted to Halloran Hospital so that he could be treated for his injuries.



Raymond R. (Rock) Newmark

Advanced Navigation Training - Pilot Relations

Alexandria Army Air Base - Alexandria , Louisiana

Working closely with the Pilot is an important duty of the Navigator. All navigation depends directly on the accuracy of his instruments. Correct calibration requires close cooperation and extremely careful flying by the pilot. Instruments to be calibrated include the altimeter, all compasses, airspeed indicators, alignment of the astrocompass, astrograph, and drift meter, and check on the navigator's sextant and watch. After every flight, the navigator and pilot discuss the flight and compare notes and go over the navigator's log.



Augustine (Chris) Cristiani - Pilot

Augustine Benedict (Chris) Cristiani was born on October 17, 1920, to Giovanni and Maria Cristiani. The family lived in Alessandria, Piedmont, Italy until he was six years old. On August 28, 1926, the family decided to seek a better life and boarded a boat bound for America. Once there, they were not accepted due to the strict immigration regulations. As a result, the family was forced to flee to Canada. The family traveled south and crossed the border on their journey to the United States before arriving in the area of the iconic Niagara Falls.

As part of their adjustment to life in the United States, the family chose to Americanize their names: Maria became Mary, Giovanni became John, and Augustino became Augustine. Later, Augustine chose to use the nickname "Gus."

Gus attended Lockport High School in Lockport, New York, a small town near the iconic Niagara Falls. A photo of the young Gus appears in the Lockport High School yearbook, in which the sixteen-year-old Italian-American is described as "precise" and "shy." He also participated in the Lockport High School orchestra and in chemistry class; under his yearbook photo, the word "Chemist" appears to describe him.

At the beginning of World War II for the United States, twenty-one-year-old Gus reported for duty in New York City, prepared to return to the continent he had once left and do whatever it took to defend the United States. At the time of his draft, Augustine had been a student for two years.

In Chautauqua County, New York, Gus met his future wife Frances Trusso. On July 31, 1943, the couple married in Monahans, Texas. At this time, Gus was already a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army.

After completing his training, Gus was assigned to the 561st Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group, which was stationed at RAF Knettishall in England. From here, Gus and his crew flew several missions against Germany.

During Gus's last mission he managed to leave the plane in time. Gus was captured soon after, at 16:00, in Neuringe and then taken to a POW camp where he served the rest of the war.

