Butch and Lenny

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, Louisiana[1]
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 cars[2] 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.

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[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 Lt[4]. 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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 address[5] 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

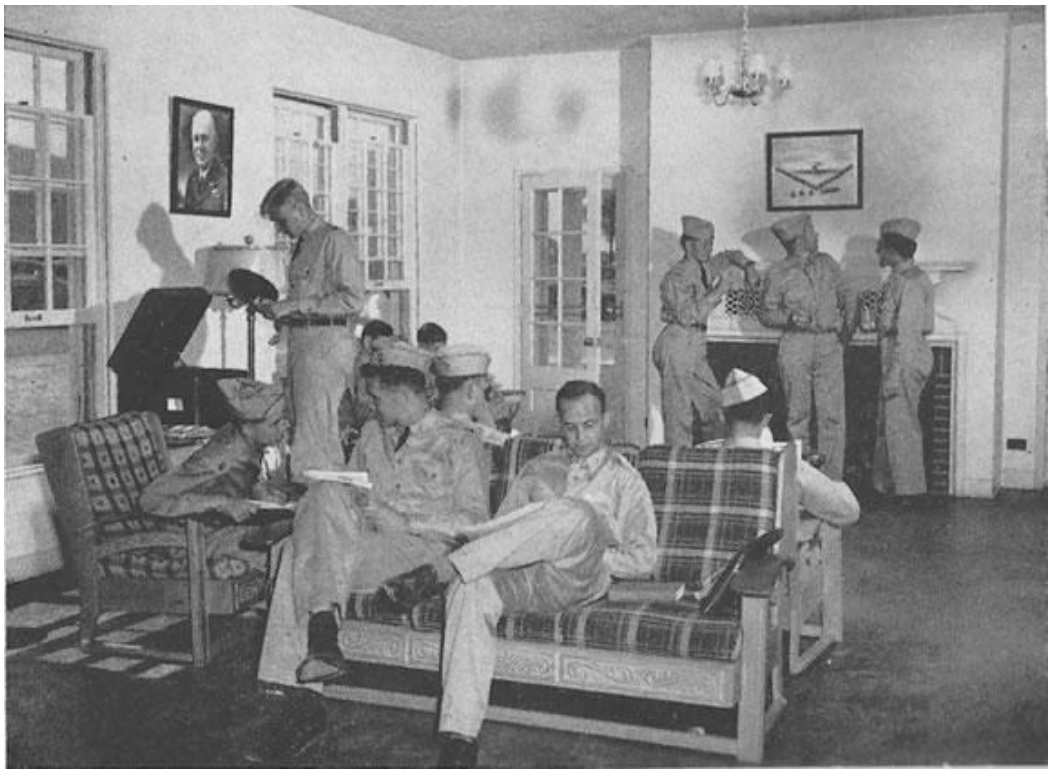
[5] Lenny is describing his new address at Selman Field

Monroe, Louisiana[6]
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 Nat[7] 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 PX[8], 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 Mitch[9], 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

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[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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[10]
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 mistaken[11]. 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 class[12] 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

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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.

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 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 civilians[13]. 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.

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[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.

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 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

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

Monroe, Louisiana[14]
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 propeller.

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

This morning[16] we had our first test of Calisthenics[17] 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 Mitch[18] 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 Nat[19] 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 clas*s 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.

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[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

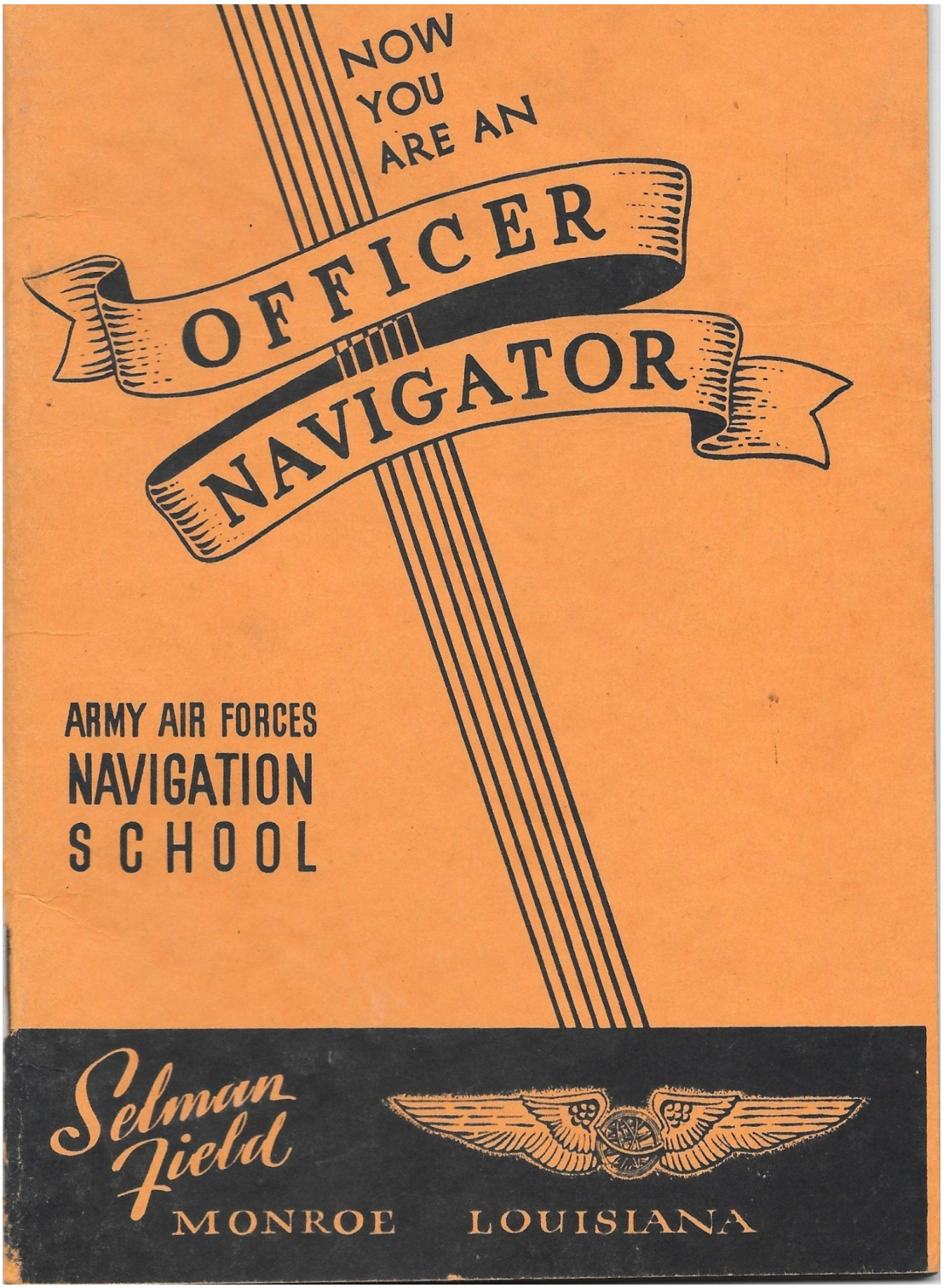
The food here is still as good as it was the first day. I am amazed at the number of vegetables given with each meal… there are always three kinds of bread to choose from, plenty of fresh milk and always two different drinks at each meal. The part that I like best about the mess here is that we don't 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



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

Monroe, Louisiana[20]
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.

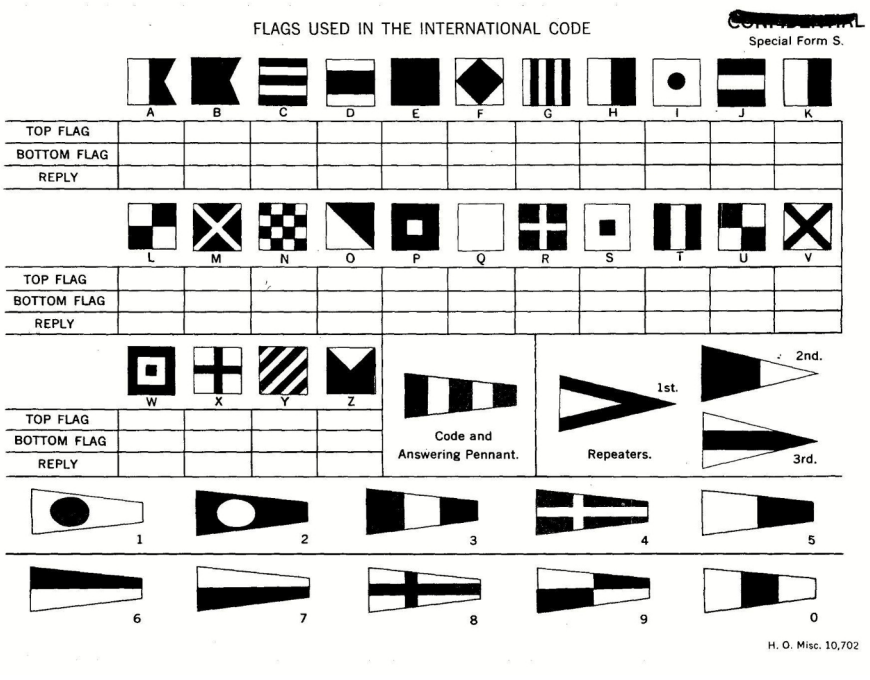
The third day is finished here and the first of many courses has been completed. This afternoon we had our final exam in *Military Discipline* and… I did pretty well on it… The subject is a snap, one that every soldier should know cold. The stuff that they taught us in three days here took eleven weeks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

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

[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 propeller.

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.

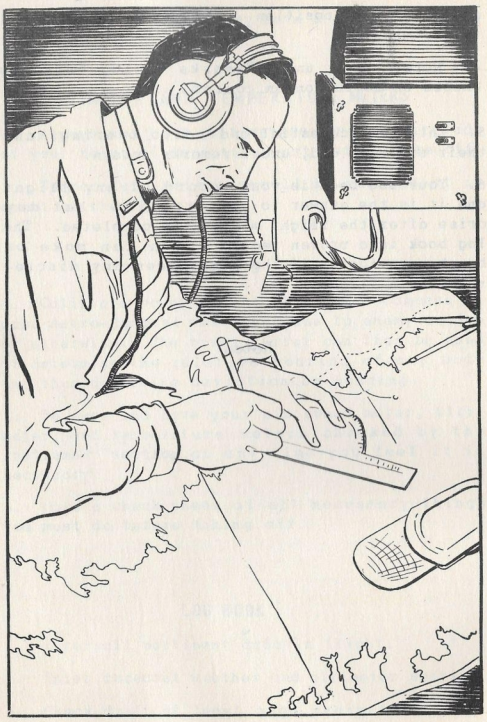
The enclosed papers are orders relative to my appointment as a Cadet and orders to *ship* to Nashville. I thought that they might make a good addition to our scrapbook. The names marked with an (x) are those fellows that were disqualified, those marked with (-) are here with me. The others are either 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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. 00-30-61 and the Kit, Navigation, Dead Reckoning, see T.O.No. 00-30-62. 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 1-2, 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.

17

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

Monroe, Louisiana[21]
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 -

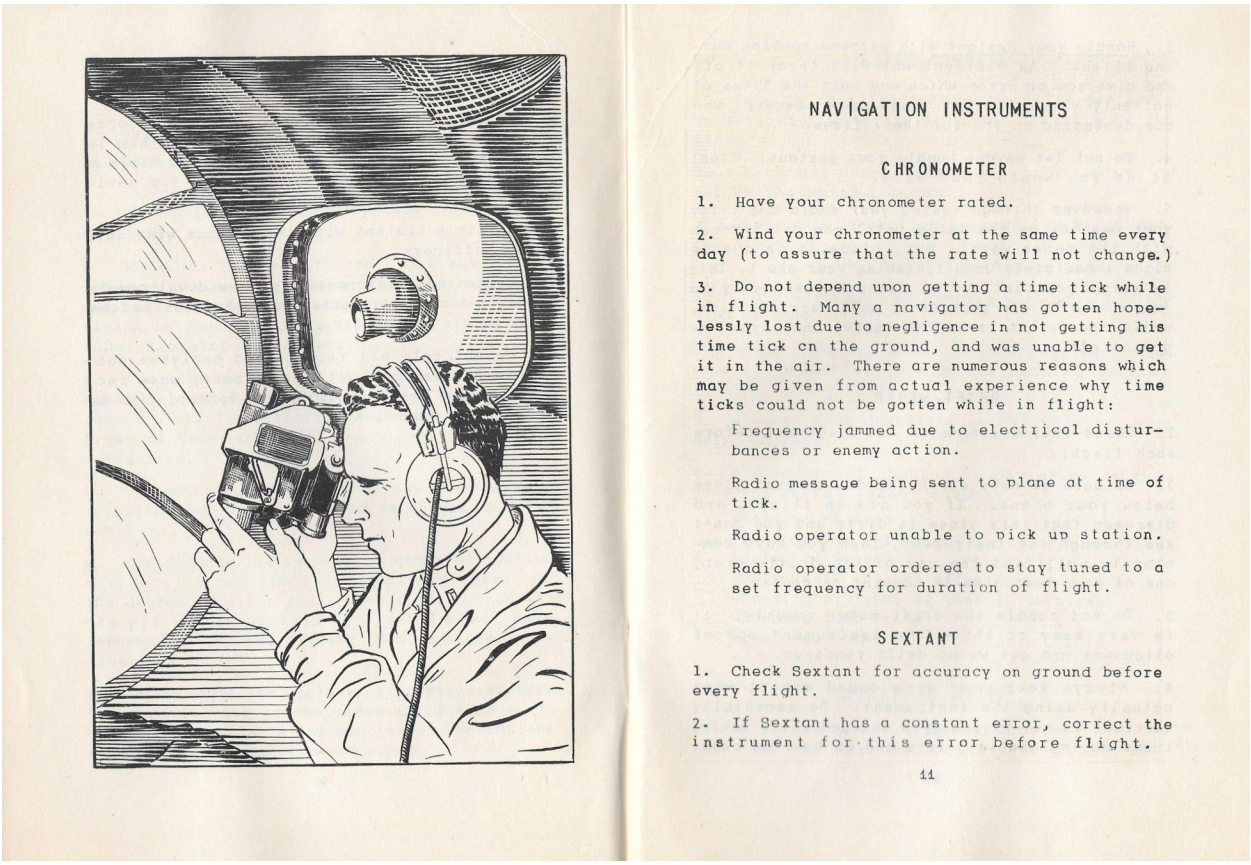
Hartford and you seem so very far away until I sat down to write and then with your picture in front of me I feel so much better

[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 propeller.

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxx
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.

11

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

Monroe, Louisiana[22]
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. The final subject of the day was *Safeguarding Military Information*, still

[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 propeller.

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 of[23]. 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. Nat[24] 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. Mitch[25]… 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 Squadron[26]. No sooner were we situated and the beds made up, when our new TO[27] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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 qrs 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

35

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

Monroe, Louisiana[28]
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	Seagull	Curtiss
		OS2U	Kingfisher	Chance Vought
TRANSPORT	C-43	GB	Traveler	Beech
	C-45A	JRB	Voyager	Beech
	C-46	R5C	Commando	Curtiss
	C-47	R4D	Skytrain	Douglas
	C-53		Skytrooper	Douglas
	C-54	R5D	Skymaster	Douglas
	C-60 (C-56, C-57, C-59)	R5O	Lodestar	Lockheed
	C-61	GK	Forwarder	Fairchild
	C-69		Constellation	Lockheed
	C-76		Caravan	Curtiss
	C-87		Liberator Express	Consolidated
		JR2S	Excalibur	Chance Vought
TRAINERS	PT-13 & 17	N2S-1 & 3	Caydet	Boeing
	PT-19 & 23		Cornell	Fairchild
		N2T	Tutor	Timm
	PT-22	NR	Recruit	Ryan
	BT-13 & 15	SNV	Valiant	Vultee
	AT-6	SNJ	Texan	North American
		SNC	Falcon	Curtiss
	AT-7	SNB-2	Navigator	Beech
	AT-8 & 17		Bobcat	Cessna
	AT-10		Wichita	Beech
	AT-11	SNB-1	Kansas	Beech
	AT-13 & 14		Yankee-Doodle	Fairchild
	AT-15		Crewmaker	Boeing
	AT-19		Reliant	Vultee
LIAISON	L-1		Vigilant	Vultee
	L-2		Taylorcraft Grasshopper	Taylorcraft
	L-3C		Aeronca Grasshopper	Aeronca
	L-4B	NE	Piper Grasshopper	Piper
	L-5		Sentinel	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 propeller.

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.

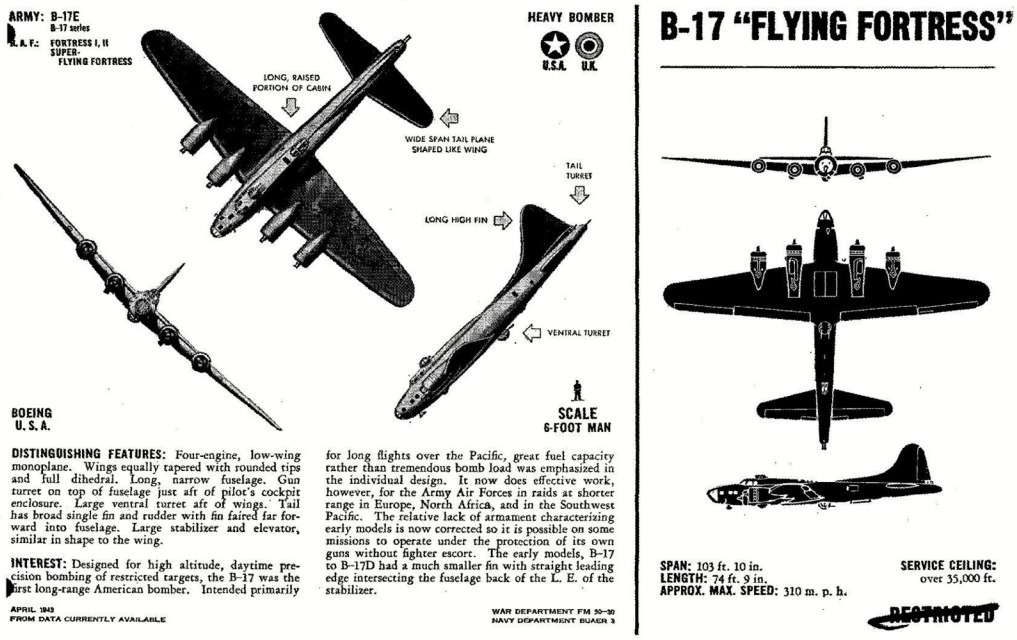
Yesterday was a real old-fashioned lazy Sunday. After breakfast I wrote a few letters that I should have written a long time ago and then Nat[29], Mitch[30] and I went over to the rec room and played a few games of billiards. The usual good dinner was partaken of and then Nat and I indulged in a few hours of *bunk fatigue* (sleep to you) until Mitch came over and woke us up. We sat in the PX[31] 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



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 Greenberg[32]? 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 own[33] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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		Flying Fortress	Boeing	HEAVY BOMBERS
B-24	PB4Y	Liberator	Consolidated	
B-18		Bolo	Douglas	MEDIUM BOMBERS
B-23		Dragon	Douglas	
B-25	PBJ	Mitchell	North American	
B-26		Marauder	Martin	
B-34	PV	Ventura	Vega	
A-20	BD	Havoc (Attack) Boston (Bomber)	Douglas	LIGHT BOMBERS
A-24	SBD	Dauntless (Dive)	Douglas	
A-25	SB2C	Helldiver (Dive)	Curtiss	
A-29	PBO	Hudson (Patrol)	Lockheed	
A-34	SB2A	Buccaneer (Dive)	Brewster	
A-35, A-31		Vengeance (Dive)	Vultee	
	SB2U	Vindicator (Dive)	Chance Vought	
	TBD	Devastator (Torpedo)	Douglas	
	TBF	Avenger (Torpedo)	Grumman	
OA-10	PBY	Catalina	Consolidated	PATROL BOMBERS (FLYING BOATS)
	PB2Y	Coronado	Consolidated	
	PBM	Mariner	Martin	
P-38		Lightning	Lockheed	FIGHTERS
P-39		Airacobra	Bell	
P-40		Warhawk	Curtiss	
P-43		Lancer	Republic	
P-47		Thunderbolt	Republic	
P-51		Mustang	North American	
	F2A	Buffalo	Brewster	
	F4F	Wildcat	Grumman	
	F4U	Corsair	Chance Vought	
	F6F	Hellcat	Grumman	

11

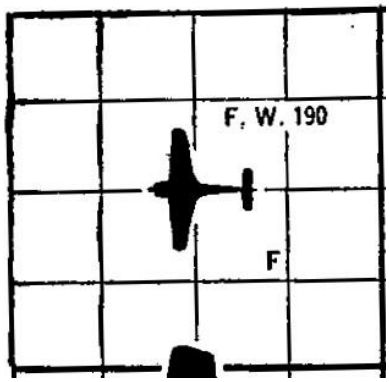
[33] Baby shower

Monroe, Louisiana[34]
Tuesday
[March 9, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

Today was jackpot day for me at *Mail Call*. There were three letters from you, one from Ebner[35], 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.

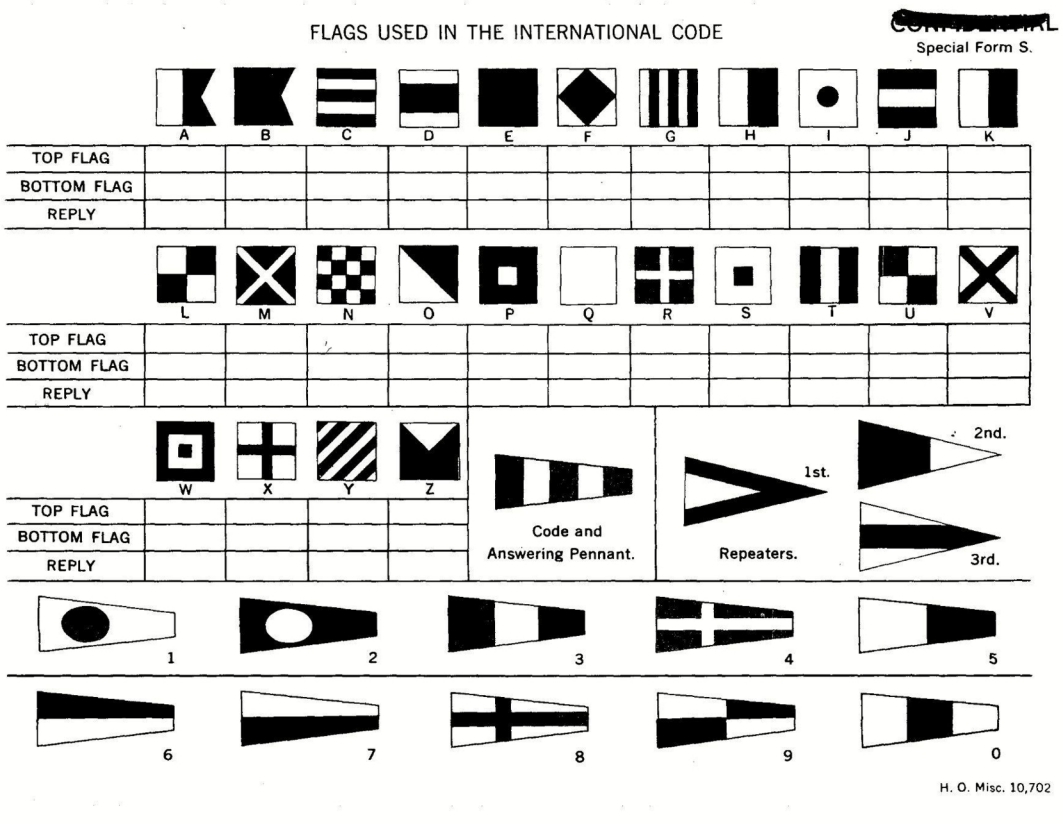
The Lieutenant who teaches us *Identification of Planes* told us that we would be required to identify a plane in 1/5 of a second or less.

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 Norm[37] and Marge[38] 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 Betty[39]; 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 stationery[40] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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.

Monroe, Louisiana[41]
Wednesday
[March 10, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

There may be something good in the delay of mail after all. Today, I received three more letters from you and also your postal card. The letters were postmarked the second, fourth and sixth and the card on the second. You can judge for yourself just how slow our mail service is.

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

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 <u>very</u> 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 ⅕ 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 PT[43] 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 Margie[44]'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?

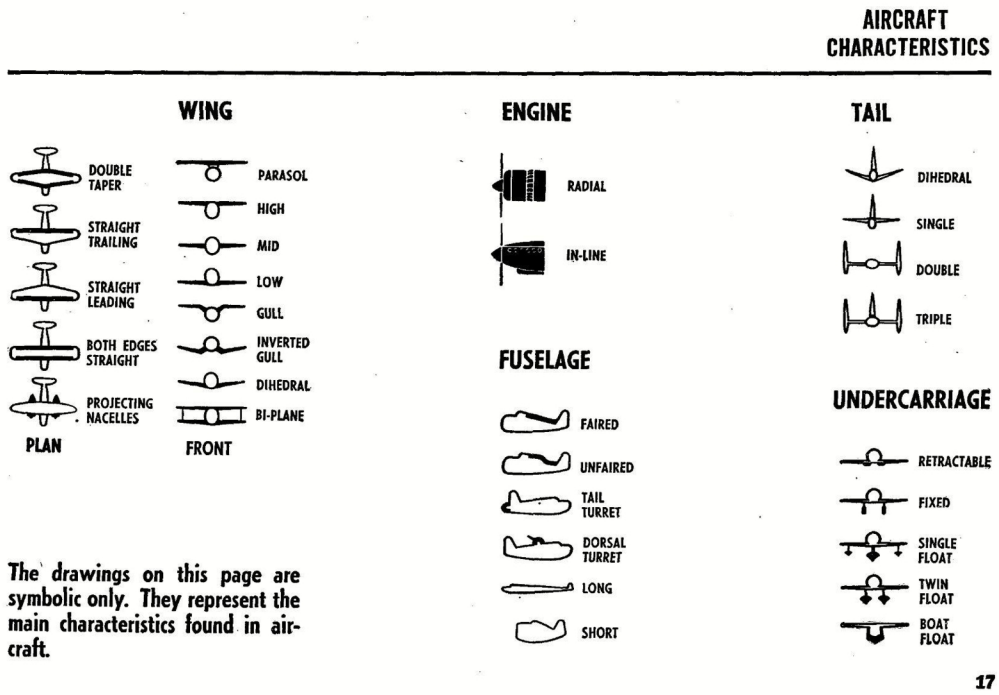
It is a Wednesday night and it is raining - A double reminder of you dear. The rain reminding me of those moods of yours; how I would like to be with you once again - rain or no rain - and Wednesday meaning that it is one week shy of five months since we became engaged. A lot of things have happened 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

I'm eagerly awaiting those cookies

[43] Physical Training
[44] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman's Levy and is pregnant with twins.

Love
Lenny



From the Pictorial Manual used at Selman Field

Monroe, Louisiana[45]
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 Norm[46], Faye[47], 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.

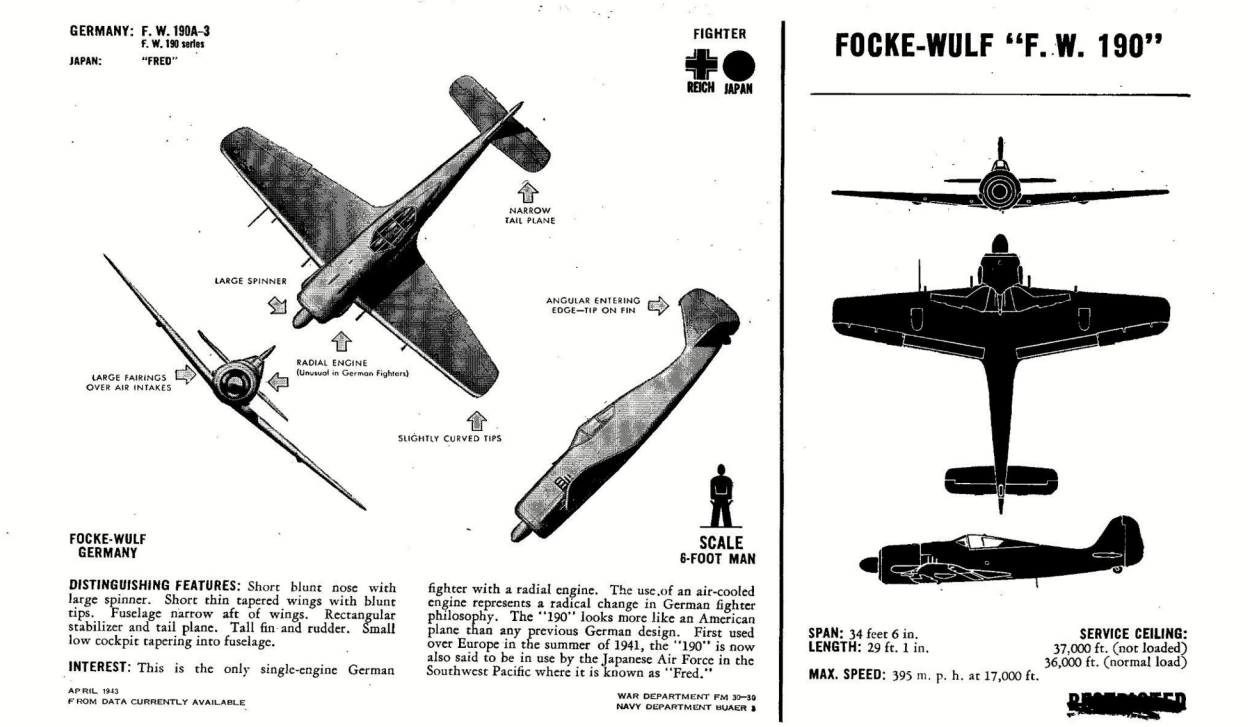
Classes again went along without a hitch and still no tests. Tomorrow however we are getting a final in *Ground Forces* and we were given fair warning that it is going to be a tough one. It is to be an hour in length and that… is unusual as the majority of the tests usually run no longer than half an 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 PT[49]. 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[50]
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 Lou[51] 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 PT[52] 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 PX[53], I met Bob and Charlotte Greenberg[54]. 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

[53] Post Express

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

Monroe, Louisiana[55]
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 Norman[56] and Margie[57]. 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

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[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.

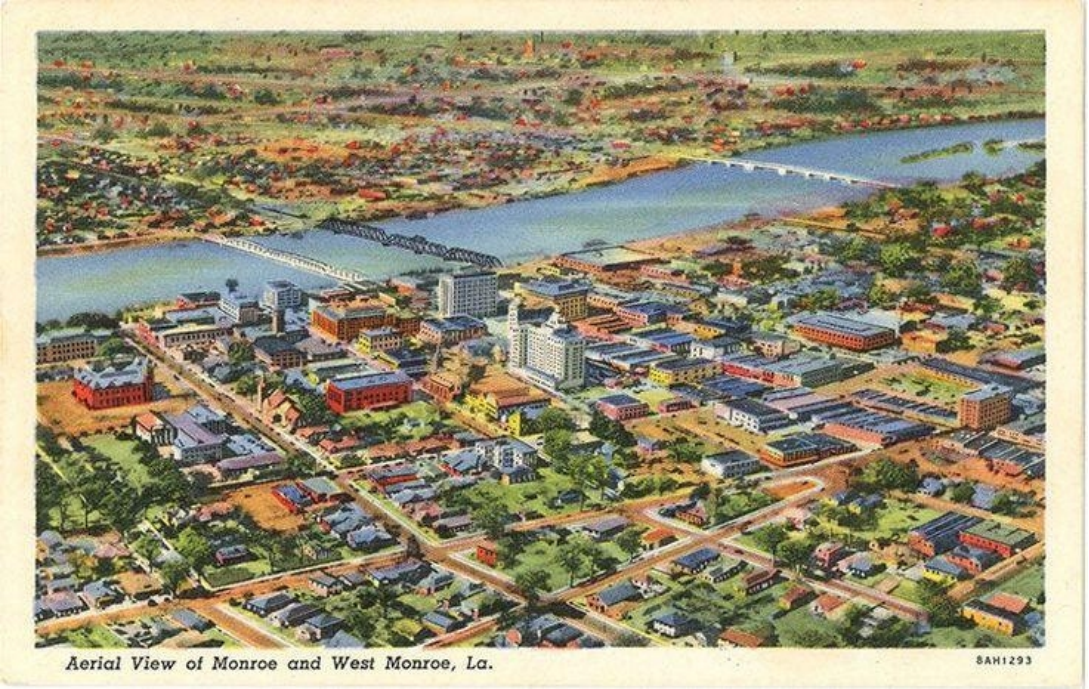
[57] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Norman.

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 Mitch[58], Nat[59] 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 evening[60].

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 USO[61] 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 field[62] in the regular Army. We had a grand time talking about things in common, such as Lake Compounce[63], the State Theater[64], 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

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[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 Annette[65] out an insignia this week, and if possible an arm insignia for Newty[66].

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

[65] Annette Paletz is Lenny's first cousin.
[66] Newton (Newty) Paletz is Lenny's first cousin.

Monroe, Louisiana[67]
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

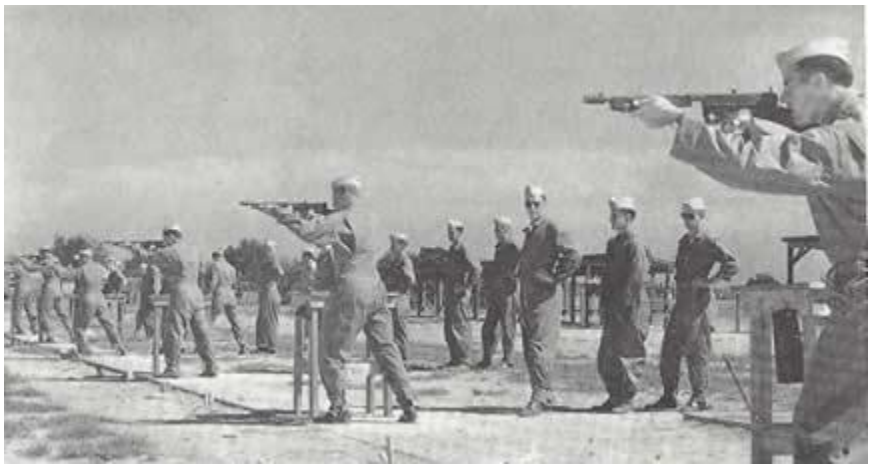
Two letters from you today and also the stationary. The letters were written the… evening of the shower and the following day. I'm glad… you had a nice time at the shower and also that Sonny gave you a ride

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

home… I was glad to hear that Florence[68] 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 third relief (ten to twelve and four to six.) I say was because I've switched with Nat[69] 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.



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

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

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Tell Mom, I'll write to her tomorrow

I love you

Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[70]
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 Nat[71] 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

[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.

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 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[72]
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 Margie[73] 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?

[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.

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 Nat[74] 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 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

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

[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.

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 flies[76].

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 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 Faye[78]'s.

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[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 .

[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.

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?

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

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I L O V E Y O U

Monroe, Louisiana[80]
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…

[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*.

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

I was scheduled to go to the Pressure Chamber[81] 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 resultant gas cloud. Of course it is a mild concentration just enough to acquaint us with the different odors of different gasses. For instance, Lewisite[82] smells like geraniums, Chlorpierini[83] smells like fly paper or licorice, and Phosgene[84] 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

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[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.

[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.

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. Nat[85]'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?

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

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

Monroe, Louisiana[86]
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*.

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

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 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 PT[87] 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.

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.

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[87] Physical Training

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[88]
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 Boomey[89]. 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.

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[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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[90]
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 Nat[91]'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 USO[92] 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 <u>will</u> fly Butch, and before you know it

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[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 PX[93] 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 Faye[94]'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 subject[95] 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.

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[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

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, 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 PT[96] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[97]
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, Natie[98] 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

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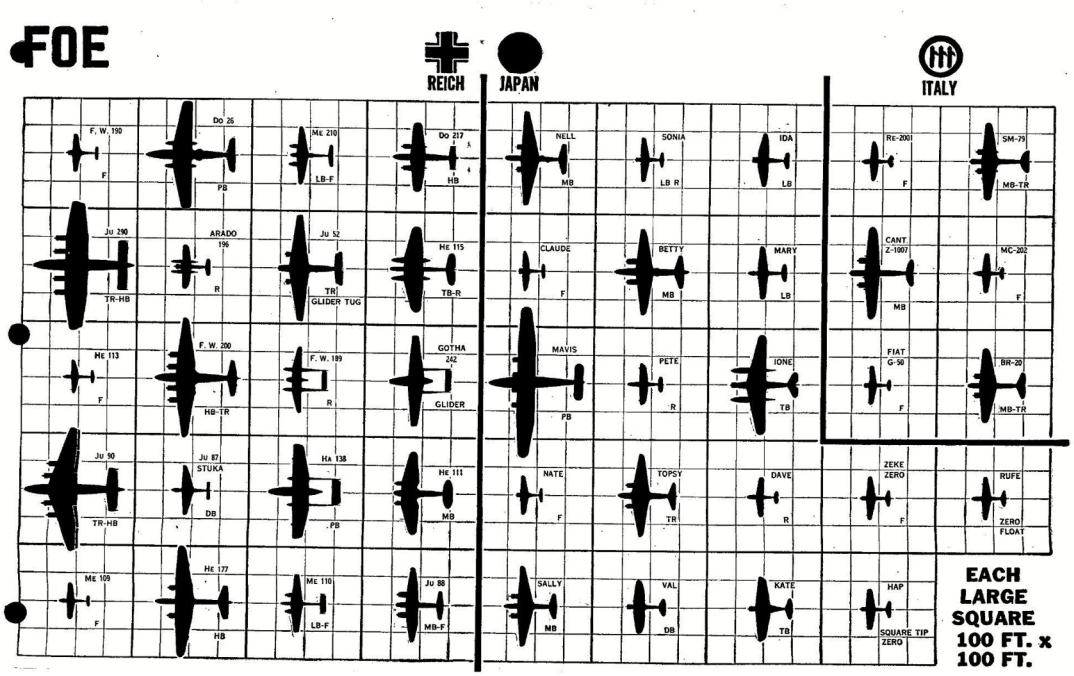
[97] Both pages are written on embossed stationery with the US Army Air Forces letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

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

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 connections with each other, and the work is honestly becoming very interesting[99].



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 thirty[100].

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

---

[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.

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 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-first[101] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

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

Monroe, Louisiana[102]
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 Norman[103] 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!

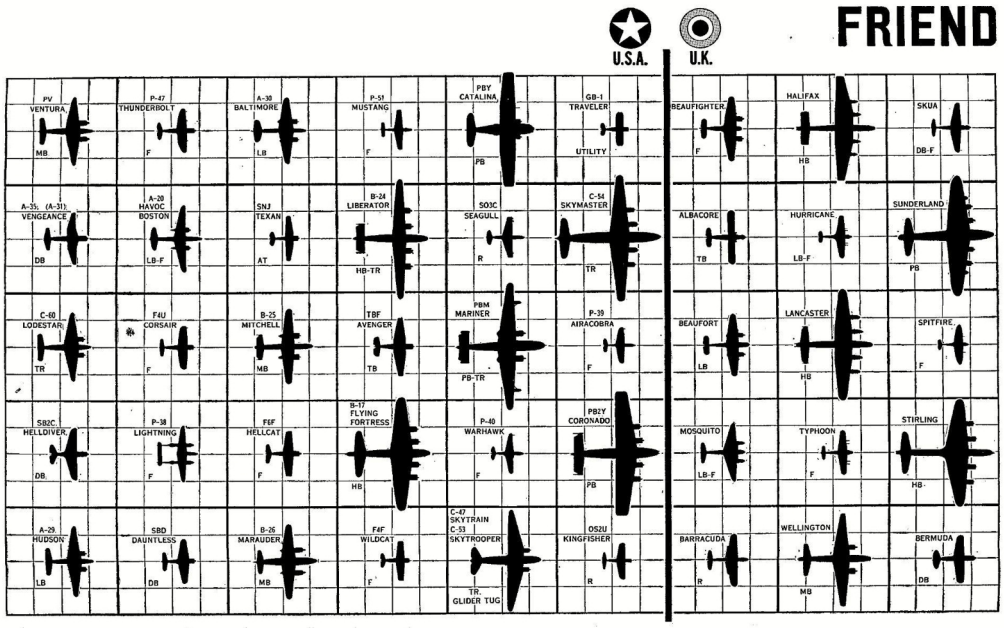
I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[106]
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 TO[107] 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 Nat[108] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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.

gettyimages
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(G-472E-593N-SF)(7-16-43-9P-6")
1447171698 VIEWS
SELMAN FIELD, LA

Monroe, Louisiana[109]
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* school[110], 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.

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[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.

I met Charlotte[112] and Bob Greenberg in town last night and she said that when a definite date for your arrival is set… let her know and 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 PT[113]. 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 MP[114]s, 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 Mitch[115] and a few of the fellows at the Cadet Club and being in his usual good humor he cheered me up some.

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[112] Charlotte Greenberg is a close friend of Sylvia's, whose husband Bob is finishing his training at Selman Field.
[113] Physical Training
[114] Military Police
[115] Mitch is a fellow cadet, and barracks-mate at Selman Field

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 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[116]
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 WAAC[117] 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

[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.

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 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 $P=2\pi\sqrt{\square}$ [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

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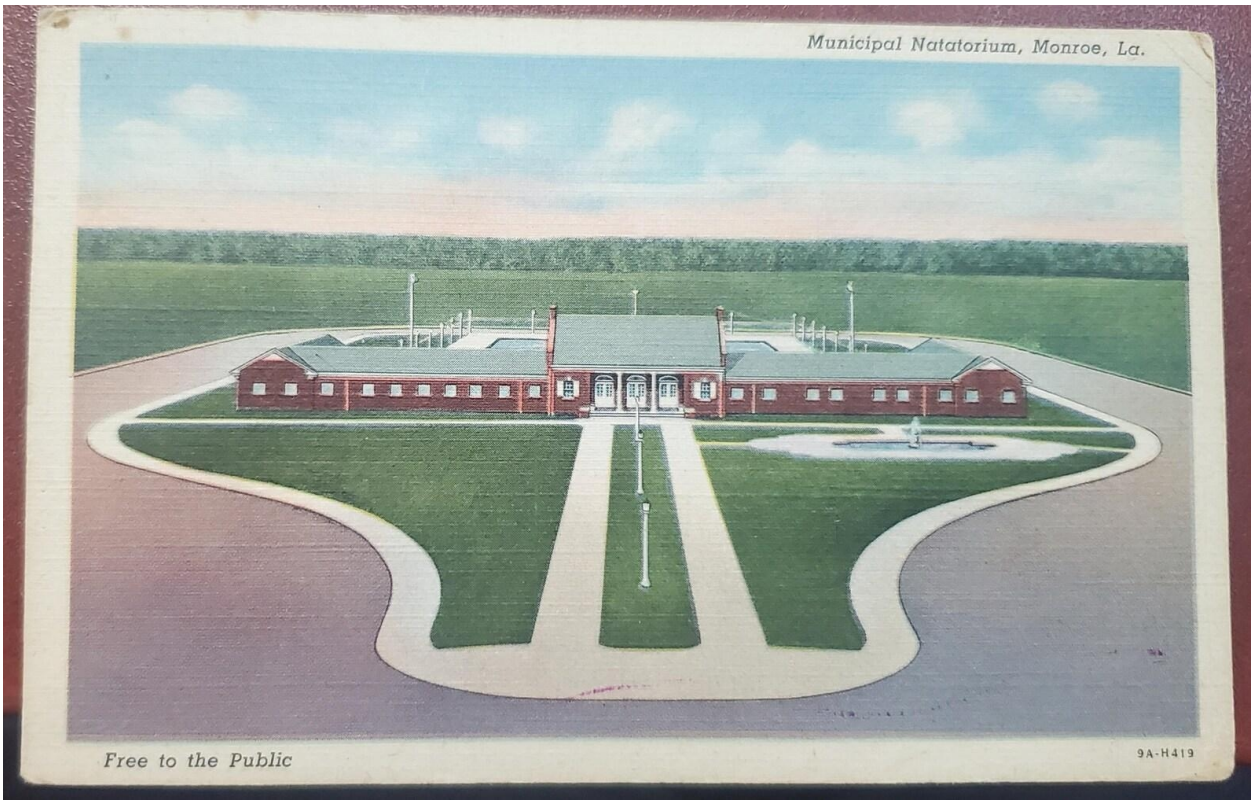
[118] This equation, represented as F = ma, is Newton's Second Law of Motion, which states that the force acting on an object is equal to the mass of that object multiplied by its acceleration.

[119] The formula for centripetal force, where Fc 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 (o**f** 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.

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 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

Wednesday - 3/st

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 'smart' boyfriend got the second highest mark in the class, ninety-eight, just about eighteen

onroe, Louisiana[122]
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 anniversary[123] 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 PX[124] 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.

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[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 Annette[125]. 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 Newton[126] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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

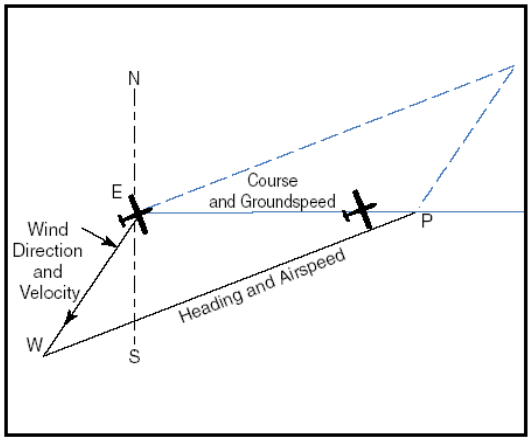
Missing: Anne Ginsburg

Monroe, Louisiana[127]
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 Triangles[128] of Velocity, a part of the subject I didn't fully understand so I had to do quite a bit of cramming[129].

[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 athletics[131].

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 <u>scorchers</u>. 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

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

[131] Basketball or Lenny's favorite, baseball.

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.

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

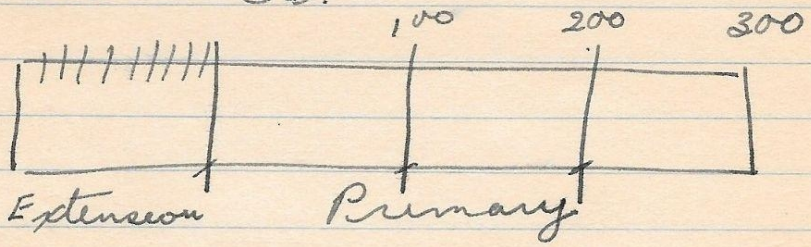
MAPS + CHARTS

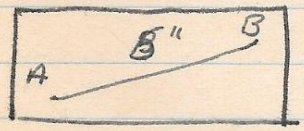
T.M. 21-26
1-205
5-230

W + F = 1" = 1 mile

$RF = \frac{1}{1000} = \frac{MD}{G.D.}$ pure number

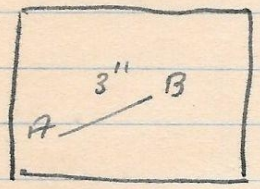
G. S.





$RF = \frac{1}{10,000} = \frac{5}{G.D}$ G.D = 50,000

Known

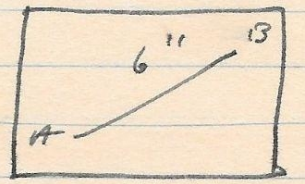


$R.F. = \frac{MD}{GD}$

$\frac{1}{20000} = \frac{3}{GD}$

GD = 60000"

unknown



$RF = \frac{6''}{60,000}$

$RF = \frac{1}{10\,000}$

Monroe, Louisiana[132]
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 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.

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

I received a letter from Boomey[133] 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 Fortress[134]. 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[135]
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 Times[136] 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

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[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 Lou[137]. 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 computers[138] 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-pilot[139] 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.

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[138] Pictured above

[139] Pictured on next page

So Natie[140] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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 Lou[141]
[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 brother[142]. 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 Kilmer[143]. It is now well over four months since I arrived at this post and my status hasn't changed one

[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.

iota. Your guess is as good as mine as to when I'll see active duty as a 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 TO[144], 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

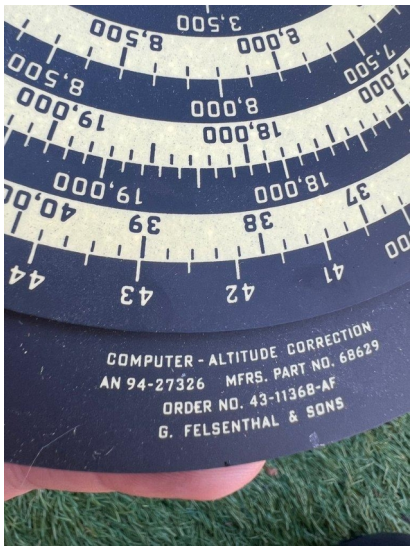
[144] Tactical Officer

Monroe, Louisiana[145]
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 computer[146] today and the thing does everything but cook!

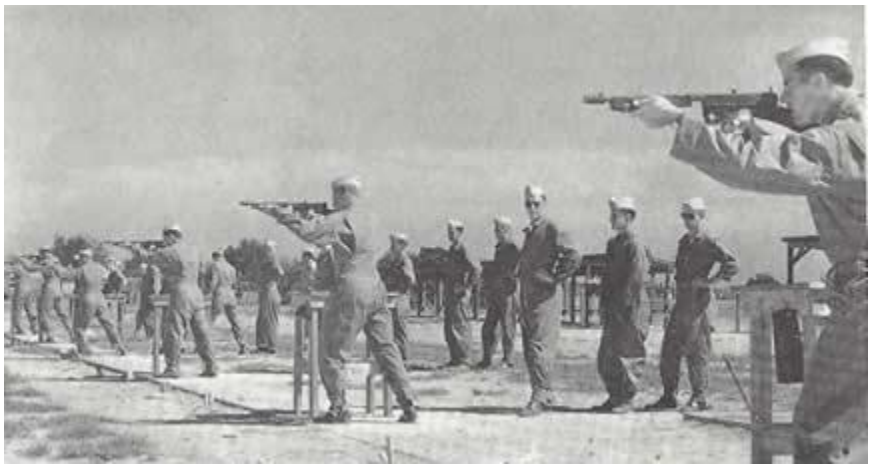
Simply by moving the dials on it, we can add, subtract, multiply, divide or work out various problems in less time than it takes to talk about it.

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 night[147], 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[148]
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 *OD*s.

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

[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.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[150]
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 Code[151]. 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.

[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.

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 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 Memorial[153]. It gave me a 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 computer[154] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

[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

[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, Louisiana[155]
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 Code[156]. 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[157]
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.

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

As you can see from the clipping I'll not be without my Seder[158] this Pesach[159]. 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 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 article[160] 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

[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.

Advanced Training[161]. 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 PX[163] 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.

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

[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

April, 1943 45

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 Colin Kelly blasted the Jap battleship, Haruna, in December, 1941 and dove his Fortress to immortality, five crew members managed to bail out. They owe their lives to a serious young lieutenant who crawled through the inferno of a blazing oxygen system to release a jammed escape hatch. He explained his second-degree burns.

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

In every theatre of operations, "Maps," the newest full-fledged member of the aerial combat team, is chalking up his score of glory. Cool heroism in the face of danger is part of Air Force 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 ships there—and got them back. Their plotting boards meant success or failure for a mission as much as a bombardier's aim or a pilot's engines in skirting "flak." Locating a Jap pinpoint on the ocean through solid overcast from five miles up; setting a pilot back on course after minutes of tortured dogfighting; back-seat driving a crippled bomber to Shangri-La with only the last gallon of fuel between you and the briny—these are vital air-war jobs today. But they don't make headlines.

Occasionally in his unassuming way "Maps" does crash the front page. When the scrapping starts he lays aside his bubble sextant in a padded nest and lines machine gun sights on a Zero or a Messer's tail. The man with the briefcase sea double in bombs too, and between bombing runs, reader first aid to the chap he's replacing. One navigator at Dieppe, who had never handled a big plane's controls before, brought the ship home himself instead of hitting the silk when the pilot and co-pilot both became casualties.

If you are a navigator you report at the ready room a few minutes early. Out on the flight line the ground crew is gassing your ship—a long-range bomber already loaded with its deadly eggs. You get your "Jimmy" from the meteorologist, a carbon copy of the weather report. By the time you've finished studying it your pilots have 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 engines are silent as you walk onto the field. Mechanics are "topping-off"—filling the tanks with the last drop they can hold. You wriggle your shoulders against the "chute straps. You're hot and excited. Never mind. Flying logs will be easy at 22,000, and that heartpounding 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 bombsight. The belly gunner has crawled into the ball turret . . . The engines are revving . . . Two ships of the squadron have already taken off . . . You stick a fresh log sheet to your desk with a couple of adhesive tape tabs . . . You jot down the time, 18:57—6:57 p.m. on the Array's twenty-four-hour clock . . . You're in the air now . . . The pilot circles once as you give him his compass course . . . He won't change course now until you instruct him to do so . . .

Navigators can't nap. When you left the airdrome your Sister showed wind speed and direction at 5,000 feet. It's changed upstairs. 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 rowboat does when you row it across a river. The effects of wind on true course and speed must be allowed for in the form of drift corrections. Your pilot cooperates in this well-understood routine by flying 45° off course for a few seconds while you tinker with dials and watch the landmaps slide through the parallel lines of your drift meter. A second leg is flown at right angles for a few seconds. You compute the drift . . . consult charts again . . . put the pilot on an altered course to bring him over the target at the exact moment called for by your mission.

Time is the fourth dimension in the navigator's air ocean. If you reach your objective ahead of your squadron you'll spoil the show. 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-leg on this mission. The two flights of the squadron take different routes. You won't meet your buddies until you're over the target area. It's up to you to keep that rendezvous.

You bend to your plotting board . . . Read the compass heading . . . Correct for deviation. It varies on each course . . . You've got your magnetic heading . . . Now correct for variation . . . Jot the true heading on the log sheet . . . Work your double drift on scratch paper . . . Compute the true course . . . Figure the ground speed . . . Take a quick glance at your second-setting wristwatch, badge of the navigator . . . Now what was that last position? . . . Your computer is out of its case and working overtime . . . "Lend your ugly hat out your computer!" . . . You ponder the wisdom of the navigator's motto . . . Time to give the pilot a course correction and the estimated time of arrival.

There's no leading for "Maps." Flying straight and level above the clouds you get a celestial "fix" to supplement dead reckoning. You sight Sirius through the sextant telescope and bring it down until it touches the bubble . . . Now you correct your DR . . . That bumpy air at 19:12 must have thrown you off . . . You've been flying over an hour . . . 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 roars ahead.

You knock off for a minute for a pressure job—replacing oil panels. Must fountain pens play too many tricks at high altitudes and ink writing is alergic to sea water . . . Only four minutes to go now. You're five miles above enemy territory. You warn the pilots and the bombardier. Gotta come down a little.

Suddenly the sonic detectors have picked you up and the ack-ack starts. Things happen quickly now. The whole wharf area of the enemy-held shipping port comes alive with mushrooms of fire. Ack-ack seen from the air is thrilingly beautiful—until you realize it's aimed at you. But the gunners haven't get the range and your flares are blinding them. Your pilot sideslips out of the searchlights in a clever maneuver and the beams go groping off in the sky. Pyrotechnics of a different hue are beginning to light up the docks

Continued on page 155

Lockheed P-38 Lightning Fighters Polish Off Nazi Bombers

FROM twin-boomed fuselage stream across the sky with a whistling roar, flying in echelon formation. Each fighter pilot brings an enemy plane into his gunsight and pumps a thick stream of lead into the elevated target, which falls—a mass of flaming debris. No airplane, our Army declares, can withstand the full firepower of the Lockheed Lightning. This plane was designed as a high-altitude interceptor to fire upon enemy bombers at their greatest heights and destroy them before they can reach their objectives. But the P-38 proved remarkable beyond all expectations in the actual test of battle and so far from the all-around designation of "fighter." The fastest and highest-flying military airplane in the world, it is officially certified with "speed in excess of 400 miles per hour and an exceedingly high rate of climb." It is also possessed of long range. All armament (including machine guns and cannon) is concentrated in the nose of the pilot's cockpit. Its main starting features will remain military secrets until such time as the Axis has learned them—the hard way. Official announcement place the battle-testing area of the P-38 in the Aleutians, where they have made many fighter escorts and recently squadrons of bombers over Kiska. On one of these escort trips, two Lightnings brought down two four-engined Japanese flying boats, according to Lt. Gen. H. H. Arnold, AAF Chief. And Lt. Col. K. H. Gibson, in command of bomber operations in Alaska, reported that a single flight of P-38s destroyed five Zeros and one four-engined flying boat in a single fire. Still another Army account relates that in one "photo-hunting" of Kiska, four Zeros were shot down and an estimated 300 Japanese soldiers were killed or wounded. By last October the tone of the communiques had changed, for P-38s were no longer encountering Zero resistance. It is unofficially conjectured that the same reluctance to fight has been encountered in Europe. The Lightnings have drawn lots on several fighter and bomber escorts in Europe, when the Nazis simply refused to come up and join battle. News dispatches from Tunisia and from other Allied theaters of war mention the boldness of the P-38s, how they have proved their fire-power greater than the mighty German equivalent (the Me-109) and that Lightning gunners have destroyed many small Axis ships, tanks and transport vehicles.

Monroe, Louisiana[164]
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

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

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 training[165] (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.

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 <u>that</u> afternoon… I had almost given up hope of ever having it. Have I ever told you that I love you so <u>very</u> 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.

---

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

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[167]
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

[166] a wet mark, is seen
[167] Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

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*.

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 USO[168] 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 MP[169]s stop the buses and search everybody for liquor. The search is a very thorough one and they get

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[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 PX[170] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[171]
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].

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[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 Computer[174] work.

This computer is more or less a circular slide rule plus one hundred other things[175]. Because of the many operations[176] 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 air[177].

Today, we learned how to keep our second type of *log* (there are three in all[178]) 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 27th[179] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

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[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, Louisiana[180]
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 Seder[181] 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 Charlotte[182] 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 CQ[184] (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]

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[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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

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

Monroe, Louisiana[187]
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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[188]
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 Hope[189].

Only nine hundred will be able to see the broadcast[190] - 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 way[191]. 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

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[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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

"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—Bobe 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, Louisiana[192]
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 broadcast[193] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[194]
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 graduation[195], 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-flight[197]. 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

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[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 parade[198] 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 graduation[199], but… that will be… different. In the first place, you'll be there[200] and it will mark… the end of my schooling and the beginning of actual work.

The graduation exercises were short[201] and to the point which pleased us no end. After a speech by the Commandant of Pre-flight[202], which like a lady's skirt was short enough to be interesting but long enough to cover

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[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.

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 Advanced[204]

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[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.

[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 Computer[205], 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.

COMPUTER: ALTITUDE CORRECTION
TYPE AN 5837-1
(Same as Type C-2 Except with Fluorescent Markings)
Manufacturer's Part Number 68629
ORDER NO. 43-11368-AF
G. FELSENTHAL & SONS
PRESSURE ALTITUDE AT GROUND IN FEET
MEAN TEMPERATURE °C
INDICATED ALTITUDE IN FEET
TRUE ALTITUDE IN FEET
COMPUTER - ALTITUDE CORRECTION
AN 94-27326 MFRS. PART NO. 68629
ORDER NO. 43-11368-AF
G. FELSENTHAL & SONS

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[206]
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 Advanced[207] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[208]
Monday
[May 3, 1943]

Dearest Butch

My first day of Advanced[209] 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 Pullman[210], 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 Joe[211] (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

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[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 system[212] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[213]
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 Pullman[214]: 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

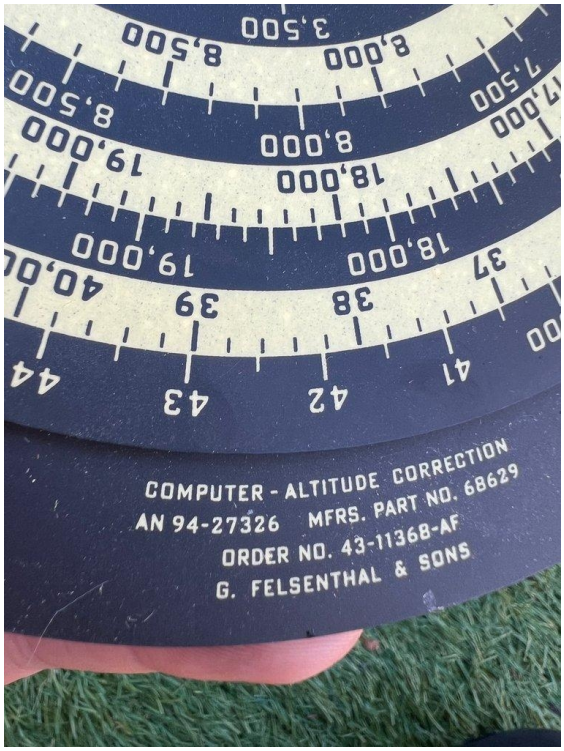
Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[215]
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 Computer[216] 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.

[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.

Syl, have I mentioned in any of my previous letters that friend Ebner[217] 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 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 obnoxious[218]. In the PX[219] 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 student[220] 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

---

[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.

[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.

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 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 Margie[221] tonight so I'll say goodnight now.

Regards to the family and everybody else

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Still no stamps[222] - 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, Louisiana[223]
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 Hotel[224], 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… Jonas[225], 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, Natie[226] 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 Greenberg[228] everyday as we both… get in the line, waiting for a place to wash.

Speaking of Natie, it is very ironic, the way things[229] 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

[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.

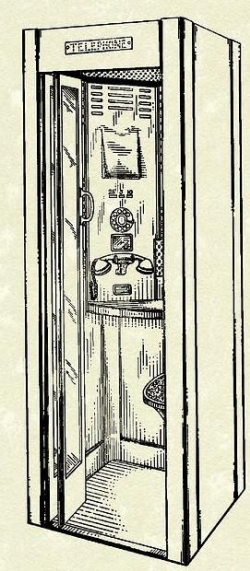
I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[230]
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 Wednesdays[231]. 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

[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.

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 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 Charlotte[232]'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 Ebner[233] 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.

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[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.

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[234]
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

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

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 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

[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.

Monroe, Louisiana[236]
Thursday
[May 13, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Because of the schedule[237] 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.

Classes[238] 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

[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.

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.

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 instruments[239] 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

[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.

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 *Retreat* and yesterday I was warned to get one very soon or suffer the consequences[241]. So I 'dood' it.

Received a letter from Boomey[242] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

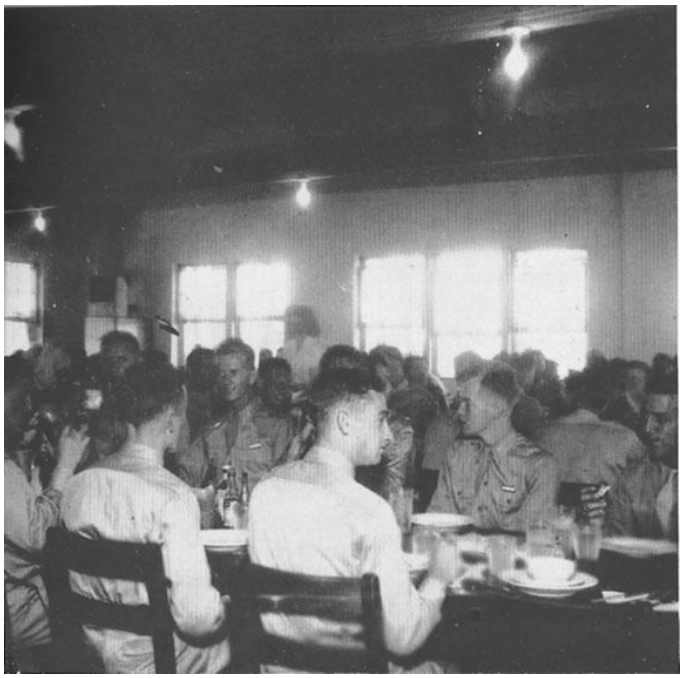
[241] The military training consists of close order drill which tends to improve military carriage and to teach discipline. Each man is drilled in the elements of military courtesy and receives actual practice in firing the 45 caliber pistol.

[242] Adolf (Boomey) Siegel is a friend of Sylvia's who is also in the cadet training program.

Monroe, Louisiana[243]
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, Nat[244] 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

[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.

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.

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[245]
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-post[246] 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.

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[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

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 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.

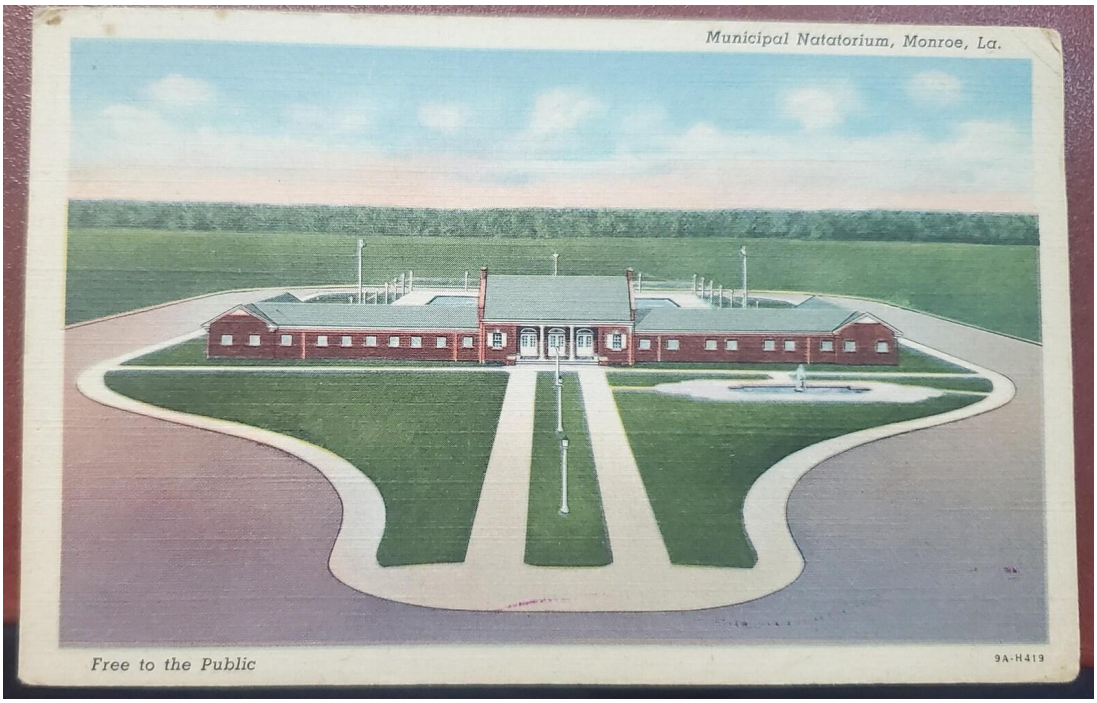
The municipal pool opens up today and after I dash off a few lines to the folks, I'm going out there possibly for a dip.

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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[247]
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 Nat[248], who was in the weather service before coming here,

[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.

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.

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[249]
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].

Classwork is just about the same as usual - we learn something new every day and spend quite a bit of time reviewing our Computer[252] work.

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[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.

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

This computer is more or less a circular slide rule plus one hundred other things[253]. Because of the many operations[254] 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 air[255].

Today, we learned how to keep our second type of *log* (there are three in all[256]) 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 27th[257] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

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[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, Louisiana[258]
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 classroom[259].

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 Nat[261] 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 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.

---

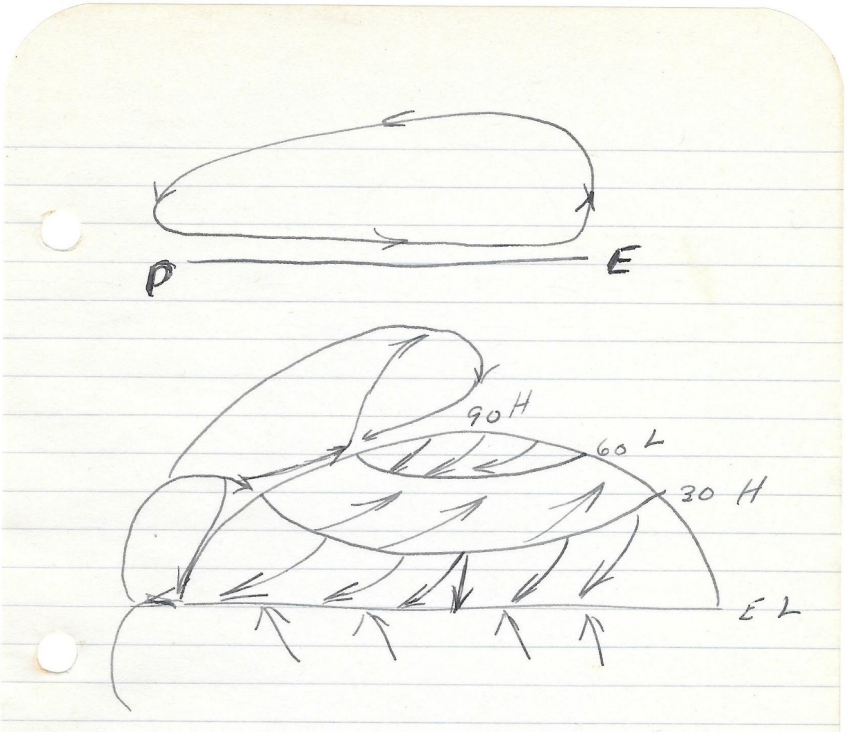
[258] Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

[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.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Lenny's notes from his Meteorology class at Selman Field

Monroe, Louisiana[262]
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

[262] Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in an Air Mail envelope.

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 Charlotte[263] 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 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;

[263] Charlotte Lipman is the wife of fellow Selman Field cadet Jonas I. Lipman.

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, Jonas[264] 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 Ebner[265] 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 WAAC[266]s, 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[267]
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 Pilotage[268] 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 log[269]. 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 Claire[270]'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

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[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 Pullman[271], 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 St[272], 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. Nat[273]'s wife moved into the same neighborhood yesterday, Joe[274]'s wife lives there, Charlotte[275] lives very near there and Jonas[276] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

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[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, Louisiana[277]
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 tours[278] 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

[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.

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.

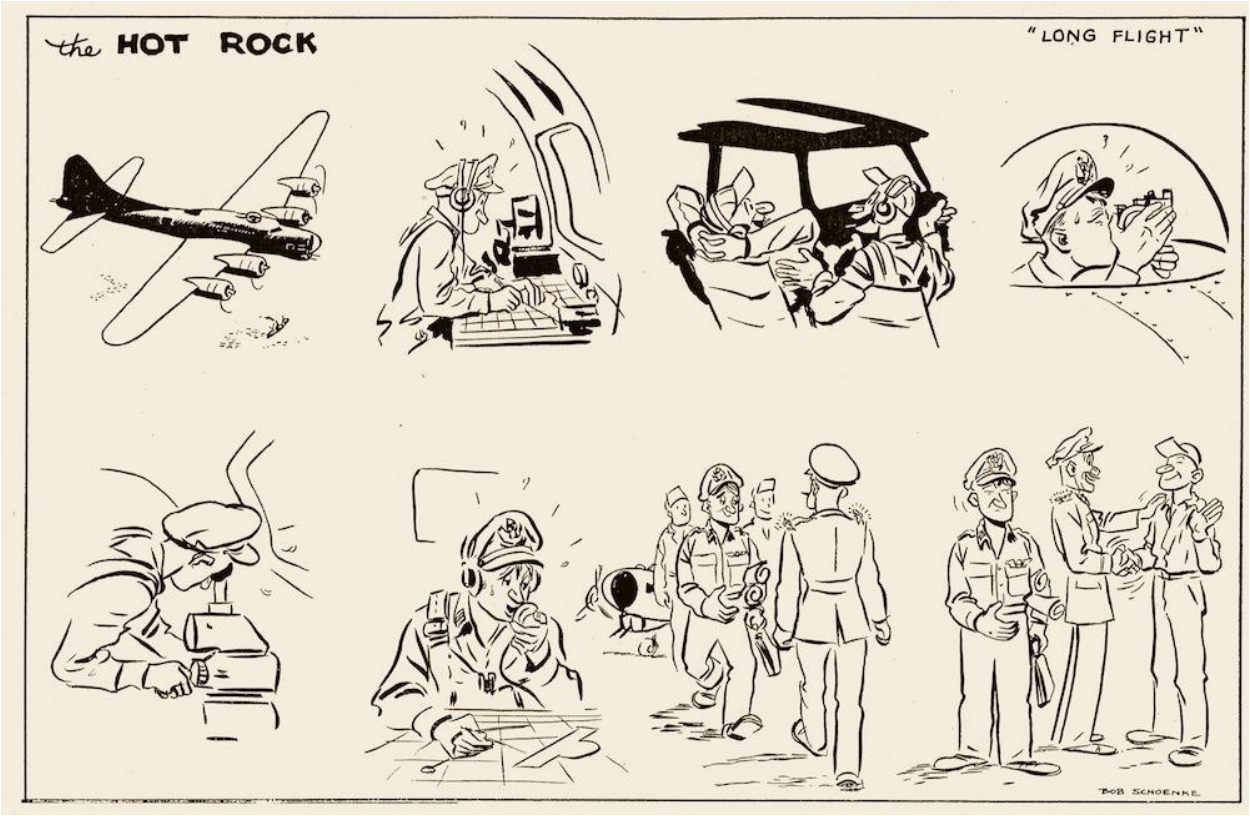
Don't you worry about not being able to see me during the week because of my studying. When you get here, things will work out, so that we'll see each other almost every night, except if I'm on a night flight.

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Monroe, Louisiana[279]
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.

[279] Written on Selman Field stationery with an embossed letterhead and mailed in an Air Mail envelope.

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 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 Jonas[280] 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 Joe[281] 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

[280] Jonas I. Lipman also trains at Selman Field in Monroe, Louisiana.

[281] Joseph L. Levine also trains at Selman Field.

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.

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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[282]
Monday
[May 31, 1943]

Dearest Butch,

Another week on the merry go round[283] 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 Jonas[284] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
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, Louisiana[285]
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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Monroe, Louisiana[287]
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

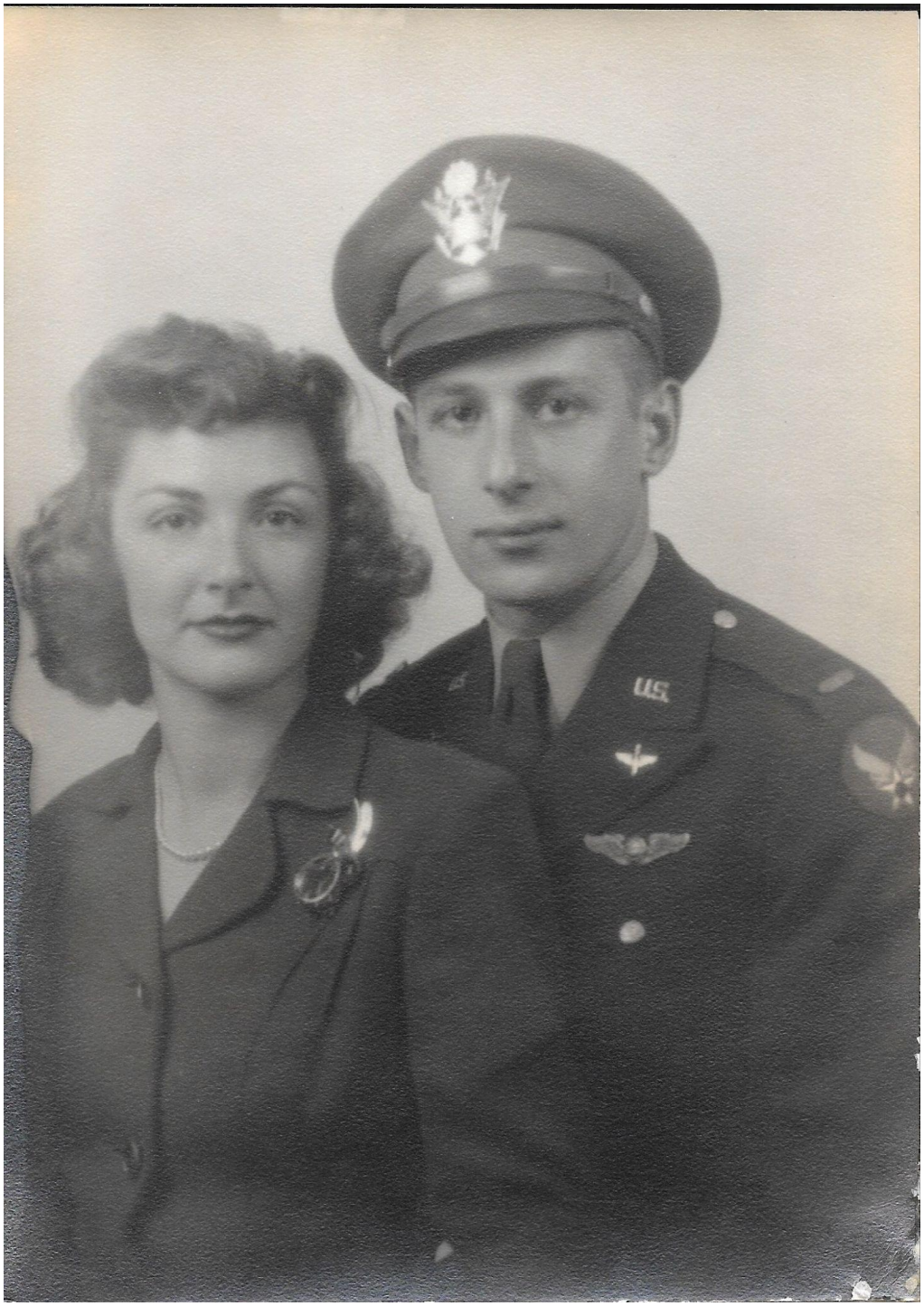
Goodnight my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
(xxxxx)
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.

V V Hachom

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 Monroe, Louisiana.

Three Witnesses:

Nathan Lichtenstein	Leonard Levy
Joseph L. Levins	Sylvia Geetter
Jonas L. Lipman	G. K. Gurich, Rabbi

(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 Navigator[288]

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.

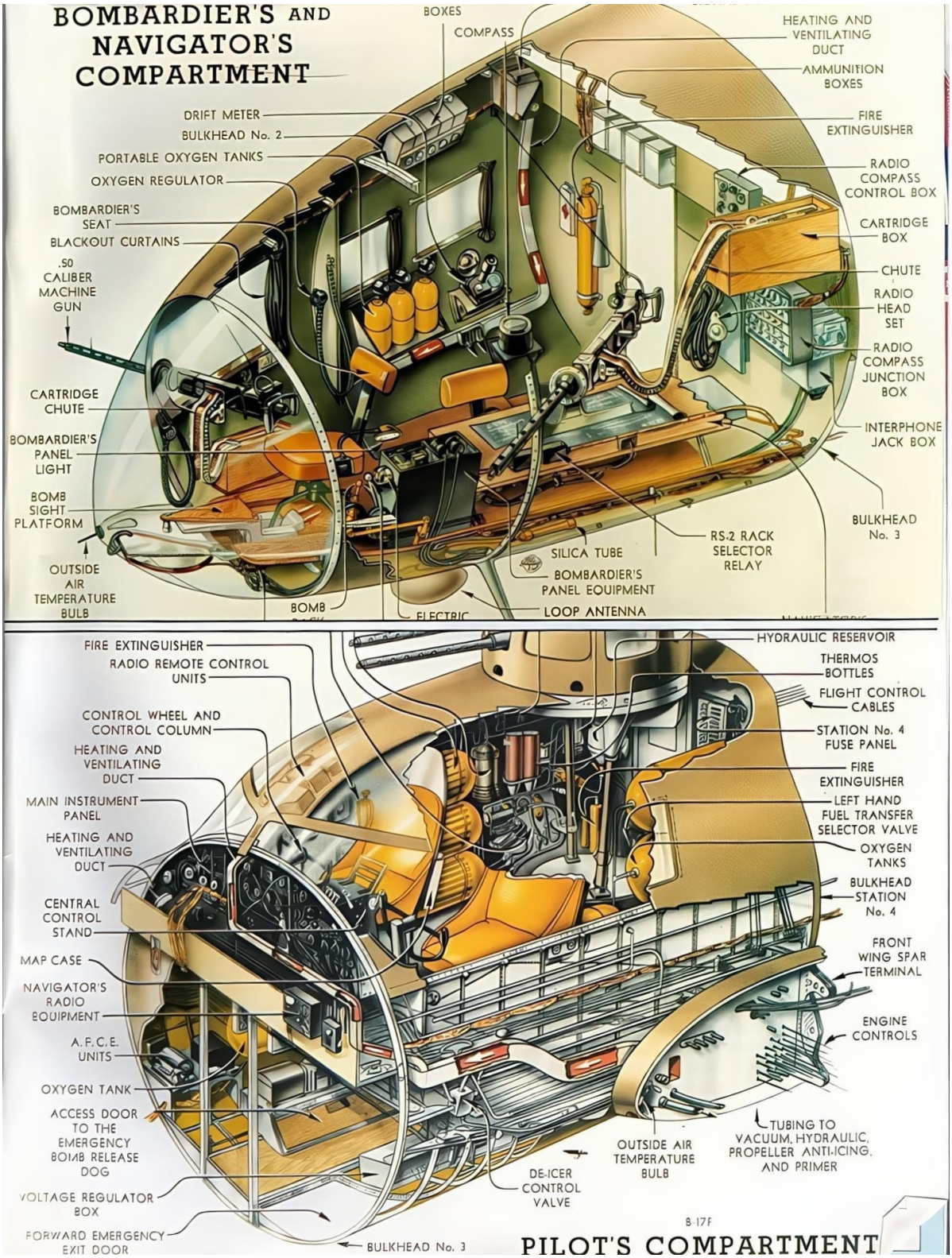
Navigation Training - Pilotage

[288] https://timeandnavigation.si.edu/navigating-air/navigation-at-war/wartime-navigator

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 ETAs[289] 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.

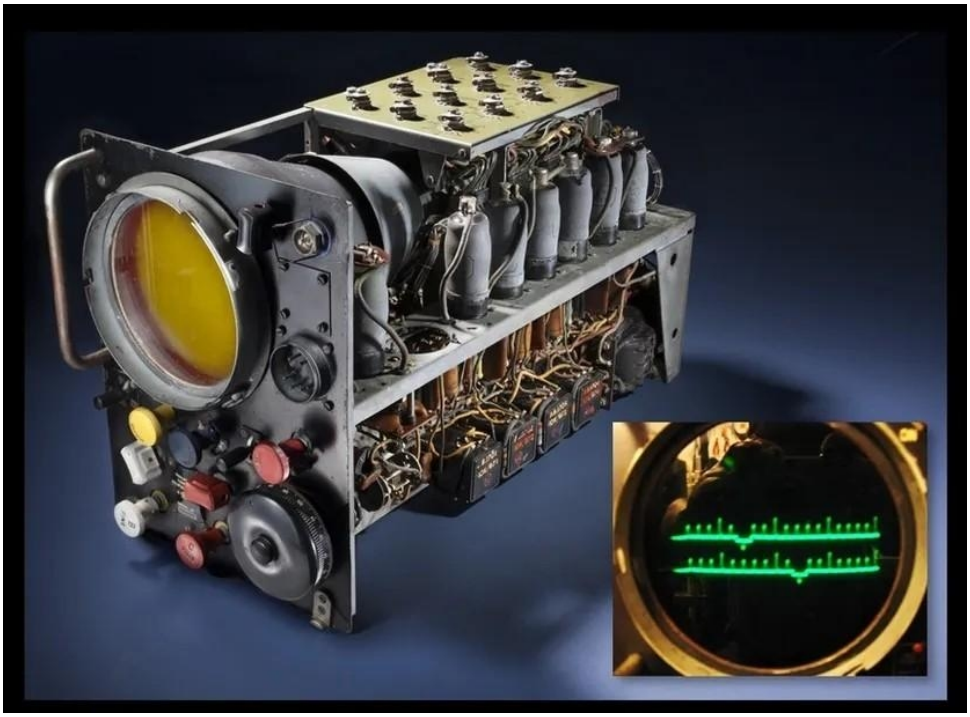
The A-10A Sextant

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

By 1943, Allied pilots in Europe were using the medium-range GEE hyperbolic system for all-weather navigation. The system works by measuring the time delays between signals from the two stations. By tuning in different pairs, the navigator could plot lines of position in the form of hyperbolae (curves) that intersect to give a precise location.

The R65 APN-9 in a Boeing B-17G

Flight Officer Appointment

Selman Field - Monroe, Louisiana
August 20, 1943

HEADQUARTERS
Army Air Forces Eastern Flying Training Command
Maxwell Field, Alabama

20 August 1943

PERSONNEL ORDERS)
No. 39)

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 Regualtion 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 (Last name) L. (First name) (Middle initial) (Army serial number)

Permanent home address 108 (Number and street or rural route) Hartford (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. E. 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, 19 43

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*) 16—31917-1

93109

ENLISTED RECORD OF

Levy, (Last name) Leonard (First name) (NMI) (Middle initial), 31251913 (Army serial number), A/C (Grade)

Born in Hartford, in the State of Connecticut

~~Enlisted~~ or inducted [1] 24 November, 19 42, at Hartford, Connecticut.

When ~~enlisted~~ or 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. to None

R. H. BRINKLEY Capt. F. D. Agent Finance Officer

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 AC-AUS

Character Excellent *me* Periods of active duty [6] None

Remarks [7] No time lost under 107th AW.

Print of Right Thumb

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—508689

Document Provided to State of Connecticut - World War II Bonus

93-109

S-26674

Army of the United States

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

CHARLES R. BOWMAN,
Major, Air Corps,
Executive Officer.

W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 55
January 22, 1943

Flight Officer Assignment

Selman Field - Monroe, Louisiana
September 4, 1943

HEADQUARTERS
ARMY AIR FORCES SOUTHEAST TRAINING CENTER
MAXWELL FIELD
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

In reply
refer to

201- Levy, Leonard 4 September 1943

SUBJECT: Appointment as Flight Officer.

TO : Flight Officer Leonard Levy, A - T- 61298
Army of the United States,
Selman Field, Monroe, Louisiana.

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:

Philip Boardman Jr.

Adjutant General.

Inclosure:
Form for Oath of Office.

Pre-flight Aviation School Graduation

Selman Field - Monroe, Louisiana
September 4, 1943

Pre-flight Aviation School Graduation

F/O Leonard (Lenny) Levy's USAAF Insignia[292]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

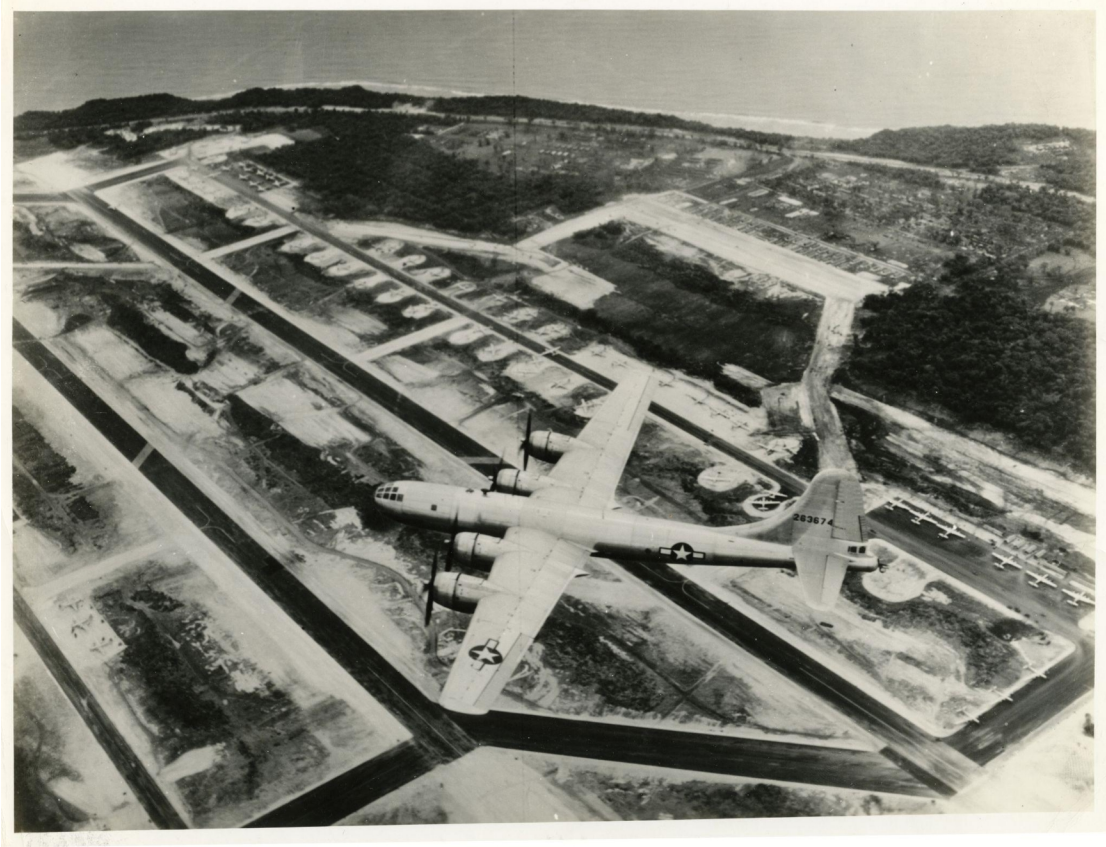
CLASS OF FORTY-FOUR-6

ARMY AIR FORCES NAVIGATION SCHOOL
SELMAN FIELD, MONROE, LOUISIANA

Alexandria, Louisiana[293]
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 PX[294], 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 base[295] 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.

Pyote[296] 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 Pullman[297] 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 Central[298]. 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, Louisiana[299]
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 suit[300] (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 beginning[301] - 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 call[302], I'll dare saying

I do love you
xxxxxxxxxx
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
2. Jacket Insert, Heated
3. Trouser
4. Trouser Insert, Heated
5. Helmet
6. Shoes, Felt
7. Shoe Insert, Heated
8. Glove, Heated
9. Rayon Glove Inserts
10. A-12 Mittens
11. Scarf
12. Lead Cord
13. Woolen Shirt
14. Light Socks
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

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."

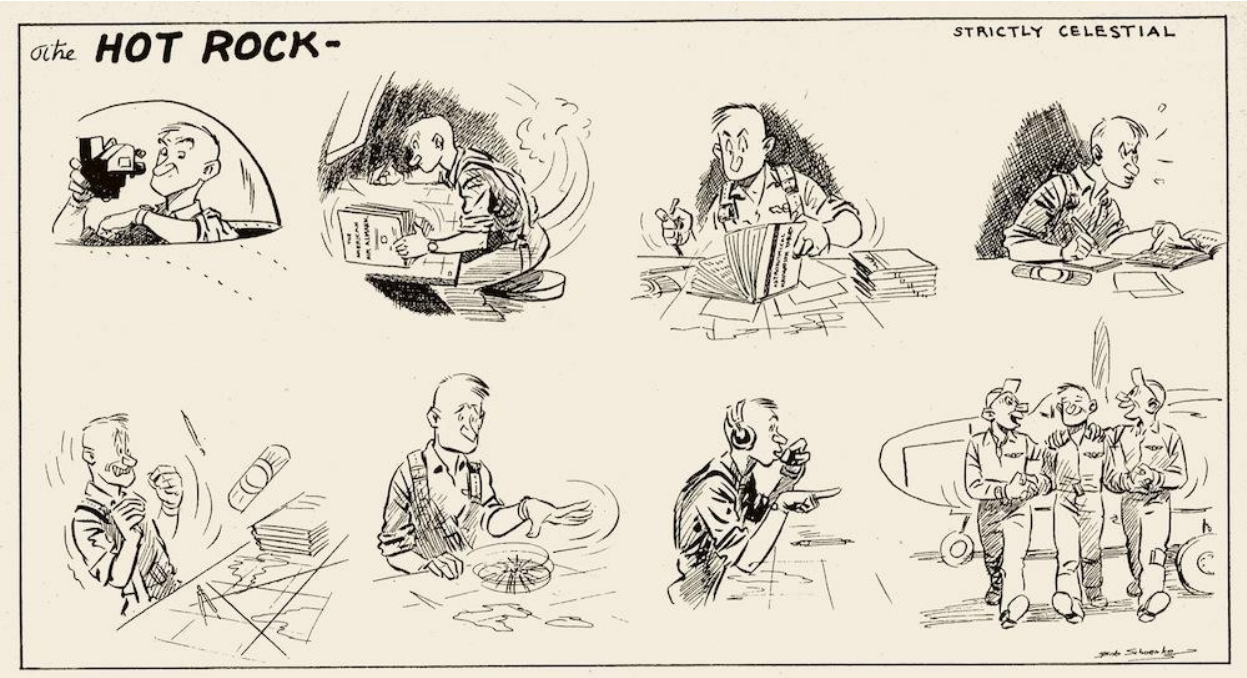
Gus attended Lockport High School in Lockport, New York, a small town near the iconic Niagara Falls. A photo of the young Gus appears in the Lockport High School yearbook, in which the sixteen-year-old Italian-American is described as "precise" and "shy." He also participated in the Lockport High School 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.



Butch and Lenny

A POW Love Story

Part 2: Flying in the Air Corps (1943-44)

by Sylvia Geetter Levy and Lt. Leonard Levy

Edited by Alan Neal Levy

Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana[1]
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 3:15 yesterday afternoon. We felt pretty good when we saw the train as it was made of eight Pullman cars[2] 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.

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[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 US Office of Defense Transportation contracted with Pullman-Standard Car Company to build 2,400 troop sleepers.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST July 10, 1943

"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.

[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.

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.

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 Lt[4]. 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 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.

---

[4] Lieutenant

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[5] 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
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

[5] Adolf (Boomey) Siegel is a 1938 classmate of Sylvia Geetter Levy's from Weaver High School, one of three high schools in Hartford, Connecticut. Lenny Levy graduated from Weaver in 1936.

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.

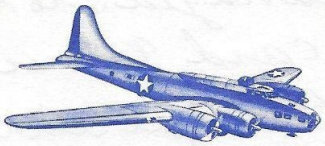
Love
Lenny

The address[6] stands for Air Force Preflight School (Bombardier-Navigator). The 43 -12 stands for the fact that we are the 12th class of the year 1943.

Love,

Lenny

[6] Lenny is describing his new address at Selman Field



ARMY AIR BASE
GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

Sunday

Dearest wife —

Arrived here about three hours ago, and after getting a place to sleep, bedding to sleep in and some food, I sent you the telegram which you have no doubt received by now. The trip here was very uneventful — we left at nine that morning and got into St. Louis at twelve the next day (I was all set to give you the surprise of your life had we gotten there sooner) We stayed there about three hours and then went on our way. Outside of the food and the usual card games I have nothing to say about the trip. To say that the food was lousy would be mild — and it cost us a dollar

Grand Island, Nebraska[7]

Sunday
[November 28, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Arrived here about three hours ago and after getting a place to sleep, bedding to sleep in, and some food, I sent you the telegram... The trip here was very uneventful; we left at nine that morning and got into St Louis at twelve, the next day. (I was all set to give you the surprise of your life had we gotten there sooner.) We stayed there [for] about three hours and then went on our way. Outside of the food and the usual card games, I have nothing to say about the trip... I managed to stay away from the card games until this morning, then got into a poker game and won close to fifty dollars. Just as soon as I hear when we are to get paid, I'll probably send you a money order. Oh yes! - our sleeping accommodations were very good - one man to a berth, with Rock[8], another fellow, and myself having a private drawing room to ourselves, with me in the lower berth not bad, eh?

Sweetheart, I miss you terribly coming down here. I lie in bed just thinking of you, taking time out only to look at your pictures, which I had put up just as soon as we boarded the train. But you left me just as I wanted you to - just a little tears, but not too much. Just remember, all this isn't going to take long - just a few 'minutes' - and then I'll be back home with you.

I can't write anything about this place because I haven't seen any of it. We have a Formation at seven-thirty, and after that I plan on taking a walk around to see what's what - providing it stops snowing.

Don't send any letters here - we won't be here over a week -

And so my sweet, goodnight until tomorrow -

I love you
xxxxxxxxx
Lenny

[7] Written on embossed stationery with Army Air Baser, Grand Island Nebraska letterhead in a plain envelope.

[8] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

Friday - November 26 [1943]

Darling ~

Here I am on my way home. I can't begin to tell you how happy I am that you got a Pullman[9] ticket for me. I guess we will be pulling into Monroe[10] soon - It's five o'clock now.

Speaking of Monroe it certainly does bring to mind the happiness we had there. Despite the roaches, ants and the sickening heat we experienced there, it was heaven for me. I do love you so much my darling - everything will have something that I… associate with you, and.. it will only bring the pleasantest of memories.

Last night, going home to Francis[11]'s, was about as unhappy a ride as it could be. I guess we were both a couple of real sisters. By the time we got to bed, I was so exhausted that I was thankful to be able to fall right to sleep. I did wake up however once during the night to find myself dangerously close to Francis. As mentioned to you today, it sure will be hard for me to get used to sleeping without you, darn it.

---

[9] The Pullman Company constructed a total of 2400 troop sleepers for the Defense Plant Corporation between 1943-1945. These were put into service mixed with regular passenger equipment and in solid sets on troop trains until the final soldiers returned.

[10] Monroe. Louisiana has been home for Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Levy since they married here on June 12, 1943. If she, as she states, is pulling into Monroe, she must have started her journey at a station near her former apartment, where she and Lenny had their tearful parting.

[11] Francis is Chris Christiani's wife. Chris is the Pilot of Lenny's crew. She, Eleanor Ellison and Sylvia were living with their husbands, in separate apartments in Monroe, Louisiana. Chris Christani and Lenny were in the same crew, while Sam Ellison was in a different crew.

Awoke this morning about nine o'clock, my head ached just a bit, but it wore off and I'm feeling fine now - thank goodness. As I thought - and I'm not being critical - (I'm smiling here) Francis didn't have her things packed, so she had that to do this morning. I went over to Eleanor[12]'s and I had breakfast with her and Sam. When Sam left to go to the field[13] - you know what he did, hon? He kissed me - it didn't take long - honest, it didn't.

We, Eleanor and I, had plenty of time left so we went into town. I got the picture Hon, You were right about my getting it - such a *smatt* husband. Oh yes - there was my final and last *tear*, to be made through Kress [Department store]! As usual, I couldn't go through it without buying something - stationery is one of my purchases. Eleanor bought a pair of play shoes like mine. I told Eleanor that now that I was leaving, she may be able to keep that… budget of hers - without my influence on her. Eleanor came on the train with me.[14] I hated to say goodbye to Eleanor - she has been a very good friend. She bought me a pack of Chesterfield's, four boxes of matches - the reason for all the matches is because she said I never have any on me. Francis came along at the last minute - everything was taken care of. So off we went and now I'm on my way back to Hartford[15].

I am now in bed - The earliest I have gone to bed in a long time. I wonder whether you are in bed now, too - in your own Pullman. Just think we are both doing the same thing tonight. Oh, how I wish we could be traveling together, not each going to separate destinations. Well, honey when this is over we will take a trip together and in every sense of the word, it will be a pleasure trip. Oh my darling I do love you so. I miss you so much already.

Guess what I had for supper? Turkey and cranberry sauce - jealous? The turkey was good, but I don't want to talk about the cranberry sauce - it was terrible. We are riding backwards and I hate that sensation. I guess I'd never be able to fly in an airplane.

Sweetheart, I am very tired now. If you were here I would get in my favorite position and snuggle up so very close. Well darling I can't do it now but soon we will be together again and I will be able to kiss you good night. However, in my heart I have my prayer and wherever you are… I'll say good night. If it were at all possible at this very

---

[12] Eleanor (Kohn) Ellison married Sam Ellison, a friend of Lenny's who also trained with him at Alexandria Army and Air Force Base, and would soon join him at the same Air Base in England.

[13] Selman Field, Monroe Louisiana is where Lenny and Sam have been finishing their Flight Training. Sam is arriving for his morning training, while Lenny and his crew are on alert and awaiting transportation to a new base, which they expect will be a disembarkation point to a base in England to bomb German targets.

[14] for one stop.

[15] Hartford, Connecticut is her hometown, where she will reside with her mother, Adelle Stolper Geetter and sister Sadie Geetter at 148 Magnolia St. in the North End.

moment - I would tell you how much I love you. I do love you so very much my darling and I'll say goodnight just like we used to. Here's a kiss, goodnight darling.

Saturday, November 27

Good morning darling ~

Here it is 7:50 and I am all dressed and waiting to get into St Louis. I had a big breakfast but somehow I'm still hungry. It is very stuffy on the train now. Looking out of the window makes me wish I could have just one whiff of that air. We are in Missouri and we are traveling along the Mississippi. It seems strange to see all the trees barren of their leaves after seeing them still on the trees in Alexandria.

Darling, something funny happened to me last night. Last night I awoke and heard someone trying to pull my curtain apart… the thoughts that ran through my mind… I didn't know what to do. I put the light up and remembered I had a nice long hat pin on my hat and figured that it can be a good bit of protection if properly applied. So I took my trusty hat pin off of my new hat and pulled open the curtain. There was a soldier - rank I couldn't tell, so I closed the curtain and he went away. I went to Francis's berth and told her the story. I got up enough courage (five minutes time - I'm a brave one) and I decided to go to the ladies room to see if I could see who he was in case he was still around. Sure enough along he comes followed by a Porter[16] who had a ladder in his hand and guess what? He got on the upper berth over mine. Golly, you can imagine my relief. No doubt he must have been trying to get into his berth when I heard him. So back to sleep I went, but you can be sure I had the hat pin right in reach.

Honey, I expect the train to pull into St. Louis Station, so I'll continue this later, sweet.

Hello, here I am on the train all set for my ride straight to Springfield, [Massachusetts.] So far darling, everything has been working out fine and the trip has been very comfortable. Francis had trouble in making her connection from here on. She has to get off in Cleveland and the conductor says we should get there about nine tonight.

Darling, I wonder how you are. I hope your trip has been comfortable. If I know you - I bet you slept in the lower berth last night. I hope you left at the time scheduled yesterday because waiting around certainly can get to be very annoying.

[16] One bunk in each Pullman car was dedicated to a porter who rode along with the troops and helped ensure their comfort. Every day, each bunk received fresh sheets and pillowcases in the grand Pullman tradition. The middle and lower bunks converted to daytime seating and each car included four wash basins and two restrooms. Each bunk set included a weapons rack and a place for foot lockers.

We arrived in Missouri and I can see the steel plants and in the distance the city is just covered with heavy smoke. I guess that I'll sit back a while and look at the scenery - whatever there is of it. Darling, I know that my thoughts will all be about you - I do love you so.

I am now in my berth - all nice and comfortable for the night. It is now 9:30 and Francis just got off at our last stop, Cleveland. She changes trains there.

It has been a very uneventful afternoon - I read practically all of the time. It looks like it is pretty cold outside - at least I hope so - it sure will feel good - that's what I get for being a northerner I guess.

Well, tomorrow night at this time I should be home. I will go to see your folk as soon as I can, I know they all are anxious to see me, and get all the latest news.

Well my darling, I guess there's not much more to say now. As soon as I finish writing for tonight I am going to try to get some sleep. So my darling goodnight and remember let me tell you I love you so very much. Goodnight, sweet.

Sunday November 28

Good morning darling ~

I am definitely on my last lap of the trip. I had a very good night's sleep and I feel fine this morning. The conductor told me that we are a half an hour late so that will get me into Springfield about ten o'clock. That will make it… so I leave Springfield about 10:30. Darling, this morning I woke up and looked out of my window and guess what I saw - snow! It sure looked good to me and the hills are beautiful. I realize now how beautiful the north is - I really appreciate it now.

I had my breakfast and I am all set. I had sunny side eggs this morning and darling they weren't broken. I wonder how they do that.

It looks like it is mighty cold outside. I wonder how the weather is where you are. No doubt it is plenty cold. Well darling, I'll end this letter when I get home. So until then, I love you darling.

I am now in Hartford. The exact place in Hartford is the railroad station. I am waiting for my brother Moe to pick me up. All of my luggage is here and I certainly do feel relieved.

The trip from Springfield to Hartford was one of anxiety. I guess after making such a long trip, when you reach the home stretch it seems as though you'll never get there. I guess

for the first time in my life I had a spell of homesickness and when we did pull into Hartford, it did look so good. I kept looking for familiar sights on the way from Springfield and I did see so many.

Well darling, here I am at the station. For the heck of it I looked for one familiar face and I know nobody here.

My sweet I guess this letter is a rough idea of what has happened since I left Alexandria. I hope at times it doesn't get boring. In spots, truthfully if I didn't write this and pretend I was talking to you as though you were right along with me, it would have been a dreadfully lonely and boring trip. and my darling, each time I wrote that I love you, I wish you knew how many times my heart was saying it. Closing this letter once again, let me tell you that I love you and that no matter where you go I'll be thinking of you.

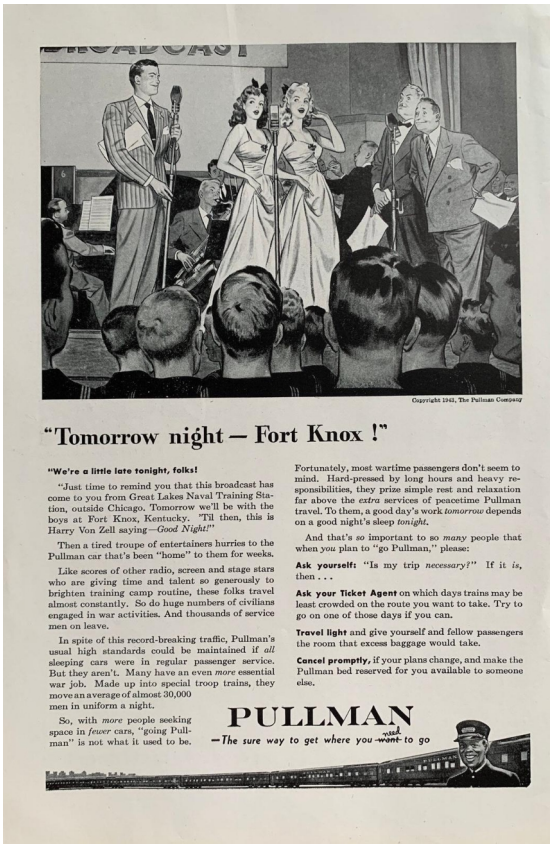
Until tomorrow ~

Always yours,

Love,

Sylvia

XXX



Copyright 1943, The Pullman Company

"Tomorrow night — Fort Knox !"

"We're a little late tonight, folks!

"Just time to remind you that this broadcast has come to you from Great Lakes Naval Training Station, outside Chicago. Tomorrow we'll be with the boys at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Til then, this is Harry Von Zell saying—*Good Night!*"

Then a tired troupe of entertainers hurries to the Pullman car that's been "home" to them for weeks.

Like scores of other radio, screen and stage stars who are giving time and talent so generously to brighten training camp routine, these folks travel almost constantly. So do huge numbers of civilians engaged in war activities. And thousands of service men on leave.

In spite of this record-breaking traffic, Pullman's usual high standards could be maintained if *all* sleeping cars were in regular passenger service. But they aren't. Many have an even *more* essential war job. Made up into special troop trains, they move an average of almost 30,000 men in uniform a night.

So, with *more* people seeking space in *fewer* cars, "going Pullman" is not what it used to be.

Fortunately, most wartime passengers don't seem to mind. Hard-pressed by long hours and heavy responsibilities, they prize simple rest and relaxation far above the *extra* services of peacetime Pullman travel. To them, a good day's work *tomorrow* depends on a good night's sleep *tonight*.

And that's *so* important to so *many* people that when you plan to "go Pullman," please:

Ask yourself: "Is my trip *necessary?*" If it *is*, then . . .

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.

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

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

PULLMAN

—The sure way to get where you ~~want~~ need to go

Grand Island, Nebraska[17]

Monday
[November 29, 1943]

Dearest wife -

This has been a long day, but not a busy one. I had a roll call to make at seven-thirty, class (that never took place) at ten, and another roll call at one this afternoon. In between times, I wrote a letter to Mom and Pop and later Rock[18] and I went out on the line and gave the new planes the once over. They are of the latest style with quite a few important changes and all for the better.

Grand Island Army Air Base

Grand Island, Nebraska

I took a look around the base today and it isn't half bad. The Officers Club and Mess are both really good. In fact, when they run out of the regular meal that is being served, they serve steak. I mean steak! I've had two suppers here, and they've both been steak. The combat crew headquarters, where we are due to be processed eventually, is really something to write about. The lounge is known as the Esquire Room, and

[17] Written on embossed stationery with Army Air Baser, Grand Island Nebraska letterhead in a plain envelope.

[18] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

it gets its name… from the greatly enlarged pictures of the better known Varga girls that are on the walls at one end of the room. There is a snack bar that serves almost anything. The country around here is really desolate looking - it is flat, sandy land with nary a tree in sight. As yet, I haven't seen the town but they tell me that it is about the same size as Alex[19], and about the same type of town.

I'm writing this in the barracks and the boys are throwing cracks at each other left and right, so if this is rather incoherent you'll understand why.

One thing that I get a big kick out of here is seeing the fellows who have been 'alerted' walking around armed to the neck. Just before leaving here, all members of combat crews are issued guns and jungle knives, and they walk around with the guns on one hip and the knife on the other.

Butch darling, I'm like a chicken without a head here. Come five o'clock and I get a strange feeling, sort of like the one *Lassie* must have felt. It's unnatural to be unable to see you every day. What I'm trying to say, my sweet, is that I miss you very much and what's more I love you very, very much. And so my sweet until tomorrow I'll say

I love you
xxxxxxxxx
Lenny

[19] Alexandria, Louisiana where he and Sylvia had been living as man and wife at his previous base.

[Monday] - November 29, 1943

Darling ~

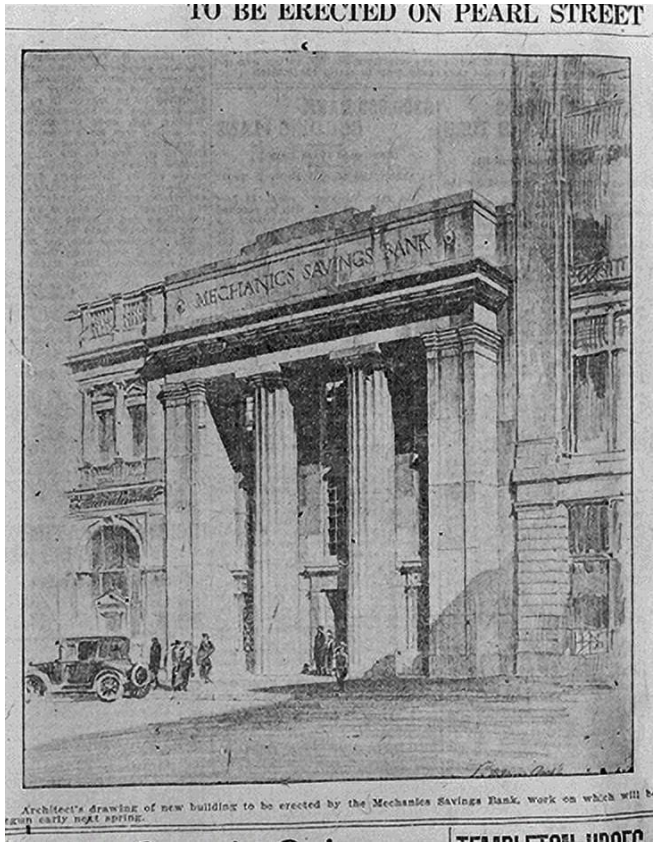
This isn't going to be a newsy letter as I am going to write another letter to you later on. I am enclosing a form which I obtained at the Mechanics Savings Bank. I went there today and showed them my *Power Of Attorney*. In order to have the *Power Of Attorney* of your bank account I have to give them my copy to keep in their files. I don't want to do that because if I need them elsewhere, I'd be stuck without one.

This form gives me the *Power Of Attorney* just in the Mechanics Bank… Please fill in all the blanks, and sign it where it says LS. When notary public is written on the bottom, have your Commanding Officer sign it. So darling please fill this out and return it immediately.

I'll write a long letter to you later and until then - I hope all is well - and I love you darling -

Love,

Sylvia



Monday nite - November 29 [1943]

Darling ~

What a busy girl I have been since I came home… When I came home my mother[20], Sadie[21] and Betty May[22] were home. I really didn't feel as though I had left home for two months - it felt more like two days. My sister looks well and my mother about the same. Betty May gave me a real kiss and she stuck close to me the whole time.

My packages came from the *Railway Express*[23] so I was relieved to find them there. I showed Betty May my doll, and she thinks it is *the* thing. However when Lorraine came over later… it caused a fight, and I had to take it away from them - aren't I the mean aunt, darling?

Later on Faye, Lou[24], Holly, Nate[25], Ben, Gladys[26], Allan, and Lorraine were here. It was quite a roomful and of course plenty of commotion. I decided not to go see Lillian then, because it being Sunday, I was sure she already had more company than she could handle, so I decided to save my visit until today. By the way hon, Natie gave me a cigar for you in celebration of your new nephew… As I thought, Lou sure takes a *ribbing* from Nate.

I called your mother as soon as I got home and told her I'd be there that evening. I also spoke to Margie[27] and she was going to be at your house that evening. When the sisters

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[20] Adelle Stolper Geetter lived at 148 Magnolia St. in the North End of Hartford, Connecticut.

[21] Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and was unmarried at the time.

[22] Elizabeth (Betty May) Weidman is Sylvia's seven year old niece.

[23] Railway Express Agency, founded as the American Railway Express Agency and later renamed the American Railway Express Inc., was a national package delivery service that operated in the United States from 1918 to 1975.

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

[25] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born two months ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

[26] Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

[27] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

and brothers left - it was really good to see them - I went to your house. Mom looks well and that goes for Dad too, except that he is getting a real tummy, like a particular son of his. Mom told me that Lou's baby is a very sweet little girl. By the way dear, I just learned that Lou's wife is a year younger than I am - she's 22 years old. Not bad having such a young aunt. Is it darling?

Now I come to what may be a surprise and… what I think won't be a surprise. Nevertheless, it is to be a secret. Do you remember what I said is the reason why I think Margie is so *upset* - as your mother put it in her last letter to me? Well, I was right, she is pregnant. Margie says the doctor says it will come in July. Now, I guess you are wondering why it is kept a secret. It isn't a secret here at home - goodness, everybody knows about it. But for some reason, your mother told me not to tell you about it. Maybe she thinks it will worry you, but hon, I can see no reason for keeping any secrets from you… I am telling it to you, so please don't let on to Mom that you know about it. I know how you feel about it because I feel the same way. It is a shame that it had to happen; perhaps if they were more careful, it could have been prevented. Of course, at times, no matter what protection you may use, it just doesn't help and I'm pretty sure from what Margie tells me they weren't very careful. There's no sense talking about the "could-have-beens" - it has happened.

Margie feels terrible about it and… realizing what her problems will be now, I can't help but feel very sorry for her. Norm doesn't have the money, and Margie hasn't a decent place to bring up a baby. You know how congested the apartment is at her house. She has no intentions of living with your mother and from what your mother said last night, she really is looking for a small apartment for [her] dad and herself. Margie says that she is going to try to find a larger apartment for her father, so that when the baby comes there will be plenty of room. I can assure you darling she is not the happiest person in the world and regardless of the fact that it might have been prevented, it is still a shame for her and Norman. When you… think how people have had children and raised them to be fine people… they will have to make the best of it, and believe in that old philosophy that what happens, happens for the best. I'm sure it will all work out all right. It just takes a lot of will, to just make the best of it and from all appearances, I think Margie is doing a fine job, and I mean that, dear. So, my sweet, you are going to be an uncle - sooner than you expected. Perhaps you will be home… that would certainly be nice, hun…

Mom thought I looked very well and she is just crazy about the picture. She likes the way you look but she doesn't think the picture is a very nice one of me. I told her you gained weight and it made her feel so happy. I told her that if I look well it is only because I was so happy when we were in Alexandria, it just had to have some effect on me. I was so happy darling, and I do love you so much.

I left your house about 10:00 and I had so much to do, but just didn't get to it - by that I mean unpack. Your mother gave me your policies, which she spoke to you about that have matured and you are to receive $75. From the letter they sent her, they have sent the claim papers to you, but I have no idea when and where they will catch up to you, so I decided to think of something I can do the next day - which is of course today. So later on in my letter, I'll tell you what I have done.

This morning at about 6:30, I received your night letter by phone and I was so happy to hear from you. Just to know you arrived and everything was fine was all I wanted to hear. I am looking forward to a letter from you. my darling, so very much. I do hope I get one soon.

This morning I went to the bank in regards to making your account a joint one. I presented my *Power Of Attorney* and consequently it only meant the bank had to keep it in their files all the time. I don't want to give it to them, as I may need the few copies I have, and so they gave me these forms for a *Power Of Attorney* for your bank account for their bank, and if you will fill it out when I send it to you and return it a immediately, it will help straighten matters out.

Then, I went to the American Red Cross, to see if they could tell me just what Power your *Power Of Attorney* gives me. I really didn't understand all of it dear. They told me I could get free legal advice from Lawyer Kotchen from twelve to one at the Municipal Building, so I decided it wouldn't hurt. So I went and I'm glad I did. He explained it all very clearly to me and also advised me in regards to your policy. He's to write to them and ask if I could send them a *certified copy* of my *Power Of Attorney*, which he will make out for me, so that I may keep my copies.. They will send me all of the necessary papers to be signed. You see dear, I don't want to part with my copies of the *Power Of Attorney* and the lawyer says it is a very good idea.

Darling, in regards to your *bonds*, your will does not cover them, nor does the power of attorney give me any power on making me your heir… I hope I don't seem like I want those bonds to go to anybody but you, but being my husband I can see no reason why I can't talk to you about such matters sensibly. Now, if you want me to be the other name on your bonds and not your mother, you will have to write to her and tell her you want them changed. It is something I won't tell her to do, and it is *your* responsibility to tell her. However, that is only if you want them changed - that's up to you and I would appreciate your telling me what you intend to do, whether you want to change them or not.

Well I guess that ends all the legal matters.

I went to the hospital today and saw Lil. I couldn't see the baby but the mom looked fine. From all reports the baby looks like Nate - I guess that's always the way - to have the boy look like his daddy.

Tonight I went to the *Bushnell* with Sadie to hear a lecture by Charles Collinworth Junior, the war correspondent in the war in Africa, from which he has just returned. Admission was by tickets processed from buying war bonds and Sadie got a one thousand dollar bond for her boss so that entitled her to two tickets right up in the front, too. I was amazed at what a young person he is - he is only 26 years old. Although he looks young his intelligence is far above 26. He was very interesting and it was an evening well spent as I believe I learned a few things.

Now I guess it is about time I went to bed. Life is so different now without you… I will never get used to it but I'll make the best of it until you are home again.

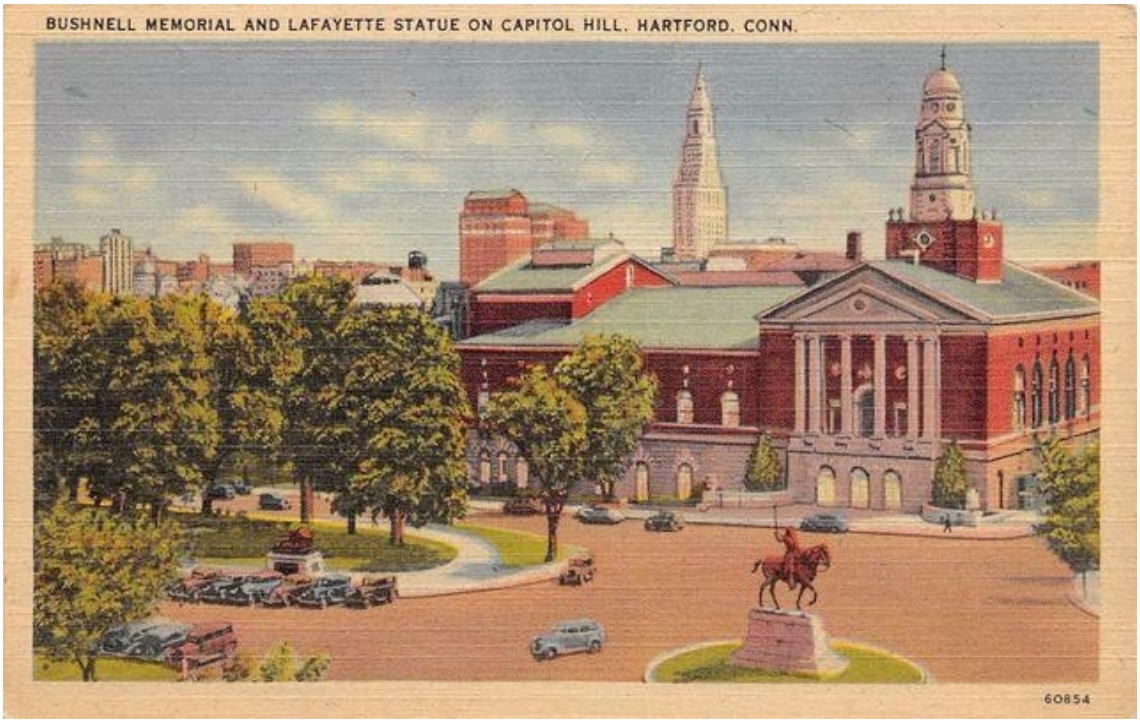
So, my darling, I'll say goodnight to you, with every prayer that this finds you well. Goodnight my darling and remember that I love you so very much.

Always yours,

Love,

Sylvia

XXX



November 30 [1943] - Tuesday night ~

Darling ~

At last I got around to unpacking my suitcases. It was quite a job - it took me all morning up until 3:30. Well, now that it is done I certainly feel much better.

By the way, dear, your trunk arrived but you forgot to give me the key for it. Mom called me and told me it came, and asked me if I had the key. So, darling, you will have to send me the key as soon as possible.

Strand Theatre (1476 seats) - 1017 Main St. (1914 - 1974)

I met Margie in town tonight at quarter to five. We had supper in the Jade [Restaurant], and then we went to the *Strand* to see Betty Davis and Miriam Hopkins in *Old Acquaintance*. It was very funny and different from the average run of pictures. It felt strange to sit through a double feature - thank goodness the seats weren't like the ones in the Post Theater - my aching *twizzy*! I never would have lasted!

After the show, we went into *Leggett's*[28] for a drink. Looking [around,] I… noticed how [different] the clientele in Hartford is today. Talking with Margie[29] I can see that she and Norm[30] have a big headache on their shoulders now that they are going to have a baby. I can't help but feel sorry for Margie. I honestly hope that everything turns out as it should - for the best.

Darling, I wonder how soon it will be before I hear from you. I am so anxious to know how you are, and also to hear the latest news. I do hope all is well, and that I'll be hearing from you soon.

Tomorrow, I intend to go to the *US Employment Service*. I am not going to look for any other kind of work, but office work. So after I go, I'll tell you what happened and if I am a girl with a job once again… I wonder how I'll feel getting up to go to work again. These past six months certainly have made a lazy thing out of me - of course it doesn't take much. Nevertheless, I'll be glad to get back to work.

Darling, while I was straightening out my closet I came across the box of your letters that I saved. Of course, I picked some out and I had such a good time reading them. Some of those letters seem so far back - especially the ones in which you speak of trying to get into the Air Corps. Those letters mean so much to me, that I'll always keep them.

I guess I will go to bed now. I realize that not once in this letter did I tell you I love you, and it's not that I wasn't saying it to myself a million times, but you know how it is once you get onto telling something. So, sweet, please forgive me, because I do love you so, and miss you every minute of the day. Please take good care of yourself - and once again - I love you, darling, and wherever you are - goodnight dear.

Love,

Sylvia
XXX

[28] Leggett's Drug Store had a soda counter.

[29] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy. She is pregnant with twin boys Richard and Steven Levy.

[30] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had just enlisted in the Army.

JOHN NEWTON HOWITT
I'm Proud... my husband wants me to do my part
SEE YOUR U. S. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION

1

Grand Island, Nebraska[31]

Wednesday
[December 1, 1943]

Dearest wife -

This place is getting to be more and more like a country club every day. Instead of having a formation at 7:30 in the morning, they set it back to 8:45, so that we wouldn't have to get up so early. As this is only a Processing base they have no real work for us to do - a lecture now and then on security etc., but nothing to tax the brain. The hardest work I've done all day is lose out in a strenuous game of Monopoly which, by the way, is the rage out here.

Tonight will be our first night off the post, and there is quite a bit of red tape to go through to get a pass. First, we had to take a *short arms* inspections and then… we had to purchase and [carry] a prophylactic kit. It seems that one in every four fellows on the base gets… a venereal disease, and they are trying to stamp it out. Chris[32] and I are getting a big kick out of it… as neither one of us feels the urge so badly… to go to all that trouble.

Last night the entire group attended a lecture, the subject of which is a strict military secret. After the lecture, our crew adjourned to the PX[33] where we had a miniature beer party and I stayed up until the late hour of 12:00. If it weren't for things like that and the Esquire Room, I believe I'd go nuts just hanging around. Another week of this life and I'll start gaining more weight.

---

[31] Written on plain stationery in a plain envelope.

[32] Augustus (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[33] PX stands for post exchange. All Bases had their own PX. Grand Island As Lenny is in transit

As to what is going to happen to us… your guess is as good as the next. They seem to have forgotten about the section in which our crew has been placed, and the rumors are running wild. The wildest of them all have us going on a Bond drive covering the 48 states; while still another has us going from here to Scott Field located in Illinois and from there to a POE[34] without being processed here.

There [are] a few cases of crabs (body lice) in our barracks. (Rock[35] being one of the victims) and the rest of us are living in constant dread of getting them. Outside of this, very little excitement has happened and not getting any mail from you, makes it very hard for me to write much of a letter. The chances are that I may be here for another week or so… if I don't get your letters here they will be forwarded to me and eventually I'll get them. I expect the first one to be a really long one telling me all that's happened since you drove away from the gate Thursday night.

No matter how many letters I write I'll never be able to tell you just how much I love you my darling, nor how much I miss you. I know it isn't enough to just say that you are in my thoughts every moment of the day, but believe me it's the truth. I realize that if it hadn't been for you I wouldn't be where I am today - an officer in the Air Corps and if I haven't already done so I thank you, my sweetheart I love you.

Although I haven't said so before I hope you found everything, and everybody, fine at home - what does the family think of your doll? And have you convinced them of your prowess as a cook? Until tomorrow - my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Use the address on the envelope.

Love

L.

[34] POE in a military context stands for "Point of Embarkation," which is the location where personnel begin their journey to a destination. This is what was happening: Lenny's crew was given Knettishall, England as their destination Base where other B-17s were already conducting bombing raids in the European Theatre of Operation.

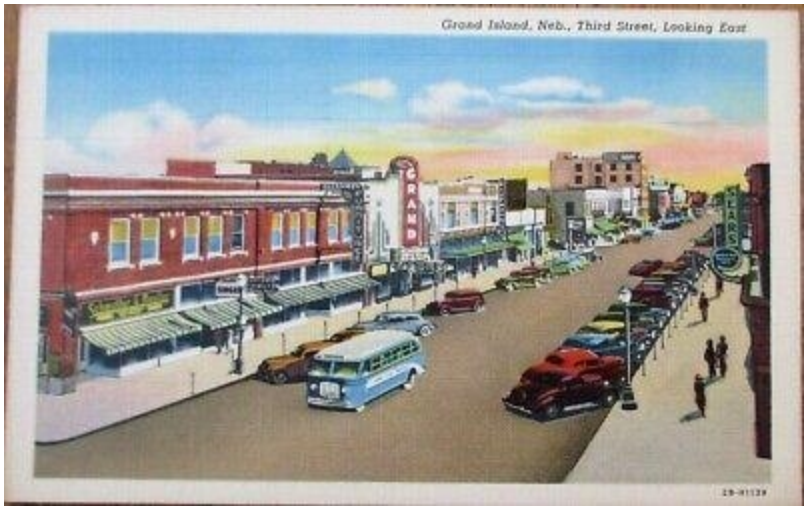
[35] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

Grand Island, Nebraska[36]

Thursday
[December 2, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Another day and still nothing has happened, and what is worse nothing in sight. [Some] of the crews have been assigned ships and still others have been alerted but we are still the forgotten few. With the exception of a previously played game of monopoly this morning, I have done exactly nothing. To top it all off last night's, for some unknown reason. Because of this, the crew took themselves to the show where we had a good laugh at Red Skelton[37] and then went home to sleep.



Chris[38] received a letter from Fran[39] this morning so I know that you were all right up until the time she left you. (Why I told you not to write is beyond me.)

[36] Written on plain stationery in a plain envelope.

[37] A movie with Red Skelton in it

[38] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[39] Chris Christiani's wife

Honest sweetheart, I can't think of anything more to write about. Please believe me when I say I'm sorry - I feel that you'll understand if I cut this letter short.

Before I close though I want to tell you something that I've said before, I think - something that I'll never tire of telling you. My only regret is that I can't hold you in my arms and feel your lips on mine when I tell you over and over that I love you. Not only that my darling but I miss you terribly.

Please, please excuse the shortness, my sweet.

Regards to everybody

I love you
xxxxxxxxx
*Your husband
Lenny

* Something new has been added

December 2 [1943] - Thursday

Darling ~

Before I get on with this letter I have an apology to make. I asked you for the key to your foot locker and I found out tonight that I have it. I should have looked through my key case before I asked you for it.

It certainly was good to receive two letters from you today and the picture cards. I've been waiting for a letter from you all week and those two letters made me very happy. From the pictures on the souvenir pictures you sent me, Grand Island[40] looks like a very nice town. Did you get into town and have a look around? I am sorry to hear that your trip was so boring, didn't the poker game help? Darling, even though you won fifty dollars, please don't make a habit of gambling - it is so easy to get into it, but getting out of it is an entirely different story.

It was too bad that we couldn't be in St Louis at the same time, Saturday. As you said, it would have been a surprise… a real surprise. Well, I'm glad to hear that you are well and so far all is going along smoothly. I bet it is exciting… to move on to some place [and] you don't know… exactly where. Well, wherever it is… I hope it will be the best.

Today, I went shopping for Natie[41]. I brought back what they received for the baby that they didn't need and bought other things for him. I also went to the ration board to get Philip Henry (that's his name) his first ration book. By the way, Lil will get out of the hospital this Sunday. It so happened, her nurse couldn't come until this coming Monday and, having room in the hospital, they let her stay there.

This afternoon I went to Tootsies and Robbie is as cute as ever. He spilled some Rinso on the floor and Tootsie scolded him and told him to look at what he had done. So he was so ashamed he closed his eyes and wouldn't open them to look at what he had done. It was so cute to see him do that, darling. I couldn't stop laughing.

Went to [your] Mom's for supper. Margie was there too. Mom expected Norm[42] to call and she wanted me there to

[40] Grand Island Army Air Base in Grand Island, Nebraska.

[41] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

[42] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had just enlisted in the Army.

say hello. Well, he did call and the poor kid has another cold. It seems that he has been getting them one after the other. Other than that, he is fine and he asked all about you.

Darling, guess what we had for supper? I guess you hit it right - fish. It was good and I enjoyed it.

Today I went into the restaurant[43] to see Dad. Bill was in the back of the store talking to the man, and he didn't recognize me. He told the man that there's a good looking girl, and he was going to have a little fun. Was he embarrassed to find out it was his niece. Well, I always did like young uncles.

I tried on the pants you sent home in your foot locker. I had a lot of trouble figuring out how they worked but I finally did it. They feel so soft and they sure are warm - I don't know how you could feel cold in those, darling.

It is so much better to see the lights on throughout the city. Everything looks so much more alive. However, it won't feel like home again until you are here with me - I do love you so much darling. Well, whenever it [is] that you come home again, I know it will make me the happiest person in the world… As each day passes, I know it is one day closer to that day. So goodnight my darling and take good care of yourself. I love you.

Love,
Sylvia

[43] Arthur Levy operated a restaurant on Trumbull St. in Downtown Hartford, Connecticut.

HOTEL YANCEY, GRAND ISLAND, NEB.
CardCow.com

Grand Island, Nebraska[44]

Friday
[December 3, 1943]

Dearest wife -

I've seen Grand Island, and that's about all I can say for it. Remember how dead Hartford was before the war? Well this city is even deader.

We got into town about eight-thirty. There wasn't a soul on the streets. We walked around for about an hour looking for some excitement and wound up where we started - the Hotel Yancey, where Chris,[45] Rock[46] and I took a room for the night. In the lobby we met the fellows from crew #19, and we decided to go to the one hot spot of the town. We called the cab and off we went to the *Log Cabin*; we got there and found a

[44] Written on engraved stationery with an imprint of *Army Air Force Base, Grand Island, Nebraska* in a plain envelope.

[45] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[46] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

shack, nothing more, so off we went back to the hotel, where we sat around in the room talking until twelve, when the boys went back to the base and we went to sleep. That was our trip to the city.

Nothing new has developed here for our crew. We are still hanging around waiting for something to happen. Chris, Rock and I cornered the Major yesterday and asked him what was in store for us. He wouldn't tell us, naturally, but did say that we were getting *the best deal* of all. What he meant by that, we don't know, nor can we find out anything more. All we can do is sit and wait. Meanwhile, we are getting a very good rest, taking a nap whenever we so feel…

Some of the crews are leaving tomorrow; and still others in a few days; that will leave us here alone.

The money is for you Syl, use as much of it as you need for yourself. If there is any left you can put it in the bank. Next month you should receive the first check; if after a week or two you don't get it, let me know and I'll take care of it. If you… need more, let me know… and I'll see that you get it.

I'm waiting on *pins and needles* for your first letter - there are so many things I want to know; all about your trip, how everybody is at home, about your prospects of a job, in fact everything. So if you've left any of these questions unanswered, make sure that your next letter takes care of it.

The Flying Fortress - Boeing B-17 G[47]

If you see David and Albert… tell them that the plane I'm to be in will be the new *Fortress* with the improvised chin turret. Outside of one other plane, the B-29, this is the most deadly bomber in the air. By the way, one of the rumors has us going to a B-29 field - If this comes true, it will be the answer to all our dreams. It is by far the safest and best ship to be in. It is so big that they use the 17s for fighter escort!

Had I… known that I was to be here so long… I surely would have had you come out here. Chris and I are both kicking ourselves for not having any foresight. I remarked to the Major that I would like to wire you to come out here, but he said it would be foolish as he thinks we might leave here the first part of the week.

I'm acquiring a few souvenirs for you and also something I think you'll appreciate very much, a whole box of gum, and just as soon as I

[47] The Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress is an American four-engine heavy bomber aircraft developed in the 1930s for the United States Army Air Corps. A fast and high-flying bomber, the B-17 dropped more bombs than any other aircraft during World War II, used primarily in the European Theater of Operations. It is the third-most produced bomber in history, behind the American four-engine Consolidated B-24 Liberator and the German, twin-engine Junkers

get a hold of some wrapping paper, I'll mail them to you. Our scrapbook must be getting pretty thick - don't ever stop putting things into it sweetheart. Someday we all have a lot of fun looking through it in our own home.[48]

Like all letters, this one too must come to an end and this is it. Before I say goodnight though, I want to tell you again that I miss you and love you very, very much. 'S funny, but I never get tired of saying or writing that.

Goodnight darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Talking to you Saturday was like being in heaven for five

[48] This does in fact occur, but the scrapbook later is lost.

December 5 [1943] - Sunday

Darling ~

After today, I realized I have missed my preferred vocation - that of being a maid. After cleaning the house here, Natie[49] called me and asked me to please come over and help him clean up [his] house as Lil was coming home this afternoon, and the house was a mess. So, I've been there until now, and it is now a quarter to six. Lil looks fine and the baby, as tiny as he is, is the image of Natie. He looks so much like Natie that I was expecting him to say something typical of Natie's dry humor. It's amazing how a little thing less than six pounds can take over an entire household. It's definite that he's the king now.

Darling, I can't tell you how very happy I was to talk with you. Yesterday afternoon, I went to the show with Margie[50] and Butch and I told them I wanted to go directly home as I had a premonition you would call. My darling, I only wish I could have been with you - I do miss you so very much. I'm glad that you are well and so far, although not much seems to be happening, everything is going along fine. I love you very much dear, and please try to keep me as informed as you can.

Your letters were read by me at least six times. I bet I could tell you what each letter says by heart. By the way hon, what *does* the army do to cure the boys of body lice? How is Rock[51] - I really feel sorry for him. Give my regards to him and Chris[52]. Tell Rock I want him to start gaining weight in case he hasn't started to yet. You tell me that Monopoly is the rage in Nebraska. How that brings me back to the days I worked in the toy department[53]. Every time a customer asked me how it was played, I made up rules of my own. At least I know it is a game where you buy and sell real estate - am I right, hon?

I met Margie downtown yesterday and we ran into Frances[54] on our way to the show. She looked the same and told] me… Boomey[55] is going to go for some more schooling, somewhere. It was all very indefinite - perhaps you know more what it is - do you? We went

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[49] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

[50] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

[51] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[52] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[53] Sylvia worked at G. Fox & Co. the largest department store in Hartford, Connecticut

[54] Frances is a friend of Sylvia, who is engaged to Boomey Siegel.

[55] Adolf (Boomey) Siegel is a friend of Sylvia's. They both graduated from Weaver High School in 1938.

to the *Allyn*[56] and saw *True To Life* with Dick Powell And Mary Martin. It was a comedy and I enjoyed it.

In regards to my job, I called yesterday morning and he told me to report to work Monday morning. I then called the Crystal Research Laboratories in regard to the job I wrote to you about and told them I didn't think I was suited to the job they wanted to hire me for and I thanked the man for letting me think it over. He was very nice and thanked me for being so honest about it.

Tonight [your] Mom and Dad are going to Jesse's house. This is the first time they have been there since Jesse and Buster were married. I think she is having most of the aunts and uncles over there tonight.

Sweetheart I will be at your mom's house Tuesday night and I do hope you will be able to call. I wish it were possible for us to talk more than five minutes – five minutes is such a short time.

Well at least we can always write, so that's something. Until tomorrow, when I will write you again - I love you darling and take care of yourself -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

P.S. That something new you added to your last letter made me laugh - it was a cute way of putting it - my *schmot* husband. I do love you so.

[56] The Allyn Theatre was a performing arts venue which showed feature films at 207 Asylum Ave. in downtown Hartford.

Grand Island, Nebraska[57]

Monday
[December 6, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Talking to you Saturday was like being in heaven for five minutes. I had no idea that I could ever miss anybody the way I do you. There is just a constant growing in my heart; everything I see or do brings back a memory of something we did together, or something you said. Without frills, my darling, I love you.

After talking to you I went out to the *Log Cabin* where I felt so good for having talked to you, I had a few drinks, a couple of dances and called it a night. Yesterday we hung around waiting for some news about what is going to happen to us, therefore no letter yesterday; at night Chris[58], Rock[59] and I went to a public dance where, because we're officers

[57] Written on plain stationery in an envelope from Hotel Yancey.

[58] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[59] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

and because there are so few crews here, we had a fairly good time. The combat crews run this town - nothing is too good for us. We stayed in town last night,[60]Chris and I, in one room, and Rock by himself.

One thing I've learned about the city of Grand Island is that it is a very curious town with perhaps a reason behind it all. The place is nine-tenths German and they know more about what goes on than even the Cadet wives did back in Monroe. Not only that, but they flaunt their knowledge and then try to find out more. (I met a girl at a dance who claimed to be a blood relative of Rudolph Hess.) We've naturally been told to keep our mouths shut, but give some fellows a few drinks and they have no secrets. The girl mentioned above knew my Army life from the time I started school back in Monroe; she told me where I'd been and how long I'd been there. I tried to find out from her what is going to happen to us but she either didn't know or wouldn't talk.

What I'm going to write now my darling, I'd much rather tell you over the phone tomorrow, but I don't dare; I'm even afraid to write it, but it's such good news that I'm going to have to hint at it. There is a very strong rumor making the rounds that we are to be stationed in this country for at least four months. Do you remember a fellow from Hartford who used to take you out, [who] joined the Navy? We are to do the same type of work that he did. I'm telling you this only because it is such a good rumor, but as always don't put too much stock in it - you know Army rumors by now.

So you landed a job on your own terms? I'm impatiently awaiting your letters to find out what they were. How does it feel to be working in the same place as Nate? There are so many things I want to know. I hope your letters answer all my questions.

Life has settled down into a groove that is more like a rut. We've become so bored that we play Monopoly for money just to help time go by. Right now there is a crap game going on here, and the fellows are playing not for the thrill of gambling, but because they're simply bored. My will is still strong enough to keep away from it, but I'm slowly weakening.

[60] Probably at the Hotel Yancey.

That, Butch, is all the news I can think of, now to go back to something old but always a pleasure to write about. That is the subject of my love for you - something that nobody has more of than me… You know by now sweetheart that I cannot write fancy phrases or make with… flowering talk, so I am afraid that you'll have to be content with I love you; but with all my heart.

I love you
xxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Regards to all
L.

December 6 [1943] - Monday

Darling ~

Once again I'm a working girl[61]. I am ashamed to admit it but darling I am dead tired. It wouldn't be fair to say whether I like my job or not because it is so new and I can't say. I met Natie[62] in front of his house, and we walked to work. It is a long walk[63] to Capitol Ave, but it is better than having to stand on a crowded bus. I got there on time - we have to be there at 8:15. The man to whom I was to report is in New York, so I sat there until someone finally took care of me. I had forms to fill out in the employment office and I was told not to tell the other girls I was receiving sixty cents an hour…. I told him that I wouldn't work for less, so that settled the matter.

I get a $24 exemption on my salary and over that I am taxed for the income tax. That $24 is allowed to married girls whose husbands are in the Army and his rank is not [above] a First Lieutenant. So, darling, as soon as they make you a First Lieutenant, I get just a $12 deduction. I don't know just why they figure it that way - perhaps you can tell me.

I guess you are wondering what kind of a job I have - well I do bookkeeping. It is different from what I have always done, but the experience I had in the Hartford Accident [Insurance Co.] figuring premiums and using the calculating machine certainly is a great help to me now. See now that I won't have much time to throw spitballs as everybody has enough to do - there is no fooling at all.

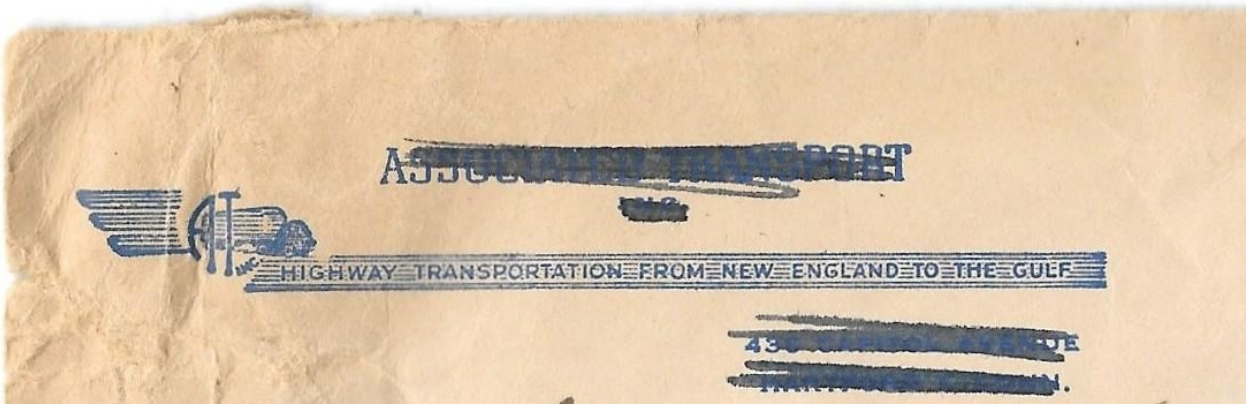
I do bookkeeping on all accounts receivable. I have all the accounts in the Ms - that is, all names that start with M. I don't work in the same building as Nate, but I ate lunch with him today. I sit next to a window and I caught myself looking out of it and daydreaming. Nice way to start isn't it, dear? How short of help they are, four girls left my department Saturday, to get married. It's too bad I couldn't meet them and give them an *old timer's* point of view on

[61] Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

[62] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

[63] About 1.5 miles.

marriage. When I got through talking with them, they would be sure that being married to the right person [surpasses] any happiness in the world.



A notice came around this afternoon giving the girls permission to smoke at their desks while working, because the company cannot afford the time wasted when the girls go to the ladies room to smoke. Oh yes. one more thing about my job - I had my hours all mixed up. I work from 8:15 to 5:00 o'clock and have ¾ of an hour for lunch from 11:45 to 12:30; and we work until 11:45 on Saturday. So far, the girls seem to be very nice but everybody is kept so busy, that there is no time for social visits like I was accustomed to in the Retail Credit Co[64].. Well at least I will get my wish, my mind will be kept busy.

Honey, I received [the] money order in your letter today. There is nothing I need and, as I said, I'm going to put it into the bank. Now that I'm working, I'll be able to meet all of my expenses. Now darling don't forget - if you have any money left when you are paid, send it home and let me put it away - I'm sure we will need every cent we can save for the future, and I know that you want to be able to start out right, when that future becomes the present.

The news of your having the new model B-17 is very good. I hope that the rumors of you flying the B-29 come true. At least such good news compensates, to an extent, for your hanging around. I wish I could be with you to pass the time away… I am certainly thinking of you and praying that everything turns out for the best.

You remember in one of your first letters you kidded me about not *getting the urge*. I forgot to tell you this and it just came to mind. When I went to Lawyer Kotchen to explain my will, as I wrote before, he took me home. Well, we got into a conversation on war marriages, and he asked me to forgive him if he asked a personal question. He asked me if I

[64] Sylvia also worked at the Retail Credit Company. By the 1940s, **Retail Credit Co**. was one of the nation's largest credit bureaus, holding files on millions of American citizens. It now operates as one of the "Big Three" credit bureau, Equifax.

ever got the *desire* for relationships, since your leave. When I asked him why he asked that question, he said that in his *cases*, he has found… that married women desire relationships… when their husbands leave and it consequently leads to trouble in the courts. Truthfully, his asking me this made me very embarrassed…

It is improbable that I'd ever have… desire for any other man, but my husband. I'm sure he wanted to discuss it further, but I guess he realized he had approached the wrong person… The girls he had in mind were those that wanted to try some new experiments, or else those that were afraid of becoming *old maids*, if they didn't hurry up… I believe the majority of army wives, married for one reason, and that is purely for love. I know I did, and nothing or nobody will ever change my mind. I do love you so very much, darling.

In your letter, you mentioned your trip to the *Log Cabin*. It must be like the one past Meriden - although I have never been in it.

Yes hon, I am keeping up my scrapbook. I can't tell you how much pleasure I derive from putting things in it. Each thing is a memory, and they are memories filled with such happiness. If I'm not putting something in it, I am looking through it. Hon, I'm afraid I'll wear it out. Please send me all the souvenirs, and any item you think will be of interest and you want to save.

Darling as far as the chewing gum is concerned - a whole box too - I must say that it is something. Thank you for thinking of it and I can double assure you - I certainly appreciate your thoughtfulness. Why I'm going to chew my head off - what a swell time I'll have!

How do you like how my new pen writes? No sweet; it's not as good as yours. In fact, it is nowhere near as nice, but it is all I need - it doesn't leak all over my hand. I bought it in *Gustave Fischer's*[65] and it was three dollars. It writes very well and it is guaranteed - and the way I lose pens - this one is good enough. Hon, how does your pen write? It looks like it writes very well. I hope so, because you have to use a pen [so often.] I am keeping my eyes open for a pencil to match it, and… as soon as I do… I'm going to get it for you.

Honey, Main Street[66] is so crowded. I went to the jewelers (Mr. Kurland) tonight after work to have him fix my diamond. Before I get off the subject - I was talking about the crowds - oh yes, it is so crowded. Why it's just like New York - honest, hon. I hate to do any shopping now - it is almost impossible. Now to get back to my ring. You remember what I told you the jeweler in Alexandria said about fixing the diamond on the side so that it would be tight - they said I needed a new setting. Well, Mr. Kurland is going to tighten it,

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[65] Connecticut's oldest office supplies company — **Gustave Fischer**, founded in 1899 had a store in Downtown Hartford.

[66] Downtown Hartford

and he says the setting is perfectly all right, and it can be easily done. So I will get it tomorrow night. I will feel much better when I wear it now, because I was worried about losing the stone.

Oh, my hand hurts! I've been doing so much writing today, and working the [adding] machine has made my lazy hands ache at the wrists. These past six months have made me into a real sissy. Well, it won't take long, and I'll be able to take it again. So, I better get to bed now and rest. I'm looking forward to tomorrow night. I hope you will be able to call, and I'll be able to speak with you again. I hope you are well darling, and here's my kiss goodnight X and I love you sweetheart.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Main St. Downtown Hartford

Grand Island, Nebraska[67]

Wednesday
[December 8, 1943]

Dearest wife -

All day long, I've been waiting for tonight, so that I could talk to you and then the five minutes just flew by, and half the things I wanted to say went unsaid.

As I told you over the phone, today was a very busy day for us; we finally went through 'processing.' Now we're ready to leave here. The Army is making sure that we leave this country with enough equipment. Despite all the stuff I got at the Sub Depot in Alex[68], I still needed more and they gave it to me here. Of course, they took some of my original issue away, so I don't have too much, but packing is still going to be a problem. The *equipment* issued to us has no clue as to where we are going, and we are still in the dark as to our destination.

Last night after the call, Chris[69] and Rock[70] and I went to town - it turned out that our enlisted men were waiting for us with plenty of liquor for one last fling. I'm sorry to report that your husband came back to camp slightly worse for wear! (It won't happen again, but I just couldn't back out.) They wanted us to come out again tonight, but I turned it down because of a number of reasons - one of them being that I didn't want to get the habit.

I can't quite explain what happened last night. I felt fine until I started to talk on the phone, and then I got extremely nervous. On top of that, when you told me that Dad had a bad cold and he didn't come to the phone, after I told mom that the call was goodbye – well, you can imagine how I felt. I guess the fact that I knew then, that I was to leave very soon had a lot to do with my feelings. My darling, I'm very anxious

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[67] Written on Alexandria Army Air Base stationery.

[68] Alexandria Army Air Base, Alexandria, Louisiana

[69] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[70] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

to go and get it over with but I'm going to miss you terribly if what I'm going through now is any inkling of what is to come.

About the *Power Of Attorney* and the *will*, my darling, I think you have been misinformed. If I'm correct in thinking the way I do, this *will* supersede anything I've ever done before, in the way of naming a beneficiary. You had better check on it again, but that is what they told me when I asked about it today. The *Power Of Attorney* also covers anything that might possibly come up - I don't understand why anybody should tell you differently. The form that you sent me merely gives you control of my bank account, while the [*Powers Of Attorney]* you have, plus the five extra ones I've [sent] you, cover everything including the bank account…

Sometime tomorrow, I'm sending out a package of clothing and stuff that I was told not to take along. Some of the stuff, namely the box of gum and the souvenirs are for you; tell Mom to put the clothing away as I may need it someday - the pants will come in handy when I'm working in our garden, and the jacket goes with the heavy pants - if it fits, wear it!

As for the situation (and it is a situation) That Norm[71] and Margie[72] got themselves into about all I can say is *TS*. That's a rather crude way of saying it, but they have nobody but themselves to blame. I'm sure that, had they taken the pains that we did, it could have been prevented. I can't understand why Mom makes no mention of it, but be assured that I won't let on to her that I know. It will be up to you to keep me informed as to developments. Only after reading your letter, did I realize how happy I was in not leaving you in the same way. It is only natural for me to want a child, and I want one very much, but I want to be there when it's born and I know that you feel the same way about it.

I am ashamed of myself for not writing Sunday and then going to the dance that night, but there just wasn't anything to write about. Until today we did absolutely nothing and I couldn't write about

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[71] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy has enlisted in the Army.

[72] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

that. If you were here I'd hang my head until you said that you forgave the *baby…* I will wait anxiously for your letter saying you do forgive me.

Sweetheart, I meant just what I said when I asked you not to worry. It will do neither one of us any good and besides I have a strong feeling that it won't be too long before I am home with you.

While speaking to you tonight, I told you three times that I love you but I wanted to say it three hundred times, because my darling I do, more than life itself. Believe me when I say that there is nothing in the world strong enough to keep us apart. Someday my darling, I'll come home to you and we'll begin to really enjoy our love for each other. There'll be no cloud hanging over us, and we'll bring into reality all the dreams we've dreamed these past six months - the happiest months that anyone ever spent.

Before I start to cry I'd better say goodnight -

I love you
xxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Regards to all the family -
say goodbye for me

Love
L.

By the way how do you like
the way my new pen write?
Love
L

I had to get it in an
extra time or two tonight

L.

Grand Island, Nebraska

Thursday
[December 9, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Another day has gone by and we are still here, and if the snow continues we'll be here indefinitely. Today had a special meaning for me - it is just one year since I first left you standing on the platform with your eyes filled to the brim.

It's been a long year my sweetheart and a good one. It's seen a lot of things happen to *you*, *me*, and *us*; and we've been married three days less than six months. I'm an officer n the Air Corp[73] and we've been together longer than I thought the Army would permit. Last year this time, I had no idea I'd still be in the States tonight.

Today saw us back in the old routine of doing nothing and mighty thankful we were for it… as it was perfectly miserable outdoors… It was snowing when we came in for supper and for all I know, it still is.

Do you remember how I used to say that the Co-pilot was weird?… He was at the dance with us the other night and ever since then, he has been talking about the wonderful girl he met… and how he would like to marry her. Asked how old she was, he said seventeen! For four days, we've heard nothing… except *his girl* and how he would rather *stay here* with her… than *go to combat*, if only her mother would give consent to the marriage. Well today we met her - and I had all I could do to control myself from laughing in his face. As Rock put it, I've seen better faces on clocks and better hands on a 5-cent beer. She is nothing more than a silly kid - 10 years younger than he - just *nuts* I call him.

The army changed its mind again about foot-lockers. Oh, it's a good thing I told you not to bother sending it out to me. They did, however, say it was all right to pack our navigation supplies in a cardboard box so your *Schmatt* husband got one slightly smaller than a

[73] The United States Air Force became a separate military service on September 18, 1947, with the implementation of the National Security Act of 1947. Prior to that, military aviation was part of the Army and Navy.

locker, and now I have got too much room. I'm all packed, just waiting for the word to go.

I realize it's too soon to judge your new job, but it does sound rather good. It is a little different from your other jobs, and] you'll gain a new kind of experience. I can't enlighten you on the exemption you wrote about, as I've never heard about it before. The only reason I can think of is that any *rank* over a *first*, pays enough so… the wife shouldn't have any hardship.

Darling, if this letter is rather short tonight, it's because my cold has gone to my head, and my eyes are watering and my nose is running. Just as soon as I finish this, I'm going to have the chef fix me a hot glass of tea and then I'm going to bed with plenty of blankets. If only I had you to snuggle up too tonight - boy do I miss that!

Not once in almost four pages, have I told you that I love you, my darling, but I do, really I do. I guess the reason I feel so low these past few days is because I'm beginning to appreciate just how much I love you and how lonely I can be, in the largest crowds, when you're not around. Until tomorrow my darling, I love you goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Regards to all

L.

This letter is coming free because I've been told it travels faster, That way let me know.

Love
Lenny

Grand Island, Nebraska

Friday
[December 10, 1943]

Dearest wife -

It's beginning to look like my goodbye was a bit premature. True enough we went through processing but again they seem to have forgotten about us. As a rule, the day following processing is the time a crew is put on the *alert* but we have heard no more since. The Esquire Room is becoming a second home to us - in fact we are beginning to look like the fixtures of the place.

Dr Levy, that's me, cured a cold last night with a dose of medicine, a capsule of something or other, and plenty of heat. After mailing your letter I took some medicine that Lieutenant Kisk, our flight surgeon prescribed, fired up the stove, and got into bed. I piled plenty of blankets over me and before I knew it I was drenched with perspiration. This morning, when I got up, I felt fine - no runny nose and no sore throat.

In last night's letter, I told you about the Co-pilot[74] and his latest romance. He naturally thinks her the one girl in a million, and the purest of pure. Well from two different services, we've heard that she is nothing but a tramp. None of us know… how to tell him about it, without causing ill feelings, but at the same time, he is the laughingstock of the entire post. His only salvation is that we leave here before they have time to get married.

Rock[75] is now the happiest man on the base; when I went through processing I claimed that my wristwatch was missing and after signing a half-dozen forms and seeing a few officers, they finally issued me another watch for the sum of fourteen dollars and change. Chris[76], the Co-pilot and the Radio Man[77] were also issued watches and they… spend all their

[74] Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington is the Co-pilot of Lenny's crew

[75] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[76] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[77] William Burtle Mayne is the Radio Operator of Lenny's crew

time comparing the times they have. I say times because no two of them agree within a minute, and yelling 'Hack' at each other, mimicking the squadron Navigator when he gives us a Time Tick.

Time is really beginning to hang heavy on our hands now. Even Monopoly holds no interest for us. If only you, my darling were here with me, then the days and nights would be so damn short. Why couldn't we have foreseen the way things were to happen? In the past two weeks we would have seen more of each other than we had in months. I suppose that's the way things were meant to be, so I guess there is no use crying about it - but I do miss you so much my darling. I lie in bed nights just thinking of you and the times we had and then I start making plans for the years that are ahead of us. My darling if only half my plans come true, we will be the happiest couple ever. Just keep your fingers crossed, your hopes high, and listen to nothing but good news until the day I can hold you in my arms again. I love you my sweetheart - any one can have a wife but there are very few fellows who are as lucky as I in having a wife and a sweetheart all in one.

Up until tomorrow my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Regards to all

L.

December 11, 1943
Saturday nite ~

Darling ~

As I wrote the above address, I realized that tomorrow is December 12 and it will be our six-month anniversary. Isn't time going by so quickly? It seems just like yesterday, we were married. I do hope that the time for you to be home again will pass as quickly. It was such heaven when we were together and I miss you so.

I received your letter today - the one you wrote to me Wednesday night and I enjoyed it immensely. I must admit I cried when I read it. The main reason for the tears was that I could just hear you saying what you wrote and darling it just hit home.

I'm not angry for your not writing that Sunday night. If there wasn't anything to write, well hun, they're just wasn't anything to write, and of course I forgive my baby. Now you can pick up your head.

Oh, was it cold today! I awoke about two this morning because I heard the window shade blowing. I got up to close the window and I couldn't see a thing - the snow was blowing all over and the wind was so strong I thought we were having another hurricane. This morning when I got up to go to work I looked and expecting to see a deep snowfall, I was surprised to see practically no snow on the ground. We had just a little snow but the impression I had during the night was the wind blowing and the snow through the air. It just didn't fall on the ground. The wind has been terrific all day and there were a good many hats blown all over Main Street today.

I haven't written to you since we called as I planned to write one big long letter tonight and give all of the latest news to date.

Honey, I think of you so much, wondering how you are, where you are, and just how things are coming along. Golly, how I wish I were a fellow right now and I could be with you. Honey, I love you so much.

I received a postcard from Eleanor[78] yesterday; it was from New Orleans[79]. She's there for a week, as Sam has gone somewhere for a week. She said it is something to see and she misses me. I know for a fact that I miss her. I guess we are two peas of the same pod.

Honey, I wanted a job that would keep my mind occupied and I sure got my wish. It is one job where there is no time to do any fooling and by five o'clock I am tired. It's interesting work… I am learning bookkeeping which is good experience. We have more work than we have time for, and my boss asked us to work until seven on Monday and Tuesday nights. Most of the girls work overtime every night, but I hope I won't have to.

… My ring is causing a general course of conversation in the office - everybody remarks on how beautiful it is and what a rock it is! … I am so proud of it darling and I think it is the most beautiful ring I have ever seen - it has such a beautiful luster. I like to imagine that the reason why it sparkles is because it is just radiating our love. One of the girls in my office said that her attention was called to it because it threw a ray of light in her eyes. I guess it picked up the sunlight - it is just like a mirror, then and it throws off all the colors of the rainbow.

I met Jackie Siegel's girlfriend on the bus the other day and she told me that Jackie is coming home on furlough… in a few weeks and if he comes home she intends to get married… It can't be definite, because the furlough is still an *if*. I bet when Boomey[80] hears about his kid brother beating him to the punch, he might feel jealous. When he was home on sick leave, it would have been an ideal time for him to get married… She told me that when she came back from visiting Boomey… she wasn't sure she was in love with Boomey, but he was about the best fellow… to be engaged to, but as far as marriage was concerned she wasn't sure of that.

Honey, I hope you don't feel badly because Dad didn't come to the phone to say goodbye. He really wasn't very sick darling, he just had a cold and you know how colds affect him. He went to bed early and he told Mom to wake him up if he fell asleep when you called… When you did call, he was fast asleep. I guess Mom thought she'd rather let him sleep. He did want to say goodbye but Mom was worried about him and she wanted him to get some rest. He's fine now and his cold is all gone.

---

[78] Eleanor (Kohn) Ellison married Sam Ellison, a friend of Lenny's who also trained with him at Alexandria Army and Air Force Base, and would soon join him at the same Air Base in England.

[79] Sam has been reassigned to another base near New Orleans.

[80] Adolf (Boomey) Siegel is a friend of Sylvia's. They both graduated from Weaver High School in 1938.

Mom went to New York for the weekend and expects to be back Monday night. She left at nine o'clock this morning. I guess she is going to see Lou[81]'s wife's baby. In case you don't know this, Lou's wife was in and apt. in Brooklyn and he's living there now.

Ruth Schachter called me last week and I wasn't home at the time so I called her Thursday night. Walt is in Africa. She told me the unusual way he found out that he had a son. He left four days before she had her baby and… she gave birth two weeks before time. She sent a cable through the American Red Cross and he never received it. While she was in the hospital, she wrote to Walt's best friend, who was in Sicily and announced her son's arrival. This is the coincidence - Walt was flying and he had a stop in Sicily, so he went to see his friend. They haven't seen each other in over a year. They were reading, when the mail arrived, and his friend got the letter… that Ruthie had written to him. So, by his being there just at that particular time he found out that his son was born. Isn't that a coincidence, hon?

As far as Margie[82] is concerned, she is fine. Of course she and Norm[83] have a real problem on their hands and it is a shame they couldn't have waited. I guess the reason Mom didn't want to tell you, like most of the things she doesn't tell you, is because she's afraid you will worry. You know how Mom worries about things, and I guess she feels that you will. However, one good thing about it is that the government pays for all her doctor and hospital bills, and for a year's doctors care for the baby. This is furnished for the wives of the four lower brackets of the army. So hon, That is a real break because that does cost quite a good deal of money.

Today I met Margie and Rosalyn, she's a girl I met at work downtown. We went to the Capital[84] [Theatre] and saw *Government Girl* with Olivia DeHaviland and Sonny Tufts. He's the fellow that was Paulette Goddard's boyfriend in that picture *So Proudly We Hail*, remember? It was good but I expected it to be better. After we got out of the movies, Margie and I went shopping for Hanukkah gifts for the folks and, as the stores were open until nine tonight, we had the

[81] Louis (Lou) Levy is Lenny's uncle.

[82] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

[83] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy is trying to enlist in the Army.

[84] The Capitol Theatre was opened on August 28, 1920 with George M. Cohan heading a vaudeville bill which also included Eddie Foy & his family. Built on the site of the Coliseum Theatre, it was designed by Thomas W. Lamb. It was equipped with an organ, and was later known as the Fox-Poli Theatre before finally becoming the Loew's Poli Theatre. Located at 591 Main Street, this was perhaps the most elegant theatre in Hartford.

time. We got Dad a snazzy sport shirt to wear on Sunday - a gray and yellow plaid - and we got Mom some nice perfume and lipstick. I got my mom a telephone table - ever since I can remember my mom's been wishing for something to put the telephone on - Now she will have it. I know that is something she really wants.

Darling, you ask me not to worry about you, hon; I won't worry but I want you to know that I'll be thinking of you constantly and I'll be praying that you are well and home soon. That is something I couldn't help but do and I don't think you would call that worrying. I'll take faith in the fact that everything that *has* happened to us… has been for the best, and whatever is to happen will [also] be for the best. As you say, let's keep feeling that it won't be long before you are home again and we can go on being the very happy Mr. and Mrs. we were when we were together. I love you darling - oh how I love you.

Hon, everybody likes the brown hat that you said looks like a Pot Lid. I guess I look like the tomboy I am.

I want to finish my rug and get something new to work on for our home. I'm forever looking at pictures in magazines on home furnishings. I keep imagining what our home is going to be like. It is so strange how a person can change. I never took any interest in such things but now it fascinates me. I'd like our home not to be just ordinary but very different and yet beautiful.

Honey, I received a letter from the insurance company in regards to the policy that has come due and there is a $75 payment in it. They are going to send an agent here and I am going to show my *Power Of Attorney* and receive the payment. In regards to the copies of the *Power Of Attorney* you are sending me, I am glad you have taken the trouble to do that. I am sure it will be sufficient for all matters that might arise… In regards to the will, I don't know what to say. Lawyer Kotchen told me that as far as war bonds are concerned, in order to change the beneficiary… a will… does not cover it - if you want it changed, either you bring the bonds and have the beneficiary changed or the beneficiary can do it. If you have an insurance policy at home, the same applies to it… I don't know whether you do have any insurance at home, you never said. However, I know that Norman wrote to Mom and asked her to change his property to Margie. As I said before it's up to you and whatever you intend to do about it let me know won't you dear?... I hope I don't sound *grasping* darling because you know I feel about these things, but being your wife these things just have to be taken care of and I guess it is one of the responsibilities you assume when you get married - poor kid!

If all goes well I intend to go to New Britain tomorrow to see the family. My mom is sleeping at Faye[85]'s house tonight. She took care of Holly[86] and Betty May[87] so that Faye could go downtown for a while and do some shopping.

It is so cold in the house tonight, my nose feels cold. That reminds me I miss your habit with noses, honey.

Oh, was it mobbed downtown today. Of course, G. Foxe & Co. was the busiest and the front of the store was jammed with people trying to get in. I don't know how those inside got out. Maybe there's still in there do you think so honey?

I am looking forward to the gum and souvenirs you sent me. You're such a good husband and I love you so much for it.

I went into Sage's[88] today to see if they had that candy I want to send you that you liked so well, hon. The Candy Department is a joke now. They had peanuts and Maple Sugar

[85] Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty) May and Holly Suzanne

[86] Holly Weidman is one year old at the time

[87] Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman is seven years old

[88] Sage-Allen is a department store next to G. Fox's on Main Street in Downtown Hartford.

Candy. The selection was too varied, so I couldn't make up my mind… Consequently I bought nothing.

I still have your ration books. As yet, I didn't find the time to return them and on thinking about it - I waited a long time to get them so I'll take my time in sending them back - I know I'm being a devil but heck I have time to be an angel when I die. Wouldn't I be surprised that when the time comes, I find myself with a pitchfork and a tail, instead of beautiful white wings and a harp!

It is so quiet in the house, that the ticking of the clock sounds so loud. For a change, our neighbors are not arguing tonight. I think she has a sore throat and that's the reason.

Oh my fingers hurt, I've been writing too long. You can see what a sissy those six months made out of me - well it won't be long before I'll be tough again.

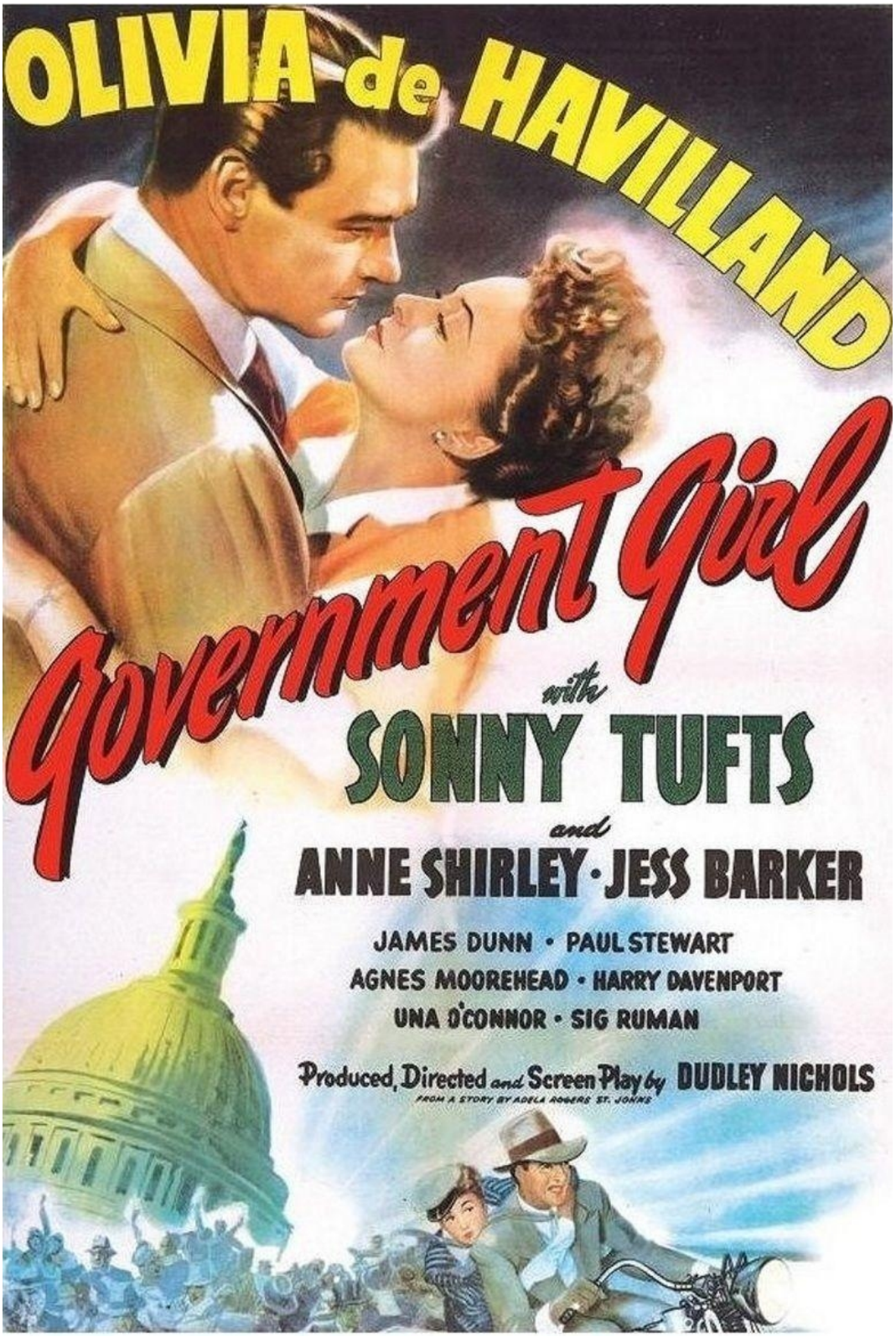
Your pen writes very nicely, hon. I have to brag about mine a little - mine doesn't leak! What a pleasure it is… because I hated to write with a pen because, no sooner had I finished one sentence and my hand was covered with ink… Today my nose got so cold when I was downtown, I thought what a wonderful thing it would be to have *nose*-muffs, with automatic nose wipers in them so that you don't have to take your mittens off to get your hanky… [to] wipe your nose. Isn't that an idea, hun? I am so *schmatt*. I think it would be a good idea.

Honey, wherever you are, I hope this letter finds you well and happy. I love you darling and please take good care of yourself. Give yourself a kiss for me. On second thought, just imagine it because you'd look silly kissing yourself - and you know me I'm never satisfied with one kiss: I'm such a she wolf! So my honey, I'll say goodnight now and, once more before I close this letter, I want to say I love you with all my heart -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

And here is a great big X because it is now after 12:00 o'clock and it is our 6th month anniversary

I love you
Sylvia


OLIVIA de HAVILLAND
Government Girl
with
SONNY TUFTS
and
ANNE SHIRLEY · JESS BARKER
JAMES DUNN · PAUL STEWART
AGNES MOOREHEAD · HARRY DAVENPORT
UNA O'CONNOR · SIG RUMAN
Produced, Directed and Screen Play by DUDLEY NICHOLS
FROM A STORY BY ADELA ROGERS ST. JOHNS

Sunday night ~
[December 12, 1943]

Darling ~

I never expected to talk to you today, but darling it was the best thing that could have happened. I kept thinking of you all day and the fact that it was our sixth month anniversary made me miss you so. It was a real honest to goodness pleasure to have longer than five minutes to talk. You sounded so much better in spirit, that it made me feel so much better. If only for that one reason - I am so thankful to be able to talk to you. I do love you so, my darling.

You certainly expect quite a bit from your wife – twins! I'm afraid you are going to lose that bet, because I don't think I'll have twins. However, if it means very much to you… I'll see what we can do about it.

So now I have a rival! *Knobby*! Honey, I bet he's as cute as he can be. If you ever take any snapshots of him please send me one. Hon, what perplexes me is how is he going to fly with you at 20,000 [feet]? Maybe he isn't going to fly with you, or are you having an oxygen mask made special for him?

I'm so glad you were able to talk with Dad because I know he wanted to say goodbye to you. It is too bad that Mom had to be in New York - I know she would have been so happy to have been able to talk with you again.

Yes, Issie[89] is in the Navy I forgot just what his rank is but it is equivalent to a Major in the Army[90]. The reason why he wanted to go into the Navy is as I said he wanted to get out of the hospital[91]. You see, he was in line to be superintendent and [when] the superintendent retired… they told Issie that they were sorry, but being a Jew, he couldn't get it… After being there for so many years, and being in line for this [promotion] and that old story of being a Jew… isn't easy to take. So I guess he reasoned it all out very soundly, and going into the Navy must have some very definite advantages for him, or else he wouldn't do it. A man with a family of five children[92] thinks very seriously of such a step before going on with it - so I guess he knows what he is doing.

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[89] Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter has recently left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital and enlisted in the Navy.

[90] Issie has been offered a commission as a Commander, which is equivalent to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the United States Army.

[91] Mt. Sinai Hospital is at 490 Blue Hills Ave. in Hartford, Conn.

[92] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David Maranski, Albert Leonard, Thalia, Harold Paul and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

I was supposed to go to New Britain today, but it being so cold outside, I decided to stay home and take care of some things at home. Betty May[93] was here all day and she kept me company. She is good company and I love to talk with her because she has such good power of reasoning for her age. You can't put anything over on her. She was in a very affectionate mood today and she kept telling me how much she loved me and how happy she is because I am home.

As yet Nate[94]'s baby hasn't been circumcised as he does not weigh enough. Well Lil shouldn't feel bad about the fact that he is a little baby, because they say little babies are healthier [than] larger children later on. Well, your cousin Newton can help prove the saying.

I guess tonight's call was really goodbye. I'm so happy I was home and then of course that you were able to make the call. I hope that wherever you will be sent, it will be to your liking and goes along well. No matter where you are, I want you to know I'm always thinking of you, and I love you with all my heart. I'll pray constantly for you to be home soon, and this whole mess will be over soon. So goodnight darling I love you and, until tomorrow, when I'll write again ~

I love you
X XXX
Sylvia

Darling this great big X is for what today is our anniversary. Let's hope that when we celebrate our first year anniversary we will be together again - may God grant it. In the time you will be away, I have happiness in the thought of these past six months and it's amazing how pleasant memories can stay with you and help make things seem brighter. I am so thankful for these past six months and for what it has meant to me. It has proven to me that our love is a true love, and there is nothing more I could ever ask for, and I have happiness in knowing that I am your wife and someday we will go on where we left off ~ and our happiness will know no bounds.

I love you
Sylvia
X

[93] Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman was seven years old at the time.

[94] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

Monday night ~
[December 13, 1943]

Darling ~

Today has been a very uneventful day. I had a long day at work and there certainly was plenty to do. The reason why we had to work overtime was because there are so many letters that we have received that have to be taken care of, and answered… It being the last of the year we are busy keeping our accounts in order during the day – oh, the life of the working girl!

I received three copies of the *Power Of Attorney* and the letter starting your insurance that you have taken out. On reading over this copy of the *Power Of Attorney,* it is much more explicit than the ones you received at Alexandria. I have enough copies now and I can take care of things and not worry about running out of them. Thank you darling, for getting them.

It is so cold today, I had to wait twenty minutes for the bus… and my toes got so cold. In fact, my feet are still cold. Now if you were here, I'd warm them on you when we got to bed.

I wanted to call your mom tonight to find out about how the folks were in New York but Margie told me in our conversation tonight that Mom is at her club. I forgot this is Monday night.

Hon, I miss you so much I'll never get used to being without you no matter how much I have to accept the fact. I'll be so happy when I can be with you again - I love you so much my darling. I'll say goodnight now hon, because there really isn't much to write except that I'm feeling fine and I hope your cold is definitely gone by now. Take good care of yourself and once again before I say goodnight ~ I love you darling ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Tuesday night ~
December 14, 1943

Darling ~

When I came home from work tonight, I felt tired but when I saw two letters from you, it made me feel like an entirely different person.

How well I remember that day a year ago, the ninth of December. I can remember going to the diner in the RR Station and tears dropping in my coffee. I thought the hot cup of coffee would help me feel better, but… nothing would have. Yes sweet, in one year you have made something of yourself, and I am so proud of you. I'm not just saying that… I honestly am proud of you. I know how hard you worked when you were a cadet, and how much you had to take to get where you are. I know that you earned your rank… when you work hard for something, the reward at the end is so worthwhile. I feel as you do about the length of time we were together. It was longer than I thought it would be, and I can't understand how so much happiness could have been enjoyed in those six months. In a way, it was a happy year. The reason why I say *in a way* is because it would have been better if there was no war - but other than that… it was as good a year as it could be - a very eventful [one] and of course a happy ending, six months. Your wish was granted - you are an officer in the Air Corp.[95] You are flying… and you were home longer than most fellows stay in the States… If it helps, you have a wife that loves you more than could ever be told.

As for me ,darling, my one regret… is that I didn't realize a long time ago that I loved you. I just hope that every year to follow will have as much happiness as I have had these past six months.

Darling, I giggled over your copilot's romance. It certainly is… the silliest thing I ever heard and being 28 years old I wonder just what does ail him. I agree with you that he is odd.

[I] work[96] until seven tonight and at least I feel better than I did a week ago… I feel as though I know what I am doing and why I do it. Nothing that bothers me more than to follow a procedure and not know why I am. I always want to know the why.

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[95] The United States Air Force became a separate military service on September 18, 1947, with the implementation of the National Security Act of 1947. Prior to that, military aviation was part of the Army and Navy. Lenny was in the Army Air Corp.

[96] Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave. in Hartford, Conn., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

Honey, I honestly [have] a bad cramp in my right hand. It can be understood if you saw me add over eight feet of figures today and pull the lever after each amount - my adding machine isn't an electric one - damn it!

I've been very lucky about getting to work in the morning. Natie[97] and I walk as far as Sigourney St. and Homestead Ave. and we are picked up from there by a friend of Natie's, and [I arrive] just a few blocks from my office.

Margie[98] called me tonight and extended a New Year's party invitation to me from Pearl[99]. It will be a Hen Party… and a bunch of girls who are all in the same boat - waiting - are coming to the party. It ought to be quite a party – one bottle of hoarded liquor.

Mom told Margie she is glad we are going to a party. Of course she has a date - well I guess I'm just an old maid for the duration of your absence.

So honey, I'll say goodnight for today and feel that it is one day closer to the day we will be together. Goodnight my sweet, I love you

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[97] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born last months, Philip Henry Geetter.

[98] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

[99] Margie's best friend.

Thursday night ~
December 15, 1943

Darling ~

You are getting to see more of our country, aren't you darling? When I get a letter from you I never know where it will be postmarked. I bet it is cold there because the winters there are supposed to be really mean. I certainly know what it is like to be cold because my legs get so cold on our way to work - I shiver when I think of it. You got your wish, hon. You wanted to be the passenger on a plane and let someone else do the worrying. It must be more of a pleasure trip, traveling that way.

Honey, I bet there is so much excitement going on now. There is so much ahead of you that I bet you are impatient to get going… Oh, how I wish I could be with you – and… if you only knew how much I mean that. I have got that much of a Tomboy streak in me, an adventure seems to fascinate me so much. That's what I get for being a girl - next time I'll make sure I choose the opposite sex - There's not much excitement being a girl. I guess when you are made a girl, your object in life is to be virtuous and if you are a boy - well you're just damn lucky! If I weren't married - that's if I never met you - I can assure you I would be in one of the Services now.

In regards to your not writing Sunday night after the cold… writing was up to you and if you felt like forgetting things for a while and wanted to go to the show - that's up to you. I heard that that picture was a terrible picture and I can imagine how you must have had *Shpilkes*[100] throughout the show.

The Field you are at now must be a very nice camp - your description… certainly gives that impression. I wonder how long you will be there. This wondering is just like a game - you never know what will happen next…

Tomorrow night, I am going to the movies with Roz, the girl in my office. We are going to work until six-thirty, have dinner in town, and then the movies.

Darling I won't worry if I don't hear from you in the days to follow, as I know you might be on the move and it will be quite impossible for you to write. I hope you are well and everything is going along fine.

Until my next letter - I love you sweet and good night ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[100] *Shpilkes* is a Yiddish word that means impatience, restlessness. It's similar to "ants in your pants." (shpil-keez).

Friday night ~
December 17, 1943

Darling ~

Being a working girl again I'm glad today is Friday, because that means that tomorrow is Saturday. I worked overtime three nights this week so you can understand why I'm glad tomorrow is Saturday - it was a long week.

Last night Roz and I worked until seven and then we went to *Mickey's* on Market Street and had a spaghetti dinner.

We had to wait for seats as they were so busy. It was delicious spaghetti and the meatballs were very good, too.

After we ate all we could we went to the Strand[101] and saw *Corvette K-225*. It kept us on the edge of our seats and the co-feature *So's Your Uncle* kept us laughing. It was one of the funniest pictures I've seen in ages and golly how I laughed.

Natie[102] had me rushing tonight. I went downtown with him to help him select some gifts for his friend, Jim Daly's mother. He is overseas now and his mother has been in a hospital for about three months now. We rushed so that we could be there before 6:00 as the stores weren't open until 9:00 tonight. We got some other things but I will have to do the rest of the shopping tomorrow.

Honey I am going to wash my hair soon and how I miss your shampoos. You spoiled me honey.

Margie[103] told me that Boomey[104] was home for a few days. Margie was at Annette Albert's shower and she noticed that Frances[105] had a very pretty wristwatch. She commented on how pretty it was and Frances told her that Boomey bought it for her when he was home last week. It is a very pretty watch from the description - it has rubies and diamonds on the case of the watch.

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[101] The Strand was a performing arts venue in downtown Hartford, Conn that showed feature films at the time.

[102] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born last month, Philip Henry Geetter.

[103] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

[104] Adolf (Boomey) Siegel was a friend of Sylvia's from Hartford, Connecticut where they were both in the Weaver High School class of 1938. Lenny graduated in 1936 from the same school.

[105] Frances was a friend of Sylvia, who is engaged to Boomey Siegel.

I wonder how long it will be before I hear from you again. It seemed so strange to come home from work and not have your letter waiting. I certainly do miss not hearing from you. I hope all is well and everything is coming along fine.

I proudly wear your wings every day - and I have good reason to wear them and be as proud of them as I am. I hope that the time passes quickly and we will be together again - I do love you so and without you I just never feel right.

When you write to me sweet please tell me as much of yourself and whatever you can write as possible.

Until tomorrow then my darling good night and I love you ever so much.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Saturday
[December 18, 1943]

Dearest wife -

At least I'm able to write to you, true I can't tell you half the things I would like to, but Army censorship prohibits me. Quite a bit has happened since my last letter and someday we'll spend hours talking about what I've seen and done since I kissed you goodbye that night in Alex[106].

I am definitely on my way to the place we've talked about so often - one of these days I expect to meet Lou[107] and have a nice talk with him and also be able to personally congratulate him on becoming a father.

At my last stop, I met quite a few fellows from Hartford, One of them a First Lieutenant by the name of Lassoff - I can't think of his first name, but I think you went to school with him, at any rate he is a relative of Sadie[108]'s boss so if you're interested you can find out from him.

Each new base that we land at means just so much more of an easier life. Here there is absolutely nothing to do; it even lacks the roll call we had at Grand Island, And what is worse they don't have an Esquire Room. It is extremely cold here and other than going to eat or to the PX we don't venture outdoors. Our length of stay here is doubtful but not too long I hope.

So your brother Is[109] has finally got himself into the Navy. I don't quite understand the move, but as you said, he must have known what he was doing for after all he is no kid. Give him my best regards and tell him I wish him the best of luck.

---

[106] Alexandria, Louisiana

[107] Louis (Lou) Levy is Lenny's uncle who recently married Renee and had a child.

[108] Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister

[109] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

It's three weeks my darling since last I saw you, the longest we've been apart since we were married, and to say that I miss you would be putting it very mildly. I lie awake nights thinking of you and the many happy times we had together and then I start thinking of the many more happy times we are going to have when all this is over with and we're back together again and time is our own. It won't be long my darling not when I have you to look forward to.

That's about all for now my darling. If we are still here tomorrow, I'll write again, if not the next letter will be from my next stop. I love you my darling - don't ever stop believing that and I won't ever stop telling it to you -

Goodnight and

I love you
Lenny

Saturday nite ~
December 18, 1943

Darling ~

Oh what a busy Saturday the department stores had today! The sidewalks were full of people doing their Christmas shopping and all of the stores were full to capacity.

Thank God I am no longer a sales girl! I couldn't help but feel sorry for them - it is such a nerve racking job.

I had my teeth cleaned today and I was glad to hear that I have no cavities. Now I don't have to worry about my teeth for another six months, it is such a good feeling.

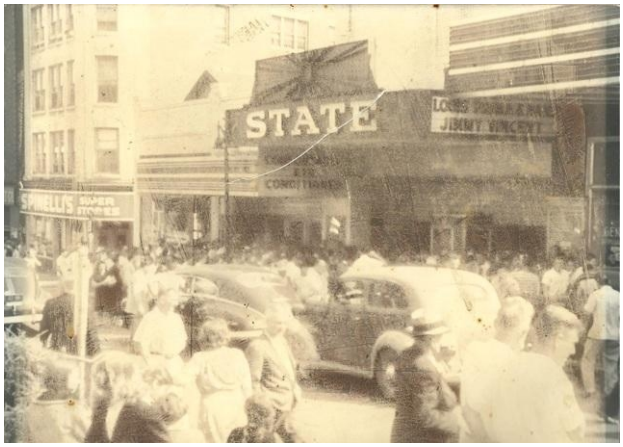
It was a lucky thing I went into the Bushnell[110] Card Shop today for a Christmas card because while I was in there I saw two baby pictures for Natie[111]'s son's room, and they were just what I was looking for…

As I expected the telephone table I bought in Wise's[112] for my mom never came and I had to go there today and find out what happened to it. They checked on it and promised to deliver it Monday. I guess I'll have to wait and see if they do - nowadays you have to expect this kind of service and the Christmas rush doesn't help matters much.

[110] The Bushnell Memorial Hall is a performing arts venue in Hartford, Conn.

[111] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

[112] Wise, Smith & Company, was a department store in Hartford, Connecticut.



I met Pearl[113] and Margie[114] about three-thirty and we went to see *Happy Land*[115] At the Capital. Why they ever named it *Happy Land* is beyond me. Everybody cried from start to finish. It was so very sad. Margie said that if Mr. Goralnik went we would have to row our way out. Speaking to Mom tonight she said that the Goralniks went - and they walked out halfway through the picture.

After the show we went to Johnson's for hot dogs. Remember the time I wanted to go to Johnson's on Farmington Ave. and you mistook it for the above Johnson's, and you took me there instead? You felt so embarrassed, I'll never forget it - it was really funny - please don't think I'm,,, making fun of you - it was just cute - I guess that's the only way to put it. Well Margie and I each had two hot dogs each, and when we were on the bus we didn't feel so good.

Margie came here and we didn't do much, just talked. It is a very sad fact but Margie is having a lot of heartache now and it is a shame her being in her condition. Her folks are treating her very badly and it is all because she is pregnant and they blame Norman. They have no use for him and as far as Margie is concerned, they tell her awful things and try to make her feel… she is lucky to be with them. Margie wants to get a room somewhere but in her condition she shouldn't be alone. Hon, I feel so sorry for her. I don't care what anyone says - it may be hard on Norm, but it will never compare to what Margie is having to go through now - I guess it is so true about that saying - it is the woman who suffers. I just hope everything works out.

I expect to go to New Britain tomorrow if all goes well - I'm anxious to see the children and Babe and Issie[116].

It is Saturday night again and honey I'll never get used to Saturdays that just don't mean very much… I haven't told you about what I intend to do on New Year's Eve. Pearl is having some of her friends over and she invited me to join the Hen Party. I know that there

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[113] Pearl is Margie's best friend.

[114] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

[115]Happy Land is a 1943 film directed by Irving Pichel, featuring Don Ameche as Lew Marsh, a father grieving the loss of his son in World War II.

[116]Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter has recently left his job at Mt, Sinai Hospital in Hartford, and enlisted in the Navy.

will be many such parties this New Years - but let's hope and pray that a year from now we'll find all of us celebrating the new year together, and this war will be over.

Honey, before I end my letter I just wish you were here and I could kiss you again and again. I love you so much. oh honey I love you. take care of yourself and goodnight my darling.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Sunday
[December 19, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Another day and we're still here in the wilderness, but our prospects of leaving… shortly are very good.

Yesterday, after mailing your letter, I went over to the PX, had a can of beer and then went to the hospital to visit Chris[117]; yes he's there - he has a touch of the grippe and the flight surgeon thought a few days in the hospital would do no harm. The nurse wouldn't let me stay more than a couple of minutes, so I left and went to the theater, saw *True to Life* with Franchot Tone, and had a good laugh for myself.

This place is actually getting on my nerves. I purposely slept until twelve today, so that I wouldn't have too much time to kill, but even then the day dragged by. I went to the show again this afternoon and spent the rest of the day in the club reading week old newspapers and rereading magazines that I know by heart. Yes my darling, life has become a pretty boring thing but it won't last much longer I'm sure.

About all I can say for this place is that it's cold - terribly so. I don't dare go out unless I'm wearing my heavy flying jacket and most of the time I also wear the boots that go with it. There is snow everywhere and packed down so hard that it appears to be for the duration. God help the fellows that are stationed here permanently.

Having so much time to myself, I naturally get to thinking of you and then I get to miss you terribly and then I get lonesome. I've never felt this way before my darling, but I'd give anything right now to be able to

[117] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

hold you in my arms, and kiss you over and over... Sitting in the club by myself I think of all those little things and it all mounts up to the fact that I miss you more and more as the days go by. I hope that your job is keeping you busy so that you don't have time to think too much, because judging from my own experiences it's hell. I miss not getting any mail from you - that thirty page letter must have grown by now - it sure will be a godsend to be able to sit down someday and read it over and over. Just as soon as I get to where I'm going, you'll hear from me and then you'll have my new address and believe me when I say I'll count the days until your letters start coming; just as I'm counting the days until I see you again. Once again it boils down to the fact that I'm not capable of saying what's in my heart - all I can say is I love you sweetheart more and more with each day -

I can't tell you where I'm going, where I am or what's cooking and I've said just about all there is to say So I guess I'll go to bed and think of you my darling wife -

Goodnight -

I love you
Lenny

The X's aren't there, but if they were they would be doubled tonight. I love you so much.

L.

Sunday night
December 19, 1943

Darling ~

It's happened! Margie is living with Mom. Last night, when she came home… she had a big argument, and her father told her to get out. She called mom and asked her if she could eat dinner there, and after telling mom the story, mom asked her to bring her clothes and live with her and Dad. It is the only thing that can be done. I hope that things will go along smoothly - Margie has been having as much as she can take.

When I came to New Britain today everybody was busy wrapping Christmas gifts. Being a professional wrapper, a G. Fox[118] Institute graduate, they put me to work. Hon, Issie[119] has a family to be justly proud of. Harold[120], he's the youngest boy, is the best-natured child I have ever seen. He smiles continuously. Suzanne[121] is taking after him. Albert[122] and David[123] are certainly proud of their Daddy [but] they had to know about you and what kind of a plane you fly, and if you are really going to fly over the Japs. I bet Issie's heart will break when he has to leave them, and I know that they will certainly miss him…

Issie and Babe are going to be very busy this week - they are having so many parties made in their honor. Friday night, Babe is having an open house and I guess that's where I'll be.

Tomorrow is Monday again, so I better get to bed. I have an alarm that wakes me in the morning, but it is nothing like the alarm I used to jump out of bed in Alexandria to shut. As cold as I felt when I used to get up those mornings, it was a real pleasure.

Honey, goodnight and I love you my darling.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

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[118] G. Fox & Co. was the largest department store in Downtown Hartford.

[119] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

[120] Harold Paul Geetter is three at the time of writing.

[121] Suzanne Geetter is one year old.

[122] Albert Leonard Geetter is eight years old.

[123] David Maranski Geetter is ten years old

Monday
[December 20, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Here I am thirty miles north of Detroit writing the letter I promised to write last night. I have an excuse - a very feeble one - and I ask your forgiveness. After talking to you on the phone, Chris[124] and Rock[125] talked me into going to the show to see Mae West's latest picture[126], it is the lousiest thing I've seen in years, not forgetting that picture we saw in Alex[127].

Talking to you yesterday made it much easier for me to start this trip to - destination unknown[128]. it was, as you said, just as if we were in the same city talking to one another but kept apart for an unknown force. Darling, I miss you terribly and when I talk to you on the phone, it eases the pain for a while but then, when the glow of happiness dies down, it becomes more acute and my love for you grows a little larger.

Yesterday at noon, we were *alerted*, which meant the beginning of what is going to prove a very interesting trip. At one o'clock we loaded our baggage onto the planes we were to use, and then went to draw our small arms. This consisted of a .45 automatic pistol and a hunting knife. Walking around like a bunch of characters from the wild and wooly West, we went and had our final physical exam, and then we were through for the day.

This morning, we were awakened at seven, had breakfast and arrived at base operations by eight. After some last minute loading and making a preflight check on the plane, we took off, arriving here

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[124] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[125] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[126] Probably *The Heat's On,* in which Mae played Broadway star Fay Lawrence as a temperamental diva who is reluctantly persuaded by a Broadway producer to star in his latest production.

[127] Alexandria, Louisiana

[128] Lenny and Sylvia expected the new base to be England.

(Selfridge[129] Field Michigan) at two this afternoon. It is wonderful traveling as a passenger (we are being flown by ATC.) I sat in the radio room all the way, reading, smoking, eating and of course sleeping. It is bitter cold in this part of the country and consequently Chris and I are spending a quiet evening in our rooms. This air base is the *last word* in comfort. It is an old base and a permanent one; the BOQs are large two story brick buildings with steam heat, the beds have double mattresses and they even supply towels, just like a hotel. We are with the Pilot, Co-pilot and Navigator that are flying us *across* and the five of us have a suite of rooms. Each building has its own dining room, and the club is right in back of us. Our enlisted men went into Detroit for the night, so I'll be able to tell you about it in my next letter.

As I told you over the phone, we have a date to meet another couple in Boston five years from now to show off our twins. One of the girls that worked behind the snack bar in the Esquire room is getting a ring for Christmas and she was talking about the lovely times she is going to have. To shut her up, I told her about you and the wonderful twins we are going to have. To settle the argument, we made the above mentioned date - the loser to buy dinner for the winner's entire family.

About 'Knobby' all I can say is he is the cutest pup you ever put your eyes on. He's white with a few black spots… and no more than a good sized handful. He is about four weeks old and not yet strong enough to stand on his own four legs. He does one of three things - either he is drinking (milk), sleeping, or doing a 'job.' What I can't understand is how such a small animal changes the color of milk - from white to Amber so quickly!

Butch darling, there is so much I would like to write to you but I just don't dare, you'll just have to wait until I get to where I'm going before you know the details of the next few days. Just don't worry my darling everything is going to turn out all right and, before you know it I'll be back home, holding you in my arms for keeps. Just keep two thoughts in mind always - I love you very, very much and no matter where I am I'll always be thinking of you my sweetheart.

---

[129] Selfridge Field was also getting ready for the arrival of the 477th Bombardment Group (M) (Colored) on 15 January 1944 to train Tuskegee Airmen with Republic P-47 Thunderbolt fighters and North American B-25 Mitchell bombers.

That's about all for today – if time permits, (Or if authorities permit) all right again tomorrow. once again my darling I miss you and love you very very much -

Goodnight my darling and here is an extra one for you x[130]

I love you
xxxxxxxxx[131]
Lenny

Regards to all,

Love you
L.

[130] Lenny was self-censoring his X (kisses) after his signature, because he believed they were not allowed.

[131] Lenny was planning to self-censor his X (kisses) on his signature, because he believed they were not allowed. Apparently, he was using extras here.

Monday night
December [20, 1943]

Darling ~

Today I received a Christmas card from Frannie[132]. As yet, I haven't had a reply to my last letter to her. I guess she must be very busy getting ready for Christmas… It is less than a week away now.

We had some excitement at work. Today, one of the cars in the parking lot next to the office caught on fire. It wasn't a bad fire but it was an excuse to stop working for a while. I guess a cigarette caused it. The man who owns the car made a mad dash for the spare tire in the trunk of his car.

Tomorrow night I am going to the Christmas party that the office has yearly. It is going to be a big party because they have a personnel of about 150.

Saturday, I splurged on my first $27 paycheck. I bought a new dress. It is a lemon color and I surprised myself when I bought it because I honestly had no intention of buying a dress when I went downtown.

Sweetheart, [your] mom told me that your clothes came. Why did you send home your summer suit? I haven't been there yet, but she tells me that the gum is there - thank you darling.

It snowed today for about ten minutes and then the sun shone in all its glory.

Sweetheart, there really isn't much more to write tonight. Not knowing… where you are or what I'd like to know… is hard… All I can say is that wherever you are, I want you to know I love you so much and I'm just praying constantly for your return home soon.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[132] Frannie is married to Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani - the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Tuesday
[December 21, 1943]

Dearest wife -

No letter yesterday for the same reason that this is going to be more of a note than anything else - in other words, there is just nothing to write about. I slept until twelve noon so… I won't have as much of the day to kill. My entire day is spent eating, sleeping, reading, and going to the theater, if there is a new picture showing. (That happens every other day.)

Today saw the coming of a cold snap; that up here means bitter cold with a biting wind. The wind is so strong that it blew a [censored[133]] completely around down on the line this afternoon.

Chris[134] is still in the hospital, It turned out that instead of the grippe, both his ears are infected, a recurrence of what he had back in Alexandria[135]. He will be there a week or so and it looks like I'll go on ahead with the rest of the crew and wait for him to catch up at our final destination. It is bad enough to be well and stationed up here and I pitied anyone who is sick up here - it is just miserable.

The climate besides being cold is very dry - so dry that cigarettes just fall apart once the package is opened. Speaking of cigarettes reminds me to tell you that I lost the case you gave me for my birthday - the one you didn't think I'd use, but which I prized so much. I feel terrible about losing it, but have no idea where I dropped, or left, it.

Sweetheart, I've written time after time telling you just how much I miss you and how much more I love you but as each day goes by I realize that what I felt before was nothing in comparison to how I feel now or how I'm going to feel as time goes by. In the short space of time that we had for each other you became a part of me - deep in my heart, where no

[133] Censored: probably B-17, or other plane model was cut by hand from Lenny's letter.

[134] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[135] Alexandria, Louisiana

matter where I go, you'll always be with me. I mean that sincerely my darling and I always want you to remember that I love you.

That's all the news for today, so until tomorrow when I'll write a few more lines - good night my darling -

I love you
Lenny

Wednesday night
December [22, 1943]

Darling ~

Tonight there is cause to celebrate - I finally finished my rug. As I told you when we were in Alexandria… there wasn't much left to be done on it… so today I got my final spurt of ambition. Now it will be put away with the other things I am saving for those happy days when we will have our new home.

I joined the hundreds of others in Hartford that are sick in bed with colds, etc. However, I haven't got a cold but a bad bronchial cough. It has been coming on for the past few days and last night I began to cough like a fog-horn. I don't feel sick at all but you know how annoying it is to have a tickling sensation in your throat. I've been taking cough medicine Issie[136] gave me an aspirin. So, I ought to be better in no time – you… can't keep a good Levy down for long.

Last night I went to the Christmas party our office[137] made. Perhaps if I didn't go out last night I wouldn't have such a bad cough today, but I had a good time… It was a typical office party - everybody was drunk and all the girls were out to get a 4F married 70 year old man for the evening. As far as the men - well you know what they were out for.

I left at about eleven and I had so many laughs. The photographer for the evening was at our table so consequently our group became the most photographed… If and when they are developed, I'll send you a few of them - they ought to be funny.

Transportation to and from the party was wonderful. Esther, a girl in my department, Accounts Receivable by the way, has a beautiful convertible club car, and she took Roz and myself there and back. She's a very nice girl and we have something in common - we are both married and our husbands are overseas. However, she's nine months ahead of me in her marriage… and her husband has been in India for nine months. Well to get back to the party, we all had a good time and this evening Roz called and told me half of the kids didn't show up today and the other half came in after nine - we are supposed to be there at 8:15.

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[136] Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (issie) S. Geetter left his job at B Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enroll in the Navy.

[137] Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

Mom just called to find out how I feel. I just hope I'll be able to go to work tomorrow - I hate lying in bed.

Sadie[138] went downtown tonight - the stores are open until nine - and she's going to get a gift from the family for Issie - he needs plenty of clothing so I guess that's what she's getting. They are having an open house Friday - I guess I told you that in one of my previous letters.

How's Knobby - the mascot? I wish somehow I could be him for a while - at least I'd be with you for a while. I miss you my darling so much. I received a Christmas card yesterday from Mrs Rodailat. It was a coincidence as I mailed one out to her yesterday morning.

I have your pictures on my dresser and right now you are looking at me and oh how I wish those pictures were really you - I do love you darling.

Darling, as for today, there's not much else to write. I hope you are well and I hope to hear from you soon. Please give my regards to Rock[139] and Chris[140], and of course all of my love to you.

Yesterday I received the first letter from you since the one you wrote to me in Detroit. Although there wasn't very much you could say… just hearing from you and knowing you are well made that letter so precious. I can well understand your anxiety to get going. Perhaps at this very moment that I am writing this, you are on your way. For your sake, I hope that you are. If, as yet, you are still not here nor there, please be patient darling.

It is good to hear that you are going to congratulate Lou[141] on the birth of his daughter. I hear she is a very cute baby and something to be congratulated on.

Well your wife is still in bed. I guess I just couldn't be different from the rest so I too have the grippe. I don't feel very sick except for a sore nose that I've blown so darn many times. Mom isn't taking any chances, however, so she makes me stay in bed and tanks me with water and fruit juices.

---

[138] Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister.

[139] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[140] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[141] Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and just had their second daughter Holly Weidman.

Goodnight, darling ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Friday night
December [24, 1943]

Darling ~

Yesterday I received the first letter from you since the one you wrote to me in Detroit. Although there wasn't very much you could say… just hearing from you and knowing you are well made that letter so precious. I can well understand your anxiety to get going. Perhaps at this very moment that I am writing this, you are on your way. For your sake, I hope that you are. If, as yet, you are still not here nor there, please be patient darling.

It is good to hear that you are going to congratulate Lou[142] on the birth of his daughter. I hear she is a very cute baby and something to be congratulated on.

Well your wife is still in bed. I guess I just couldn't be different from the rest so I too have the grippe. I don't feel very sick except for a sore nose that I've blown so darn many times. Mom isn't taking any chances, however, so she makes me stay in bed and tanks me with water and fruit juices.

I'm home all by myself now as the folks are in New Britain for the party for Is[143]. Mom thought I'd be afraid to stay by myself but I convinced her that while I lived in Alexandria I learned how to overcome that.

It was very cold here yesterday and last night. This morning when I awoke I noticed that my windows were covered with ice. Of course, being snug and warm in bed, it looked very pretty but I guess those on the outside weren't thinking the same thing.

Roz called and spoke to my mom. She gave her all the latest news from the office for me. It seems as though the old man I danced with at the party noticed my absence, as he asked Roz about me.

He reminds me of old Mr Whipple, my boss in the Retail Credit[144]. He danced with me and when I went home I told Nate[145] that I thought sure I was being *raped* rather than *danced* with.

---

[142] Uncle Louis (Lou) Levy and his wife Renee recently had their first child.

[143] Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (issie) Geetter left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enroll as a medic in the Navy, and has just learned he will be commissioned.

[144] By the 1940s, Retail Credit Company was one of the nation's largest credit bureaus, holding files on millions of American citizens. It now operates as one of the "Big Three" credit bureau, Equifax.

[145] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born last month, Philip Henry Geetter.

After all he's not quite seventy yet! I guess that composer who wrote *They're Either Too Young or Too Old* knew what he was talking about.

Darling… yesterday I received the letter you wrote to me Sunday, which was your *second* letter and today I received the one you wrote to me Saturday. When you mentioned in yesterday's letter about the letter you had written the night before, I thought it surely had gotten lost in the Christmas Mail Rush. (I didn't mean to capitalize *rush*; blame it on my temperature or better still the high alcohol content in my cough medicine.) I had my mom call your mom and she told her what… news you could tell me. She too was so happy to hear that everything is fine. We do think of you so much darling. Honey, if anything could make me feel happier than I was to receive your letter - it could only be one thing - just to be with you, in person. I love you darling.

Seeing that kisses are censored at the end of letters… we will just have to pretend they're there. Reviewing your letter, the one you wrote Sunday first, I couldn't understand why they were missing. Of course, today's letter explained it, but I admit I was a wee bit in the dark about it yesterday.

I received a surprise today too. It was a letter from Eleanor[146] and you will never guess its contents. Should I keep you in suspense for a while, and be the little brat I can be… or should I be a good girl and tell you right away? Let me see - I'll be good - the letter came from - now guess hard - Tampa, Florida. That's where she and Sam are living as he is having his second phase there. Isn't that a surprise? I didn't know they sent fellows from Alexandria to complete their training elsewhere - did you? She told me that they are sharing a five room apartment with another Navigator and his wife at fifty dollars a month per couple. It is a real modern apartment, and I can imagine how mad she gets when she thinks… she was only paying ten dollars in Alexandria. She told me that her landlord brought a case to court in Alex and he lost - so [after] another fight… he shut off their lights. Mrs Rodeilat - left word with neighbors one day that if Eleanor liked, she could have Helen's apt, as she has gone back to New York. I asked Mrs Rodeilat to keep Eleanor in mind, never realizing that all this would happen.

Margie[147] called today and my mom says that she too isn't going to work as she has a slight case of the grippe. Mr Lassoff brought some bread here today and he was telling me about his son. It so happens he is home on furlough now and his dad sure is happy.

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[146] Eleanor (Kohn) Ellison married Sam Ellison, a friend of Lenny's who also trained with him at Alexandria Army and Air Force Base, and would soon join him at the same Air Base in England.

[147] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

Well, it's Christmas night and seeing that I haven't got a pair of nylons to hang up, perhaps I ought to do as Joan Davis, the comedian said she is going to do on Christmas Eve - hang up an empty bottle of Stocking makeup.

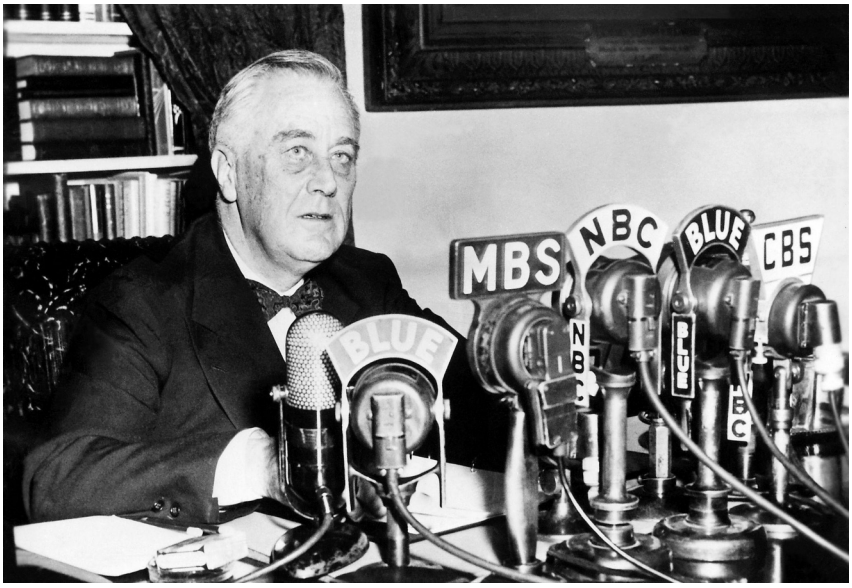
I heard the president's speech today and I thought it was a wonderful speech. Although he didn't make any definite promises he was reassuring and in times like these a little reassurance can mean so much. I wonder if you were listening to it. Did you, darling?

Hon, I hope that I will be able to mail my letters to you real soon. I admit my letters aren't letters that might win prizes but I hope they fulfill my one reason for writing… making you happier and being able to pretend you are right here with me and I am talking to you.

I'll say goodnight for now my darling and before closing let me tell you that I'm always thinking of you and how very much I love you.

Goodnight, darling ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Saturday night
[December 25, 1943]

Darling ~

Today has been a very quiet and rather uninteresting day, so if I make this a short letter it will only be, because I fear it wouldn't be very interesting reading matter.

I'm better today, but I still have to lie in bed as my temperature isn't normal yet! The radio proved good company today, because of the varied Christmas programs on today. I had Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* [148]dramatized three times, and at the present moment I feel as though I know it well enough to repeat parts of it word by word.

Yesterday, I received a form from the War Dept. stating that I was to receive an allotment soon. I hope they keep their word and send it soon because I can use the money right now, and I can't get down to the bank. It has been a rather expensive month – gifts, telephone calls, and new doctor bills and medicines. And not working this week, I don't expect a large paycheck next week. I hate to use that money, but I guess it can't be helped so maybe I'll be able to make it up in the future.

I believe [your] Mom and Dad went to the movies today. I hope they didn't have to join those where there was "Standing Room Only" - but it being Christmas Day, I was wondering… if they had trouble finding seats.

I am keeping my word about making this a short letter, as there honestly isn't much more to write except that I love you and hope you are well. Best wishes to Rock and Chris - and once more darling - I love you.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[148] This was probably a rebroadcast of *A Christmas Carol directed by Orson Welles in 1939.* Lionel Barrymore was featured as Ebenezer Scrooge.

V-mail[149]
December 26, 1944
Somewhere in England

Dearest wife -

Remember my saying that I'd have tea in England for Christmas - well that's just what I had and nothing more. The trip over wasn't bad - a lot better than going by boat. The base I'm at now isn't too bad, but I'm still not at my final destination; we finally caught up with the rest of the crew and now we'll have to wait for Chris.

England is a beautiful place - from the air, but on the ground it is miserably dank and cold. The blackout here is really something to see - or rather not to see. So far, we have seen no indication of a war, things being very peaceful.

Sweetheart, use the address on this sheet and eventually your mail will get to me. Write just as often as possible, and you can be sure that I will too. I miss you terribly and love you more than ever. give my regards to all at home.

I love you
Lenny

[149] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad.

PRINT THE COMPLETE ADDRESS IN PLAIN BLOCK LETTERS IN THE PANEL BELOW. AND YOUR RETURN ADDRESS IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. USE TYPEWRITER, DARK INK OR PENCIL. WRITE PLAINLY. VERY SMALL WRITING IS NOT SUITABLE.

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MRS. LEONARD LEVY
148 MAGNOLIA ST.
HARTFORD 5 CONN.
C/O GEETTER . U.S.A.

26 DEC 1943

E/O L. Levy
SENDERS NAME
A.P.O. 13662 A.A.
SENDERS ADDRESS
C/O Postmaster N.Y.N.Y.
Dec. 26/1943
DATE

Somewhere in England

Dearest wife -

Remember my saying that I'd have tea in England for Xmas - well, that's just what I had and nothing more. The trip over wasn't bad - a lot better than going by boat. The base I'm at now isn't too bad but I'm still not at my final destination; we finally caught up with the rest of the crew and now we'll have to wait for Chris.

England is a beautiful place - from the air, but on the ground it is miserably damp and cold. The blackout here is really something to see - or rather not to see. So far we have seen no indication of a war, things being very peaceful.

Sweetheart, use the address on this sheet and eventually your mail will get to me. Write just as often as possible and you can be sure that I will too. I miss you terribly and love you more than ever. Give my regards to all at home.

I love you
Lenny

V···-MAIL

Sunday
December 26 [1943]

Darling ~

Today is one of those days when everything outdoors has a gray cast. I guess it may snow or perhaps rain.

Everybody is at Natie[150]'s house now as they are having the *Bris*[151] for the baby today. I bet the apartment is full to capacity and then some.

I called your mom today and Margie[152] is in bed now. I'm home, too, with the grippe, but she went outdoors yesterday and I guess she wasn't well enough. Dad suggested I take a cab and come over for the afternoon, but the weather is changing as it is, and still having a slight temperature, I'll be a real good girl and stay in the house.

Not having much to do and the radio programs on right now aren't very interesting, so I've been looking through our scrapbook and I've been reading some of your letters. I get such a kick out of the ones you wrote to me, while you were in pre-flight [school.] You were so worried, my darling. Someday, we will have fun… going over so many things, and although they say it isn't good to dwell too much in the past, it… is so much fun to reminisce, when there are so many pleasantries attached.

Issie[153] leaves tomorrow morning - he will be stationed in New London for a while. He's afraid he'll be court-martialed right off because his uniforms, he just got them from Fox's[154] do not have the proper insignias. He certainly had to get so many things, but he [also] received so many gifts from his associate doctor friends at the hospital and from his friends in town. I'll bet he is all excited - he's been looking forward to this for a long time.

Your mom just called. She wants to visit me, but I told her it wasn't necessary as I am really fine. I told her I was going to write to you and at first she didn't understand - she thought I *had* your address. She laughed when I told her I'm saving them until I can mail them to you.

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[150] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had the first of two children, Philip Henry, who was one month old at the time this was written.

[151] The *bris* ceremony, also known as *brit milah*, is a Jewish ritual circumcision performed on male infants when they are eight days old, symbolizing the covenant between God and the Jewish people. The ceremony typically involves a *mohel*, who performs the circumcision, and includes blessings and the naming of the child.

[152] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

[153] Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter has recently left his job at Mt, Sinai Hospital in Hartford, and enlisted in the Navy.

[154] G. **Fox** & Co. is the largest Department Store in Downtown Hartford.

Last night, I heard a joke on *Can You Top This One*[155] – program. In fact I heard two that amused me quite a bit so I'll try to tell them as they were worded and maybe you'll enjoy them too. Now let's see - how did they go - oh yes -

One morning this particular married woman said to her husband, "Did you know you cursed me in your sleep last night?" And her husband replied - "Who said I was sleeping?" I bet you heard it - if it's an old one I guess that's why I heard it.

And the other is about a little [woman] who made all her own clothes. One day, she made a dress out of an old curtain. Her boyfriend took her to see a play one evening and she decided to wear this particular dress. When the lights were dimmed and the familiar cry, "Curtain going up" was issued - she fainted.

Now hon, do you think I should be wearing *Poils*[156] for two such jokes?

I'm hoping that this coming week will bring word from you. Until tomorrow, I'll end this letter with all my love and I'll keep my fingers crossed and my hopes high that I'll hear from you soon.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[155] Can You Top This? was a radio panel game in which comedians told jokes and tried to top one another.

[156] Pearls, spoken with a New York accent.

V-mail[157]
[December 27, 1944]
Somewhere in England

Dearest wife -

I can't imagine why people say the English are cold and unfriendly… everyone that I've met has been extremely friendly and more than willing to go out of his way to help. The *Yank* with his chewing gum and candy, is king here. The kids on the street run after you asking for American candy or chewing gum - with the English accent it sounds terrific. The beer here is all that they ever said it was - it tastes unlike anything you ever drank before.

By the way darling, in your next letter to Sam and Eleanor tell Sam to thank God that he left his pilot when he did. I can't write details, but I think you know what I mean.

Tonight is a holiday in England, Boxing Day and I think I'll go to town tomorrow. I'll tell you what I saw darling.

Goodnight my darling.

I love you
Lenny

[157] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad.

SPACE PROVIDED. USE TYPEWRITER, DARK INK OR PENCIL. WRITE PLAINLY. VERY SMALL WRITING IS NOT DIFFICULT.

No.

CENSORS STAMP

MRS. LEONARD LEVY
148 MAGNOLIA ST.
HARTFORD 5 CONN.
c/o GEETTER U.S.A.

Pvt. Leonard Levy
SENDERS NAME
A.P.O. #12662-AO
SENDERS ADDRESS
% Postmaster, N.Y.
Dec. 27, 1943
DATE

DEC 28 1943

Somewhere in England

Dearest wife –

I can't imagine why people say that the English are a cold unfriendly race, everyone that I've met has been extremely friendly and more than willing to go out of his way to help. The 'Yank', with his chewing gum and candy, is king here. The kids on the street run after you asking for American 'candy or chewing gum' – with the English accent it sounds terrific. The beer here is all that they ever said it was – it tastes unlike anything you ever drank before.

By the way darling, in your next letter to Sam and Eleanor tell Sam to thank God that he left his pilot when he did. I can't write details but I think you know what I mean.

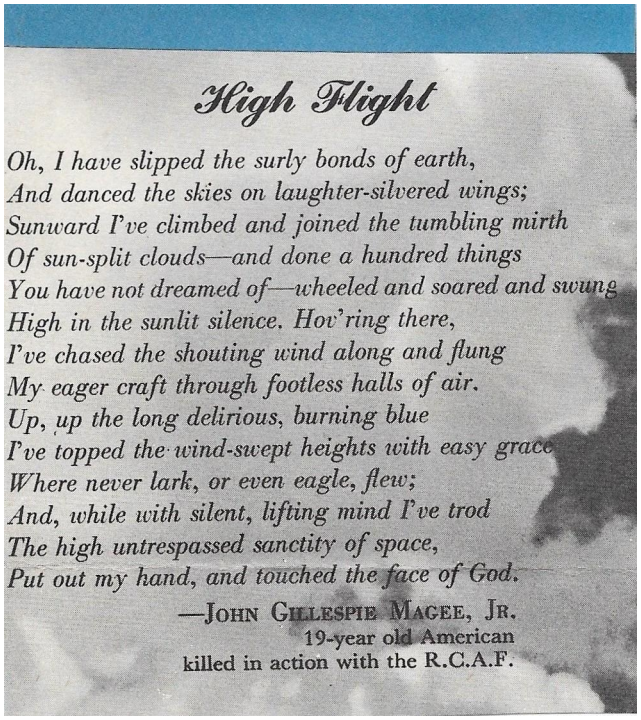
Tonight is a holiday in England, 'Boxing Day', and I think I'll go to town – tomorrow I'll tell you what I saw. Goodnight my darling –

I love you
Lennie

Tuesday night
December 28, 1943

Darling ~

I am enclosing a copy of the poem *High Flight*[158] that was in the *Coronet*[159] this month. I think it is very beautifully written and I thought perhaps you might enjoy it.



High Flight

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds—and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle, flew;
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

—John Gillespie Magee, Jr.
19-year old American
killed in action with the R.C.A.F.

I went to work today[160], as my cold is gone. My bosses were kidding me about getting sick the day after the party - they said I can't take it anymore. From all the stories I've heard, there were plenty of goings-on Friday - the day before Christmas. The office was to close at one o'clock but by 10:30, everybody was drunk and all the men were running around kissing the girls, and some of them coupled off in empty offices. The head boss from New York happens to come through the office that morning, and hearing all the noise, and seeing his help all over the stairways… he got mad and told everybody to go home - it was ten-thirty. So instead of getting out at one o'clock, they went home at ten-thirty. Natie can't get over it - the way everybody acts, but once you work in a large office, it is to be expected, when a big holiday comes along. I learned that in the insurance company, but it seems that in this office it is much worse because the heads of the departments just don't give a darn.

I intended to go back to work yesterday, but it rained in the morning. By twelve, it cleared up, so I decided to visit [your] mom and Margie[161] (She didn't go to work either because of a cold.) I ate dinner at three, and the way I ate, Margie thought I was the one pregnant. But I could prove it to her that I definitely am not.

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[158] The poem was written by John Gillespie Magee, Jr., an Anglo-American aviator and poet. Magee served in the Royal Canadian Air Force, which he joined before the United States entered the war; he died in a mid-air collision over Lincolnshire in 1941.

[159] Coronet was a general interest digest magazine published from October 23, 1936, until at least March 1971

[160] Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

[161] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant.

I'm chewing some of the gum you sent me. I got it yesterday when I went to mom's. By the way hon, where are those souvenirs you told me you were sending to me? Mom said that the only thing she found in the foot locker or whatever you sent your things home in, was the box of chewing gum. Did you forget to send them to me?

I'm very sorry to hear that Chris[162] is having trouble with his ears again. I hope it isn't serious and he will be well soon. Give him my regards and best wishes , dear, and tell him he's too *smaht* a pilot to be getting sick.

Darling, your going to the movies so often just to pass the time reminds me of how I did the same thing in Monroe [Louisiana] at times. I do wish I could send some of my letters to you now, it might help to hear from home.

In case you didn't know this, Norman[163] is in the hospital. Before I go any further - it is - honestly nothing serious - and you know I tell the truth. He has been having trouble with his nose, as you know, so he is under observation. As yet, they can find nothing wrong with him. They think it may be caused by the fact that when he was a baby he had croupe or bronchitis. It doesn't mean anything. It's what my nephew David[164] coughs from now - that bad case of croup he had two years ago and Izzie[165] said he thinks David will always have some sort of condition… Meanwhile Norm is taking it easy and gaining weight. He says that he expects to have a doctor stay at his bedside all night, to listen to how he breathes as he sleeps. It is all part of the observation. In case Mom or Norman haven't written to you about it yet, don't mention it until they do. Please keep it another one of those things between the two of us.

Hon, if in the future you feel the same way you do, about not having much to write – please, please don't take it in mind, not to write at all. Even if it is just an "I'm an all right" note - it means so much to me just to hear that. After all, letters mean as much to us at home and hon I look forward to them so much.

Tonight I glanced over the want ad section of the *Times*[166] and I was so surprised to [see] that jobs aren't to be had as they have been in the past. I don't know the exact reason why there aren't, but it is certainly a definite change. There are just two columns of Female Help Wanted.

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[162] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[163] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy is trying to enlist in the Army.

[164] David Maranski Geetter is ten years old at this time.

[165] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David , Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne.. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

[166] At the time, Hartford, Conn. had two daily papers. *The Hartford* ***Times*** was the evening paper.

The insurance agent from Prudential was supposed to come here tonight so that I could sign the necessary papers in order that I can [pay] the seventy-five dollars that has come due. It is quarter to ten now, so I guess he isn't coming tonight after all. Maybe he has the grippe.

Mom and Dad gave me a ten dollar bill for Chanukah. Not wanting anything - particularly right now, I decided to hold onto it until I do.

Sweetheart, telling me that you miss me a little means so much - if my telling you that I love you helps sweet, then I ought to be very helpful because I do love you so and words will never express how much I miss you. Please remember my thoughts are always with you and there's a constant prayer that you will be home soon. so take care of yourself - be a 'schmaht' Navigator and you will come home wearing "Poils[167]."

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[167] Pearls, spoken with a New York accent.

Wednesday night
December 29, 1943

Darling ~

I just finished addressing some New Year greeting cards. Among them, I included cards to Boomey, Ebner[168], Norm and I signed them from the both of us. Seeing we can't wish them a happy New Year personally, a card might be the next best thing.

I spoke to Ebner's dad tonight in order to get his new address. I learned that he is no longer in Louisiana; he is now in Ohio, and he is in the Railway Battalion, doing practically the same thing he did in civilian life. He had his folks send him his overalls as that is his uniform during the day. It seems as though the camp he is in now isn't very large, and he's not… near to a large city… In comparison to New Orleans, and how much he liked it there, it will take him some time to get used to his new surroundings. Darling, here's his address. .. If you can drop him a card, he would love to hear from you…

PFC Ebner Glooskin 31380681
Company A, 764th Railway Shop Bn.
Camp Millard
Bucyrus, Ohio

I also called Leona Alexander tonight. She told me that Boomey is now in Virginia, but he doesn't expect to be there much longer, before he is on his way to a staging area. Oh, yes, he was home again this past weekend. He came in rather unexpectedly. I don't know whether he will still be at this address when you get this, but if you want to write to him and use it, I'm sure it will get to him eventually -

Squadron 355, 302 Bombing Gp.
Langley Field, Virginia

I was speaking to Margie[169] tonight and she said she received a letter from Norman[170] today. He's having a wonderful time in the hospital, running around all day doing nothing and gaining weight.

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[168] Ebner Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia in 1938 and has been a friend of his since Lenny and Sylvia started dating.

[169] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman's Levy and is pregnant.

[170] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy is trying to enlist, but has medical issues.

From the news, it seems as though Germany is really taking her much deserved beating. All of us at home are hoping that Eisenhower was right when he stated that '44 would be the doom for Germany and the European War will be over. However, I shudder to think what this victory will cost - I don't mean cost in regards to money.

Eddie Cantor's program is on now and, darling, the impossible is happening - it is worse than ever.

Poisoned Natie[171] today. I brought some coffee in a thermos bottle to work and he had some and it was terrible. I used NesCafe, but I guess I didn't measure it accurately and it was terrible. No wonder I have a complex, when I make coffee in any form...

Betty May[172] has been calling me recently and asking me to take her ice skating, when I'm not working. I have ice skates but I invariably end up on my *end*. I told her, if it snows, I'll go sledding with her in the park - just like a married woman. I honestly hope it snows so that we can go Saturday.

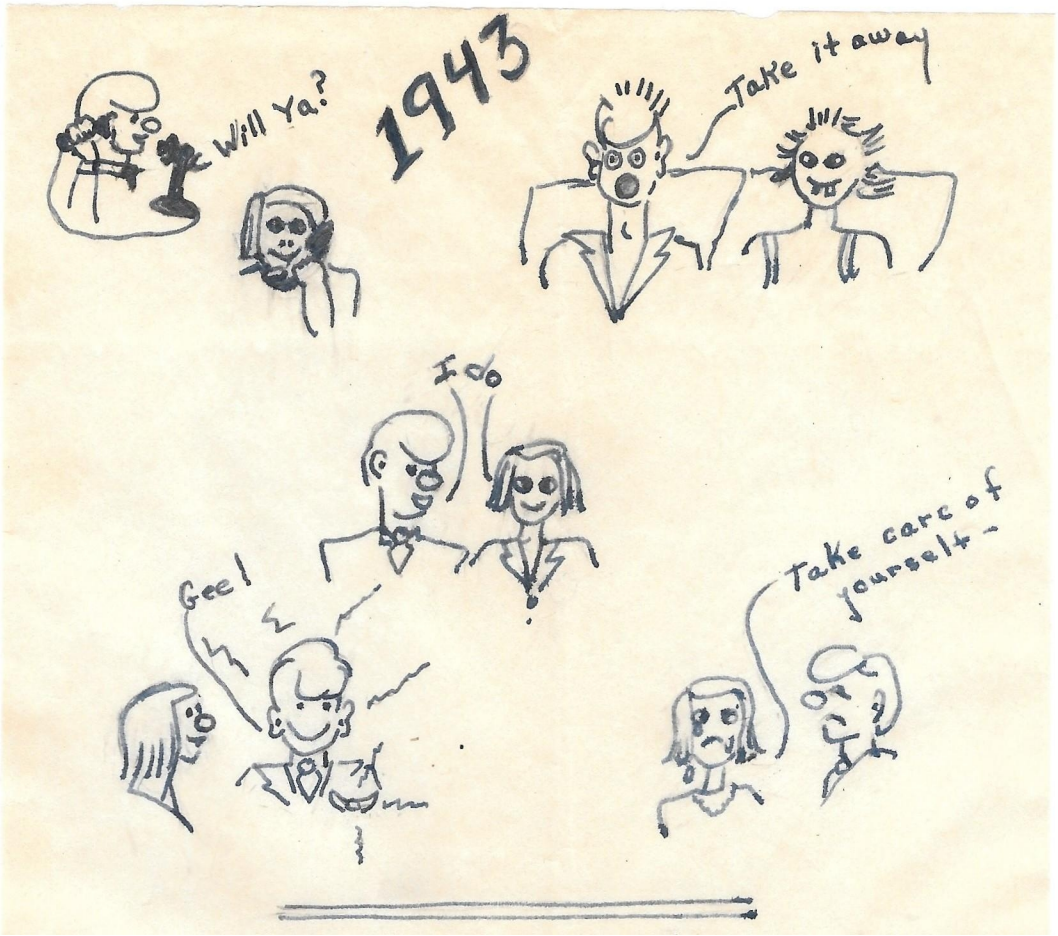
Honey, I haven't much more to write today. I am wondering where I found so much to write tonight - when I started this letter I expected it to be much shorter, but I guess that's a woman for you - there's always something she can talk about.

Honey, I love you and I hope that it won't be long until you will be able to write. Take good care of yourself and once more - remember -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[171] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had his first of two children, Philip Henry, who was one month old at the time this was written

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



Thursday night
December 30, 1943

Darling ~

The above is a result of my doodling. I was just listening to the radio and my thoughts were wandering over the happenings of this year and as I thought about them I doodled… Right now I am thinking of the morning after we went to your graduation dance in Monroe [Louisiana] and I heard crickets singing in my room. Now, when I think about that incident I can laugh, but that morning, when I discovered my new evening gown all eaten up, I didn't see anything to laugh about.

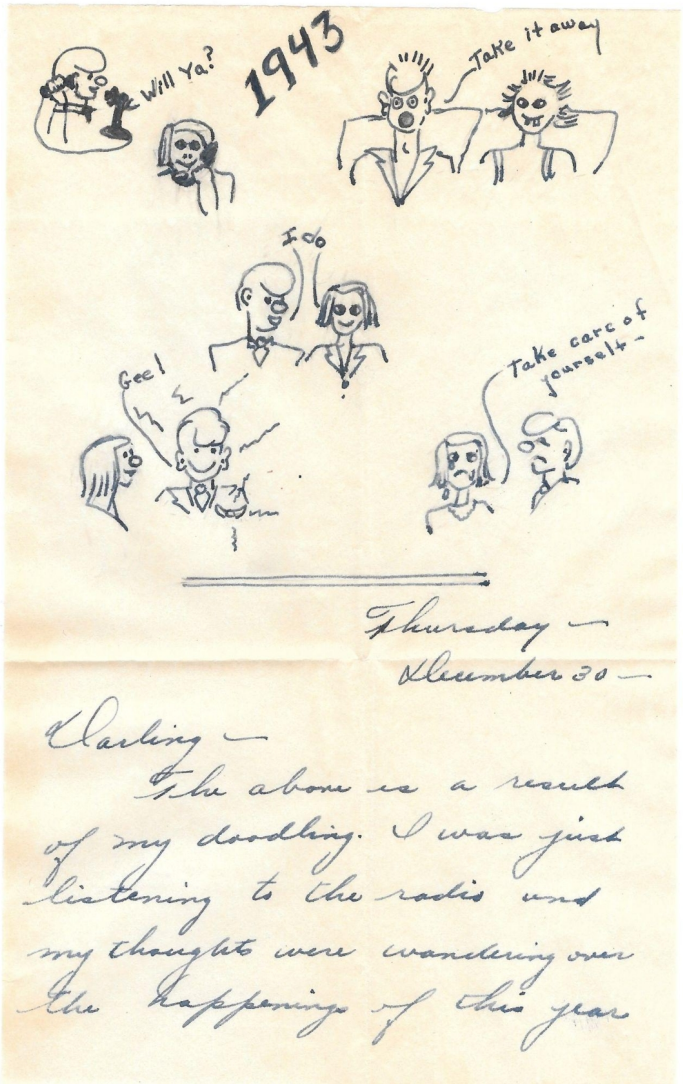
Sweetheart, this past year has been the most eventful and happiest year of my life. So much has happened in one year, that if… anybody had told me what lay ahead of me… I'd think they were a bit tipsy. As long as I live, 1943 will be a year I'll always think about. It is made up of such pleasant memories and happiness. Of course, the goodbyes we had to say were the hardest thing in the world to do, but now that the goodbyes are said, there's pleasure in the thought that our next step will be "hello again," and let's hope that we will

never have to say goodbye again. As much as '43 means to me, I'm anxious to have '44 come along. I feel that '44 will be that much closer to victory and back to normal living.

So, sweet, this is a very poor attempt to tell you… when the New Year rolls in, I'll be thinking of you, how much I love you, and everything you mean to me. Darling I want to thank you for all the happiness I have had this year, because of your love… I pray this will be the last New Year we will ever be separated.

A happy New Year, darling - and I sincerely hope it will be full of happiness, and success, and health, and pretending we are drinking to the New Year together - Well - here's to us and the chance to go on where we left off.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



England

Friday, [December 31, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Less than an hour left before this year is last year, and when it does leave us it will be taking the most pleasant episodes of my life with it, namely my marriage to you, our living together, for a short while, and my becoming an officer in the Air Corps. What more could a man ask for, than being the husband of the loveliest, grandest, sweetest person in the world *and* wearing wings? It has been a good year, despite the fact that it also separated us, but I assure you that there are better ones coming, my darling. I do love you so very much, sweetheart and each day that passes means just one less between us. I miss you more and more with each passing hour. God what I wouldn't give to be holding you in my arms right now.

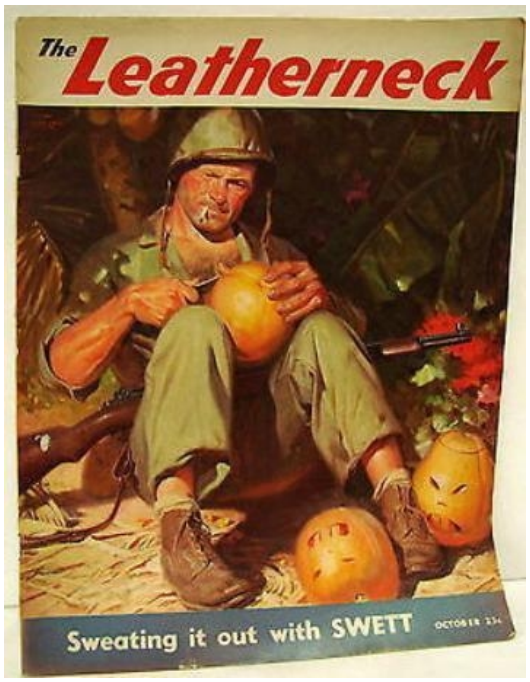
I may have spent a lousier New Year's Eve but I don't recall it. Even last year's, spent in Blackstone VA, was better; I at least went into town and had a few beers, but here I'm just stuck at camp, not even daring to take a beer, the taste being so awful. I played cards for a few hours, made myself about ten pounds (roughly forty dollars) and decided I had done enough celebrating!

By the time this reaches you, you should have received my cable and at least one letter. The only reason I'm sending part of them V-mail[173] and part regular [mail] is to find out if one is really faster than the other. There is so little that can be said in V-mail, so if there is not too much difference in time I'll send the mail regular.

Concerning me, there is nothing that can be said that I have not already written. I'm still waiting around for orders, taking life easy but not putting on any weight because of the lack of sleep. I just can't sleep nights and that is probably the cause of the miserable headache I have

[173] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

right now. I took two of the Aspirins that you gave me before leaving Alex[174] and they may do the trick. you will no doubt be interested to know that my hair has finally grown in and I actually part it, where you want it done too!



Chris[175] hasn't arrived yet and I'm beginning to 'sweat him out.[176]' I would sure hate to back in with a new pilot, And besides he's a pretty nice fellow, easy to get along with etc.

Happy New Year, my darling wife - it is just twelve. This makes the third one that we've known each other, and none of them have we spent together. Let us hope that this is the last one to see us apart - may this year see what we all want, with it bringing us together.

Sill darling I miss you more than I ever thought possible, and my sweetheart I'll be counting the days till we're together again. I do love you so very very much. Goodnight my darling and here is an extra one for you x[177]

I love you
Lenny

Regards to all, Wish them all a Happy New Year for me, and tell them that I'll write just as soon as I get to a permanent station.

Love you
Lenny

[174] Alexandria, Louisiana

[175] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[176] Sweating Out is a military slang that means anxiously awaiting something, or someone.

[177] Lenny was self-censoring his X (kisses) after his signature, because he believed they were not allowed.

V-mail[178]
[January 1, 1944]

Dearest wife -

After mailing your letter last night, I came back to my room, got into bed and had the first good night's sleep since arriving here - in fact I didn't get up until eleven-thirty, Or just in time for dinner.

Nothing of importance, or excitement happened today, if it weren't for the Pork Chops we had for dinner, one would never know that it is a Holiday. This past month and a half has been a soldier's dream come true - eating and sleeping with very little of anything else thrown in.

My darling, this is going to be a short letter because what little news there was I told you yesterday. Not because it's customary, but because I want to I'll tell you I love you and miss you very much.

Goodnight my darling.

I love you
Lenny

[178] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad.

SPACE PROVIDED. USE TYPEWRITER, DARK INK OR PENCIL. WRITE PLAINLY. VERY SMALL WRITING IS NOT SUITABLE.

No.

Pvt Leonard Levy
BASE PO
1053
ARMY
CENSORS STAMP

MRS. LEONARD LEVY
148 MAGNOLIA ST.
HARTFORD 5 CONN.
C/O GEETTER

T/Sgt Leonard Levy 36598
SENDERS NAME
APO #13662-PP
SENDERS ADDRESS
C/O Postmaster N.Y.
Jan 1 1944
DATE

JAN 2 1944

Dearest wife -

After mailing your letter last night, I came back to my room, got into bed and had the first good night's sleep since arriving here - in fact I didn't get up until eleven - thirty, or just in time for dinner.

Nothing of importance, or exciting happened today, if it weren't for the pork chops we had for dinner one would never know that it is a holiday. This past month and a half has been a soldier dream come true - eating and sleeping with very little of anything else thrown in.

My darling this is going to be a short letter because what little news there was I told you yesterday. Not because it is customary, but because I want to I'll tell you I love you and miss you very much. Goodnight my darling.

I love you
Leonard

V-MAIL

Saturday night
January 1, 1944

Darling ~

The best way to start the new year, and knowing it is the right way, I'll start right off by telling you ~ I love you. That's one thing I'll never have to make any resolution to do.

New Year's was spent in a very quiet way. I didn't go to Pearl's house as I told you I intended to do in one of my previous letters. Instead I went to your house. I went there directly from work and had supper there. Mr and Mrs Goralnick[179] came over later on. Margie[180] got silly and I had two drinks. We didn't stay up late, in fact we were all in bed by 11:00. I guess I'm getting to be a real sissy because those two drinks made me very heavy headed and I fell asleep as soon as I got into your bed and hon, I wasn't awake when the new year arrived. I'm really glad I was asleep because without you with me to welcome it in - there was just no pleasure attached to it. I'm looking forward to the 1945 new year and we will be together to celebrate it.

This afternoon I went to the movies with Margie and Adelaide - our sister-in-law Claire's sister… We saw Rosalind Russell and Brian Ahern in *What a Woman*. It was very amusing and I enjoyed it very much.

I looked all over the house for my fountain pen and I couldn't find it, that accounts for my letter being written in pencil tonight.

Darling, the insurance agent was here the other day and he had me sign the necessary papers so that I will get that seventy dollars.

Oh yes hon, your wife gave up a very desirable date [on] New Year's Eve. One of my bosses - fat and 40 - pestered me all afternoon to go with him on New Year's Eve.

In regards to New Year's resolutions, I didn't make any. The reason why I didn't is this: I began to think of things I could resolve to do and be like and hon, there were so

[179] Roslyn (Mandell) Goralnick was married to H. Robert (Tuddy) Goralnick (also known as Bob Gorin). Tuddy's parents lived next door to Lenny's parents.

[180] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant for the first time.

many, I just knew I couldn't keep them all. The only resolution I made is to keep my chin up, and as you asked, not to believe any rumors - no matter what. Do you think those are good resolutions?

I was paid yesterday and rather surprised too. As you know, I didn't work on two days last week. We get paid only for working days and that means 16 hours at $0.60 per hour – well, you figure it out.[181] Well, I got almost $14 And hon, I made a wish that they always figure my paycheck like that.

Sweetheart, I hope you had a pleasant New Year's Eve - no matter where you are. It has been our second New Year's apart, but regardless of that fact, you were on my mind all night. I kept wondering where you were and how you were. I hope you are well and everything is as good as it can possibly be.

Hon, please give my regards to Rock[182] and Chris[183] and I know that when you get this it will be a little late - but nevertheless tell them I wish them a very happy New Year…

Well darling it is time to say goodnight again. I hope that I'll be hearing from you soon. I don't mean to practice repetition but once more let me tell you - I love you with all my heart and miss you more than words can say.

Goodnight my darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[181] Sylvia's net pay should have been $9.60

[182] Raymond (Rock) Bobert Newmarki is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[183] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Monday night
January 3, 1944

Darling ~

When the doorbell rang yesterday morning, I had no idea that it would be a telegram… from you. Naturally, I was so excited I could just about get it open without it tearing. I have been anxiously awaiting word from you, and darling I am so happy that everything is fine. I called [your] mom immediately and she was so happy, too… She didn't get your telegram until about three-thirty in the afternoon.

I mailed to you, my seventeen letters, that I have been saving. It is a shame [we] didn't know your address was unchanged, because you would have received some of my mail by now… Getting all of those letters at once will be quite a bit of reading… I hope… you will get them soon, and I hope that the same applies to me in regards to your letters.

I went ice skating yesterday morning with Betty May[184], Beverly[185], Marilyn[186], Lorraine[187], Lou[188], Nate[189] and Moe[190]. We had so much fun but today I feel sore. We played *Switch* and Betty May insisted on being on the end, and she'd have no one else but me – hon, it was a riot. Issie[191] surprised us by coming to the pond to say hello. He came in for the day. He expects to be able to come home every other weekend. He looked nice in his uniform but hon, I'm still partial to yours. When he went to see my mom he took your address so I guess he intends to write to you. David and Albert were with him and they were sorry they didn't bring their ice skates.

I went to your house yesterday afternoon with the intention of getting some of my things that I left there Saturday. I expected to go to the movies with a girlfriend in the evening, but… we changed our minds, so I had supper at your house and slept there, as well.

---

[184] Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman is Sylvia's seven year old niece

[185] Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

[186] Marilyn Geetter was nine at the time this was written.

[187] Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine Geetter Goldberg and a son, Allan Joel Geetter, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

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

[189] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan (Nate) A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had their first child, Philip Henry Geetter, who was one month old at the time this was written.

[190] Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter

[191] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David , Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

Helen came over with her soldier boyfriend and Margie and I made supper. We boiled potatoes! Well, we sat and talked until 11:00. Mom and Dad were at the Goralnicks playing cards and when they came home they were surprised to see we were still up. We didn't get to bed until after twelve and we finally made up our minds to go to sleep at about 3:00. Then the trouble began. I was overtired and so was Margie and we couldn't fall asleep. She has the damnedest habit of whining and groaning when she sleeps and although she claims she wasn't sleeping, she kept me awake by making groaning sounds. Tonight the both of us are dead tired. Today I had a lot of work to do and at about 3:00, I thought my eyes would never stay open. It was one of those days I thought would never end. Hon, as soon as I finish this letter I am going to bed.

Hon, do you like the enclosed clipping? I read it in the *Coronet* magazine and thought you would be interested in it too.

Here is some scandal for you. Mayer was fired from his job at Fox[192]'s. He was fooling around with some woman there. I honestly can't understand that man. Mom was telling me how terrible she thinks he is and how bad Mr and Mrs Goralnick felt.

My brother Ben[193] works in Veeder-Root as you know and so did Charlie Weiner until recently. It so happens that as long as Tootsie and Charles had been married, Charles always got upset stomachs and he couldn't hold anything down. A few weeks ago, he had pains again and my brother told him to go to the doctor. He finally decided he'd go, and he found out that he has an ulcerated stomach. So he quit his job and he's back with his father. Now I guess he doesn't have to worry about being drafted… so he doesn't want to work in a defense plant. Toots hasn't mentioned this to me as yet, my brother Ben told me about it.

While I was waiting for the Blue Hills Ave. bus to take me to your house yesterday afternoon, I was talking to Irving Lubin… He told me that he is being inducted next week. I guess he is very happy now because he wanted to get into the Army.

[192] G.Fox & Co. is the largest department store in Downtown Hartford, Connecticut

[193] Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter

Margie[194] is definitely beginning to look like a prospective mother. She is just going into her fourth month. Hon, she expects her baby about the first part of July… for all you know your new niece or nephew will be born on your birthday. Mom and Dad keep telling Margie to make sure it will be a girl. I'll let Margie have the girls and I'll still have my sons. I gather that Margie will have to give up her job very shortly because her office doesn't know she is married. She applied as *single* and it will be a perfect… scandal if she walks around with a baby bump.

Saturday night[195] I had the radio on while *Your Hit Parade*[196] was on, Frankie Sinatra was the guest singer for the evening and it was coming from Hollywood.[197]

Hon, it was a riot to hear the girls in the audience, (and I think that was all the audience was composed of) scream at the end of every line he sang.

My mom thought I was going out of my mind when *jokingly* I decided to scream too - only she didn't think I was funny.

Boomey Siegel's kid brother Jackie was married yesterday afternoon. Annette was so worried these past few weeks wondering whether he would get his furlough.

Darling, there are so many questions I would like to ask in regards to what you are doing etc., but I know that perhaps you couldn't answer them anyway. So sweet, when you write I hope you will tell me as much about yourself as you can.

The picture of myself isn't this year's but I just got it from Margie - she had it all this time.

---

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

[195] January 1, 1944

[196] ***Your Hit Parade*** was an American radio program that was broadcast from 1935 to 1953 on radio. The show Sylvia is referring to was the New Years' Day show on January 1, 1944.

[197] Frank Sinatra was more than a guest host, by this time; he was the regular host. Sinatra's move to Hollywood led to a conflict with the American Tobacco company which sponsored the show.

Oh honey I'm so tired. I ache all over - my muscles hurt so - I guess I skated too much for the first time. I guess I should go to bed so I'll say goodnight. I'll be dreaming of you, hon, hoping you are well. Take care of yourself sweetheart 'cause I do love you with all my heart.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Sylvia Geetter Levy outside of 148 Magnolia Ave., Hartford, Connecticut

England

Tuesday
[January 4, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Still in the same place hanging around waiting for something to happen. Nothing unusual, or of interest, has occurred but nevertheless I'll try to make this an interesting letter. It would be a much easier job if only I had gotten a letter from you full of questions - as it is I don't know what about this place interests you.

I still haven't seen much of the surrounding countryside in the daytime but from what I hear and read while censoring mail it is really nice - If one is interested in nature or old buildings. A few churches nearby that were built in the Twelfth century, making them *just a bit* older than some of the houses out around Windsor[198]. It is practically impossible to buy anything in the nearby towns because what little merchandise is left on the shelves is highly rationed; clothing along with all else, is rationed and the English never [seem] dressed up in comparison to… the States. The soap, along with all cosmetics, is a luxury available only to the wealthy and those who know a 'Yank.' Well, imagine what a majority of the people look like; but remember these people have been at war for five years. All women are subject to government draft, not to the armed services but to the factories and when called have the privilege of either donning a uniform or going to work, for twenty pounds a month in some munitions factory.

But enough of this country, there are so many things about home that I want to hear about, if you haven't answered my questions in previous letters please do so in the very next one. How is Natie[199]'s 'Little Katchka' (A poor name for a boy) has he the appetite and sense of humor of his father? How are Faye, Lou, Betty May, Holly[200]? Tell Betty May[201] that I sure would like another letter from her, and tell her father that just

[198] Windsor, Connecticut is a town just north of Hartford with historic buildings.

[199] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had a son , Philip Henry Geetter, who was one month old at the time this was written.

as soon as I'm stationed somewhere permanently, they'll hear from me. The same for Sadie[202], Ben[203] (How is he making out with the draft board), Moe[204] and the rest of my in-laws. What about Is[205] - has he left for the Navy, did he get a commission[206] - tell me all.

Butch darling by the time you receive this you should also have received your first allotment check from the government. Did you? If not, don't fail to let me know as I'll no doubt be able to straighten things out at this end. Once I get settled, I think I'll be able to send you some extra money as living conditions here are very inexpensive - days go by before I spend so much as a shilling.

Speaking of spending money, I got my weekly rations today and with it a large bar of P&G laundry soap - one of these days I'm going to have to wash my laundry, handkerchiefs and all. In fact, it better be very soon as I'm down to the end of them.

Once again my darling wife I find that I've run out of news and also questions; so I'm afraid that this letter is going to come to an end. But not before I reaffirm my love for you and tell you that being away from you just can't last - I miss you terribly, my darling but knowing that you are waiting for me keeps my dream castles from

---

[200] 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.

[201] Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman

[202] Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and was unmarried at the time.

[203] Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

[204] Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

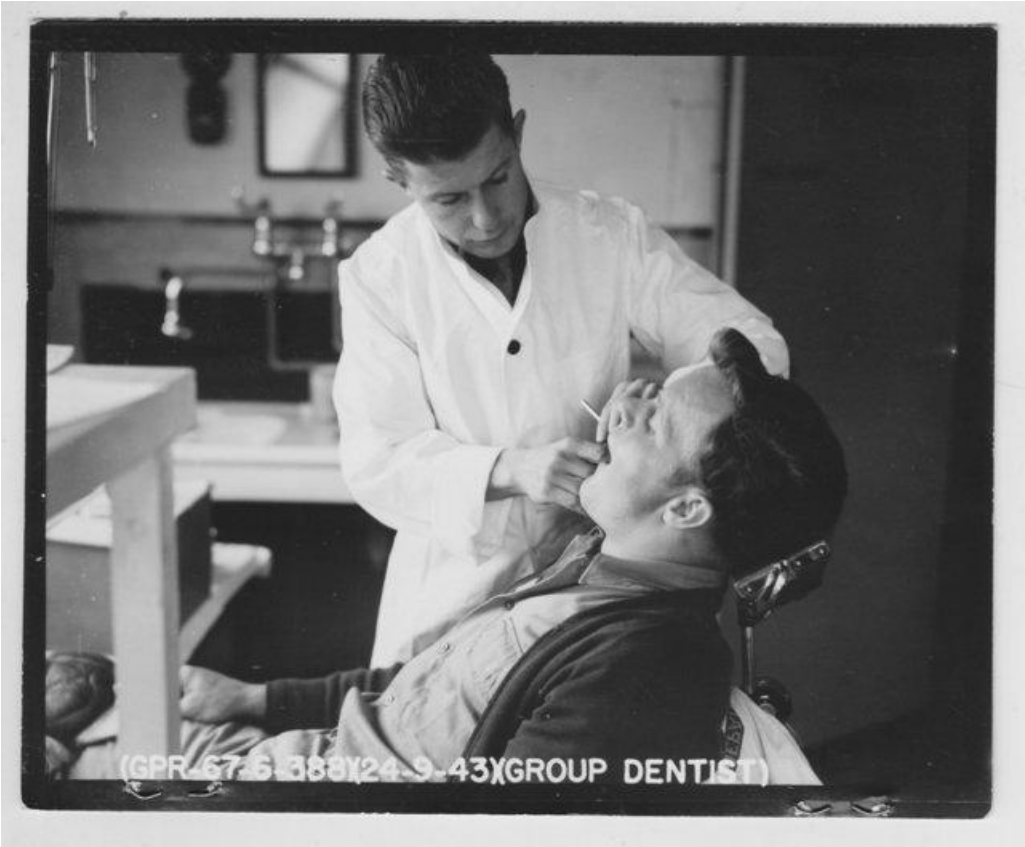
[205] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David , Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

[206] Isidore left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the Navy, and has just learned he will be commissioned a Commander.

crumbling away. Take care of yourself my darling wife and always remember that no man hath greater love than what I have for you.

Goodnight my Butch -

I love you
Lenny



Wednesday night
January 5, 1944

Darling ~

In tonight's paper they had the enclosed article. Your name is on the list of those ordered to active duty. I noticed that 2nd Lt. is after your name - did you get your promotion, darling?

We were told today that we are to work three nights a week now - Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights… It will be two hours extra each night - that means I won't get out until seven o'clock. We have so much work to do, that it is the only way to get it done.

Darling, {your] mom is going to New York over the weekend. Bertha's youngest son, will be *Bar Mitzvahed*[207] this coming Saturday. I think I will sleep with Margie[208] - that's if I don't go roller skating with some girls.

Sweetheart, last night I had a wonderful dream. I dreamt that we were buying our own home and we were so happy… Just when I was so happy, Sadie[209] poked me to get up - it was 6:30 and time to get up to go to work. It was certainly an awful let down. Darling, at least there are always hopes, and my one hope is that it won't be long before such dreams will come true.

I miss you so much darling. Hon, remember that I'm always thinking of you and I love you with all my heart.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[207] A *bar mitzvah* is a Jewish coming-of-age ceremony for boys that occurs when they turn 13, marking their responsibility to follow Jewish commandments. The term translates to "son of the commandment," and the ceremony typically includes a public reading from the Torah.

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

[209] Sylvia and her older sister Sadie Geetter share a bed in a single bedroom at 148 Magnolia Street in Hartford, Conn.

Thursday night
January 6, 1944

Darling ~

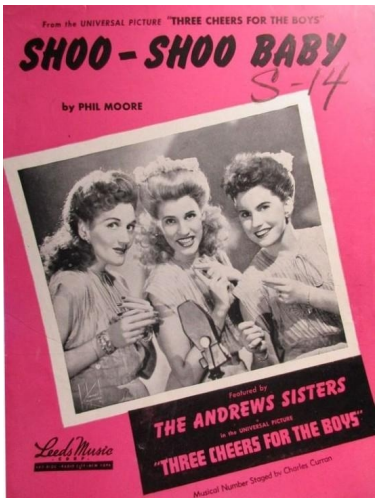
What a day! It snowed and then it rained and the slush just slushed all over. It never fails - when I should wear my boots I don't and that goes for today. Every time a car rode by, my heart was in my mouth - I could just feel myself being showered.

How do you like the *Dagwood* cartoon? It was in last night's paper and it struck me as being about the funniest cartoon I've seen in a long time. In fact, this afternoon when I was supposed to be working very hard I happened to think of it and… I just grinned away. The girl who sits next to me noticed that I was smiling and she asked what I was thinking of. All I had to say was whether she read *Blondie* in last night's paper and she laughed.

Tomorrow is the happy day of the week – payday. I'm certainly looking forward to it - I'm broke but flat. I had to borrow a quarter from Roz tonight. It has been expensive living these past few weeks, but it is a comfort to know that I have no bills whatsoever, and when I get paid tomorrow all I have to deduct is my $10 board[210].

Darling, one thing I am very grateful for is the fact that I have some nice girls to work with in my office. It means so much when all the girls get along. We have to work hard but I don't mind it at all. Of course sometimes I come home from work so tired but it makes it easier for me to fall asleep and there's no desire to do much thinking about anything.

Every afternoon, four of us get together and talk during our lunchtime. The group consists of all married girls and we work in the same group. One of them is the girl I told you about in our previous letter - her husband is in India now and he has been overseas for over a year now. The other is thirty-five, has three children and is divorced, and the third is in her early thirties, and her husband is not in the army. She's been married for a few years. Today's conversation turned to whether married girls can trust their husbands while they are overseas. I'm not telling you what the opinions were or what was said, but I certainly can say it was quite a discussion.



Oh yes, I have a new name – Shoo-Shoo. It all came about when I was telling a girl about the Frank Sinatra program

[210] Sylvia and Sadie each paid a monthly rent to their mother Adeile Geetter to live in a single bedroom at 148 Magnolia Street in Hartford, Conn.

the other night and how he sang *Shoo-Shoo Baby*[211]. Ever since then she has called me Shoo-Shoo and the name is getting popular with the rest of the girls - what a name!

Sweetheart, I have no idea how many times I've written that I love you - it must be hundreds of times but hon, I'll never stop. It just isn't possible not to tell you because I love you so much. I think about you so much and hon, I can't begin to tell you how much I miss you.

Please take good care of yourself - And let's pray there won't be long before we are together again.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

SHOO-SHOO BABY
The Andrews Sisters
words and music by Phil Moore

You've seen him up and down the avenue
And now he's wearin' the navy blue
She had a tear in the corner of her eye
As he said his last goodbye

Shoo, shoo, shoo baby
Shoo, shoo, shoo baby
Bye, bye, bye baby
Do-dah do-day
Your papa's off to the seven seas

Don't cry baby
Don't sigh baby
Bye, bye, bye baby
Do-dah do-day
When I come back we'll live a life of ease

Seems kinda tough now
To say goodbye this way
But papa's gotta be rough now
So that he can be sweet to you another day

[211] A song made popular by The Andrews Sisters in 1943 and covered by Frank Sinatra recently.

Saturday night
January 8, 1944

Darling ~

My wish came true today - I have at last heard from you. Although there wasn't much you could say in your V-mail[212], it meant everything in the world to just hear from you and know you are well. I know that there is so much that you won't be able to tell me in your letters, but hon, when you write, tell me as much about yourself as possible. I can't tell you how much your letters mean and how much I look forward to them.

I am wondering whether Chris[213] has joined you as yet. Coincidentally, I received a letter from Fran[214] today and she wants to know whether I've heard from you because… she has had no mail from Chris and she believes he is on his way. Perhaps by now, she has had some word from him.

Seeing that you are not at your destination, I imagine anxiety is riding high. Darling, I hope that wherever you go... will be to your liking. That may sound foolish but I think you understand what I mean.

Since last night, I have been to three movies… I find it is the best way to just relax for a while.

[Your] Mom is not home this weekend, as she left for New York this Friday. I bet she will be so excited when she finds out we heard from you.

This afternoon I went to Mickey's for a spaghetti dinner with some of the girls with whom I work. It was a good dinner and I took pride in the fact that I am slowly learning the art of eating spaghetti. It feels like a great accomplishment to me.

Dad told me that in your letter to them you mentioned that you met quite a few friends from home and you also met Hank there. That's quite a coincidence, but... it really is a small world now and no matter where you go you will meet somebody from home.

[212] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

[213] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[214] Fran is Chris Christiani's wife.

Norman[215] is out of the hospital now and he will be going on maneuvers soon. He is still waiting for something to be done that might transfer him into a new outfit, or should I say branch.

Ebner[216] will be very surprised this week when he receives his mail. I wrote to him on the spur of the moment and enclosed your address. I thought he might want to write to you and having your address would help, wouldn't it hon.

Next week will be a hard week for me, as I will work ten hours for three days of the week. Whenever I tell folks I'm working three nights a week... the first thing they say is that I should think of all the money I'll be making. I guess they don't stop to think what a lazy thing I am, and I'm not convinced… the extra money will ever make me rich.

As yet, I haven't received any allotment[217]. After speaking to Margie[218] I gather that the first allotment is generally held back and the second month two checks will be received. It's a good thing the folks in my neighborhood are honest because I've been reading in the newspaper about checks being stolen out of mailboxes. I am not worried about that at all and I guess that next month I will receive two checks at once.

Darling, I wish this war will end soon. I don't mean to be impatient nor do I mean to complain, but it will be so nice to have you home again. I know that there is so much to be done yet and it will take time, perhaps more time than some folks expect, but nevertheless I won't give up… hope that you will be home soon. I miss you darling and my love for you grows more each day. So darling, until I'll be with you again, please always remember that I love you and my thoughts are always turned to a happy future.

Goodnight my darling,

I love you
Sylvia[219]

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[215] Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy is trying to enlist, with issues discovered in his medical exam.

[216] Ebner Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia in 1938 and has been a friend of his since Lenny and Sylvia started dating.

[217] An **allotment** is a designated amount of money that is automatically distributed for you, from your pay. Lenny had designated $200 a month to be sent directly to Sylvia from the US Army, which is believed to be half of his pay. January was due to be the first, and both Lenny and Sylvia are awaiting the check's arrival in the mail.

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

[219] Sylvia also censors her xxx kisses.

England

Monday
[January 9, 1944]

Dearest wife -

As you can probably tell by the lapse in dates, my orders finally came through and I'm now at another base in England. How long I'll stay here remains to be seen. I can't tell you much about this place, in fact I'm not supposed to say anything about anything, so I'll just confine myself to generalities.

Still no mail from you, don't really expect any for another week or so, and I sure do miss hearing from you, my darling. The mail system is slow enough as it is, but with the constant moving around one never knows when it will catch us. One thing though, when it does start coming I'll have to take off a week to read it all. Don't disappoint me, sweet.

The post has something that is very rare in England, and with the extra money that I have I'm sure taking advantage of it; they have a complete supply of clothing and equipment for officers and already I've left a few pounds there. Yesterday, I bought a foot locker, six pairs of heavy wool socks (the English rib type that sell for $1.50 a pair in the States,) another dozen handkerchiefs and some more underwear. Tomorrow I'm planning to buy a pair of shoes and a bathrobe (it's cold here.) Oh yes, I got myself a pair of flannel pajamas… to keep warm in bed.

Now that I'm in England I'd sure like to take a trip into London but it looks like I'll have to wait for a while, we are restricted to the base here - just like the days back at Monroe!

Chris[220] finally caught up with me at the last base - or according to what he told me, the doctor was rather surprised that he got well so soon, or at all. Did I tell you that he had both ears infected and for a

[220] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

while he couldn't hear? He sends his regards, as does Rock[221] who constantly talks of those *Latkes*[222] you made for him - He's still the same Rock though, having a good time for himself without a care in the world.

Butch, darling, I know that this is going to reach you too late but I want you to know that I haven't forgotten that this month marks our seventh [month] anniversary. It seems like yesterday that we were marching off, first the weeks of our engagement and then, through weeks of our wedding... My only hope, my sweet, is that someday I can tell you and show you again just how much I love you and how much I long for you these days.

They've kept us pretty busy today and we are not used to it. I'm rather tired, so after finishing this I'm going to turn in for the night although it's only eight o'clock.

Goodnight my darling - once again I want to say I love you very very much.

I love you
Lenny

[221] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[222] A latke is a type of potato pancake or fritter in Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine that is traditionally prepared to celebrate Hanukkah.

England

Monday
[January 10, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Just got through moving my bed to be nearer the fire, and before I lose what little ambition I have I'll write this letter. Our barracks is heated by just one small coal stove and inasmuch as we are severely rationed on the amount of coal we use, no fire at all until five in the evening, it really gets chilly in here. Some of the boys at the warm end moved out, so I got one of their beds.

We were paid our per diem (the refund on the money spent for food and quarters en route) today and I went on another buying spree, getting a short coat (the type that Rock[223] and Chris[224] wear) a pair of shoes and some more underwear. It seems that every place I stop at I keep adding to my luggage - it won't be long before I'll need a truck all to myself when I move.

We are not allowed to write about our activities at this base, but you may rest assured my darling that I'm in no danger yet. If it weren't for the cold this would be an all right place. The food is very good, being comparable to what some camps back in the States serve, the place itself is fairly well laid out and we even have hot and cold running water. There is a bar on the base, serving beer and Cokes, a library and a theatre showing a new picture every night.

No mail yet, so I've been contenting myself by rereading the letter you wrote while I was at Grand Island[225]. That reminds me, how is your job? Are you still at the same place or have you changed since last I heard from you? Be sure and tell me all in your letters, including the latest about Margie[226] and how Mom and Pop are taking it now.

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[223] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[224] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

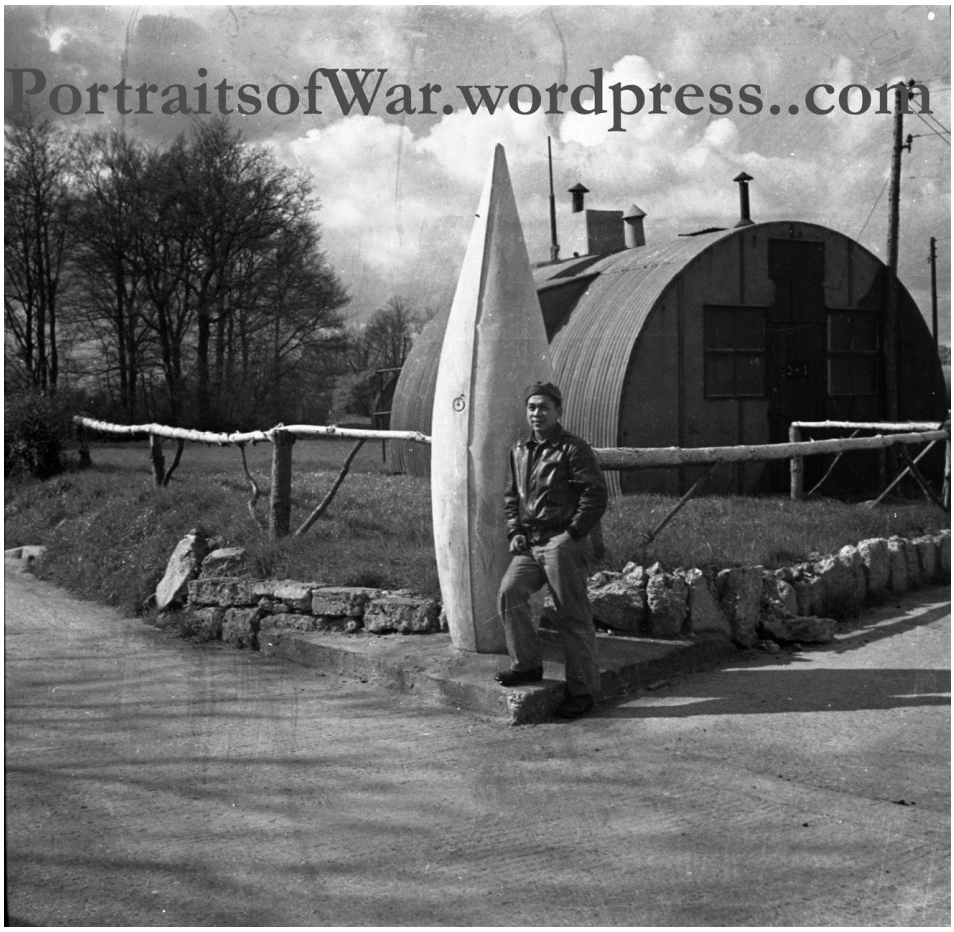
[225] Lenny's previous post of debarkation for England.

Golly, Butch, I can't begin to tell you how much I miss you lately - every minute of the day is spent thinking of you and the times we had together. I do love you so very much my darling and I am taking care of myself for you.

This is a short letter, I know, but truthfully there is nothing to write about, so if you'll forgive me I'll close now.

Goodnight my darling -

I love you
Lenny



[226] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant for the first time and living with Lenny's parents.

V-mail[227]
[January 10, 1944]

Darling ~

I can see that the space provided on a V-Mail is sufficient space for all you had to say for the month since you wrote last. Seeing that you like it so well, I have come to the conclusion that you ought to enjoy receiving it. Personally, such letters have the same effect on me as did your first postcard.

I worked until seven o'clock tonight and I am very tired. I guess I better get used to it because I'll have to work overtime for a long time.

You will receive a package from me soon. I am sending you a new cigarette case and Ben has an old cigarette lighter, which I am having fixed before sending it along, too. Although it isn't a new lighter I hope you like it.

Glad to hear you like England and so far everything is fine. take care of yourself and give my regards to Rock and Chris.

I love you
Sylvia

[227] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

No.

(CENSOR'S STAMP)

To
T/O Leonard Levy
A.P.O. 12622-AA
c/o POSTMASTER, N.Y.

From
MRS. Leonard Levy
(Sender's name)
148 Magnolia St.
(Sender's address)
Hfd., 5, Conn.
January 10, 1944
(Date)

Darling—

I can see that the space provided on a V-mail letter is sufficient space for all you had to say for the month since you wrote last. Seeing that you like it so well, I have come to the conclusion that you ought to enjoy receiving it. Personally, such letters have the same effect on me as did your first postcard.

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Glad to hear you like England and so far everything is fine. Take care of yourself and give my regards to Rock & Chris.

I love you
Sylvia

V···-MAIL

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT PERMIT NO. 14

England

Tuesday
[January 11, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Just a few lines to let you know that I'm feeling as well as can be expected in this miserable weather and also managing to keep myself busy. It is really getting to be a problem to write a letter as everything here is so damn secret. I got optimistic today and went to the post office to claim my mail - naturally there was none; I figure that it will be another week before it catches up to me.

As I wrote in my first letter from here, we are restricted to the base, but some of the boys have managed somehow to get into the city[228] and their stories make me think of New York the last time we were there. They say the crowds are reminiscent of Times Square and despite the war, London[229] is still London[230], but the prices are way up. Here, as well as in the States, liquor is hard to get and the boys moan about it day and night - I sometimes think they miss it more than they do their homes.

The weather here the past few days has been utterly miserable - rainy and cold all the time; it's a wonder that all of us aren't down with the flu or pneumonia. Instead of Justice having what is known here as The ETO cough. it is just impossible to stay warm here.

One of the boys in my barracks has a dog *Roger* by name and he has us nuts. Either he is doing a job on the floor or chewing up somebody's socks; he has already cost his owner three or four pairs. Right now one of the fellows is teasing him with a glove, and in jumping up, he skipped and landed on his hind end; he put his tail between his legs and walked over into a corner.

Instead of just rambling along, my darling, I think I'll close but not before I tell you again that I do love you so very much my sweetheart and

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[228] London, England is where a big mission is being planned against Berlin, Germany

[229] Cut out of the paper.

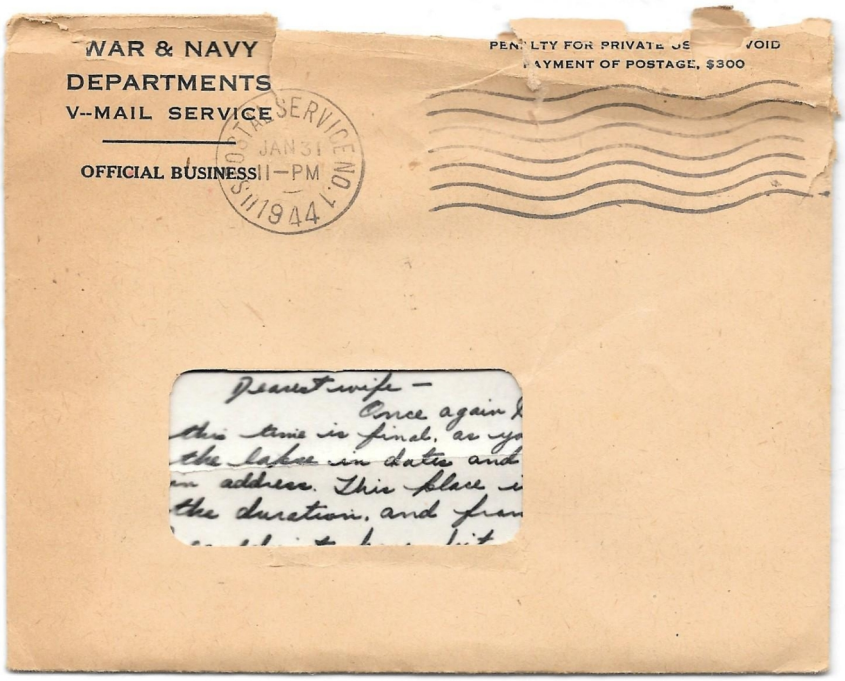
[230] And Cut out again.

miss you more today than ever. Not only do I love you my darling but I like you too.

Goodnight sweetheart -

I love you
Lenny

V-mail[231]
[January 11, 1944]



Darling ~

I thought I had surprises before - but never was I more surprised than when I read you are sorry that you didn't get a wedding band before leaving the States. Darling if you are really serious about that and you would like to have one, well I'll send you one, if you tell me the kind you would like. Oh yes, and have your finger measured at a jewelers for your ring size. Hon, you told me about Boxing Day being a holiday in England, but now my curiosity is aroused - just what kind of holiday is it?

Once more darling - if you are serious about the ring - I would like to send it to you and also please mention in one of your letters that you would like to receive a package, and if this is anything in particular that you need - please tell me and I'll be happy to send them to you.

I love you
Sylvia

[231] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. _____

(CENSOR'S STAMP)

To F/O LEONARD LEVY
APO 1266 AA
c/o POSTMASTER
NEW YORK

From Mrs. Leonard Levy
(Sender's name)
148 Magnolia St.
(Sender's address)
Wtfd., Ct., Conn.
January 11, 1944
(Date)

Darling —

I thought I had surprises before — but never was I more surprised than when I read you are sorry that you didn't get a wedding band before leaving the States. Darling, if you are really serious about that and you would like to have one, well, I'll send you one if you tell me the kind you would like. Oh yes, and have your finger measured at a jeweler's for your ring size.

Now, you told me about "Boxing Day" being a holiday in England but now my curiosity is aroused — just what kind of a holiday is it?

Once more, darling — if you are serious about the ring — I would like to send it to you and also please mention in one of your letters that you would like to receive a package, and if there is anything in particular that you need — please tell me & I'll be happy to send them to you. I love you,

Sylvia

V ...- MAIL

POST OFFICE DEPT. PERMIT NO. 15

England

Wednesday
[January 12, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Today brings back a happy memory of a day seven months ago[232]. It was sunny that day in Monroe and my life has been bright ever since; truly my darling nothing but good has happened since the day we were married. Of course our being so many miles apart is not good but then that was inevitable, we knew it would come sooner or later. I'd give most anything to be with you, not only tonight but every night, but inasmuch as that can't be, the only thing I can say is - I love you with all my heart, my darling wife, and I pray that it won't be too long before we are together again.

Chris[233] arrived here today and with him came news, via Francis[234], that you are well. For some reason he is getting his mail while I'm still 'sweating it out.' It shouldn't be too long now, as the mail is coming in and quite a few of the boys who came over with me got their first mail today.

Still can't say what I'm doing here, but please believe me when I say I'm not in any danger - don't worry as I'm in a safe spot (as safe as any place in England can be) and feel fine. Another thing, don't pay too much attention to the headlines.

The weather, though still very very dank, has warmed up a bit and it is almost possible to get up in the morning without shivering to death. Outside of that, this place is all right - we even had a fresh egg for breakfast today - I've yet to see that bugaboo of all ETO breakfasts - powdered eggs.

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[232] Sylvia Geetter and Lenny Levy were married June 12, 1943 in Monroe, Louisiana while Lenny was in Flight Training School at Alexandria Army Air Base.

[233] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[234] Francis is Chris Cristiani's wife, who became friends with Sylvia while they were living in Monroe.

Of course we see *Spam* in all forms - sometimes it is disguised so that we don't recognize it - but the taste gives it away every time.

They've kept me busy from eight this morning until almost ten this evening and not being able to tell you about it leaves nothing for me to say in the line of news. I hope you understand, my darling, why my letters lately have been so short and packages uninteresting or even boring.

I'm going to bed now - it's eleven o'clock - in preparation for another big day tomorrow. Sure would like to have you snuggle up close to me, not only to keep me warm but because I miss you so much, my darling, and I do love you very much, Butch.

Goodnight my darling, and here is an extra one (x) for our night

I love you
Lenny

It’s a shame, what with the scarcity of paper, to finish so high on the sheet, but for the life of me I can't think of another thing to write.

Love,

L.

HOW DO YOU MAKE YOUR POINTS GO 'ROUND?
MEAT STRETCHING SPAM BIRDS STUFFED AND BROWNED!
SPAM BIRDS
Wrap thin slices of Spam around your favorite stuffing, fasten with toothpicks, brown in hot oven. Serve with garden peas, fried candied sweets. IMPORTANT!—Spam gives you full point value . . . no bones, no waste, no surplus fat.
WHY YOUR GROCER MAY BE OUT OF SPAM . . .
explained by letter from Lt. ———, Hormel salesman on leave with the U. S. Marines in the Southwest Pacific.
"New Year's Day was made exceptionally bright by the arrival of mail and the presence of plenty of good old SPAM! Boy! You never fully realize how delicious and good Spam is until you taste it out here in the bottom of a fox-hole. All the boys out here think Spam is swell."
SPAM
COLD OR HOT... SPAM HITS THE SPOT!
HORMEL
GOOD FOODS
GONE FOR THE DURATION . . . but don't forget Hormel Soups, Chili Con Carne, Ham, Chicken, the popular Dinty Moore Foods and 41 other delicious Flavor-Sealed products.

Wednesday night
January 12, 1944

Darling ~

I just can't write another V-mail letter. There is so much about them that I don't like. So hon, please don't send me any more of them. If it takes… a little longer to send… regular mail, it will really be worth waiting for.

Sweetheart, I hope you can get cigarette lighter fluid. I am sending out the lighter tomorrow and there will also be some extra flints and wicks. It is against the law to send the lighter fluid, as it is inflammable so… you will… have to furnish the most important part of the lighter. I do hope you will be able to get it.

As soon as I get your request for a package, I'll send you some Mary Oliver Chocolates[235]… If you haven't done so as yet - try to… as soon as possible. All you have to do is mention the fact that you would like some cigarettes, or something, sent out in one of your letters… There is always something I can send to you. Darling, do you need razor blades, and what kind do you use? Do you smoke Camels or Chesterfields, and hon, do you have enough socks, handkerchiefs and underwear? If there is anything you need please ask for it as I know that it is very difficult for you to get so many things.

Tomorrow is Nate'[236]s fourth engagement anniversary. He had me go to the florist for him tonight and have a bouquet sent to Lillian. We Geetters are a sentimental clan, but there is a good reason why we are.

I was trying to figure out why you are having difficulty sleeping the night through. It might be nervousness or excitement, darling, and it will pass off. Tomorrow night, I am going out to dinner and the movies with some of the girls at work. We will work until seven and then rush like mad in order to make the last show.

When Mom and I had our daily conversation tonight, we were both wondering whether you had received our letters yet. Hon, every day I think of it and I'm just praying that you are receiving mail now.

I have some of the girls in the office thinking that I am pregnant. I didn't feel very well the other morning - I was dizzy and had nausea - well that's the only symptoms I needed to give them that impression. It was really due to being tired, but I don't think I can make them believe it.

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[235] A chocolate store in Downtown Hartford, Connecticut that was on Main St. next to the Strand Theatre.

[236] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan (Nate) A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had the first of two children, Philip Henry Geetter, three weeks earlier than the time of the writing.

Do you know what today is darling? It's our seventh month anniversary. I guess out of these seven months I've been with you but a short time. However, there was so much happiness in that brief time that I can always have pleasant thoughts. My main wish is that you will be home when our first year anniversary rolls around and we will be able to celebrate it together. Is that wishing for too much darling?

Sweetheart, it's time to go to bed now so I'll have to end this letter. Goodnight darling I love you so very much.

I love you
Sylvia[237]

Strand Theatre[238] - 1466 seats

1017 Main St., Hartford, Conn.

[237] Sylvia also censors her xxx kisses.

[238] The Strand was destroyed in 1974.

England

Saturday
[January 13, 1944]

Dearest wife -

The person who first said, 'No news is good news' was probably never two thousand miles from the person he loved with all his heart, as I am. Anything, even a notice of an overdue bill, would be welcome. Watching the other fellows collect and read their mail brings the homesickness and loneliness on, and I don't mean maybe. I know you are writing every day, my darling, it's just that I seem to be the unlucky one whose mail got held up en route. There was no mail at all today for anybody, so it wasn't too bad and I feel almost sure that tomorrow will be my day.

Butch, I had to come all the way to England to hit the jackpot on a slot machine. This evening, just before leaving the club, I put a shilling in, and out came five pounds, the equivalent of twenty dollars. It more than made me even for the night, as I had lost two pounds in a poker game earlier. Chris[239] standing near me, thought the machine fell apart and I just stood there with my mouth wide open.

But for the censor, I would have lots of news to tell you, but as usual I'll just have to confine myself to general items.

Right now, there is a hot argument going on here, as to whether or not a flying man is worth the extra money he gets for flying - and I do mean that. Everybody is in a happy frame of mind because we've been promised Turkey for dinner tomorrow, and on top of that school will be out at two instead of five tomorrow. The weather here has been almost beautiful the last two days – the sun has shown for a minimum of three hours which is a rare treat. (My, how I ramble on.)

It was rather *smaht* of me to buy all that extra clothing when I did, I gave my laundry out when I came here and it was promised for today - Now

[239] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

they tell us that it won't be back until next Saturday and I am running low.

... I had every good intention of writing last night, but when I got back to the barracks, there was no fire and it was so cold in there that it was just impossible. Finally at 12:00, I was sleeping by then, the orderly came in and made the fire but by morning it was out and just as cold as ever. Please forgive me, sweet?

I've tried to make this a long and interesting letter - hope I've succeeded. Truthfully, outside of telling you how much I love and miss you there just isn't another thing for me to say. I do love you very, very much my darling and my longing for you grows larger with each minute. Won't be too long before we are together again, Butch, and then we will surely make up for all this lost time. Take care of yourself my darling and don't ever change - stay the way you've always been - the way I fell in love with you - the way I married you - and the way I want you!

I love you
Lenny

Regards to all -

Tell Sadie I'm still wearing the sweater and socks she gave me when I left.

Love,

Lenny

Thursday night
[January 13, 1944]

Darling ~

Tonight I went to the movies as I had planned. I went to the *Strand*[240] and saw *North Star*. It was an excellent picture and although I cried more than halfway through it, I enjoyed it very much. We had to stand quite a long time before we got seats; there was a long waiting line.

I must be getting used to working until 7:00. I didn't mind that very much tonight. I guess by keeping busy all the time I don't notice the passing of time. Tomorrow night I am having eight girls here as sort of a reunion. They are the girls who once made a club, and I was a member too. We never see each other unless there is a gathering of some kind. Most of the girls are married and being mothers too - they find it hard getting around.

Darby is back in the hospital. I don't know just what it is all about as [your] mom hasn't said anything to me about it - I guess she doesn't want to talk about it. Margie[241] gave me the little information she knows - I guess he had a relapse. Hon, don't say anything about it in your letters home to Mom unless she tells it to you first.

Hon, I received my allotment check today - and the funny thing about it, I wrote to Newark and asked about it. I guess that's the way it always is - just when you try to find out about things like that - the check comes through.Hon, you should see me dictate a letter in the dictaphone at work - just like an executive. I enjoy that more than any part of my job - it really is loads of fun. Sweetheart, I am not the least bit tired tonight but it is after twelve and getting up at six-thirty won't give me enough rest - so I'd better get to bed. good night darling all my love to you

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Stamped "Return to Sender" through the addressee, and two Army Directory Service stamps with a redirect to APO 790 NR. The first is dated 2/4/44 and the second is undated. On reverse dated June 12, 1944 a Postal Service, and two date stamps: May 5 1944 and May 23 1944.

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[240] A movie theatre in downtown Hartford, Connecticut

[241] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant for the first time.

England

Sunday
[January 16, 1944]

Dearest wife -

At last At last! Yes, my darling, today the mails came, not much to be sure, but enough to keep me satisfied until the deluge comes. To be exact, there were two: one from you dated the fifth of the month and one from mom mailed the second. Judging from that, I would say that airmail is the best way for you to send me letters… you [must] have written letters previous to the one I got, for you make no mention of the cable and various other things that would sound like a *first* letter. Your letter didn't contain much news but it was the type of letter I wanted; that seemed as though you were actually right here telling me about Lou[242] and his troubles with the hot water. It's just like you - devil - to beat him to the draw - each time. Has he been sick or is it his nose that is troubling him again? According to her letter Lou is near him and no doubt has been to see him - what does he write about Norm[243]?

You wrote that you would like to send me a new cigarette case - I sure would like one of the same type as the one I lost, if you can find one. Talking about things to send me - I will have a definite need for writing paper, absolutely none can be had in England, as there is a definite shortage of paper here, so send me the largest box of it you can find. And all the chocolate bars you can buy! God knows I crave it! If you can't find any, tell Dad to try and get some from one of the salesmen that come into the store. Outside of those few things, there is nothing I can't buy here. Don't by any means send cigarettes as we can buy them for five cents a pack here and besides I have a reserve of twelve or thirteen cartons - We were each given ten before we left the States. Before I forget, when you do send me the package, write *Soldiers Requests* on the outside so that I'll get it without any trouble.

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

[243] N. Norman Levy is Lenny's younger brother who is trying to enlist in the Army.

Half-holiday proved to be a false alarm and I was kept busy until well after four. The Turkey dinner was forthcoming as promised, and lived up to expectations. Not only did we have Turkey, but two desserts. The War Department says that men overseas should have turkey at least twice a month, so we can be sure of two good meals a month.

The dog I spoke so endearingly of is no more - at least not for our crew. Some low character dog-napped him at our last base. Rock[244] and I were both a bit heartbroken as he was our special charge. We looked for days but couldn't find him. You mentioned working overtime; don't overdo it, my darling - take things easy so that you won't over-tire yourself. Glad to hear that you are taking Mom to see *Abbi's Irish Rose* - hope she enjoyed it.

Mom's letter contained two bits of news, one you had previously spilled to me and the other was rather startling. The fact that Margie[245] is living with Mom and Pop was, to say the least, unexpected. Don't you dare forget to write me the whole story, leaving out none of the details. Frankly the whole thing doesn't sit right with me. I don't understand Mom going back on what she has previously said. She writes that Dad and she don't mind but I doubt that very much. Mom and you mentioned the fact that [Norman] expects to be transferred soon by the medical board. What is the story behind that move?

The argument I wrote about last night continued until well after midnight with no final victor. Thank God it did not continue today.

It's getting late, my darling, and I want to write to Mom so I'll close… until tomorrow -

Good night my sweetheart, I love you, like you and miss you.

I love you
Lenny

[244] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[245] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant for the first time.

Saturday night
[January 17, 1944]

Darling ~

It is impossible for me to tell you how happy I was to receive an honest to goodness letter from you today. Although receiving your V-mail[246] letters mean as much to me, they leave me very melancholy. Letters are the only things we have to bring us together - and they mean as much to us at home as they do to you boys overseas.

I guess all of your questions had been answered in my previous letters. Betty May[247] was here when I was reading your letter and she was thrilled when I read her the part where you asked to have her write to you. In fact, she's sitting here at the table with me now, and she wants me to help her write a letter to you… I had a hard time trying to convince her that there isn't time for one tonight - but I had to promise to help her with one very soon.

I took her and Lorraine[248] to the *Lenox*[249] this afternoon to see *Lassie Come Home*. Yes, *we* saw it in Alexandria [Louisiana] but I thought *they* would enjoy it - so I sat through it a second time. I wish you could have seen the two of them crying during the picture – at one time I thought Betty May was going to lose it.

Last night I had the girls[250] here and although there were just eight of them besides myself - from the noise we made it sounded like ten times that many. I guess all the jabbering was caused by the fact that the girls get together very rarely and when they do - well there's so much to be said - they all talk at once and nobody is doing any of the listening.

Hon, today I bought a quarter of a pound of candy - it's just a few pieces - but seeing that I can send you a package as heavy as eight ounces without a request, I thought that

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[246] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

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

[248] Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

[249] A movie theatre in Hartford, Connecticut

[250] A reunion of her childhood friends

perhaps a few pieces of candy will be better than none at all. When you see the box - don't think they are the Mary Oliver's I plan to send you - they are not, darling - it's just the only box I have.

Yesterday I received a letter from Ebner[251]. He is now a Corporal and expects a furlough in about five or six weeks. Perhaps by this time you have already heard from him, as he has your address.

Darling, do you remember Francine Andrews - the girl I worked with me in the Two Hartfords[252]? I told you that she and Phil practice the rhythm system, in order not to have children. The other day I met another girl… and she told me that Franny expects a baby this month. I guess that system wasn't as safe as she claimed – Thank God - we thought differently of that system - or I'd join Margie[253] in the rush for maternity dresses. Speaking of Margie, she is getting there. None of her clothes fit her and she has to get those extension models now.

I'll have to get a book that gives the American valuation of English money. Hon, if you have that extra money you spoke of - or when you have it - please send it home. I guess I'm being the thrifty wife now but today I was looking at furniture in Fox's[254], just for the fun of it, and everything I would like to have in our house someday is expensive. So, darling, we will need every cent we can save. I don't mean for you to deprive yourself of anything - but whatever you have that you don't need - well that will mean so much in the future.

Sweetheart, I have to take Betty home now. It's getting late and furthermore she's getting wild now. So, darling, it's good night again until tomorrow. and hon when I go to sleep tonight and I think of what you wrote in your letter, believe me hon, will make me feel so happy. I love you so much sweetheart - if only time goes by quickly and we can be together again. Take good care of yourself sweetheart -and remember

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

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[251] Ebner Glooskin graduated in 1938 from Weaver High School, one of Hartford's three high schools. He became friends with Lenny while he was in Basic Training.

[252] Hartford Fire and Hartford Accident & Indemnity were the Two Hartfords. The company is now The Hartford again.

[253] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

[254] G. Fox & Co. was an American department store chain founded in 1847 by brothers Gerson Fox and Isaac Fox. Its flagship store and headquarters were located in Hartford, Connecticut, and operated throughout New England. It was the largest privately-held Dept. store in the United States until its acquisition by The May Co. in 1965.

Tuesday night
January 18, 1944

Darling ~

I didn't work until seven tonight as my cold is still with me. I feel all right except that my nose is so sore. I don't think I've kept a *Kleenex* away from it all day.

Hon, can you get stationery? If not, do you like the stationery I am using? Just say you would like a box of it and I will send it to you.

I've been forgetting to tell you something. I don't smoke anymore. That's the truth, darling. I told you that I would stop smoking as soon as I had to buy my own.

Norman[255] is going to be stationed in Tennessee now. He told Margie[256] that he is leaving this week and as for the future, he expects to be in the States for a long time yet.

Natie[257] was so excited today. His son was going to have pablum (that's a cereal) for the first time. Guess how much he had? It's really funny – ½ teaspoon! And next week he can have ½ an inch of banana for supper. What a hearty meal - Nate was telling me he feeds the baby at ten at night, and twice a week he feeds him at six in the morning so that Lil[258] can sleep. I told him that I don't think you'd ever do that, and he said… you might like it when your time comes to be a Daddy.

Hon, I received a letter yesterday which was forwarded from Alexandria [Louisiana]. It was from the unemployment office in regards to whether I was to receive unemployment benefits. I was to appear for a hearing on December 6. Well they say it's better late than never - in this case it just doesn't matter.

Remember my telling you about the girl in my office whose husband has been overseas for nine months? She's been acting very down in the dumps lately. Today she told

[255] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

[256] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

[257] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter who recently gave birth to their first child, Philip Henry.

[258] Lillian (Lil) R. Geetter

me that she is sorry she got married and she wanted to know if I felt the same way. I really feel sorry for her, it must be terrible to feel that way.

Sweetheart, Mom wants me to get to bed. I'm going to have some hot lemonade. Maybe if I had some of that beer you write to me about, it would either kill or cure me. Well, sweetheart, it's goodnight again and remember - with all my heart -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

"But I've Never Worked Before!
— what kind of war job could I do?"

"The More Women at Work—
The Sooner We'll Win!"

Experienced or not, there's a job *you* must do—*you* and millions more women—to save our war effort, our boys' lives! If you're married, your job won't change your husband's draft status. If he's called anyway, you'll be financially prepared!

You can take any Civilian Job . . .
Restaurants, hotels, department stores, transportation — *all* are war jobs! Read your newspaper want ads for the job that needs *you!* Or get advice without obligation from your U. S. Employment Service Office. Full or part time, you're wanted — *immediately!*

You can work in a War Plant . . .
If there is a war factory in your community, or a shipyard, or a government arsenal — there may be dozens of different kinds of jobs you can do to help bring Victory closer! Read the want ads or ask your U. S. Employment Service office.

You can be a WAC or WAVE . . .
— Spar or Marine. Send a soldier to fight, bring our boys home sooner! If you qualify, you'll be serving your country, *and* learning an important job you may need, after the war. Get full details at any U. S. Army or Navy Recruiting Office, or Naval Officer Procurement Office.

You can be a Cadet Nurse . . .
Healthy? 17 to 35 years old? A high school graduate? Get free training, with pay, to replace nurses who are with the armed forces. War workers—ill or injured, civilians needing operations, new mothers and babies—depend on you! Ask your local hospital about the U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps!

Published in the interest of the war effort by Kleenex* Tissue

Paper, too, has a war-time job . . . that's why there's not enough Kleenex Tissues to go around. But regardless of what others do, we are determined to maintain *Kleenex quality* in every particular, consistent with government regulation.

KLEENEX TISSUES
KLEENEX TISSUES
KLEENEX

(*T. M. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.)

England

Wednesday, [January 19, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Just a short letter today - it's getting harder and harder to write as the days go by - to let you know that I'm feeling fine and also to tell you that I love you more today than I did yesterday.

Intended to go to town this evening, but I realized that I hadn't written today so postponed the trip till tomorrow; I won't miss much, and what I wanted to do will keep until then. Overslept breakfast again today and had to be content with wieners again for dinner - if after this is all over, I suddenly get up from the table some day when you serve Franks and Beans blame it on my present mess officer. Evenings I lie in bed and dream of those truly delicious meals you used to turn out for me back in Alex[259] especially those wonderful steak dinners and… those breakfasts of ham or bacon and eggs. Those were the happiest days of my life, Butch, but I'm afraid that I never showed my true appreciation. I'll make it all up to you my darling, just as soon as this mess is cleared up.

The past few days have been clear, although a trifle cold, after Monday's rain. Maybe winter is coming to England - will have to take a walk through the surrounding countryside, the fellows that have done so, say it is really worthwhile.Got paid today, and… your allotment was taken out so you should be getting it soon.

No more to write about my darling, So until our date tomorrow, I'll say I love you very, very much and miss you terribly. Good night darling.

I love you
Lenny

Please send me Nate's new address.

Love,

Lenny

[259] Alexandria, Louisiana was Lenny's previous posting before receiving orders to ship out for England.

Wednesday night
January 19, 1944

Darling ~

So little has happened since yesterday that I guess this is going to be a very short letter. Hon, will you please write the date on the top of your letter? It will be a way of knowing... when you wrote the letter.

Do you remember how my nails kept breaking when we were in Alexandria? Well, they are long again and I certainly am proud of that fact. I just wrote a letter to Franny. I should have answered her letter sooner, but I guess it's just one of those things you just put aside not meaning to…

I thought it would surely snow today, but toward the latter part of the afternoon, the sun came out in all its glory. There has been quite a bit of ice skating and it makes me mad to think I've only gone ice skating once so far.

Margie[260] is not going to work after this Saturday. She hasn't been very well since she became pregnant, and furthermore she's getting bigger every day And she is known at work as Miss Naidorf.

Ben[261] is still working in Veeder-Root[262]. He is getting used to the work now and likes it pretty well. As I told you Charlie Weiner isn't working there anymore since he found out that he has ulcers. Adelaide's husband sent home some pictures he took in the Aleutians. Photography is his hobby and he takes some wonderful pictures. Cheer up hon, I know you want a camera - and I'll keep my eyes open until I can find one for you.

Does the cigarette lighter I sent you work? I hope so. If it does not just tell me so, and maybe I can get another one from somebody. I've got 4 brothers and they must have more than one lighter hanging around the house.

Sweetheart, as there is not much more to write tonight, I hope that everything is coming along fine. I love you so much.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

---

[260] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant.

[261] Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

[262] Veeder-Root is the largest manufacturer of precision-counting equipment. Their counters were used by Rear Admiral Byrd to measure the miles traveled by his dog sled on the way to the South Pole.

© Vintage Paper Ads

they have always Counted on VEEDER-ROOT DEVICES

In 1900, no cycling trip was complete unless its mileage was duly recorded on a Veeder Cyclometer. And today, hundreds of thousands of bicycles are equipped with the same basic instrument, improved and modernized by Veeder-Root.

Today, also, Yank tanks are equipped with a hundred Veeder-Root Devices . . . the engine counter that records every shaft turn of engine operation, idling or in action, and so warns of approaching needs for oil-change and other maintenance, besides providing an accurate record of tank service.

In fact, Veeder-Root "Factory-Figures" are used in innumerable ways throughout the Army, Navy, and Air Force . . . supplying a continuous flow of information that helps directly in saving lives and G.I. equipment. And if you are a purchaser of such equipment, you can count on Veeder-Root, right now, to put these "Factory-Figures" to work in your plant.

The Counting House of Industry

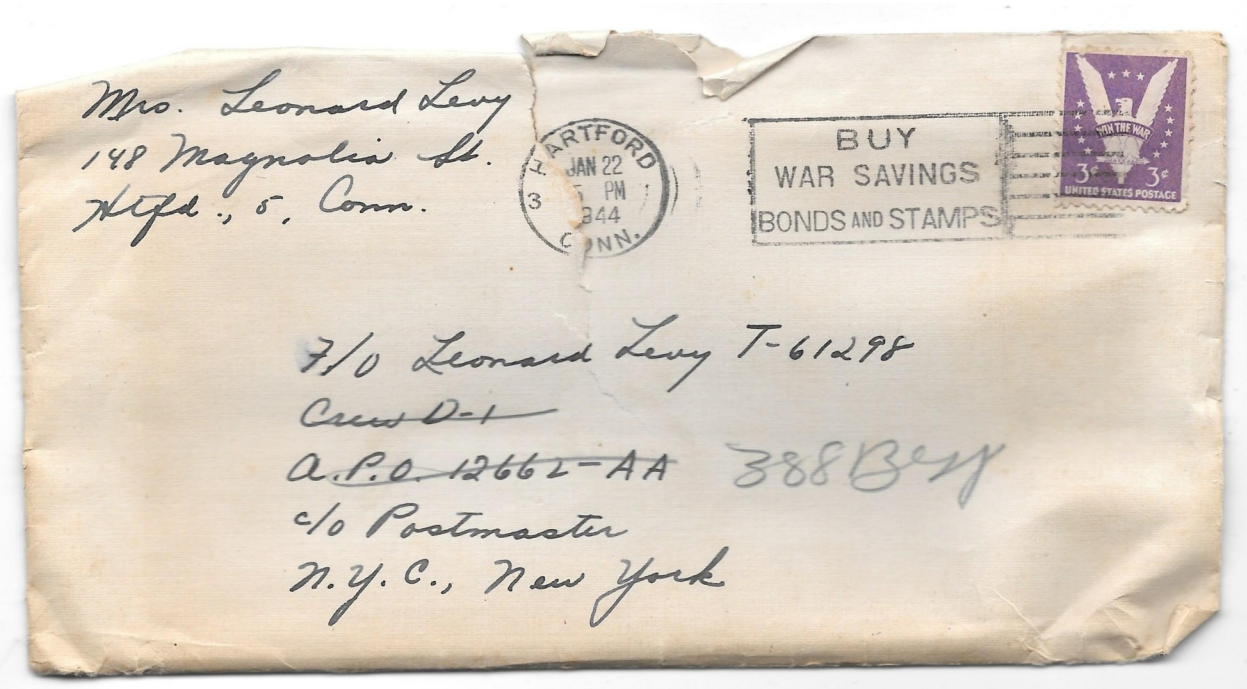
VEEDER-ROOT INCORPORATED

Hartford 2, Connecticut

In Canada: Veeder-Root of Canada, Ltd., Montreal
In England: Veeder-Root Ltd. (now addition in progress)

January 21, 1944

No letter. Cartoon and one page of Local News from *The Hartford Times*.



"For the last time, Buck, I said, 'Stop looking at your feet'!"

Sentry Box

News About Local Men and Women Now in the Service of Their Country

Army to Credit Pre-Induction Training Work

Pre-induction training will become part of a man's military record when he is inducted into the Army, it has been announced by Maj. Gen. Sherman Miles, commanding general of the First Service Command.

Boys who complete pre-induction courses in high schools and vocational schools, as well as men 18 to 38 years of age who take such special training in vocational schools under federal, state, or local auspices, thus will have credited on their official Army record cards the training received prior to their induction.

All youth and adults completing pre-inducton courses will be given an official record by the school which they should deposit with local Selective Service boards to insure its safe delivery to the Induction Station and the Reception Center.

Since many men beyond the high school age lack training or experience directly adaptable to the 650 Army specialists jobs, the War Production Training program has included offerings to reach out-of-school men as well as boys in school. Local school officials can give further information to all prospective inductees in the age group from 18 to 38 years of age.

In this war, nine out of ten soldiers are given specialist training; the man who enters with preliminary training is more ready to adapt himself to the demands of the military program and thus advance more rapidly.

* * *

ENSIGN FRANCES E. ALLEN of Lowell, Mass., recently visited her aunt, Sister J. Teresa of St. Francis Hospital here. Ensign Allen, a graduate of St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing in Naval Hospital in Chelsea, Mass.

* * *

AVIATION CADET HAROLD R. ANDERSON, son of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore S. Anderson, 60 Earle St., is taking primary flight training at Bennettsville, S. C. His previous courses were in Nashville, Tenn., and Maxwell Field, Ala. Prior to joining the Army in January, 1943, he was employed by Pratt & Whitney Aircraft.

* * *

STAFF SGT. MAURICE M. BOURRET, son of Mr. and Mrs. Josephat Bourret, 97 Seymour St., is serving in the Aleutian Islands with a ground crew unit of the Army Air Forces. Prior to joining the Army Dec. 18, 1941, he was an employe of New Departure in Bristol. His brother, **SGT. JOHN P. BOURRET**, is an Army cook, now stationed in Italy. He worked for the Mortensen Dairy before leaving for military service in March, 1940.

* * *

After nearly a year of separation, two East Hartford brothers met accidentally on a street in Italy just before Christmas. They are **GEORGE J. BREEN** of the U.S. Maritime Service and **PVT. JOHN W. BREEN** of the Army. Sons of Mrs. Elizabeth A. Breen of Woodbridge Ave., East Hartford, they entered the different services last April. After three months of basic training at Ft. Eustis, Va., John was sent to Italy. George's ship returned from England one day too late for him to see his brother before he left. In Italy, however, John visited a new Merchant Seamen's Club daily in the hope of hearing something about his brother's ship. On the way to make one of these calls, John accidentally met his brother on the street. In cables sent home, the brothers reported it was the best Christmas gift they ever had received.

* * *

WILLIAM J. BRENNAN has been graduated as a second lieutenant from Napier Field, Ala., pilot training school. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. James F. Brennan of 497 Park Ave., East Hartford, and a graduate of East Hartford High School. He was employed by Hamilton Standard Propellers when he entered the Army in December, 1942.

* * *

SGT. HARRY M. CONNERS JR., son of Mr. and Mrs. Conners of 82 Cabot St., is stationed in New Guinea with an anti-aircraft unit. He has been overseas for two years. Prior to his enlistment, he was employed by H. W. Conklin Real Estate ... last February, he was employed as a substitute in the parcel post division of the Hartford Postoffice.

* * *

Friends in Hartford for many years **T/5 JOHN J. CORONA** and **PFC. CARMELO ZAPPULLA** now are serving together in the Army Ordnance Division in England. Corona is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Patsy Corona of 51 Martin St. and husband of Ann Imundo Corona of 22 Judson St. His brother, **PVT NICHOLAS D. CORONA** is serving in New Guinea, and another brother, **DOMINIC CORONA** is in training at the Navy station at Sampson, N. Y. **ZAPPULLA** is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Angelo Zappulla of 43 Fenwick St. He has two other brothers in service, **PFC. SEBASTIA ZAPPULLA** at Camp Carson, Colo., and **T/SGT. ANGELO ZAPPULLA** at Allenhurst, N. J.

* * *

SGT JAMES A. CURTISS, son of Mr. and Mrs. James H. Curtiss of 100 Norwood Rd., West Hartford, is now stationed at Salt Lake City, Utah. He recently completed an intensive course at Harlingen Army Air Field, Texas, where he received his aerial gunner's wings. He also is a graduate of the armorer's school at Lowry Field, Colo. A graduate of the State Trade School, he was ... Fla. He attended American International College in Springfield and the University of Connecticut and was a member of Eta Lambda Sigma and Alpha Delta fraternities.

* * *

JOHN J. FOLANDER, son of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Folander of 130 Earle St., received his commission as a second lieutenant in the Army Air Forces at Columbus Army Air Field recently. He began pilot training last March.

* * *

PVT. ALBERT I. FREEDMAN, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Freedman, 2706 Main St., and husband of the former Edna Rescan, South Norwalk, is with an infantry unit at Camp Edwards, Mass. He was graduated from Weaver High School and State Teachers College, New Britain. He received his M. A. degree from the University of Connecticut. Before joining the Army last August, he was teaching at the Chauncey Harris School. His brother, **CPL. IRVING FREEDMAN**, is serving in England with an ordnance bomb disposal squadron. He also is a graduate of Weaver High School and attended Teachers College in New Britain for one year. Cpl. Freedman is a former employe of Colt's.

... training at ... From there he was sent to the Naval Air Station at Jacksonville, Fla., where he served as an ordnance instructor until he left for overseas duty somewhere in the Pacific about four months ago. He is a graduate of Bulkeley High School and was employed by the Wiremold Company, Elmwood.

* * *

MARION GLATER, daughter of Mrs. Lena Glater of 53 Sharon St., has been commissioned an ensign in the WAVES. She is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and formerly was a bacteriologist in the State Department of Health and at Meadowbrook Hospital, Hempstead, N. Y.

* * *

CPL. EDWARD C. HEMMANN, son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl E. Hemmann and the husband of Shirley Grabinsky Hemmann, 7 River Rd., Wethersfield, is stationed at Camp Gordon in Johnston, Fla. Previously, he completed a specialists' course on Diesel engines, conducted at the General Motors Institute in Flint, Mich. A graduate of Wethersfield High School, he worked at the Pratt & Whitney Division of Niles-Bement-Pond Company before joining the Army in February, 1943.

... joining her brother in military medical service. She has enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps with the rank of second lieutenant and will report at Ft. Devens Jan. 26. A graduate of Hartford Public High School in 1940 and of Hartford Hospital Training School last year, she had been on the hospital staff since then. Her brother, **T/CPL. 5TH GRADE JAMES P. KARTSOUNIS**, is serving in the Medical Corps at the 47th Field Hospital, Fort Jackson, S. C. Corporal Kartsounis, now at home on furlough, joined the Army eight months ago and received his basic training at Camp Pickett, Va. He was graduated from Hartford Public High School in 1940 and prior to entering the Army was employed at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. At HPHS he received the Greek prize in his class and was a graduation speaker. He was active here in the Whitney Players. Corporal and Lieutenant Kartsounis are the son and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kartsounis of 316 W. Preston St.

* * *

SEAMAN 1/C HARRY KRAIZA of Suffield is home on leave after four months of foreign service. A native of Suffield, Seaman Kraiza attended the public schools in that town and was employed at ... Bradley Field before entering the service in May, 1943. He has several brothers and ...

Maloney of 115 Arnold St., has reported for duty at the Air Forces Bombardier School, Carlsbad, New Mexico. He is a former student at St. Peter's College in Jersey City, N. J., and at Fordham University.

* * *

ANTOINETTE M. MARZANO, an ensign in the WAVES, has been assigned to general duty. Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Marzano of 250 Putnam St., she was graduated from St. Joseph College and formerly was employed as admissions secretary at the University of Connecticut and as secretary to the priorities manager in the Hartford War Production Board office.

* * *

ALEXANDER J. McCAFFERY, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander McCaffery of 133 Tredeau St., received the wings of an Army Air Forces pilot and commission as a second lieutenant at Spence Field, Ga., recently. A graduate of Hartford Public High School, he worked as an apprentice machinist before he enlisted in the Air Corps.

* * *

ROBERT W. NORMAN, son of A. A. Norman of 29 Charter Oak Pl., recently was graduated from Columbus, Miss., Army Air Field with the rank of flight officer.

He began pilot training ... tember, 1942.

PFC. MEL... of Mr. and ... of 252 Hillsi... at the Univ... College Park... program. He ... basic trainin... Tex. Before ... last June, h... Trinity Coll... manager of ...

HERBERT ... man 1/c, A... and Mrs. He... 128 Preston ... transferred ... Technical ... Memphis, T... Air School ... He is a gradu... School, class ... ployed at ... Propellers w... Navy 10 mon...

CHESTER ... has been gr... with the ra... tenant, at Na... the son of M... golowicz of ... a graduate ... School. He ... United Aircr... the Army.

It's a Family Custom

2nd Lt. Irene Kartsounis is a member of the Army Nurse Corps. Her brother, T/Cpl. 5th Grade James P. Kartsounis, is in the Army Medical Corps. Here the corporal gets a careful check-up by the lieutenant.

Judy Serves with the Marines

Judy, two-year-old Doberman Pinscher from South Windsor, went ashore with Marines when they hit Bougainville. She was donated to the Marine Corps by her owner, Marshall F. Bidwell.

Connecticut Airmen in Texas

Connecticut birdmen prepare for final post-graduate ... Central Instructors' School, Randolph Field, Tex. Left ... Lt. Thomas P. Gleason, 15 Higbie Dr., East Hartford ... John C. Howard, Moosup.

Avon Man Wins Decoration

Pfc. Robert A. Brown Jr. of Avon, receives Soldier's M... Brig. Gen. Walter J. Reed of Seventh Air Force Ser... mand at Central Pacific base for "exceptionally ... conduct" at scene of airplane crash.

G. J. Breen J. W. Breen

Cpl. Freedman A. Freedman

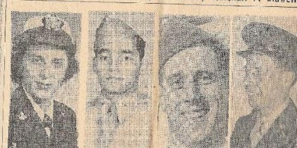
Sgt. M. Bourret Sgt. J. Bourret

Sgt. Conners S. E. Conners

C. Zappulla John Corona

Sgt. Curtiss Lt. Brennan

Ensign Allen Ensign Glater



Ensign Marzano Lt. Folander Sgt. Garofolo Cpl. Hemmann

H. E. Wetmore Lt. Zongolowicz Lt. McCaffery E. J.

M. C. Smith Cpl. Leshin Lt. Edgerton H. R.

Friday night
January 21, 1944

Darling ~

Isn't the enclosed *Blondie* cartoon funny? How about trying to drink your tea that way darling? You might start a new trend in England.

Received the letter you wrote to me on our anniversary day. It was a very nice letter and I don't know why you should feel that your letters are uninteresting. I know that there is so much you can't write about, but what you can write and do write, means so much.

I learned from your letter that Chris[263] is with you now… I was anxious to hear about him. Give him my regards and tell him I'm glad to hear that he is well.

I guess they are keeping you so busy now… Regardless of how tired you are at the end of the day, I bet you prefer it to just hanging around, doing nothing all day. At least time doesn't weigh heavily on your hands.

Do you know that I thought I couldn't put the X's at the end of my letter - so I had to sign all of my letters without them. I found out today that it is all right and I did feel like a real fool.

Tomorrow, my mom and I are going to the matinee performance of *Abbi's Irish Rose* at the Bushnell.[264] I have good seats and I'm so happy about that because as you know Mom doesn't hear nor see too well. I hope it will be good because I had to do a lot of convincing to make Mom want to go.

Darling, I am buying a $100 war bond this month and I decided that out of your allotment I am going to buy a $50 bond monthly.

[263] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[264] Bushnell Memorial Hall is a music and performing arts venue in Hartford, Conn. that also shows feature films.

Issie[265] is home tonight but he came in just for a few hours. He had a lot of trouble with his car on his way in and when he got home he was exhausted. He said he likes the Navy so far and he sends his regards to you.

Tootsie called tonight and wanted to know what I heard from you and she asked me to send you her regards too.

Did I tell you that your niece or nephew will be born in July? Tonight Margie[266] was telling me that July will be an expensive month for me - your birthday, the baby's birthday, and her anniversary. Now, she can get back at me for her expensive month – October.

Today we received a notice from our supervisor warning us that there has been too much talking during working hours and it must come to a halt or else dismissals will be necessary. I couldn't help but giggle as I read it and Bernie - he's my supervisor - heard me. It was really funny although it wasn't meant to be - it was like the notices we got in school. I had to ask Bernie if that means we will get report cards every month and get marked in deportment - Well he broke down and laughed too.

My cold is all gone and it is wonderful not to have to sneeze every five seconds. Every time I sneeze, I lose a bobby pin and darling you know how hard bobby pins are to get. So, I can't afford to get anymore colds.

We have a new girl working in our office and she's Jewish. I guess she's ashamed to say she is, so she tells one girl she's Swedish, to another she's Irish, and to another she's Polish. When the girls got together… it was funny to hear the nationalities she was supposed to be. They have nick-named her *League of Nations*. They want me to say something to her in Jewish and see if she understands. However, this is one thing I've learned it's best to just stay out of.

Sweetheart, ohh how I hope time passes quickly until we are together again. I miss you so much darling. and I love you so much. Take care of yourself darling and remember you are always in my thoughts.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

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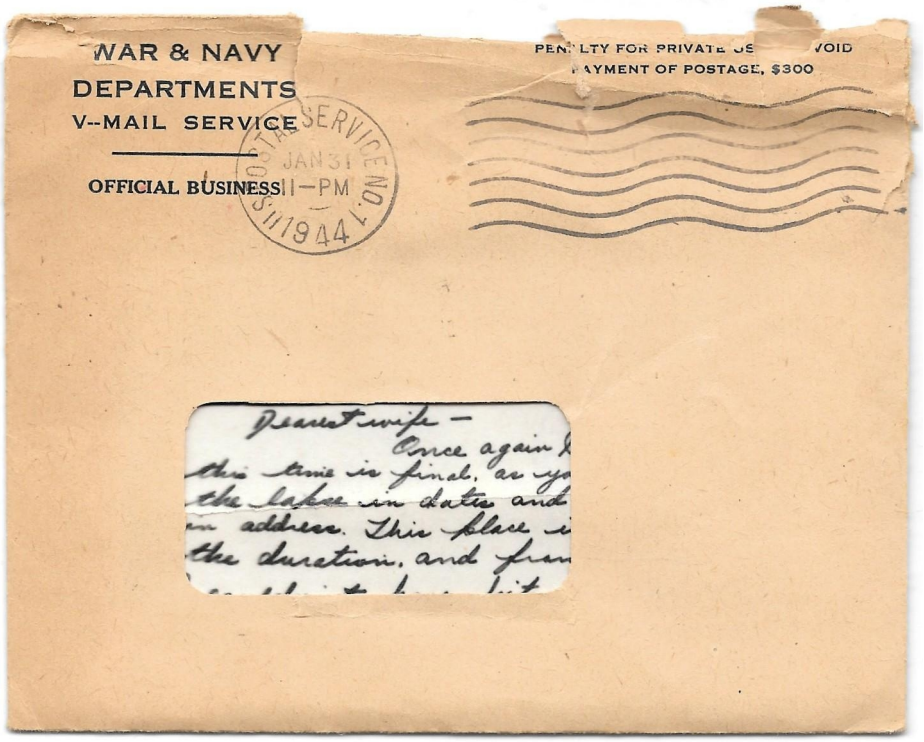
[265] Isidore left his job as a physician at Blue Hills Hospital in Hartford to enroll in the Navy. He is commuting from his apartment in New Britain to the Sub Base in Groton.

[266] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy. She is pregnant with twin boys Richard and Steven Levy.

V-mail[267]
[January 22, 1944]



Dearest wife -

Once again I've changed bases, this time is final, as you can tell from the lapse in dates and also the change in address. This place is home for the duration, and from what I hear I couldn't have hit it any better. For a base in the ETO[268], this place has everything - a beautiful club - I'm in it now - a very good mess [hall], and heated barracks. I'm just about ready to start in with what I've been training all this time for, so it can't be too long before the 25 missions are over and I'm on my way home. Due to the change I'll probably have to 'sweat out' the mail all over

[267] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

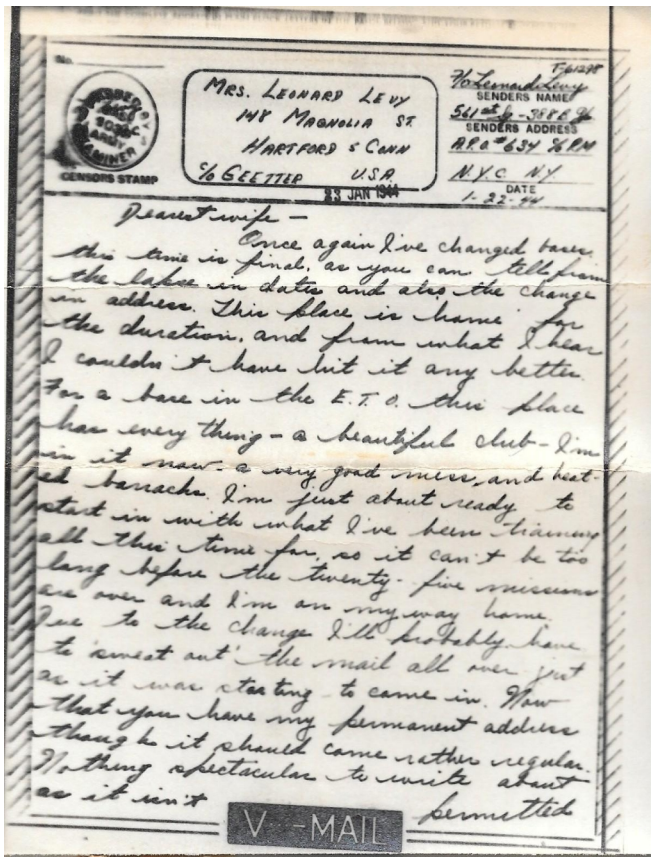
[268] European theatre of operation

just as it was starting to come in. Now that you have my permanent address though, it should come regularly.

Nothing spectacular to write about as it isn't permitted, but someday I'll be able to regale you and the children for hours with stories of my experiences. On the way down here I caught a glimpse of Cambridge University - a very beautiful place. Rock[269] is sitting nearby and he sends his regards, also asks if you can send some *latkes*. My darling, it is becoming Hell to be away from you. I miss you so terribly much, love you more and like you at the same time. I have no way of showing it now, except by letters, but wait until I'm home.

I do love you so very much 'Shoo-Shoo' take care of yourself for me and give me a thought once in a while. Goodnight my darling - a longer letter tomorrow.

I love you
Lenny


Mrs. Leonard Levy
148 Magnolia St.
Hartford 5 Conn
c/o Geetter U.S.A.

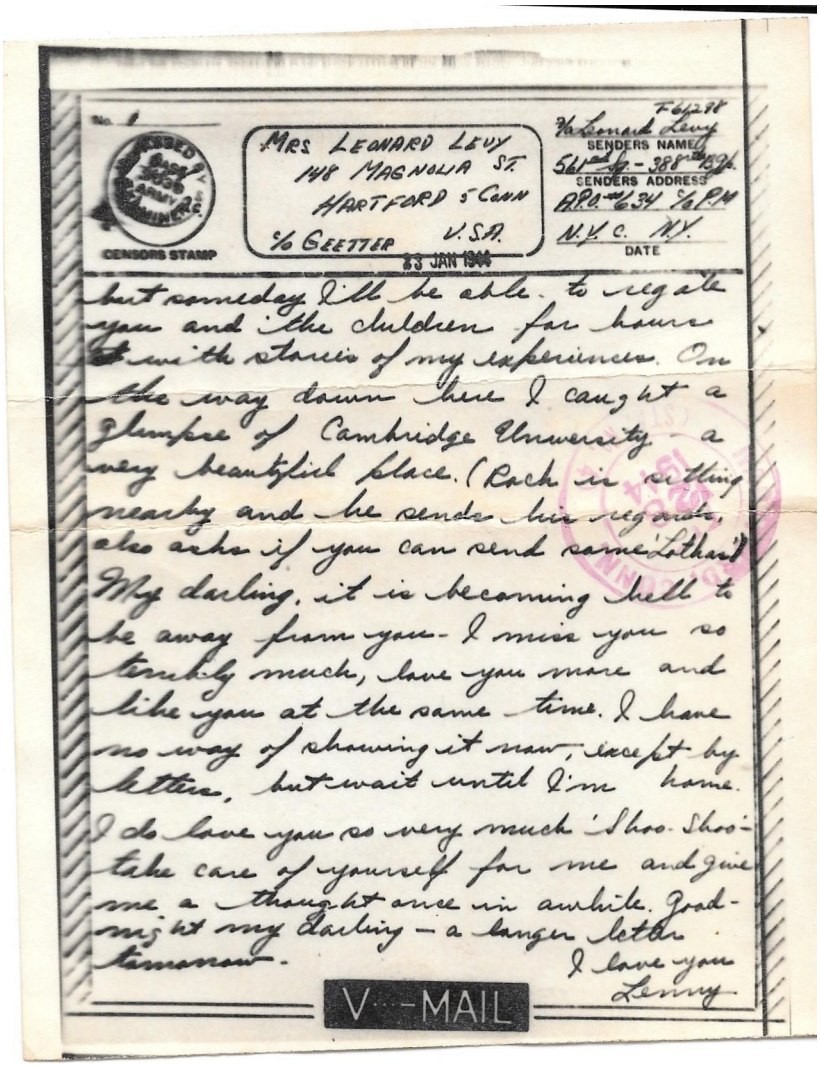
Lt. Leonard Levy
SENDERS NAME
561st B-25 FR Sq
SENDERS ADDRESS
APO #634 c/o PM
N.Y.C. N.Y.
DATE
1-22-44

CENSORS STAMP
18 JAN 1944

Dearest wife –
Once again I've changed bases this time is final, as you can tell from the lapse in dates and also the change in address. This place is home for the duration, and from what I hear I couldn't have hit it any better. For a base in the E.T.O. this place has every thing – a beautiful club – I'm in it now – a very good mess, and heated barracks. I'm just about ready to start in with what I've been planning all this time for, so it can't be too long before the twenty-five missions are over and I'm on my way home. Due to the change I'll probably have to 'unest out' the mail all over just as it was starting to come in. Now that you have my permanent address though it should come rather regular. Nothing spectacular to write about as it isn't permitted

V-MAIL

[269] Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.



No. 1

CENSORS STAMP

MRS LEONARD LEVY
148 MAGNOLIA ST.
HARTFORD 5 CONN
% GEETTER U.S.A.

23 JAN 1944

Pvt Leonard Levy
SENDERS NAME
561st Sq - 388th BG.
SENDERS ADDRESS
APO 634 % PM
N.Y.C. N.Y.
DATE

but someday I'll be able to regale you and the children for hours with stories of my experiences. On the way down here I caught a glimpse of Cambridge University - a very beautiful place. (Rock is setting nearby and he sends his regards, also asks if you can send some Lotharil) My darling, it is becoming hell to be away from you - I miss you so terribly much, love you more and like you at the same time. I have no way of showing it now, except by letter, but wait until I'm home. I do love you so very much Shoo. Shoo - take care of yourself for me and give me a thought once in awhile. Good-night my darling - a longer letter tomorrow.

I love you
Lenny

V-MAIL

This V-mail was written by Lenny Levy on 1-22-44, posted by the US War Offices Post on the Knettishall AFB on 22 JAN 1944 and received by the Hartford Connecticut post office on January 31, 1944.

Jan 22, 1944

Hi Lenny,

First – you'll forgive me for addressing you as Flight Officer as that is now incorrect. It has been rumored about at home that you may be a Second Lt. [Lieutenant]. I haven't been home in 10 days. I'm not up to the minute on any news.

The plus for this informal note is to send my belated best wishes on your foreign mission. Matters of a military nature have overwhelmed me the past few weeks and I'm just about getting my head out of the water. On Monday next, I'll be in my 2nd month of service. Of course, that's small potatoes when matched against your... time – Yet the days are slipping by faster than I had expected.

As you know, I'm stationed at the Sub Base in New London – fortunately close to home. I don't know how long I'll be here - so any day I may find myself detached – I hope not for long. I hope not for a few weeks. I do want to break away from the family easily and not all in one shove. The work I am doing is of a medical nature but is not at all in the field of anesthesia or hospital administration. That doesn't disappoint me one bit. I was prepared to do something different once I got in, so I'm not upset.

Have seen the family in Hartford but once this month – saw Sylvia at the time. They all looked well to me then. Do call up Nate and Mom when I get to New Britain or inquire of the Hartford gang when I call New Britain[270].

Well, I wonder what goes with you since you reached foreign shores. There is no doubt that it will be in for a big share of active service. In spite of everything I ought to be doing, my thoughts often turn to you and the important missions you and the remainder of your crew will be undertaking. And always, I wish to the utmost the complete success of each of your assignments.

Yes, Lenny, this is just a note to say "Hello" - to tell you of my sincerest wishes for your safety.

Love always
Is

Ft. Cmdr.
I. S. Geetter U.S.N.R.
Sub Base – New London Conn.
561 Bomb Squad
D. O. Q.

[270] New Britain is the relatively new home for Isidore and Rebekah (Babe) Geetter and their five children aged 1-10. Issie's return address shows his commission in the US Navy, which has him posted at the Submarine Base in New London, Connecticut.

Saturday night
January 22, 1944

Darling ~

Today I received a letter from you which you wrote on New Year's Eve. It took a long time getting here but it was a letter worth waiting for. I don't know what caused the delay because your letters seem to be arriving about ten days after you write them.

Darling, we are sort of perplexed about your APO numbers. [Your] Mom wanted to send a cable to you last night and when she called the Western Union office they told her there was no such APO number listed. I called the American Red Cross today and explained about the cable gram and they said the APO number 12662 is an *embarkation* point number and that's why we can't send the cable gram… If you have a delay in getting our mail, it's because it has to be rerouted from that embarkation point. Darling, haven't you got another number now? In regards to why Mom wanted to send a cable - she just wanted you to know that we are receiving your mail and everybody is well. However, I hope that our mail is getting to you. It is terrible if you are not getting it - and you have been waiting such a long time to hear from us.

I mailed a 5 pound package to you today - that's a regular overseas package. I am not saying *how* it went through but nevertheless, it's on its way. There is candy in there and although there's not too much you can put into that [size] box, I hope you will like it.

This afternoon I went to the *Bushnell* [271]with my mom to see *Abie's Irish Rose*. Very good seats but Mom still had difficulty hearing everything. The performance was "all right" but that's about all. It wasn't as good as I expected it would be and I was disappointed.

This evening Roslyn[272] called me and we decided to go to the movies. I was home later than I expected and it is now twelve o'clock. Truthfully, it is hard for me to stay up much later than twelve - that shows how [much] I am getting away from nightlife.

There's not much else to write tonight as not much more has happened. However, if only I could tell you how much I miss you and how much I love you - this letter would be volumes. I hope that just being able to… say that I love you and miss you so much, helps express what I feel. Take good care of yourself darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[271] Bushnell Memorial Hall in Hartford, Connecticut is a venue for live theatre and music that also showed movies.

[272] Roslyn (Mandell) Goralnick was married to H. Robert (Tuddy) Goralnick (also known as Bob Gorin). Tuddy's parents lived next door to Lenny's parents.

Somewhere in England[273], unstated

Monday - 23
[January 23, 1944]

Dearest wife -

At last I have the time to sit down and write. Overnight my life has changed from one of leisure to that of a busy person. As you know, I'm now at my permanent base and my work has finally begun. Yesterday, just as I sat down to write to you, a captain, who sleeps in the same barracks as [me], asked if I wanted to go for a ride. Not having been up in over two months I went, partly to see England from the air and partly to get my flying time for the month. While at operations I met the squadron Navigator and he made an appointment to see me at seven last night. When we met he took me down to the *line* where we spent a pleasant two hours talking about the work of navigation in actual combat.

He gave me quite a few helpful hints and promised to give me more from day to day. When I got back to the barracks I found that there was an *alert* on and the lights went out rather early because most of the fellows had to be up by three. All of the above is in explanation of why there was no letter for yesterday. Forgive me, my darling?

After mailing your letter Saturday, I stepped into the bar room for a drink and found that there was a dance going on (later learned that it was a weekly affair.) While standing around listening to the music I met a fellow I haven't seen in over four years, We lived on the same street at

[273] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

home for a good long time, rehashing the fun we had 'way back when.' He brought me up to date on all the boys from the 'old gang' and then after a dance or two I went to sleep.

This morning I was up by 10:00, had coffee in the snack bar, took care of some details and am now in the lounge writing. My 'home' is even nicer than I thought at first - the club is much better than the one we had at Alex[274], the fellows are all very friendly, the meals good, the theater has plush seats (my aching *'twizzzy'*) but there is still school to go to. It seems that as long as I'm in uniform, there'll be something to learn. So long as it will help to bring me back to you, my darling, I'll be willing to go.

Saw quite a bit of the country-side on the way down here, and as the sun was shining it looked quite nice. Stopped in Cambridge for a while and, except for the narrow streets and the wrong-side-of-the-street drivers, it looked like any average size city back home. Cambridge University looms out on the skyline and is really an impressive sight.

With the exception of Chris[275] (and we expect him along any day) Crew18 is intact. Rock[276] already has one mission to his credit and is still talking about it. He has relatives in London and on our first pass we are going to visit them and maybe get a real home-cooked meal – *latkes*[277] and all!

Speaking of passes: we get a fifty-six hour pass every three weeks so I guess it will be some time before I see the night life of London again.

---

[274] Alexandria, Louisiana was the last US Base Lenny served at before shipping out to England.

[275] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[276] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[277] A *latke* is a type of potato pancake or fritter in Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine that is traditionally prepared to celebrate Hanukkah.

No mail from you in almost a week, due to my change of bases, so once again I'm eagerly awaiting news of home and you, my sweetheart.

It's time I took care of some important matters, so if you'll excuse me from rushing off, I'll go attend to them. Before I go, however, I want to tell you once again that I love you ever so much my darling and do miss you terribly - pray that it won't be long before we are together again.

Until tomorrow - when I'll write again.

I love you
Lenny

I like you too 'Shoo-Shoo'

Love,

L.

Somewhere in England[278], unstated

Tuesday
[January 24, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Here I am, after a hard day of trying to keep one step ahead of those who are trying to put me to work, reporting the events of the day - hope all my small talk makes for an interesting letter. Awoke just after 8:00, in time to miss breakfast as usual, so contented myself with buttered toast and coffee (complements of the snack bar.) After that hearty repast I fetched myself over to Ground School where I heard more of the same dribble that's been thrown at me since leaving school. Class lasted until eleven-thirty when it was time for the noonday meal which consisted of that delight of all *Etousians*[279] (GI's of the ETO[280] – stew! Had planned to go back to school for more dribble but Lieutenant Arban, the squadron Navigator collared me for some extra help and practice on (*censored*[281]), the greatest aid[282] to navigation since the compass. After an hour and a half of this I decided to call it a day - and that I did. Hung around the barracks, washed up, straightened things out a bit until time for supper. Eating over for the day, we took ourselves to the Post theater to see a musical revue staged by the enlisted men of this base. The name *You've Had It* is a story in itself and I'll endeavor to explain it now. If you run after a bus and just miss it, the English say 'You've 'ad it, chum,' meaning 'You had your chance and missed it' - translated literally into GI talk *T.... S...* The revue itself was very good, depicting the humorous side of various phases of army life. The music, all original, was very good and quite catchy; it was played by *The Gremlins* - The hottest thing in the ETO. The show lasted a full two hours and every bit of it thoroughly

[278] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[279] A word coined by Lenny

[280] European theater of operation

[281] In this letter, Lenny self-censors the word radar, the X kisses below his signature, and the location of the base.

[282] Royal Air Force: Knettishall was a fully operational RAF base before serving as an American base. Lenny was pleasantly surprised by the condition and state of technology of the radar and navigation tools here.

enjoyable. One fellow in particular stopped the show; originally he sang with Xavier Cugat and Ernie Madaguina - sang *Amabala* among others in Spanish and as I said he stopped the show. From there we adjourned to the club where, after a game of *Snooker* - a form of billiards - I came into the lounge to write. That my darling was today - not unlike many that have gone by.

Due to the fact that Chris[283] is not here yet we are not *operational*, so I'm still 'sweating out' my first mission. Foolish as it may sound, I am anxious for them to start because the sooner I get them over with, the sooner I'll be back with you, and that my sweetheart is all that I'm living for. Mail has yet to catch me, so I'm in the dark as far as news of you, the family or Hartford is concerned. Please don't neglect to include all the details in your letters, things like how the city looks with the lights back on, your job and even the weather.

Time to get some 'sack time' Butch, So, once again, I want you to know that I love you very much. If I remember correctly you were once afraid that I'd stop telling you that but, believe me my lovable wife, I'll never get tired of telling you that I love you nor how much I love you -

Goodnight my darling - take care of yourself.

I love you
Lenny

[283] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Monday night
January 24, 1944

Darling ~

The newspaper that you sent me, the *Evening Standard*[284] arrived today. It was very interesting and I read it from start to finish. I am going to put it in our scrapbook.[285]

Evening Standard (London) - December 13, 1944

Not the issue date Lenny sent to Sylvia

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1943

TYPEWRITERS WANTED. TOP PRICES OFFERED WATSON'S TYPEWRITERS LTD.

Evening Standard

27,219 BLACK-OUT 5.25 p.m.—8.31 a.m. MOON sets 3.17 p.m., rises 6.46 a.m. ONE PENNY

FINAL NIGHT EXTRA

This is the Gin Gordon's

BERLIN IS HIT WITH 1000 TONS

"We Had Them Foxed"

Huge fires and a great pall of smoke rising to 10,000ft. were seen by our crews at the end of the attack on Berlin early to-day, when more than 1000 tons of high explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped.

TO-DAY'S AIR MINISTRY COMMUNIQUE REPORTING A HEAVY RAID, SAID: "FIRST REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE BOMBING WAS EFFECTIVE AND LARGE FIRES WERE LEFT BURNING."

"Other airplanes attacked objectives elsewhere in Central and Western Germany.

"Seventeen aircraft are missing."

All the crews agreed that the German fighters failed to realise that the target was the capital until it was too late. "We had them absolutely fooled," said an experienced squadron leader.

W.O. T. P. Johns, of Hornsey, a Lancaster pilot who was on his sixth attack on Berlin, said: "We had them so confused they believed that they never got going.

FEW FIGHTERS

"We were among the first to bomb," he said, "and while we were over the capital we saw North-east Berlin.

"Just before we reached the

VITEBSK: GERMAN ATTACKS REPELLED

The Germans have launched eight successive counter-attacks during the last 24 hours

INVASION: 90 DAYS

And Eisenhower Will Lead It, Says Washington

General Eisenhower is to lead an invasion of Europe in about 90 days, probably within 30 days, according to reliable reports in Washington, says British United Press.

The Army and Navy Journal in

Eighth Army Wounded Came Home in Time for Christmas

TROOPSHIP IN COLLISION

By LESLIE RANDALL,

Evening Standard War Reporter

Just back in England after his journey to North Africa and Italy as the first war reporter accredited to the Merchant Navy, Leslie Randall describes how the troopship in which he sailed home from North Africa narrowly escaped disaster in a convoy collision.

A troopship in which I sailed from North Africa has now reached a northern port—long overdue because we had to turn back to Gibraltar for repairs after a narrow escape from disaster.

She has brought home wounded—most of them Eighth Army men injured in the invasion of Sicily—just in time for them to spend Christmas at home.

Some were going home after a long stay in hospital in Egypt and Tripoli as well as in Sicily. Many had been away from their families for years.

Some had spent Christmas in Gibraltar. There were some who had been looking forward so eagerly to Christmas at home had given up hope of it when they found, at the last moment, a place from Wimbledon.

Some were coming back from the war entirely, or put out to sea and ready for speed for home. The Italy provided a special meal for us and the Air Force sent us a present, four

SCREWBALL SAID: "I've Had It"

CHANNEL BATTLE

Big Guns, M.T.B.s & Planes

Berlin reported to-day that British land-based long-range guns, M.T.Bs and fighter-bombers were engaged in a duel with a German convoy in the Channel last night.

The German news agency said: "The enemy's repeated attacks were rendered abortive by well-aimed defensive fire and the continuous fire of our flare-bombers."

The agency declared that R.A.F. fighter-bombers aided the Navy's fight in diminishing visibility by dropping flares.

"This three-dimensional attack, in which the British used for the first time, ended without success," the agency declared.

"The enemy lost three M.T.Bs for certain and probably some other vessels. The German convoy reached its destination with all its vessels and without suffering any substantial damage."

130 Rounds

The speed at which shells from British guns were firing by the giant artillery on the cliffs of Dover, which are shelling and being the Germans on the French coast between Calais and Boulogne, was shown in a duel which lasted for about an hour and a half.

It is stated that the British guns sent over 80 rounds, and possibly more, but the number was in the vicinity of 80.

To-day's Berlin communique says:

We had miserable weather yesterday - it rained and then it snowed -then it snowed - but it was a wet snow. I was just speaking with Margie[286]. She isn't working anymore as I have already told you. She told me Boomey is in town – he visited Dad this afternoon. That's all I know about it - but isn't it nice that he can get home. I guess it was another sudden *pass* and he came in very unexpectedly.

---

[284] Lenny and Sylvia expected he was heading to England. This was the part of the plan to share his Mission location, which otherwise would have been censored: sending a newspaper. The *Evening Standard* is a newspaper published weekly and distributed free of charge in London, England.

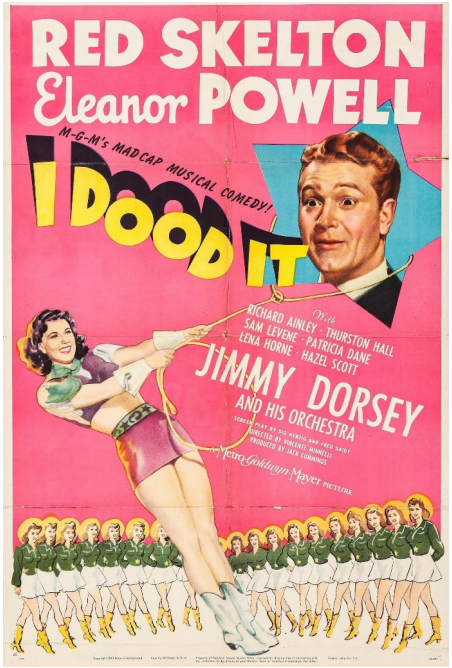
[285] Sylvia's scrapbook of Lenny's mailed souvenirs has been lost.

[286] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant with their first child.

Last night I went to the *Lenox*[287] with Sadie[288]. I saw Red Skelton in *I Dood It* and hon, I laughed so much. It was very entertaining and I enjoyed it immensely. Looking over the theatre section of the newspaper you sent to me, I noticed that most of the pictures are films that were produced here. Oh yes, I get a real kick out of the crossword puzzle - the way it is worded - it is a puzzle!

Sweetheart, I'm hoping I get a letter from you tomorrow - missing you so much - you have no idea how I look forward to your letters. Every night I pray that you are well and hon, add that you will get my mail - I just hope you have received all of it. Goodnight darling, and with all my heart, I love you.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



[287] The *Lenox* was a movie theatre on Albany Ave. in Hartford, Connecticut.

[288] Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter

Somewhere in England[289], unstated

Wednesday
[January 25, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Just remarked to the fellow sitting next to me that writing gets to be more of a problem every day - there just isn't anything to write about. This was one of those good days, slept till eleven, attended a couple of lectures but took it easy the rest of the time. Oh yes, I drew some more equipment - soon I'll need a warehouse to store it all.

Felt rather ambitious earlier so I wrote a few outstanding letters including one to the future mother Marge[290]. She no doubt fell over when she saw it.

Still non operational so I can't fill the sheet with exciting reports of dropping bombs on Europe - in fact I seem to be just as far from the war as we were back in Alexandria. Remember my saying that I wanted to come here because the navigation was so easy? Well it's even easier than I thought with all the aids the R.A.F.[291] have; soon I'll be able to get as much sleep as Rock[292].

Not another thing to say, so with all my love i'll say goodnight -

Goodnight my darling -

I love you
Lenny

[289] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[290] Margie Naidorf Levy was Norman's wife and pregnant for the first time.

[291] Royal Air Force: Knettishall was a fully operational RAF base before serving as an American base. Lenny was pleasantly surprised by the condition and state of technology of the radar and navigation tools here.

[292] Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

Somewhere in England[293], unstated
Thursday
[January 26, 1944]

Dearest wife -

After reading your first V-mail[294], I heartily agree with you that they are not very pleasant to receive; not only are they too short, but they do not even look like a letter. I'm truly sorry I sent the few that I did, But you can be sure that there will be no more. It's true that stationery is very hard to obtain; as you can easily see from the very assortment I've been using lately, but no more V-Mail.

Can readily understand your surprise about the ring, my darling, but I did mean every word of it. Just as soon as I get to go to a town, I'll have my finger measured and send it (the size) on to you. Glad you didn't ask for an explanation of my change in feeling for I'm afraid I couldn't give one - it's just that I want everybody to know that I'm married instead of trying to keep it a secret, as you, jokingly, accused me of trying to do.

So you are curious as to what Boxing Day is? I was too for quite some time, until I found somebody who knew. The explanation as I got it, is this: years ago the fortunate few who were wealthy made boxes, containing gifts, food and clothing, on Christmas night and then, through the Church, they would be distributed to the poor the next day - hence the name Boxing Day. Like all holidays, about all that remains is the name, and now the holiday merely calls for an extra day of celebration.

Along with your two letters today I also received one each from Norm[295] and 'Boomey the Kid' wrote his from the hospital and there was nothing of interest in it. Norm's letter further proved that his luck is all good. He is now stationed at Langley Field Virginia - only thirteen hours, by train, from home and he is free practically every weekend. Just before

[293] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[294] V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

[295] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

arriving there, he got into a poker game and made a fistful of money. Traveling by plane, he saved some time and was able to spend a few days in Hartford. He also told me that Ebner[296] is now stationed somewhere in Ohio - as yet I haven't heard from him but sooner or later the mail catches up to me. No doubt he (Boom) and [Frances] will get married one of these weekends - do you get to see her much?

By the time this reaches you, the package will have arrived. The lighter will be very much appreciated, for even matches are rationed - to the tune of one box a week.

This was another easy day; slept until nine-thirty, had coffee – at the snack bar and then attended class, with Rock[297], for an hour. The afternoon was free and we spent it playing Gin Rummy - He keeps beating me though and therefore it's not enjoyable. Oh yes, Chris[298] came in last night, so once again we are all together - it shouldn't be too long now before we start work again. I keep threatening to write to Fran about his alleged misdoing and now he's trying to find out your address - to hold over my head.

Your pictures, all three of them, occupy a place of honor in the barracks, my sweetheart, And the usual compliments on what a pretty wife I have, have been forthcoming with regularity by everyone that sees them. They all three overlook my bed and each morning I awake to look right into your brown eyes - I do love you so very very much my Butch - I'd give most anything just to hold you in my arms for a moment – God how I miss you. Nothing matters but that, someday, I am able to come home to you and make you the happiest girl

[296] Ebner Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia in 1938 and has been a friend of his since Lenny and Sylvia started dating.

[297] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[298] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

in the world. Just pray that the Allied successes continue and that time will [come] sooner than we dare hope.

By the way, I notice that your customary X's were missing in the last two letters - please put them back - or did you purposely leave them out because I did? Mine are out only because censorship forbids them.

In one of your letters you mentioned the fact that you are putting in quite a bit of overtime and that it tires you out - please take care of yourself for me, my darling because I want you just as I left you.

Until tomorrow then, when more of your letters should give me more questions to answer, I'll say goodnight - but not before I tell you once again that I love you very, very much (and like you too.)

Goodnight my darling -

I love you
Lenny

On the back of the envelope is a penciled greeting from another Hartford boy in Knettishall: Hiya Toots – S.E.[299]

[299] Sam Ellison

Wednesday afternoon
January 26, 1944

Darling ~

I am writing this letter in the thirty minutes I have left in my lunch hour. I didn't write last night because as soon as I came home from work - all I could do was eat and go to bed. I thought my eyes would close at work all during the day, I was so sleepy. So, by nine o'clock last night I was fast asleep and I feel wonderful today.

It is very cloudy today and it looks as though it is going to rain. I hope not, because as usual, I don't have my umbrella.

This morning just flew by.[300] I was so busy all morning that when the lunch bell rang, I couldn't imagine what it was… I don't kill time at this job like I I used to do when I worked for the Retail Credit Company[301]. Speaking of the Retail Credit Co., reminds me that I have to call them up about what my earnings were for the time I was employed there. I have to file my income tax returns. I won't have a large tax to pay this year because I didn't earn very much - I only worked four or five months. Oh, What a life - Just working five months out of twelve. Yes I'm lazy.

The insurance agent was around last night - I was working overtime. He has the money from your policy. I called him and I expect him to come again tonight.

I'm thinking of visiting [your] Mom tonight… if it doesn't rain.

My boss just passed by and he told me to tell you that I'm working hard. He is always kidding with the girls.

Sweetheart, I don't know whether there is a letter from you today as yet - but I'm looking forward to receiving one.

I am going downtown tonight directly from work. It is Tootsie's birthday tomorrow and I have to get her a gift - just what is still a problem.

The girl who sits in front of me was just remarking about my diamond - I wish you only heard all the compliments I get on it.

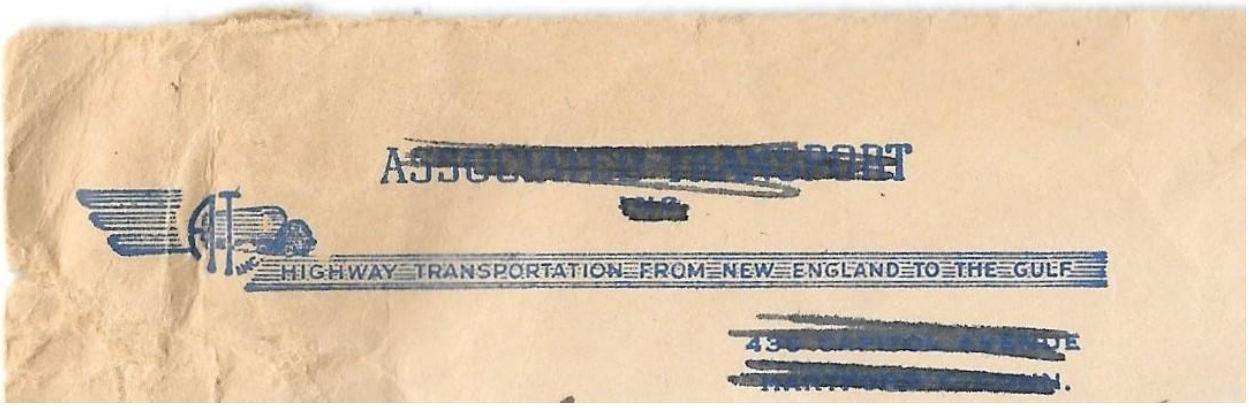
---

[300] Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

[301] By the 1940s, Retail Credit Company was one of the nation's largest credit bureaus, holding files on millions of American citizens. It now operates as one of the "Big Three" credit bureau, Equifax.

It has been a little more than two months since we have said goodbye. Darling, I've missed you so much. I'm really thankful for the fact that I'm working and although it requires a lot of extra time and energy - it keeps me busy and I don't notice the time passing. It's time to get back to work, so I'll have to end this letter. Until tomorrow when I write to you - remember that I love you with all my heart.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Thursday night
January 27, 1944

Darling ~

It is now eleven o'clock and everybody is in bed. It is so quiet that the scratching of my pen is magnified a million times louder.

Sweetheart, I've missed not receiving mail from you so much this past week. I am not feeling sorry for myself - really I'm not - but I can understand how you must feel not getting our mail for such a long time. I do hope with all my heart that you have received some of it.

I tried to send you a copy of this week's *Saturday Evening Post* but they wouldn't accept it at the post office.

Came home from the *Lenox*[302]. I went with Florence Greenberg, very unexpectedly. We saw *Guadalcanal Diary*. It was good as far as I could see - the woman in front of me had a peculiar hairstyle and it got in my way. If it was her hat I could have asked her to remove it, but, in this case, as you can well see, I was just plain stuck.

We did not work overtime tonight and it felt just like a holiday. My boss suddenly thought we were tired, so he generously let us go home at five. It was appreciated nevertheless.

It gave me a chance to get Tootsie a birthday gift. I got her a cookbook too - remember she got me one, too? I called her this evening to wish her a "happy returns of the day." She was all set to go out for the evening. She was going out to dinner and she and Charles were going to the *Bushnell* [303]to see *Jane Eyre*. She asked me to come to supper Saturday night - so I guess that's where I'll be Saturday night.

I was speaking to your mom tonight. It has been several weeks since I've been at the house, so in order to make sure I come this Sunday, she invited me for dinner. It really isn't that I need an invitation to visit Mom and Dad. In fact I like to go there, but I just haven't had much time lately.

Darling, I've been trying so hard to be brave and not wear my heart on my sleeve - so to speak. but golly, honey, I hope I'm not being a sissy when I tell you that I miss you so very much. I must confess that all I think about lately is how wonderful everything will be

[302] A movie theatre in Hartford, Connecticut

[303] Bushnell Memorial Hall presents live theatre and music, as well as feature films.

when you are home again as my darling husband. I find myself looking at linens, and dishes, and silverware, and furniture: things that never interested me before. It is perhaps just dreaming… when I look at all these things but I know that God will make these dreams come true in the very near future. So darling, until that happy day, with all my heart I love you.

5Goodnight, darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
4-21-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 23, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and a Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated April 20 1944 by the Control Section.

Somewhere in England[304], unstated

Friday
[January 28, 1944]

My darling wife -

Evidently my days of sleeping late are to be but fond memories; today I was rudely awakened at six-thirty and told to be at briefing at eight. Therefore, I had my first breakfast at this base and then went down to the line for a practice mission. Chris[305] was 'checked out' today and we flew as a crew for the first time since leaving Alex[andria]. When we got out to the *ship*, I found the squadron navigator waiting for me - instead of going along just for the ride I, too. was to be checked out on the type of navigation used here. We took part in a big formation with Chris doing very well - I think I did also but no word was forthcoming from the navigator; however, I did not get lost and, over here, that is quite an accomplishment. We flew about three hours and I hate to say this, for the first time since flying in a B-17, I felt a bit woozy. I blame it on the fact that my stomach is a bit unsettled and also because it's been so long since last I flew. This afternoon was spent at school so you can see that there was no time for the 'sack' today.

Expected mail today, but was sadly disappointed - not a one. That is the sad state of affairs that the postal system is in here in the E.T.O. (By the way, in case you are a bit puzzled, E.T.O. means European Theatre of Operations.)

By the way Butch, you've never mentioned, in any of the letters I've received from you, whether or not you ever got the stuff I sent you from Grand Island[306]. Let me know in your next letter if it came; in case it didn't I'll write to G.I. and have it traced, for there was some valuable equipment, including that box of gum in it for you. Also let me know if you've received your first allotment check yet.

---

[304] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[305] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[306] The Grand Island Army Air Field was located in Grand Island, Nebraska. It was the final stop for many airmen, including Lenny, before going overseas for combat in the European Theater against the Germans.

I tried to cable you yesterday, but what I had to say would have been so decided against it. The one thing I wanted you to get in a hurry was my change of address but they won't let it go by cable - why I don't know.

Last night's lengthy letter, plus the lack of anything exciting today leaves me with nothing more to write about, my sweet.

(Chris just went to the bar to buy a couple of *Cokes* - not the real McCoy - and when he went to pay for them found that he had no money - so Lenny had to pay.)

It's getting towards the end of the letter and not once have I told you that I loved you - but not because I forgot or because I didn't want to - it was merely so that I could say that for the end, like some people [save] the best part of their dessert. I do love you so very very much my darling and miss you more than ever. Please take care of yourself for me-

Goodnight my darling-

I love you
Lenny

Friday night
January 28, 1944

Darling ~

I just finished polishing my nails. I couldn't do my right hand, so Sadie[307] did it for me. Halfway through the job, she got very silly and so did I, so I can't brag about how nice my right hand looks right now. I have to do it over again when I finish writing this letter.

I received three letters today, but none from you. I received a letter from my cousin in Denver. It was a very nice letter. She invited us to visit them someday as her guests. Oh, darling someday let's take a trip there - it's one place I always wanted to visit.

I also received a letter from my cousin Evelyn in Newark. Her boyfriend is in England now. She's taking a Nurse's Aide course to help pass the time away. If… I didn't have to work three nights a week, I'd love to enroll in a class.

Eleanor finally got around to answering my letter. It was just like Eleanor. I laughed from the start to the finish. She is in Tampa FL and I guess Sam has about one more month before he will be on his way. She's not too keen about his crew. She still would like to have me go someplace with her. I honestly don't care to go any place now darling. If I can't be with you, I'm happiest being with my family. I guess I finally learned that home isn't just the place where you hang your hat.

Your cousin Buster gave me a ride to work today. He asked about you and sent his best wishes.

Sweetheart, is there anything you want that I can send you? I know there are so many things you can't get, and if it is at all possible for me to get it - please tell me.

Hon, how are the boys in the crew? is Chris[308] having any more trouble with his ears? I hope not. How about you darling? How do you feel? Did you lose any weight? I imagine you did - but that doesn't matter as long as you are feeling well.

Sweetheart, nothing more to say… I want to tell you before I say goodnight - That I love you with all my heart and miss you. Take good care of yourself darling. goodnight hon-

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[307] Sadie Geetter is Sylvia's oldest sister.

[308] Augustine (Chris) Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Somewhere in England[309], unstated

Saturday
[January 29, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Once again Saturday has rolled around and everybody is preparing for the night's 'big doings.' Some of the boys are at the shower room, others are shining shoes, while others are just resting up. I've already done my preparation - what little I had to do, and after mailing this will stop in for my weekly sample of Scotch and Sodas.

Your letter of the 12th came today: while it was full of questions I'm afraid that most of them have been answered in previous letters. My request for a package should have reached you by now, you know of the countless handkerchiefs I bought [and] also socks and underwear - as for the fluid - that is the only part of the lighter that I *can* buy, so you see that things are still working out for us. I'm still awaiting the chocolate although the situation here is a bit better - my biggest need now is stationery - if I don't find some soon I'm going to have to ration my letters.

Sweetheart, you write that you were sick from over-tiredness, while the girls at the office think it is due to pregnancy - one is as bad as the other; if your present job is proving too much please, give it up. I'm sure that there are easier jobs to be had.

Haven't done any flying lately and we are all becoming a little bored with things. The only thing for us to do here is go to Ground School and even that is called off when the boys go out on a mission, so you can see that most of the time we do nothing but hang around killing the day. Today for instance, I slept until almost noon and then ... a good part of the afternoon - taking my weekly shower - I can't afford to take them more often because I don't have the necessary changes of underwear - the laundry situation being what it is. If you think of it, send me some handkerchiefs and underwear - I can always use them.

[309] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

Darling in your letter you wrote 'We Geeters are a sentimental clan, but there's a good reason why we are.' What, my Butch, is that good reason?

The boys are getting ready to leave now - I guess I'll tag along. You can be sure my darling that each sip of each drink will bring back memories of the times we went out and we drank - you and your Scotch and Ginger Ale - me and my Scotch and Soda, at the Old Mill, Club Ferdinando and all the other places. Someday soon my sweet we'll relive those days, but with a fuller appreciation of what they mean to us. We'll know then of our great and wonderful love for each other, and what it means to be separated from the one we love so dearly. I do love you so very very much my darling. As they may have said it in the days of Caesar *Ego sui te amo* -

I love you
Lenny

Saturday night
January 29, 1944

Darling ~

Today when I came home from work, I had no plans made as to how to spend the afternoon. While I was eating my dinner I thought that I'd take Betty[310] and Lorraine[311] to the movies to see Margaret O'Brien, the child star, in *Lost Angel*. But when I called them, I found that they both had colds, so that was out. and then, when Sadie[312] came home, she told me she wanted to look for a dress, so I suggested I go with her. So, all afternoon we went from one place to another looking for a dress, but there was nothing really nice. So Sadie went home and I went to Tootsie's house for supper - that was the invitation she extended the earlier part of the week. I haven't had bacon in such a long time and I like it - so it was a good supper.

She was glad I gave her a cookbook for her birthday. I gave her one just like the one Mrs. Rodeilait had. Now… that Charlie can eat everything again, she can use the cookbook to full advantage. Speaking of Charlie, he doesn't want people to know that he doesn't have to be on a special dish anymore, because it might get around [to] the draft board - and then they might not believe he has ulcers.

Little Robbie is as cute as he can be. He still doesn't talk - Just one word at a time and most of it is in a language of his own. He calls me Wa-Wa, That's a new one to my collection. I fed him his supper and darling my maternal instinct was awakened. I just couldn't help but think how happy I'll be when I'll be feeding a son of ours.

Charlie went back to the store after supper and Toots and I talked as usual about everything and yet nothing in particular. She wants me to come over again next Saturday - I didn't want to promise I'd come - but I think I will [go] there again Saturday.

Tomorrow, I am going to your mom's house for dinner. I would have slept there tonight as long as I was at Tootsies but two reasons kept me from doing so. First, I have to help clean the house on Sunday mornings - and I don't enjoy sleeping with Margie. She has a

[310] Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman is Sylvia's niece.

[311] Lorraine Geetter is also Sylvia's niece.

[312] Sadie Geetter is Sylvia's oldest sister.

terrible habit of groaning in her sleep and the last time I slept there - I was awake all night and I had to go to work the next morning and I thought I'd never last through the day.

Do you recall in my letter, I think the one I wrote last night, that I went to the movies with Florence Greenberg[313]? She's been acting very unhappy lately and on the way home from the *Lenox*[314] she told me something that surprised me. Darling, this is a secret, so I'm trusting you to keep it. She told me she isn't happy at all and it all revolves around the fact that she hasn't had a child. I was always under the impression that it was she that couldn't have the baby, but instead she told me that there is something wrong with Lou, and he refuses to go to a doctor and see if something can be done. Isn't that a shame darling? I feel very sorry for Florence because she wants a child of her own so much[315]. I do hope that something happens and things will work themselves out.

Everybody asks me about you but there's not much I can tell them, not hearing from you lately. I imagine you must be on the move now and it may be a while longer before I hear from you again. I hope that you are well, darling and are getting my mail regularly now. Don't worry about us at home as we are all well. I must admit we do miss your letters.

It is time to say goodnight now darling. I'll be thinking of you, darling And loving you with all my heart.

Goodnight darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[313] Florence Greenberg Gold

[314] A movie theatre in Hartford, Connecticut.

[315] Florence Greenberg Gold had three sons.

Monday night
January 30, 1944

Darling ~

The dinner that was made today was delicious. The way Mom and Dad felt about how long it had been since I had visited last - like years instead of a few weeks.

Margie is the same - there are so many things she says and does that I can't understand., I have just given up. I guess it would be wise not to say any more because you've convinced me that I have faults too.

Your Mom and Dad went to your Aunt Ann[316]'s house for the afternoon, Mr and Mrs Goralnick went too. It seems that they have been getting together these past Sunday afternoons and have a card party. Mom told me that Dad slept until a quarter to twelve this morning. That doesn't sound like Dad does it, darling? I was up at six-thirty - can you imagine getting up that early on Sunday morning at home? I had a good reason. I began to menstruate and I always feel better if I exercise - so at six-thirty I was cleaning the kitchen.

Ann, Claire, Bubie Levy and Pauline

Rosalyn came over to Mom's in the afternoon. and Margie's girlfriends, Helen and Pearl were there too. It seems as though they both bought furs for their suits. Pearl had hers and they were very pretty. we played the records, yes the same ones that we had when you were home. Pearl and I jitterbugged - and hon, not being a jitterbug, I was dead tired after a few numbers. Later on, Pearl, Roz and I went to the *Strand* and we saw *Desert Song* - which was awful. We had to separate as the show was crowded, as usual. I sat between two couples and how I certainly missed you. Both couples were holding hands and every so often they'd whisper those little things - I guess I paid more attention to them than I did to the picture. Somebody asked me at work yesterday if I am getting used to going out without you - that's

[316] Ann is one of Bubie Levy's sisters

one thing I'll never get used to - I always feel like part of me is missing, no matter where I go. I love you so much sweetheart - so very much.

I am not going to work at 8:15 as usual tomorrow. I am taking a few hours off to go to the bank and get things straightened out.

Sweetheart, I want to ask so many questions but honestly I don't know what you can tell me. I want you to tell me as much about yourself in your letters as possible and if you can ever send me any pictures of yourself please do. and hon, the other night I put the newspaper you sent me in our scrapbook[317]. It was a tough job "but I *dood* it."

Sweetheart, tomorrow is Monday and a long day of work so I better get to bed. As usual I'm wide awake now, but when that alarm goes off in the morning, it won't be the same feeling. So angel, I'll say good night - and once more I love you darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[317] Sylvia's scrapbook of Lenny's mailed souvenirs has been lost.

Somewhere in England[318], unstated

Monday
[January 31, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Days without any mail from you, but I'll try to make this a long and interesting one to make up for yesterday, when I failed to write.

Saturday night was a flop - the red 'alert' was on and consequently the boys kept themselves in reserve, there were very few drunks and the whole fiasco broke up early, Chris[319] and I were in the barracks by 11:00. Most of my time was spent at the roulette table where, through Chris's advice, I made a few pounds.

We slept late, took things easy all day and at night went to the large hangar where there was a big party going on. Yesterday was the first anniversary of the 388th Bomb Group and our CO[320], in conjunction with the Special Services made a huge success of the evening. They had all the beer that could possibly be consumed by even this thirsty bunch, there were free cigarettes... for everyone and then there was entertainment, both professional and by the boys of the post. The imported talent included, naturally, a striptease act, and you can well imagine the disturbance she created in front of those hundreds of hungry GIs and officers. Included also, was a well known British songstress who sang an all-requests program of American songs. The band played several numbers, the newly formed Glee club sang, medals were given out for outstanding service to the group, the CO made a short speech and as a finale the striptease led a Conga line that had the 'Wolves' standing on their hind legs with their tongues hanging out. From there we went to the snack bar for a bit of food and then called it a day.

This morning I was up bright and early – seven-thirty - had breakfast (delicious pancakes) and then decided to do myself a good deed. Believe it or not my darling, I washed out fifteen handkerchiefs and four pairs of socks. It was a case of do it or go without. After hanging out my wash I took my watch (the expensive one) to the watchmaker - I broke the crystal in Grand Island[321].

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[318] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[319] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[320] Commanding Officer

[321] The Grand Island Army Air Field was located in Grand Island, Nebraska. It was the final stop for many airmen, including Lenny, before going overseas for combat in the European Theater against the Germans.

Walking out of the building I saw a familiar face and on looking twice recognized a fraternity brother of mine, Ivan Finkel[322] by name. He is a radio operator in the 562nd Squadron and has nine missions to his credit.

[We had a] good long talk about the whereabouts of all the boys and then I went to the finance office to draw my pay. By then it was time for Chow, so off we went.

Ground School took up most of the afternoon and the rest of the time was spent in drawing more equipment (yes more), and straightening out my locker. Tonight, [with] the boys being flush, there was quite a bit of gambling going on. Rock[323], as usual, went broke and Chris and I decided to back him to the tune of five pounds apiece. Our money brought him luck and he left the game well over $200 ahead! That accounts for the past forty-eight hours my darling. You can judge for yourself what a hard life I'm leading.

Butch darling, I'm really worried about you - and your job - please don't work too hard and overtire yourself. If you are rundown but are afraid to leave for lack of money, let me know and I'll send you an extra allotment - money has no value here and I can easily spare some if you need it.

As yet your package has not come, but the next few days should see it along with some more of your letters.

That, I'm afraid, is all the news and views of the day.

As usual, the best is saved for the end, and the best is when I tell you that I love you so very much my sweetheart. I'm getting so that I dream of you [at] night which means that I'm thinking of you continuously one-thousand, four hundred and forty minutes a day. I do love you, and like you, my Butch.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
Lenny

[322] Tech.-Sgt. Ivan N. Finkle, son of Louis Finkel, graduated from Weaver High School with Lenny and was flying in the "Blitzing Betsy."

[323] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

Blizzard
Betty

Monday night
[February 1], 1944

Darling ~

I feel as though I accomplished something today. I went to the bank…and I made myself the *power of attorney* of your account. I also bought two bonds - a $100 bond and a $25 bond. From now on I'm going to use my allotment money for war bonds. I manage to get by on my salary, so I don't have to touch this money, and I'm glad I don't need it now, because it will come in very handy in the future.

You should see what your *smaht* wife did tonight. I covered a box I had with some wallpaper I had, and it is a very pretty box to keep your letters in. In case you don't know this, I have all your letters filed according to the date you wrote them… I read your letters over and over - in fact every night before I go to sleep I take another one out and read it - and then just before I fall asleep I think about everything you wrote in that letter. It may sound silly to you, but perhaps you understand.

Just think, today is February 1. that future we dreamt so much about together is getting closer and it won't be long before everything comes true. I just know everything is going to work out fine, and we are going to have so much happiness someday. You just wait and see, and hon, everything is going to be for the best - like it has always worked out… for us. (Of course, my fingers are crossed on the last remark - just for good luck!)

It seems, colds are getting everybody. My mom has a terrible cold, and all she does is sneeze continuously. So many girls didn't come to work today because of colds. My boss gets so mad when one of us stays out because the work piles up so fast.

Don't forget to mention anything you may want or need, that I can send you, darling.

As yet Frannie has not answered my last letter, and I am very anxious to hear from her.

There's not much more to write now, darling. So, once again, it's goodnight, darling and -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Somewhere in England[324], unstated

Tuesday
[Feb 1, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Just a few lines tonight to let you know that I'm still well but not too happy; there was still no mail from you and I am beginning to think that somewhere along the route they are neglecting to forward my mail. Surely by now they all have my forwarding address so there can be no other excuse.

Today, like all the preceding days, has been one of comparative leisure. We were up by 9:30, grabbed a bite at the snack-bar and then went to a class in Communications. First there was a written test, in which I did fairly well, and then my old bugaboo, [Morse] code, reared its ugly head (to coin a new phrase.) Not having taken any in so long I was very slow at it and required a bit of help from my radio operator.[325] With our combined efforts I managed to squeeze through. In the afternoon we had another hour of the same subject and then I was free for the rest of the day.

In place of Monopoly we three have become *Gin Rummy* and *Fan-Tan*[326] addicts. By 'we three' I naturally exclude the co-pilot[327] who is just as eccentric as ever. I just can't figure the fellow out. He keeps to himself all day long and never has a civil word for anyone. God only knows what we ever did to deserve a character like that. He is just the opposite of 'Red' or 'Copy' - who was one swell fellow. Getting back to the card game, because I was winning most of the time, Chris[328] and Rock[329] ganged up on me and really took me for a ride.

We are still non operational and getting more tired of it as the days go by. What is holding us back nobody seems to know, but that's the way it is.

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[324] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[325] William Burtle Mayne was the Radio Operator in Lenny's crew.

[326] Fan-Tan, or fantan, is a gambling game long played in China. It is a game of pure chance. The game is played by placing two handfuls of small objects on a board and guessing the remaining count when divided by four. After players have cast bets on values of 1 through 4, the dealer or croupier repeatedly removes four objects from the board until only one, two, three or four beans remain, determining the winner.

[327] Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington is the Co-pilot of Lenny's crew.

[328] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[329] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

From doing nothing I'm very tired and so I think I'll cut this short and go to bed.

Until tomorrow then, my darling, again I want to say that I love you very very much. I also like you very very much 'Shoo Shoo.'

Goodnight my darling

I love you
Lenny

Tuesday night
February 1, 1944

Darling ~

Yesterday I was ahead of myself - I was under the impression that it was already February 1 - see what love does to me. The Fourth War Bond Drive ought to go over real big this year when you hear who is helping to sell them - Betty May[330]. I came home from work tonight to hear she's been calling everybody about buying war bonds. She even called your mom. It is for the school drive and hon, it's a riot to hear how she asks you to buy a bond. She really doesn't know what it's all about. She couldn't ask me about it today because by the time I got home from work tonight, she was in bed. However, I will have to buy one [from] her - after all, she gets such a thrill out of it.

Which reminds me, she wouldn't come here Sunday afternoon because I wasn't going to be home. It's not because she doesn't like Sadie and Mom as much as me, but when I'm home, she has somebody to talk to, and I usually end up playing with her.

She told me she wrote you a letter and when I asked her what she wrote her reply was "Do you tell me what you write in your letters?" That ended that.

Golly, is it cold tonight? Oh how I would love having you here and snuggling up to you tonight.

A girl in my office was married a week ago and she just came back today. Her husband was discharged from the Army. Well, she is getting the usual rubbing. She made me laugh today when she told me that I will have to learn all over again, while she'll be experienced…

I almost had my two tickets for the [movie] *Doughgirls* thrown out. I was looking for them… and I found them in the wastebasket. Don't ask me how they got there, but they were there.

The office is having a party Thursday night for two of the fellows that are leaving for the Army. The old timer I was dancing with at the Christmas party tried to convince me I should go, but he didn't win.

I saw an awfully cute dog as I was going to work today. It reminded me of your promise to get me a dog someday - I always wanted a dog; and yet, I'd rather wait until I had a baby and have the dog grow up with the child. Don't you agree with me, darling?

[330] Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman is the daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

We had good news at the office today. I think we are only going to have to work two nights a week overtime instead of three - that will be on Monday and Tuesday nights. I'm really very happy about it because I find it hard to get anything done at night when I get home so late.

Mom told me that you mentioned in your last letter to her that you bought a new coat. Is it a short one? I know you wanted to get one when you were home. Well, now you have an English tailored one. I know it must be very nice and it looks well on you. Wear it well, darling.

I'll say goodnight now darling - and hope to hear from you soon. I love you darling and miss you. Take care of yourself. Goodnight darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Wednesday night
February 2, 1944

Darling ~

It's funny how things happen. Ida, she's a girl in my office, hasn't heard from her boyfriend for about as long as I hadn't heard from you, and today she was so excited because she received a letter. She said that maybe when I go home, I'll have a letter from you - and so I did. It is hard to tell you how happy it made me feel to hear from you. It is good to hear that you like your new place and everything is fine. Yes, there will be so much you will be able to tell me and of course we can't forget the children. However, I do wish I could be with you - I know that's just wishful thinking. If it is permitted, can you tell me where you are?

Hon, I have such a surprise tonight. You'll never guess who called and the news I was given. Well, Ann Pratt called and she has a son five weeks old - isn't that wonderful? I had no idea she was pregnant - and I was under the impression that she couldn't bear children. She's still living in the same place. Florence[331] was confused when she told me Pratt moved. She invited me to see the baby Monday night, so I'm going there after work. I'm so excited about it - I think it's just wonderful and I am so happy for her.

Oh yes, speaking about babies, Charlotte Greenberg[332] expects to give birth next month. I had no idea she was even pregnant. I just found out about it.

Margie[333] visited Ruth Schechter[334] today and she says her baby is very cute - it's three months old now. Walt has never seen him but they say it looks just like him. By the way, Walt is in Sicily now.

It warmed up considerably today. It certainly was cold yesterday - brrr - I don't want to think about it. But, on second thought, I'd rather think about being cold than hot - I prefer cold weather.

My check came today and I expected it about the fifteenth - that's when my last check came.

I am giving up cigarettes but somehow I wish I had one right now - if you were here, I'd take one of yours. Darling - that reminds me - do you have enough cigarettes?

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[331] Florence (Greenberg) Gold is one of Sylvia's closest friends at the time.

[332] Charlotte (Greenberg) Greenberg graduated from Weaver High School in Hartford, with Sylvia. Her younger sister is Florence (Greenberg) Gold.

[333] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was living with Lenny's parents in Hartford, Connecticut.

[334] Ruth Schechter graduated from Weaver two years after Sylvia.

I am using your statement about Rock[335] asking for *latkes*[336] as a request and I am going to send you a package this weekend. I wish I could put myself in the package.

I was glad to hear that you received some of my mail. I guess it will take time before you get the rest of it. Did they seem like old news by the time you got them darling?

So, you're calling me "Shoo-Shoo" now - it's become so popular in the office that I answer to it. Oh, and I have another name - "Cookie Puss" - you figure that one out. That's what a girl calls me. Today I met Saul Hoffman[337] (he's an old friend) and his wife - and he called me Corky. I almost forgot that name - but that's the only name he knows me by. Best of all, I like it best when my husband calls me Butch.

Sweetheart, I could just about keep my eyes open during work today, so I'm going to bed now. I'm happy because I heard from you and I hope that there will be another letter tomorrow.

I love you very very much, dear, Goodnight darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[335] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[336] A *latke* is a type of potato pancake or fritter in Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine that is traditionally prepared to celebrate Hanukkah.

[337] Saul A. Hoffman and his wife Rosalind Markowitz also graduated in Sylvia's class of 1938 at Weaver High School in Hartford, Connecticut. Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy graduated from Weaver in 1936.

Somewhere in England[338], unstated

Thursday
[Feb 3, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

So much to tell you last night but I didn't write; for a change, however, I have a legitimate excuse. Seems as though something I ate didn't agree with me and I went to bed early with a bad case of indigestion. I feel better today and if I can remember what it was I had to say, I'll put them in this letter.

Yesterday was a big day as far as mail was concerned. I received two from you, three from Mom, one from Ebner[339] and two that make me feel ever so good: Valentines, one from Moe and Claire[340] and one from Bev and Marilyn[341]. Butch you've no idea how swell that made me feel. It does something to a fellow to know that his people back home haven't forgotten him, especially in the case when I've known Moe and Claire for such a short time. At the very first chance I'll write to them - not tonight as it's too late - and try to show my appreciation for their thoughts.

Eb's letter contained just general information concerning his change of address and the addition of a stripe to his uniform. From his letter it appears that he is still the same old Eb - drifting along, and taking things as they come. Mom's mail was a bit outdated and most of her news was old, having read it in your letters. She did say that she had a nice time in New York for which I'm very glad. Both she and Pop have so few good times that it does me good to hear of them going out once in a while.

Your letters, too, contain some good news. You mentioned the fact that you received the first check which takes a load off my mind. At least now I know that it has gone through all the 'red tape' and they will be coming in regularly. So, my darling, you're getting to be a true spaghetti eater! Glad to hear it. Now when I come home we can really go out and have a good steak and spaghetti dinner, or will you cook it for me? You seem to be going to quite a few shows - that's more than I can say. I've been to exactly three shows since

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[338] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[339] Ebner (Eb) Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia and became friends with Lenny after they enlisted.

[340] Maurice S. (Moe) Geetter is Sylvia's second oldest brother and his wife is Claire K. Geetter.

[341] Beverly and Marilyn Geetter are Moe and Claire's two daughters who were ten and nine at the time of the writing.

arriving here in the ETO[342] The last time being tonight when I saw *King's Row*[343]. I really enjoyed it very much - so much in fact that I intend to get the book and read it.

This was another easy day - up at 11:00, in time for lunch, then off to school for a few hours and then free for the day. Still 'sweating out' becoming operational and consequently we do very little flying. Our day will come soon and then you'll be reading about us - still haven't decided on a name for the *ship* if and when we get it, but you can be sure that it will be a good one.

I've started a new saying here on the base - instead of saying *TS*, so often, it's now 'Hard Luck' - everybody is saying it -

I am writing this without reference to your letters so if there were any questions they'll have to wait until tomorrow. Still no sign of your package but I understand that they take a little longer to get here.

Sweetheart, by the time you get this letter Valentine's Day will no doubt have passed. I've tried everywhere to buy one - anything - but all to know avail. There just aren't any to be had. This letter , therefore, will have to substitute for it, so Happy Valentine's Day my darling - I do love you <u>very</u> much.

Nothing more that I can think of Butch, so I guess this is about all for tonight. Good night my darling and when you go to bed tonight do so with the knowledge that your husband loves you, misses you, and likes you very very much. Kiss yourself goodnight for me and, as I do for you, pray that it won't be much longer before we can ... do it for ourselves.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
Lenny

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[342] European Theatre of Operations

[343] *Kings Row* is a 1942 film starring Ann Sheridan, Robert Cummings, Ronald Reagan and Betty Field that tells a story of young people growing up in a small American town at the turn of the twentieth century. The picture was directed by Sam Wood. The film was adapted by Casey Robinson from a best-selling 1940 novel of the same name by Henry Bellamann.

Somewhere in England[344], unstated

Friday
[Feb 4, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Really nothing to write about tonight but I'll make an attempt at a letter. I'm really ashamed to make the above statement, for all I've done today is write letters, one to Moe and Claire[345], one to Ebner[346], and one to [my] folks. Surely if I can find what to write to them, there must be something to say to the most wonderful person in the world - you.

Went to another movie tonight - saw *The Man in the Iron Mask.* It seems that the few pictures I do see here are really good ones. You no doubt saw this one too, did you enjoy it Butch? One thing I miss while watching a picture now is holding your hand. And to think that once you became angry at me for neglecting to do that very thing. Oh my darling, some things are going to be so different when I come home - no more will I be the forgetful husband - I've learned what it means to show love for somebody, especially when that somebody is you.

Among my latest accomplishments is the drinking of black coffee. Just a short while ago, I stepped into the Snack Bar for a cup of coffee, rather than wait for the attendant to bring us some fresh cream (or rather condensed milk.) I decided to drink it black. To my surprise, it was good - in fact it was the best tasting cup of coffee in the E.T.O.[347] for me.

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[344] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[345] Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

[346] Ebner (Eb) Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia and became friends with Lenny after they enlisted.

[347] European Theatre of Operations

Life is still of the easy variety for me although I had to get up early for a class today. It lasted all of half an hour and the rest of the day was mine to do with as I please, namely go crazy for lack of something better. We've gotten to the stage where we're even playing double solitaire. I think we'd even be grateful for a Monopoly set!

It's beginning to look like Chris[348] is going to have a recurrence of his ear trouble. He complains of difficulty in chewing and swallowing due to a pain in the Eustachian tube. Both Rock[349] and I are trying to get him to go to the Flight Surgeon but he refuses, saying he can take care of it himself. The last time he said that he wound up in the hospital. Don't in any of your letters mention this to Francis[350]. Speaking of Rock, he and the Co-pilot[351] had it out 'hot and heavy' the other day and Rock flatly refuses to fly with him. It's been brought to the attention of our Group Commander and it looks as if we'll get a new Copilot. Everyone on the base knows of our eccentric crew member and he is the laughing stock of the post. He speaks without thinking, making ridiculous statements, and has no friends; in fact lives in a world of his own .

There is an 'alert' tonight which means that I may be awakened early tomorrow to go on a mission so I'd better close soon and get some sleep.

So, my darling, once again at the end of my letter I want to say that I love you, that I'll always love you – [and] when I come home I'll prove it. And, 'Shoo-Shoo,' besides loving you very much, I like you. I'll not try to say how much I miss you because I just can't - would it ... suffice just to say that I do miss you?

Goodnight my sweetheart

I love you
Lenny

By the way Butch, [my] Mom writes that Lenny Karathen is here in England. Do you think you can get in touch with Helen and find out his address?

Love
L.

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[348] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[349] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[350] The wife of Lt. Chris Christiani

[351] Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington was the Co-Pilot in Lenny's crew.

This letter is continued in another letter.

Friday night
February 4, 1944

Darling ~

Right now there is a package I am mailing to you tomorrow, resting on the kitchen scale. There is so much I wanted to put in that package but it is surprising how quickly a package can weigh 5 pounds - that's the maximum weight. I put in some chocolate bars, nuts, a box of assorted chocolates and a few other things I thought you would like. Did you get my other package? It had chocolate in it and in your letter today, you told me how much you crave it, so it set me to wondering… whether you got it, yet. I hope so darling.

Today was really a banner day for me - I received four letters from you. They weren't recent letters - all were written before the seventeenth of January, but it was wonderful to get them. I've read them over and over again, and I know before I put them away, they will be read several more times.

Hon… I meant to explain to you about something I put in my last package. Please don't think I'm silly for doing so - but I put in a large cake of soap. When you wrote in one of your letters about how pitiful it is to see the people walk around as though they haven't had a soap bath in years - it bothered me. I wanted you to give it to somebody and, hon, if you can't eat all the candy, give some to the children you see. Mom told me that you buy gum in the PX to give to the children when you go into town – darling, that was very nice to do, and I love you for it.

I'm going to send you some stationery darling, so don't worry about not having any paper. Giving stationery is a [selfish] gift - you get it back in the end. *smaht* huh, hon!

I just washed my hair but I miss the shampoos you used to give me. Speaking of hair… do you know that we switched *parts*? Let me explain. you part hair on the side, and now, and you used to part it in the middle. Now I part my hair in the middle and it used to be on the side.

Tootsie called me a short while ago and she wants me to come over tomorrow night for supper. I think I will go. Tomorrow afternoon I intend to take Lorraine[352] and Betty Mae[353] to the movies, that's providing the weather will be nice.

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[352] Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

[353]-Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman is the daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

Last night, the office had the party I mentioned for two of the fellows leaving for the Army. This morning everybody has big heads and nasty dispositions. It seems that a good time was had by all.

Darling, you asked me to tell you all about why Margie[354] is living with [your] Mom and how the folks feel about it. Hon, this is something just for the two of us to know so please don't ever let on to Mom that I told this to you. When Margie came home pregnant - her parents were furious and from what Margie says they made it unbearable - nagging and telling her that she *made her bed*.

Margie was here one Saturday night - when she went home, she had a big argument with her folks, and the next day she called Mom and told her. Mom told her to pack and come to live with her. No, Mom didn't want Margie to come and live with her, if it could be helped. She felt it was Margie's parents' [responsibility] to keep her and take care of her… Well the Naidorf[355] and Mom had a fight and now they are not on speaking terms.

In fact, Margie never calls her mother and one day she was downtown [Hartford,] she passed her mother, and her mother didn't even look at her. Hon, I don't mean to be a *Doubting Thomas* - all I know about this big quarrel in Margie's house, is what Margie told me. I have a feeling there is more to it than we know… but no parents tell their child to leave and disown them for the reasons Margie gave. I've spoken with Mrs. Naidorf - she's a nice person and she's had a hard life…

Margie bought a new coat and two dresses that were form fitting, when she [is] pregnant and she won't be able to wear them very long. Her mother took the dresses back, when Margie didn't know about it - and I think that started something. I don't blame her for wanting to buy clothes, everyone likes [new] clothes, but Norm[356] isn't making very much now, and whatever money they have in the bank will be needed soon for doctors, hospital bills, and the *what-not* that comes with having a baby… Perhaps her mother argued with her about not being wealthy - or even well off – she [Mrs Naidorf] can't buy the things Margie is going to need.

Mom will have nothing to do with Mrs Naidorf… As much as I feel sorry for Mom, I can't side with her, so I don't say anything. Mom never got the story from *them* and as I say there are three sides to every story - the Naidorf's story, Margie's story and the right story. There must be something to it because I don't believe Margie's parents would have this attitude. As for [your] Mom and Dad, well Mom took Margie in because there was nothing else she could do. She wasn't happy about it - I can assure you. However, this Sunday, she

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[354] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was living with Lenny's parents in Hartford, Connecticut.

[355] Irving and Etta (Weisman) Naidorf also lived in Hartford

[356] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

told me they are getting used to the idea and don't mind anymore. I hope all this works out all right - but you wanted the story and that's it.

Darling, I think my lucky stars that we were careful - it just is very selfish to have a baby now because it puts the responsibility on those that just shouldn't bear it. I admit I'd love to have a baby but not now, not without you to be with me. I wouldn't want anyone else to take care of me. It's a very complicated case as far as Margie is concerned. I feel sorry for everybody – Margie, Norm, Mom, Dad and the Naidorf's. It's something that just shouldn't have been… they say, *time* takes all matters in hand, so I guess everything will work its way out. Mom and Dad have life in the house now and Margie is happy because Dad and Mom are very good to her. So hon, I guess everything will be all right.

I can't write more because six sheets is the limit for airmail letters. So, sweetheart, I'll send this letter, but start in on another letter - nothing like two letters in one night -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Sarah (Bubie) Levy, Arthur Levy and Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy
108 Colebrook St. Hartford, Conn. (front step)

Friday night
February 4, 1944

Darling ~

This continues my other letter -

Well, now you know the whole truth about Margie[357]. I know [your] Mom won't be pleased if she knows I told you all this, so darling, just don't let on that you know.

There isn't much else right now that I can think of that has happened. I guess I told you everything in the first part of this letter. So, I'll say goodnight now darling, and I'll be dreaming of you I know. Goodnight, sweetheart - and with all my heart - I love you. Until tomorrow then -

Goodnight -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Sylvia Margie ?

[357] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant with twins.

Saturday night
February 5, 1944

Darling ~

Do you like this stationery? I hope so, because I am sending you four boxes of it and five packages of envelopes. It is supposed to be a fine grade of stationery, and I can say… that it *is* easy to write on. I hope that your stationery holds out until you get this. I'm making sure that you have enough… so that you can never use the excuse [of] not having any paper. *Smahtt* – huh, hon?

When I came home for dinner, Betty May[358] was here to keep me to my promise of taking her to the movies. I had quite a time making her agree to the fact that we were going to see just the one picture, *Lost Angel* and not sit through the co-feature. From what everybody told me about the co-feature, it was a very morbid picture and definitely not for children. Well, we went and I got such a kick out of her. There was another little girl sitting in back of her, but she was like that little boy when we went to the Don in Alexandria, [Louisiana] – remember? Betty tried to be patient, and she suddenly turned around and said to the girl, who was older than her - "Some children just don't know how to behave in the movies…" I had all I could do to keep from laughing. There were a few sad parts in the picture and not understanding emotions,… she looked at me and said her throat hurts terribly. I was sorry Lorraine[359] couldn't go - because I believe she would have enjoyed it very much.

It was funny when I was on the bus with her. Everybody looked at her and then me… [and] thought she was my child. So, if you hear any stories of your wife having a daughter you'll know it was just your niece.

After I took her home I went to Tootsies. I had bacon and eggs and - this may not tempt you - baked beans. Phyllis came over too, so we had a nice time just talking. Charlie came home later on, and he had us laughing - he can be funny when he wants to be. He told me to tell you to be "Wrong Way Carrigan[360]" and navigate your plane *home* sometime. He thinks it would be very simple. The baby is adorable and as healthy looking as he can be. He is talking more now and Tootsie feels so proud of him. Charlie took us home and it is now almost one o'clock. It's rare for me to be up this late.

It is very windy outdoors now and I guess it will rain tomorrow.

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[358] Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman is the daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

[359] Lorraine Geetter is the daughter of Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. and Gladys M. Geetter.

[360] Douglas "Wrong Way" Corrigan was an American aviator known for his unauthorized transatlantic flight from New York to Ireland in 1938, which he claimed was due to a navigational error. His adventure captured public imagination and earned him the nickname "Wrong Way" Corrigan.

Sweetheart I'm wondering - just what are you doing right now. I often wonder if there is such a thing as mental telepathy - perhaps you know I am thinking of you. Oh darling, I love you so much. I think so much about the time when you will be home again. There will be so much that can be said but I bet I'll be so happy, there just won't be a word I can say. Until then sweetheart, I'll be happy just loving you as I do - so goodnight darling and take care of yourself.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Somewhere in England[361], unstated

Sunday
[Feb 6, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

According to the clipping you enclosed in the letter I received today my promotion went through, now if only my orders reach me it will be official. I feel sure that by now that is the case, but not having the papers to prove it, I must still call myself 'Flight Officer' [instead of Lieutenant.] The feeling of disappointment I experienced when first learning of the title has worn off, and then again there is that extra money I get while overseas.

I've just had something that I'd almost forgotten existed - a bath in a real old fashioned bath-tub. Through the *grapevine* Rock[362] and I heard of one at the hospital, so after supper we took a walk over and sure enough, there it was. I got in and just soaked for what seemed hours.

We are doing plenty of flying lately, but just over England. Chris[363] is going through the process of being checked out in formation flying[364], and until it is completed we'll not go on any real missions. However I have a feeling that the next time our group goes out, we'll be right in there - I hope!

Last night's dance was quite an affair. What the celebration was I have no idea, but besides the usual girls there was a stage show that was very good. Among the acts was the fellow who… was Jimmy Cagney's [stunt] double and the camp favorite: the Mexican fellow that I wrote about before. Each time I see him he gets better.

In between the aforementioned bath and now, I went to the show and saw *This is the Army*[365].

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[361] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[362] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[363] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[364] This is a big step for a Pilot – and all ten in Lenny's crew. Flying in formation requires manually keeping the plane in its assigned position and distance from the other B-17G's in the 561st Squadron.

[365] *This Is the Army* is a 1943 American wartime musical comedy film directed by Michael Curtiz, designed to boost morale during World War II. It features a story about soldiers putting on a show, with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, and stars Ronald Reagan among others.

As you can see I go to very few shows, but those I do get to see are good ones. Along with the picture was a USO[366] show with a MC that had the place roaring. He, Al Bernie[367], by name, had a million gags and he kept firing them off one after another - and some were on the raw side. The cracks he made about the officers didn't make us feel too good either. All in all though, it was a pleasant evening with the best part of it taking place now when I sit down and talk to you on paper. Honestly my darling, it is this part of the day that makes being away from you bearable.

Very little else to say, my sweetheart, about today's doings.

I do love you very very much my darling and like you too -

Goodnight sweetheart

I love you

Lenny

[366] **USO** (United Service Organization) is a nonprofit organization that provides programs, services, and entertainment to the people and families of the US military.

[367] Alfred Bernard Price, 1920-2003 was a gifted impressionist, who started out as a regular on Rudy Vallee's radio show. He toured with the USO for two years before resuming a notable television career.

February 6, 1944

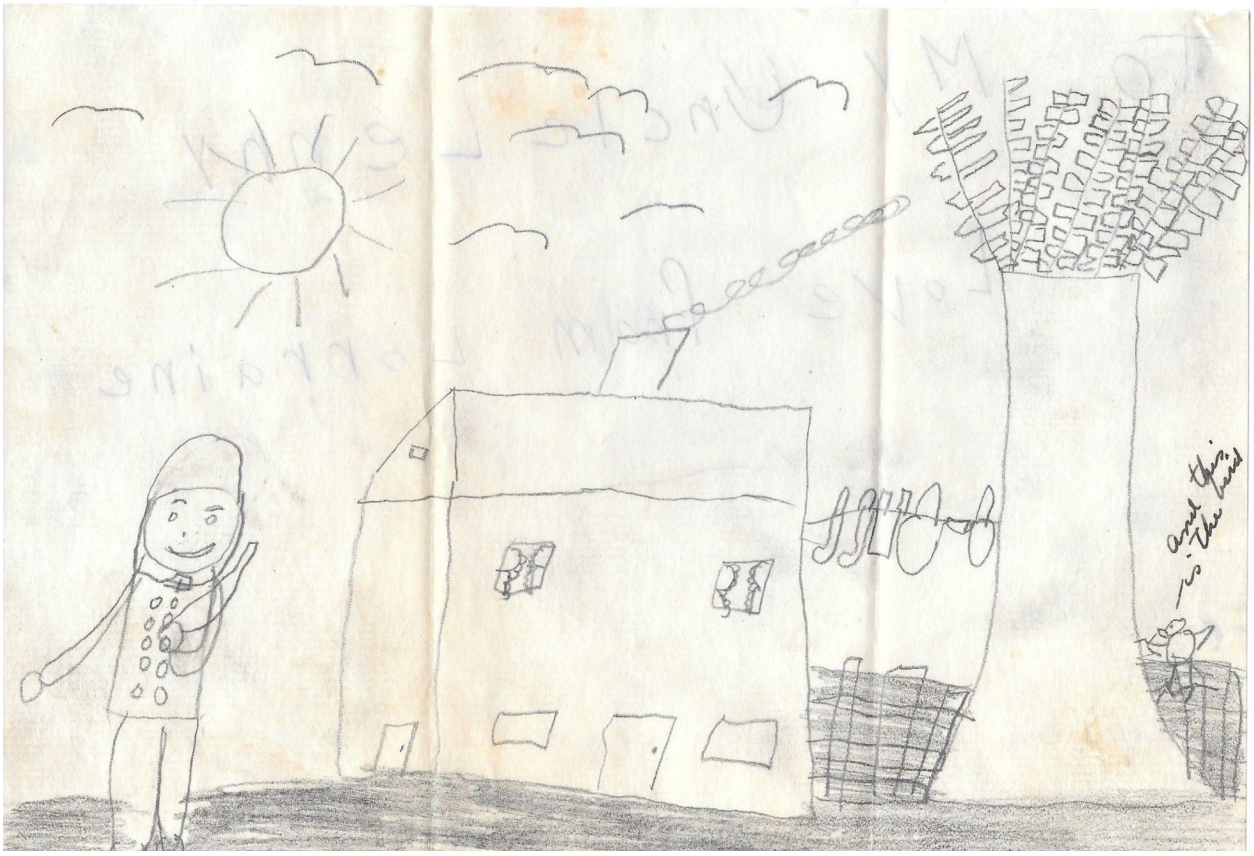
To My Uncle Lenny,

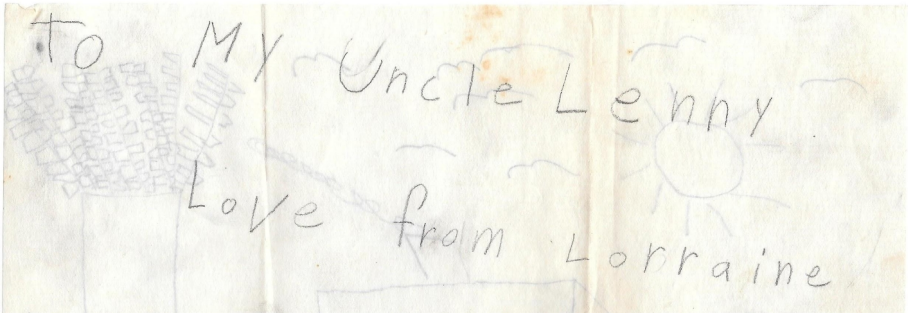
Love from Betty May Weidman

February 6, 1944

To My Uncle Lenny,

Love from Lorraine[368]





[368] Lorraine Geetter is the oldest child of Benjamin G. and Gladys M. Geetter. She was seven at the time.

Sunday -
February 6, 1944

Darling ~

Right now Lorraine[369] and Betty[370] are sitting here at the kitchen table with me making pictures to send to you. They are so intent on what they are drawing - It's cute to watch them. Lorraine is biting her bottom lip. The man next to the house is supposed to be a soldier holding a gun. It is more like a picture of surrealism.

Nate,[371] Ben[372], and Lou[373] are playing cards in Mom's room[374]. It's very quiet in there right now - every so often, they laugh so loud the house shakes.

Right now Betty and Lorraine are getting into a quarrel as to who is copying. Lorraine just made a bird, so Betty has to do her one better - so she's going to make a bird house.

I've been very industrious today thanks to Sadie[375]. I kid her about the reason why she can't sleep nights[376] is because she thinks of what she can have me do when Sunday comes around. This week she had me wash the windows - so hon, I won't have to rely on not having a profession - I can always wash windows. Ouch - my arm aches.

Darling, I'm thinking about taking out a $1000 endorsement policy. I have no [Life] insurance and I thought it could be wise if I had some. What do you think about it, darling? I wish I could talk to you about it, but this letter will have to do… my premium will be about 40-something a year - I was thinking about taking it out under the Prudential.

Rosalind called me earlier this afternoon - She wants me to go to the movies with her tonight. I'll go. She's a very nice girl, hon, and I like her very much. We get along very well at work[377], and you know how much that means. We certainly have some characters in my office, and someday I'll have you in stitches telling you about them.

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[369] Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

[370] Elizabeth (Betty May) Weidman

[371] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter

[372] Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter.

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

[374] Adelle Stolper Geetter was 64 at the time and living at 148 Magnolia St. in Hartford, Connecticut. Hayman Geetter had died in 1940 and Adelle (Sylvia's mother) was having a series of health concerns of her own. She would die in 1946.

[375] Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and her Mom's primary caregiver.

[376] Sylvia and Sadie shared a bedroom with one bed in the home at 148 Magnolia St.

I spoke to [Bubie Levy] today and she's made up a very nice package to send to you. Rock[378] and you will have a treat - she's sending a salami.

(?) Sadie Sarah W. Levy Adele S. Geetter
Two Bubies (1944)

I'm afraid that in the future I won't be going to [your] mom's house as often as I have in the past. My job keeps me so busy during the week that I don't have as much time to visit as I wish I did. Mom understands, but you can be assured that I'll visit as often as I can.

Everybody has left and the house looks like a cyclone hit it. That's the way it always looks when the family gets together. However, I enjoy having them come over - it brings so much life into the house. However, Mom says I make enough noise. I guess I do that.

Issie was here last night with Babe[379]. He's been coming in quite regularly over the weekends - which is very nice. He says he wrote to you about a month ago. Did you get his letter? I bet that when you tried to read his handwriting, it was like working out a jigsaw puzzle. I always had trouble reading his letters. They all look like a prescription to me.

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[377] Sylvia and Roz worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

[378] Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[379] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

It's time to eat supper now, if I want to go to the movies with Roz. I know we will have to stand before we get in, and I'm not looking forward to that.

It's goodnight for today and again - let me tell you I love you darling. I must admit that no matter where I go, I miss you terribly and wish you could be with me. Well, that someday may be sooner than we expect - and then, darling, we'll have wonderful times together – like we used to. So sweetheart, goodnight for now.

Regards to Rock and Chris[380] - and of course, all of my love to you.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[380] Augustine (Chris) Cristani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Monday night
February 7, 1944

Darling ~

Do you remember in one of my previous letters I told you about having my girlfriends over for a reunion? It was just two weeks ago. Well, Sylvia Ronner Zimmerman was one of the girls - Sammy Zimmerman's wife - he was a big name in Weaver [High School] at one time for football.

Well, Ronnie[381] has been married three years and they have a little girl who will be two years old this April. She was pregnant when she was here and hon, I wish you could have seen her. She expected her baby any day and she ran up the two flights of stairs.

Well, last night Sonny Rosen[382] and Florence took her to the hospital as she began to have her labor pains and she was fine. She gave birth to a boy - just what she and Zimmy wanted - and she didn't live through it. She died of a hemorrhage two hours after birth. Naturally, you can understand what a tragedy that is - she was so healthy nobody expected anything like this to happen.

Her mother is like my mom - on in years and not well - her sister has three children of her own - in fact one is just an infant and Zimmy's parents are divorced. He was brought up in an orphanage and his father married a Gentile[383] woman. So, I don't know what will happen to the children - it's so pathetic. I went to the funeral this afternoon and hon, I'm still crying.

I knew her very well. When we were kids we played together - she lived across the street from me[384] - we were in the same club - I went to her wedding, and she helped make my shower. It was the saddest thing I have ever seen - she was only 22 and such a lively, full-of-the-devil girl.

I hope that it's true about there being a heaven… it's good to believe she's happy in heaven. As for the children and Zimmy - I hope that everything works its way out for them.

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[381] Sylvia Ronner Zimmerman (1920-43) was Sylvia's best friend.

[382] Harold L. "Sonny" Rosen is a Weaver graduate who married Sylvia' friend Florence, and lives in Hartford with their two children

[383] *Gentile* is a word that today usually means someone who is not Jewish. Other groups that claim Israelite heritage, notably Mormons, have used the term gentile to describe outsiders.

[384] She lived across the street on Elmer St. where the Geetters had a 6 room flat from 1929 until they moved to 148 Magnolia Street sometime in the 1930s.

I was hoping for a letter today but I guess the mailman forgot me. Well there's always tomorrow…

Last night I saw *Flesh and Fantasy* and hon, I was on the edge of my seat, all the way through it. And when I looked about - everybody was in the same position.

Florence was just in and she was telling me to tell you that I'm still the same imp. Don't believe her, hon.

Well darling, I'm afraid that's about all the news for today. However this may be a bit old now - but I mean more now than I ever did - I love you - and I love you more as each day goes by.

So it's goodnight for now, sweetheart, but you'll be in my heart until I write you again tomorrow.

Goodnight darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Tuesday night
February 8, 1944

Darling ~

There were two letters from you today, and they were recent letters - the ones you wrote to me and January 25 and January 23. Since you haven't been writing "Somewhere in England" on the top of your letter, I was under the impression you were in another country since you moved. Not until your letter today did I realize you were still in England. I guess that sounds funny to you, but that was just the impression I was under and I just couldn't imagine where you were…

It makes me much happier knowing you have different forms of entertainment in your leisure hours. The Officers Club must be lovely, and the show given by the GIs must have been very funny. I'm sending out the stationery tomorrow - I finally got it all packed. I think you will have enough to last a long time - in fact I hope you will need very little of it. By that time I mean - you'll be home a long time before you can use it up.

I just came home from Ronnie[385]'s mother's house. I went with Tootsie and Charles and Phyllis. We all dreaded going in knowing what a tragedy this has been. However, after a few minutes the tension let up a little and we talked about everything but really nothing in particular - just talk. I know her family well, as we were neighbors for a good many years. It's such an awful thing I can't think of it, without choking up.

Darling, you mentioned a boy you met there who you knew on Adams St. [Your] Mom told me you wrote his name to her - Ben Berman. Is his name Bennett Berman? I was just wondering whether he is the same fellow I know.

There is a girl who sits at the desk in front of me at work[386] and she certainly is a character. She's married and has a daughter who is three years old. However, she has a boyfriend, a lawyer, who is married, and they go out together. She told me he was waiting for her after work (we worked late tonight) and they were going out. I asked her how her husband doesn't find out about her affairs and if he did, what would happen. She laughed and said he doesn't know about it, and if he found out he'd kill her. I asked if he goes out with other women and she said he doesn't, because he's home every evening right after work. She feels sorry for me - I don't know why - and wants to "fix me up" some time. I think I convinced her that I happen to love my husband very much, even if she can't understand what that means.

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[385] Sylvia (Ronnie) Zimmerman (1920-43) was Sylvia's best friend. She lived nearby in the North End of Hartford, Connecticut and died after delivering her second child.

[386] Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

I didn't do a darn thing during the two hours I worked overtime tonight. I guess the Associated will never get rich by my efforts tonight. I just sat there and pretended to be busy - it was more fun!It will be very nice if you and Rock[387] go to London on your first pass. It is fortu nate he has relations in London - it will make it so nice for Rock, and of course, it will be nice for you, too.

Time passes quickly when I write to you. I just realized it is after twelve and I should be getting ready to go to bed. So, sweetheart, I'll have to say goodnight now and in closing - I send you all my love darling.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[387] Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier on Lenny's crew.

Somewhere in England[388], unstated

Wednesday
[Feb 9, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

The ice has broken - at long last,we, as a crew are *operational*; that last word means plenty of work from here on in, as if my letters do not come in regularly it is not because of lack of something to say, or laziness but simply the absolute lack of time. Monday evening we were told, by operations, that we were scheduled to fly the following morning, this meant getting up at three so we went directly to bed. After breakfast and briefing, we went out to the plane and at ~~seven~~ (the time is censored) we took off.

Due to engine trouble we were unable to continue so we turned back and landed. By the time we had cleaned our guns and the ship, we were all so tired that we went directly to sleep, awaking in time to have supper.

Walking into the club we were told that we were due to go up again this morning and that I had to attend a special meeting of Navigators. When the class was over it was time to get some sleep for we were to get up early again. That, I hope, my darling, explains fully the lack of letters.

[388] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

Yesterday, and today, were big days for me as far as mail is concerned. Yesterday was truly the jackpot - nineteen letters from you and two letters and a valentine from [my] Mom. This afternoon, there were two letters from you and valentines from Betty-May and Holly Suzanne[389]. Best of all was the receipt of your package containing the lighter and the case. Thanks a million, my darling, you'll never know [how] handy the lighter is; on opening the package I filled it with fluid and it works like a charm.

Your three large envelopes with all those letters were most welcome, for they cleared up a good many questions in my mind; mainly the one about the package sent out from Grand Island[390]. What happened to the souvenirs will, I guess, remain a mystery. Speaking of mysteries, Butch, who addressed the large envelope? Surely it wasn't you, because my name is misspelled on all three! Sweetheart, one of the letters I got from you today made me feel very good. I'm referring to the one in which you wrote that you're happy at home. You've no idea how often I wondered whether or not you regretted going home instead of to Denver[391] as originally planned. Someday my darling, we'll surely take a trek out there.

On rereading the first page I find that I didn't tell you what happened this morning. We got off the ground all right but while flying around we got word over the radio to return to the base So – *two* take offs and *no* mission. I naturally can't tell you where we were to go, so you'll just have to read the papers to find out what part of the world I'm flying over these days. Someday, when I lack something to write about, I'll tell you as much as possible about the briefings we have - they are very interesting.

Right now I want to get off a letter each to [my] Mom, Lou and Faye[392], and, if time permits, one to Ben. I say 'if time permits because once again we are scheduled to fly in the morning and it is now eight-thirty.

By the way, in your letter you say that you imagined I'm losing weight. Quite to the contrary I'm getting fat - more so than at Alex[393]. (Those were the days, my darling, without fear I can truthfully say that they were the happiest

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[389] Sylvia's six year old niece Elizabeth (Betty May) Weidman and one-year old niece Holly Suzanne Weidman,

[390] The Grand Island Army Air Field was under the command of the Second Air Force that was headquartered at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Initially the field was home to the heavy bombers such as the B-17 Flying Fortress and was the final stop for many airmen before going overseas for combat in the European Theater against the Germans. Typically crews would receive their final gear and instructions at Grand Island and many had their last memories of a night out on the town here. Lenny was still waiting for his belongings to arrive in Knettishall.

[391] Dora Kaufman invited Sylvia to her home in Denver. Aunt Dora was Adelle Stolper Geetter's oldest sister.

[392] Louis (Lou) B. Weidman is married to Sylvia's younger sister Fay Geetter Weidman and the parents of Betty-May and Holly.

days of my life.) Yeah, honestly darling I'd give most anything to relive them, and someday we will, only more fully I promise, Sweetheart.

From the above you may gather that I love you my darling. That's true. I do love you very very much and miss you.

Goodnight my darling

I love you

Lenny

[393] **Alex**andria Army Air Base in Alexandria, Louisiana

Somewhere in England[394], unstated

Thursday
[Feb 10, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Thought for a while tonight that I'd have to forgo writing this evening, or more drastic than that resort to the V-mail for lack of stationary, but after a bit of house cleaning in my foot locker I found this[395].

No mail today, and we didn't go on the raid this morning, so there is very little news to write about. Rather glad I didn't fly - it turned out to be rather a rough party.

In yesterday's letter I promised to tell what goes on at a briefing. Hoping that what I'm about to say passes the censor: we're awakened very early by the orderly, and after dressing we walk to the mess hall for a good breakfast. Trucks take us from there to the briefing room where each man is checked in. When everybody is there the door is locked and the briefing officer takes the floor. In the background is a large map covered by a screen; without a word the screen is rolled up and everybody moans and groans because on the map is the *course* for the day's mission. The officer then explains why the target is to be bombed, [and] just how much it means to the Axis[396]. When he is there, we are briefed on the weather and the fighter escort[397] we can expect. At this point the Navigator and Bombardier go to … separate briefings: I, to draw the necessary maps and also to get information pertinent only to navigation. I'm left busy

[394] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[395] The letter Is written on stationary from Alexandria Army Air Base Alexandria LA.

[396] The Axis powers, originally called the Rome–Berlin Axis and also Rome–Berlin–Tokyo Axis, was the military coalition which initiated World War II and fought against the Allies. Its principal members were Nazi Germany, the Kingdom of Italy and the Empire of Japan. The Axis were united in their far-right positions and general opposition to the Allie.

until it is almost time for takeoff, so by the time I get out to the *ship,* the crew is all ready, just waiting for me. That is just about all I can say, hope I've made it sound half as interesting as it really is.

Completely forgot in last night's letter to compliment you on the 'doodles' enclosed in one of your letters. They were really very good, my darling, and depict certain highlights in our life to 'T.' It looks like I'll never live down that now infamous remark, made in jest, of that morning. These drawings, along with other pieces… confirmed the opinion I made long ago. If you were to earnestly take up painting I really believe that you are capable of turning out something worthwhile. Why, my sweet, don't you get an oil set, you've always wanted one, and, who knows , someday one of your works will hang in a place of honor in our home - try it anyway Butch?

Looks as if your husband is not as '*smaht*' as he thought. Today he was completely fooled. Not having anything to do, I decided to go to the show - this afternoon - the picture billed was *The Girl in Overalls*. It was new to me until the first flicker, then I recognized it as one I had seen back in the States, but still the name wasn't an unfamiliar one. Halfway through the picture I remembered - I had seen it under the name *Swing Shift Maisie*!

I guess that does it for tonight my darling - I do love you , my sweet and I want you to always remember that.

Goodnight Butch -

I love you

Lenny

[397] Fighter jets were not based at Knettishall. P51s of the 354th Fighter Group, based at Boxted, England and/or P38s of the 20th Fighter Group (King's Cliff England) escorted B-17G Bombers of the 388th Bomb Group at Knettishall to provide navigational support and armed protection to the bomb group.

Thursday morning
February 10, 1944

Darling ~

I didn't write last night as I decided I'd wait until this morning. It won't matter because you will get it at the same time, so there shouldn't be a lapse between letters.

It's only 8:10 now and I feel so darn sleepy - I can just about imagine how I'll feel about 3:00 this afternoon. I didn't get to bed until after 1:00 last night. I went to Mrs. Ronner's again and Zimmy[398] didn't want us to go home. He asked us to have coffee with him, and as he hasn't been eating, we decided to stay and [thought] it might do him some good. He was in a little better spirits and I don't think he was quite as shocked about things… He's realizing just what happened. As yet, I don't know what will happen to the children - I know he doesn't want to put them in a home - he's especially attached to Elaine… the little girl who will be two years old in April. I called all the girls who used to be in the same club a few years ago and we made a collection for prayer books in her name at the Emmanuel [Synagogue] and we all are going to services Friday night.

I'm writing the rest of this after lunch. As I expected, I didn't accomplish much work this morning but surprisingly enough, I don't feel tired. You asked me for Nate's address. It's 641 Albany Ave. [Hartford, Connecticut.]

Last night your cousin Charlotte Levy Wice and her friends were all at Mrs. Ronner's house. Let's see Sid Eichelman and his wife Mitzi Cone were there, too. I haven't seen them since I was in Weaver [High School.] Telling some jokes and there was one joke I just couldn't get - and I finally got it… five minutes later. They told me I better go to England too, if it takes me so long to get… a joke.

It's beautiful outdoors today, and I believe that accounts for my not doing much work today. I keep thinking of all the things I'd rather be doing.

You still have to go to school - well I guess no matter how much you have already learned, there is plenty more yet to come.

There is a girl sitting at a desk two rows in front of me writing to her boyfriend. She has his picture on her desk and she keeps looking at it so lovingly. He's overseas, too - in fact, he's been there for quite some time now.

I expect the bell to ring soon - just like school - and so I better start ending this letter. There - it just rang… I just noticed that my boss is reading a *Sports Stories Magazine*. It reminds me that you enjoy reading those stories. Everybody is getting back to work - except

[398] Samuel (Zimmy) Zimmerman was married to Sylvia (Ronnie) Ronner Zimmerman (1920-43) who was Sylvia Geetter's best friend. She died in childbirth three days ago.

me. Sweetheart, I'll end my letter now and… remember that I love you with all my heart and I wish I could seal this with a real live kiss.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Thursday nite
February 10, 1944

Darling ~

Seeing [as] I wrote this afternoon, there isn't much more that has happened… However, this afternoon, the best in me came out. A girl in the office had some candy on her desk, and she turned around to talk to two girls sitting behind her. Nobody but these two girls sit [near] her. Well, I walked over and took the candy away. When she turned around to take a piece of the candy, she had the funniest expression on her face. She looked all over her desk… and, for about an hour, she asked everybody if they saw her candy. She turned around again, and I put it back in the same spot. She still doesn't know who did it.

I just washed my hair and it's dripping down my back - call me a *drip*. Margie[399] had a bad cold this week because she visited Frances Goralnick[400] - I mean Mosesson - this past Saturday and she washed her hair there. Larry[401] ran outside - the door leads right outdoors and because of the draft - she certainly had a cold.

I wanted to go to Mrs Ronner's house tonight but I am afraid if I did, I'd fall asleep at work tomorrow. So, I'll go to bed early tonight. I am going to Faye's house Saturday night, so that Faye and Lou[402] can visit Ethel - that's Ronnie[403]'s older sister. Rosalyn and Ida are going to keep me company. I'm going to [your] mom's Sunday afternoon. It's been a few weeks since I've been there. Income taxes have to be filed next month. I'm leaving my returns up to Sadie[404] - she figured mine out last year - so you can see that's a job well rid of - of course, paying it will be left to me.

I better set my hair now because it is beginning to dry - and the hot water in the bathtub is beginning to cool. I wonder if Lou wanted to take a bath tonight - it would be too bad if he did - I used all the water. I'll say good night now - and with all my heart ---

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

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[399] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

[400] The Goralnick family was a neighbor of Lenny's parents and also a friend of Sylvia's parents.

[401] Lawrence Mosesson was the eldest son of Frances Goralnick

[402] Sylvia's youngest sister Faye and her husband Lou Weidman

[403] Samuel (Zimmy) Zimmerman was married to Sylvia (Ronnie) Ronner Zimmerman (1920-43) who was Sylvia Geetter's best friend. She died in childbirth three days ago.

[404] Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter

Somewhere in England[405], unstated

Friday
[Feb 11, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Have you ever seen a bunch of fellows act like a flock of vultures? That was my experience today and, I hate to admit this, I took part in the scavenging. Yesterday three fellows from my barracks were lost in a raid[406] and today everybody grabbed the articles they had their eyes on. First of all Chris[407], Rock[408] and I took over the three beds, giving us an entire end of the barracks. Two of the fellows owned bicycles, so now Rock and I ride them! A shameful way to act, but that is life in the Air Corps.

Still living the good life, no combat missions but plenty of local flying. Every time there is a free *ship* they send us up for practice. The only one that really gets the practice though is Chris as we stay close to the base, and fly in formation, which gives me no chance to do any real navigating. I am, however, learning the neighboring terrain and that should help when coming back from a raid.

Felt very good to read that the family likes me and… inquire once in a while about my well-being. By now you should know that I've written to most everybody; the only ones left out are Nate[409] and Is[410]. Nate because I still don't have his new address, and Is

[405] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[406] This was during yesterday's mission, which Lenny's crew failed to take part in and he said turned out to be rather a rough party

[407] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[408] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[409] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan (Nate) Geetter.

[410] Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter.

because you once mentioned that he would write to me from his new station. I suppose, however, that I should write to Babe[411] Esther and the kids - if time permits tonight, I'll do so.

Butch, it looks like I'll have to ask you to get me a new toilet kit. It doesn't look as if I'll get to London soon, and besides I doubt if I'll be able to get anything worthwhile here. So, if you will send me something similar to the one I have - nothing expensive please darling. I've been asking for quite a few things lately and I know that you don't have the money so I'll make a deal with you. This month I expect to [receive] three months back pay for flying, and… as I have no use for it here, I'll send it home to you. It should amount to well over two hundred dollars - spend as much as you want on yourself for anything that catches your eye - the remainder you can put away for that time when I come home - okay sweet?

Received a nice letter from Norm[412] today that cleared up a couple of questions, namely what was wrong with him and where he is going. Mom, no doubt, is happy over the fact that he has been declared unfit for overseas duty, it's a good break for him especially in view of his present predicament[413] and that is what it is.

Neither he nor [my] Mom mentioned the fact that Margie is living with Mom and Pop, but I'm afraid that I committed a *faux-pas* when I wrote to Margie in care of the folks. If the matter is not cleared up by now you'll do both of us a favor if you would casually mention that the reason I did so was because I had forgotten her home address. Please?

I'd better get some sleep if I'm to be in any shape to fly tomorrow, so with all my love I'll say good night my darling.

I love you

Lenny

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[411] Rebekah (Babe) M. Geetter is married to Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Is) S. Geetter.

[412] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

[413] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy was Norman's wife and pregnant for the first time.

Pvt. N. Norman Levy – 1944

Lenny's brother

Friday night
February 11, 1944

Darling ~

It has been snowing all day - the first real snowfall I have seen this winter… which has been very mild in comparison to last year. But, it being the month of February… it might be just as bad as… last year.

We aren't going to the Emmanuel [Synagogue] tonight as I told you we intended to do. Mrs Ronner wanted to go tonight but it is snowing so hard it would be very hard for her to walk from Green St. She doesn't ride on Friday[414]. So one of the girls called the rabbi and explained everything, so he will read her name before Kadish next week.

Right now we are waiting for Dr Kaschmann. My mother isn't feeling too well again. It's the first time she is having him because her doctor, Dr. Rosenbaum, is in the Navy. You know Dr Rosenbaum don't you?

I hope the weather will be nicer tomorrow as we intend to go to the Bushnell[415] in the afternoon. We are going to see *Doughgirls*. From what I have heard it is very good, so I am looking forward to it. Your mail must be held up somewhere, as we haven't heard from you since Monday. I know you are writing regularly as you said you would, but I wonder what is causing the delay in the letters coming here.

I have to address my valentines to the nieces and nephews today. Sadie[416] bought some for me, and hon, I don't know where she got them. They are cute in an odd sort of a way, if you know what I mean.

I keep teasing her about what she's planned all week to have me do this Sunday morning. Sadie just told me now that I better make out my income tax, but I'm trying to convince her that she's had more experience at bookkeeping than I, and she'd better do it - I don't know who will win yet.

[Your] Mom told me that it has been taking time for Norm[417]'s letter to arrive - so they haven't been getting any mail either. Margie[418]'s cold is better now. I hope I don't get any more colds this winter - I've had two and that's record breaking for me.

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[414] Honoring the Jewish Sabbath, which begins on Friday evening and concludes on Saturday evenings

[415] Bushnell Memorial Hall in downtown Hartford, Connecticut is a live music and theatre venue as well as a movie theatre.

[416] Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter

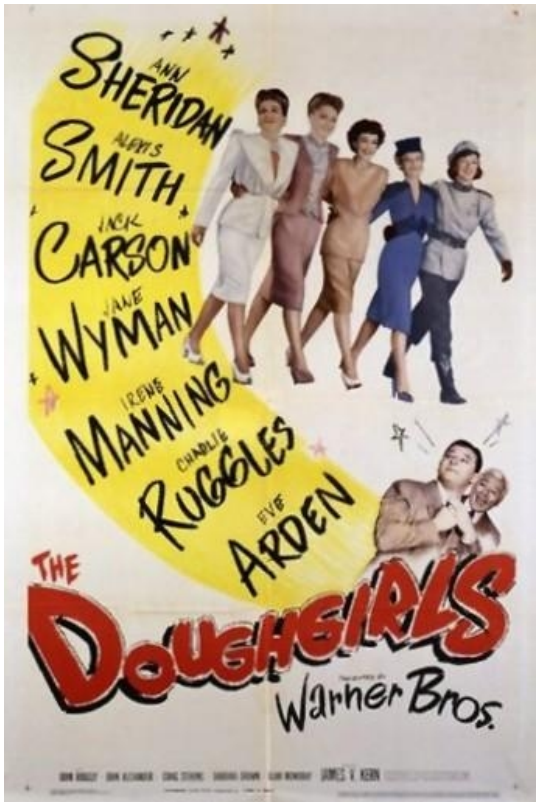
[417] Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy has recently been posted to an Army base in the US after being classified unfit for overseas duty. This classification also precludes him from joining his older brother in the Air Corps.

[418] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

How have you been darling? You haven't caught any colds lately have you? Are you having trouble with your stomach? I hope not.

Sweetheart, tomorrow when I write again, I'll tell you how I enjoyed the show. There is no more to write tonight. I do miss you darling more than I can ever say and I love you more than words can express. Take good care of yourself darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Somewhere in England[419], unstated

Saturday
[Feb 12, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Today has more than made up for all the time we've spent hanging around doing nothing. First thing this morning we were awakened and told there was but ten minutes before we were due for a briefing. We jumped out of bed, rushed to the Mess Hall and then to the briefing. When we got there we found out that it was to be only a practice flight. Some Inspector General was to give us the once over, After a slight delay we got off the ground, pulled into the formation and then flew all over England.

We landed around three, and then we got the jolt of the day: our squadron CO got a brainstorm - he devised a new type of formation and wanted twelve crews to go up and try it out. Needless to say, we were one of the crews - we were all very hungry and tired and became angry. After an hour of talking I finally convinced Chris[420] that it was foolish for us to fly, and besides, the fellow that was to be our co-pilot[421] never did show up. Off we went to the mess hall

[419] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[420] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[421] Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington is the Co-Pilot of Lenny's crew

where we convinced them that we were hungry and finally got something to eat. Back to the barracks we went where I got about two hours of sack time.

Now, after having washed, I'm writing to you before going to the club. Chris and I have promised each other that we would get drunk, we were both so angry this afternoon.

This is not only Saturday, but it is also the 12th my darling. It is exactly eight months since the memorable event took place Butch - an event that, had it not happened, I would have regretted it for the remainder of my life. As you have so often said, and written, it is both good and bad, that this is not our 18th month anniversary. Good because it gave you time to realize something… and bad because we could have had so much more time to ourselves had we taken the step when we first contemplated it.

The little time that we did spend together, my darling was the happiest part of my life. I'll never forget you as a blushing (?) bride - nor your meals, cooked under protest that you did not know how. There was our first home[422] and then Alex where you bought your first cooking utensils! Golly darling - there are so many pleasant memories connected with our lives that it should be impossible for me to ever get really blue. Some day soon, we'll be able to sit by the fire and talk, and laugh, about all that happened. Of course we'll be busy with our new life, but there'll always be time for a pleasant memory.

It's pouring out now, so instead of leaving for the club right now, I'll do a bit of fixing up first and try to make my corner more livable.

Last sheet of paper, so whether I want to or not it's time to end. Goodnight my darling, and on this special night more love than usual (if that's possible.)

Goodnight Butch –
I love you

Lenny

[422] In Monroe, Louisiana, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Levy lived in their first home, a rented room in a private house.

Somewhere in England[423], unstated

Monday
[Feb 14, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Today is Valentine's Day, so to the sweetest, and best, Valentine a fellow ever had, all the love in my heart. I do love you so very much my darling.

Sunday, yesterday, was the most mixed up day I've ever had. To begin, I must go back to Saturday night. When Chris[424] and I finally got to the club, the sign was *green* meaning that there was no flight scheduled for the following morning. On seeing this we started to have a good time. First we played the roulette wheel until we had each made four pounds; then we started to drink, and kept it up until almost 12:00 when Rock[425] convinced us that we should go to bed. We did so and it seemed that no sooner had I closed my eyes than Chris was waking me, saying we had just five minutes to get to the briefing room, there was a mission.

I was too busy rushing to become excited over the fact that this was to be my first Combat Mission. After much delay, we got out to our plane, took off and, for a while, everything went off fine. We got into formation all right and

[423] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[424] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the pilot of Lenny's crew.

[425] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

Chris was doing a good job. Just as we got to the English coast, and on our way, one of our engines went bad and we had to turn back! Three attempts and no missions. For one long second during our flight back I thought I had given Chris the wrong heading, and that we were over enemy territories, and then, lo and behold, a familiar landmark and we split the field.

After landing we had something to eat and then went to the club; when we looked in at the bar, the sign was red. Being late we went to the barracks to sleep, for red means a mission in the morning. Sometime during the night, it was canceled and they never did wake us. So instead of flying and giving Hitler hell, I went to school and got a little more learning.

This evening, after a delicious steak dinner, with real ketchup and plenty of raw onion, it's calmer. We went to the show and saw *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*. It's been so long since I saw that, [and] having forgotten some parts, I enjoyed it. From there we went to the club where I lost 10 shillings (about two dollars) playing FanTan[426], and decided that was enough. That takes care of the past forty-eight hours and explains, I hope, why there was no letter yesterday.

Butch sweet, now that we are *operational* there will be many a day, sometimes two and three in a row, when it will be physically impossible for me to write. You do understand, don't you my darling, about me telling you this, so that you won't worry. No mail from you in three days. I hope tomorrow brings me a goodly number. By the way my darling in your last letter you mentioned a cold coming on. Hope by now it is gone and that you are feeling well. As for myself, I'm feeling great and really putting on the weight.

Time to get to bed - so to the sweetest girl and best wife a fellow ever had - I love you, I do so very much my darling and miss you and like you.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

[426] Fan-Tan, or fantan, is a gambling game long played in China. It is a game of pure chance. The game is played by placing two handfuls of small objects on a board and guessing the remaining count when divided by four. After players have cast bets on values of 1 through 4, the dealer or croupier repeatedly removes four objects from the board until only one, two, three or four beans remain, determining the winner

Monday night
February 14, 1944

Darling ~

You will have to forgive me for not writing last night. My Mom hasn't been well, and I just couldn't write… I know you will understand. I didn't go to work today so that I could take care of her. It's easier for me to stay out of work than it is for Sadie[427]. Well, we had Dr. Kaschmann again this morning. He wants to take X-rays of her stomach. She has been losing… a good deal of weight and I think he suspects she has the same thing my dad died from[428]. I'm afraid my Mom suspects [this as well] - and she's afraid to take the X-rays. Truthfully - I don't blame her - oh God - I just hope it's *not* so.

In your letter today you were... wondering whether we received your package from Grand Island[429] which you stated contained valuable equipment and a box of gum. most likely you never received my letter in which I told you that we received it - so darling don't worry about it. I am wondering whether you ever received three letters from me which contain six letters each. These letters were the ones I had saved, when you first left, waiting for your address. Did you get them, dear?

About that practice mission - don't feel bad about that woozy feeling you got - you haven't been flying in quite some time and having your stomach upset… well you don't need to fly to feel woozy, anything could make you feel like that. I hope your stomach settled and you are back to normal again. I am sure you must have done well on that mission because if you didn't - you know you would have been told about it. And, darling, if you did everything you were taught and didn't get lost… I'm sure that's good.

I visited [your] folks yesterday afternoon. Margie[430] was in bed, as she let something bother her last week, which in her condition made her nervous. I guess you want to know what it is, and I hope I can tell it correctly. It seems that Norm[431] met Lou Fierberg in a town near his camp one weekend and they went out for a steak dinner and had a good time. Well, [Norm] wrote to Margie and told her he had a steak dinner with Lou and they sat around 'chewing the fat' *all evening* before he went back to camp. Well, Helen called Margie last week, as she had just received a letter from Lou in which he told her about seeing Norm, and he

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[427] Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter

[428] Hayman Geetter died of cancer in 1940

[429] The Grand Island Army Air Field was located in Grand Island, Nebraska. Initially the field was home to the heavy bombers such as the B-17 Flying Fortress and was the final stop for many airmen before going overseas for combat in the European Theater against the Germans.

[430] Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

[431] Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

told her they went to a *dance* and had a heck of a good time. Well being such a true friend, she had to tell this to Margie, which made Margie very unhappy to think Norman lied to her. A few days later Helen called again about another letter she received from Lou and although what he said wasn't incriminating… it could imply a good deal if read a certain way - it was one of those double meaning statements. Well Margie got mad and wrote a letter to Norm - telling him… she wasn't the least bit pleased about his not telling her the truth. This letter was written five days ago and she hasn't written to him since. Of course this is a personal matter… but it doesn't do her any good in her present condition. She feels better today - in fact she was very happy tonight as she received a Valentine from Norm and it had a lovely handkerchief in it.

Again I have to ask you to keep secrets - the ones I refer to now pertain to my Mom and the episode of Margie's. I know you will do this for me. Darling, Claire (your sister in law) is making up a package to send to you. I don't know just what it will be composed of, but I know it will be a delicious package and you will enjoy it.

Today when Dr Kaschmann was here I told him I wanted to gain weight and I was so surprised when he told me I shouldn't because he said my body will always be young looking which will be a true compliment to me when I get older and all of my friends will be trying all sorts of diets to reduce. Now do you wonder why I like him?

Darling - do you know that I don't know the Rock's[432] name - I mean his full name. Is he the one who wrote "Hya Toots" and signed SE[433] on the back of one of your letters? I got a kick out of it…

Boomey[434] is home now I hear. From what I can gather, he's home on his last leave as he expects to go overseas soon. I hope it's not true but if it is, I hope that it will be possible for you to perhaps get to see each other. That would be nice wouldn't it hon?

Darling, like you, I like to wait until the end of my letter to tell you how much I love you. I do love you so much sweetheart - and I know it won't be long until we will be together again and go on being happy together.

Take good care of yourself for me darling because

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[432] Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[433] The note was from fellow Hartford native and Weaver graduate Sam Ellison.

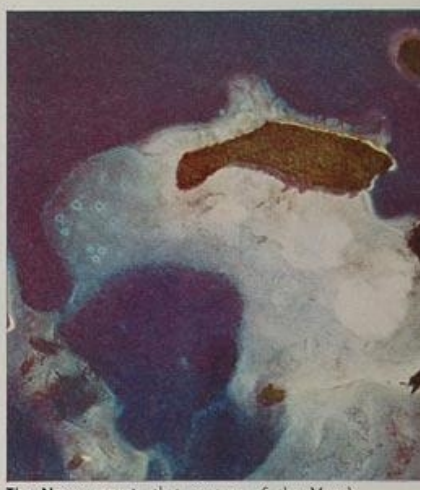
[434] Boomey Siegel is a friend of Sylvia's who is also training in the Air Corps.

"Goodbye Guesswork"

Before our fighting men close with the enemy, aerial photographs help point the way—where to shell . . . to bomb . . . to land . . . and advance. This picture is from a series made while bombing the Japs on Wake Island.

As shown in the more detailed illustrations below, made near Buka and Munda Airfields, colors themselves are so important that much photographic reconnaissance is in full color—using Kodacolor Aero Reversal Film, with which these pictures were made.

You're 4 miles up in a Navy plane, shooting straight down through a telephoto lens at an Army bomber as it lays its eggs near Jap-held Buka Airfield, north of Bougainville. Notice the details—even the bombs in the air below the plane's left wing—in this Kodacolor Aero vertical. Official U. S. Navy Photographs



The Navy reports that capture of the Munda Airfield was facilitated by information gained from photographs filmed on Kodacolor Aero; and that increasing quantities will be needed as our amphibious operations expand toward Japan. This vertical of white shoals and green islands near Munda Airfield shows how Kodacolor Aero Film penetrates below the surface, "charting" unknown waters preliminary to landing operations.

Kodak's new color aerial film answers a lot of military questions

Because of its pioneer research in color photography—research that had produced Kodachrome Film, and had Kodacolor Roll Film well under way—Kodak was "ready to go" when asked by the armed forces, before the war, for a new aerial film

. . . a *full-color* aerial film which could be processed in the field

. . . would have haze-penetrating contrast

. . . and with speed and sensitivity enough for use in modern military airplanes.

Kodak met these specifications—and more—with Kodacolor Aero Reversal Film. It is entirely new; the fastest color film by far; rapidly processed in the field.

The Kodacolor Aero shots shown here only suggest its military importance . . .

Just as earlier research contributed to Kodacolor Aero Reversal, the additional knowledge gained, in turn, helped to perfect Kodacolor Roll Film—for full-color snapshots with ordinary cameras. You may occasionally get a roll—though it's still scarce—and see what these color accomplishments mean to you.

EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

REMEMBER THE U. S. S. NEW ORLEANS?—how, in action off Guadalcanal, the explosion from a Jap torpedo sheared off her whole bow—and with 178 men dead or dying, flames shooting above her foremast, and water 4½ feet over her main deck, she was yet kept afloat by the almost superhuman efforts of her officers and crew . . . saved to fight another day?—A stern example for us at home. BUY MORE WAR BONDS.

Officers checking "The Lay of the Land," as shown on Kodacolor Aero Reversal Film. More detailed examination is made over the ground glass of a "light box."

Serving human progress through Photography

Somewhere in England[435], unstated

Tuesday
[Feb 15, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

This was another red letter day; first, and most important, there were four letters from you and then this afternoon just as I was complaining about not having any clean clothes, my laundry came from the last base I was at. Once again I am well stocked with clean clothing. You don't know what a good feeling that is.

They woke us up and gave us five minutes to get to briefing this morning and when we got there found it was just a practice flight, so up we went and flew over England for the remainder of the morning. I took it fairly easy, relying mostly on the radio, glancing out once in a while to see where we actually were. On our way to dinner, after landing, we stopped for our rations and besides the usual candy and stuff we were each allowed a can of grapefruit juice. One of these nights we'll be able to hold a real party!

Butch darling, the idea of an insurance policy is a very good one. In fact, if it is at all possible, try to make it for more than one thousand [dollars]. That may sound like a lot but think of what it will mean when it is all paid up. Your new friend Ray sounds like a nice person… I'm really glad you found somebody like that at your office, for, as you say, it makes things all the more pleasant. As yet the only package I've received is the one containing the lighter, so I'm eagerly awaiting all the others. I told Rock[436] about the salami and you should have seen his face and eyes light up. You mentioned the letter from Is[437] as yet I've failed to receive it…

The Red Sign has just gone up, so it looks like I'm going to be in bed early again. In fact, my darling , I'm going to have to close now in order to make the necessary preparations. Goodnight my darling and to quote you "wherever I go," I think of you and love you very much.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

[435] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[436] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[437] Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore S. Geetter.

Tuesday night
February 15, 1944

Darling ~

Today was really the jackpot day - I received five letters from you. Really made me so happy darling. However, I do feel bad because you aren't getting my mail. I don't know just why you are having such trouble in receiving your mail but whatever is causing it I hope has cleared up by now.

It is quite a coincidence that you should mention in one of your letters that you received the clipping in regards to your promotion from Flight Officer to Second Lieutenant. Well if … you haven't already received your orders that you are now 2nd Lieutenant - let me assure you that you are – and [accept] my most sincere congratulations. If you were home I'd give you the biggest hug and squeeze ever - but darling seeing I can't - at least you know it is what I would like to do. You deserved it a long time ago, but nevertheless you got your gold bars - even if it did take a little longer.

Now I bet you wonder how I know all this and am so certain about it. Last night at about 12:00, the telephone rang - and we were all asleep. I didn't hear the phone ring, but when I heard Sadie say "Mrs Levy is my sister" I woke up. I answered the phone, and it was a telegram from the Adjutant General of Washington DC requesting your address, so they could send your orders of promotion… to you. How do you like that? - Your wife knows more than Washington! No doubt you can understand that such a telegram at that hour of night was quite a shock and I must admit I was in a cold sweat. So hon, that's how I know about it. When they mail me a copy of the telegram I'll send a copy of it to you.

You asked me to send you Lenny Karathan's address. I called Helen tonight and she and I had quite a long conversation. By the way, Lenny's son is a year old today. It seems like he was just born. Time does pass rather quickly doesn't it?

Well here's Lenny's address.

Staff Sergeant Leonard Karathan 31326714
Co: B. 296th Eng. Bn. C
APO 230 c/o P.M.
New York City, NY

Sadie[438] just called Dr Kaschmann and my Mom is going to the hospital tomorrow – Mt Sinai for X-rays. Hon, If you can, it would be nice if you just wrote her a short letter and as to what you should say - well - just generalize - and just say you hope she is feeling better -

[438] Sylvia's and her oldest sister Sadie Geetter lived with their mother at 148 Magnolia St. in Hartford, Connecticut.

I'll leave it to your discretion - it will make her feel happier… and she will think it very nice of you. So please write her a letter.

Darling, please don't worry about my job. it's not as bad as you think it is. If I think it is making me ill, I'll quit. In regards to sending me more money - Well as I said before if you feel that you have extra money - well send it home. There are so many things we are going to need when this is over and hon, if I have a baby, as I want to so badly, when this is over - we'll need the money. Mind now - I mean extra money - I don't want you to deprive yourself of a thing. If you feel that you have money you don't need… then, … send it home.

I hope that something has been done about your Co-pilot[439]. I can't understand just what is wrong with him. I can't help but feel sorry for him - he must be unhappy deep down inside and there must be something wrong with him… I honestly think he just can't help being the way he is. Of course - it does make it very unpleasant for those who have to associate with him so I do hope you get a new co-pilot who can be like "Red."

I'm going to try to find a Monopoly set that will meet shipping requirements for size and send it to you. I'll also get the handkerchieves and underwear. I hope I get what you want - oh the trials and tribulations of a wife!

The party that was held to celebrate the first anniversary of the 388th Bomb Group sounded like a real good time. I'm so happy that you do have some entertainment where you are.

I'll have to ask Ben[440] if he knows Ivan Finkle[441]. If he's a fraternity brother of yours he would know him.

I'm sorry to hear that Chris[442] is being troubled with His ear again. you can trust me to say nothing about it to Franny. I do hope he is better and he won't be troubled with it anymore.

I'm getting to be a real good girl honey - I very rarely use slang. Of course I still say bull shit when I lose my temper at work. The kids laugh so hard when they hear me come out with it suddenly after I can't get a column of figures six feet long to balance. Hon, it can make anybody mad. Truthfully, I expect all the girls in my section to get fired someday. That married girl I told you about who has boyfriends has so many stories to tell us during work and they are so funny - well we don't always keep our minds on our work.

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[439] Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington was the Co-Pilot in Lenny's crew.

[440] Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter

[441] Tech.-Sgt. Ivan N. Finkle is a Hartford airman also stationed at Knettishall.

[442] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

You asked me what I meant by saying "We Geetters have our reasons for being sentimental." Of course, I'm a Levy now but you know what I meant by that statement. It's just that we didn't have much affection while we were children. So it means a great deal to us when there is a little sentiment attached to things, than it might to those who have been used to it all of their lives. Have I explained it darling?

So, you have taken to writing to me in Latin now! Well I have a Latin book here, and I'm going to look it up tonight. you're so *Smaht* hon! - And I love you so much.

I have to do something that's going to make Lou Weidman[443] mad - I'm going to fill up the tub and there won't be anymore hot water. I think I enjoy my bath twice as much for that reason – oh, I'm a mean one!

Sweetheart, I'll say goodnight to you now with a million "I love you's" in my heart. Oh yes, I forgot to tell you that Sadie[444] was very provoked at me the other night because in my sleep I got close to her. so sweetheart if some morning I wake up to find myself on the floor - you'll know why.

Well sweetheart it's good night for now - and with all my heart -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Fitchburg Sentinel

U. S. PLANES BOMB CASSINO ABBEY

Finn, Red Envoys Meet

High Winds Buffet Power Lines

Rumor Implies Armistice Terms Sent To Helsinki

CB Co. Foreman Killed By Train At Mill Station

Electric Service Interruptions Are Increasing

Marine Corps Correspondent Here Thursday

Historic Monastery Is Heavily Blasted Following Warning

100 Flying Forts Used In Attack; Gunfire Catches Fleeing Nazis; Allies Gaining On Beachhead

Red Army Halts German Tanks In Rescue Try

Yanks Take Isle In Vitiaz Strait Without Battle

[443] Lou Weidman is married to Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman. They are living at 148 Magnolia St. in Hartford, Connecticut with their two young daughters, but trying to find their own rental.

[444] Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter

Somewhere in England[445], unstated

Wednesday
Feb 16, [1944]

Dearest Wife,

You've certainly made me the envy of the barracks today - seven letters and all from you. You can't imagine the enjoyment I get out of opening them one by one and imagining that, instead of just reading letters, I'm actually sitting, holding your hand, with one arm around you, and talking with you. Judging from the contents, you are not getting my mail as quickly as I get yours; there can only be one cause for the delay and that is that they have to pass through the censor's office. Speaking of censors, I can't tell you in what part of England I'm in - about all you are allowed to know is what squadron and group I'm in and that you know from my address.

Your letters contained news both good and bad, about babies. I was indeed glad to hear that the Pratts are proud parents - convey my best wishes if you haven't already done so. Your news of Zimmy's wife was truly a shock - I know him very well, in fact I grew up with him. As for Florence Greenberg - well I don't know just what to say - I remember you telling me , more than once, how she would love a child of her own and that it was a shame that she wasn't physically able to have one. The biggest surprise was your saying that your maternal instinct was awakened the time you fed Robbie. I clearly recollect your firm statement that you could never stand the thought of bearing a child - how time changes a season's viewpoint. Don't worry Butch - when I get home you'll do your share.

This was another hard day for me - it rained all day so flying was called off, then the ground school schedule was canceled, so all I did was eat, play cards and go to the show. What a life, eh? That last remark reminds me. Rock[446] got a letter from the 'Knob'- he is in Italy.

Your story about Margie and her troubles and the home front sound just like Margie. I'm sure, just as you are, that there is a great deal more to the story than what she told, but I guess it's none of our business. When I hear things like that it makes me almost happy that I'm not there, because I'd be sure to say something that I'd probably be sorry for later. Keep me posted on the latest happenings.

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[445] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

[446] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

If all goes well, I expect to be in London at the end of this week. We are next on the list to get a three day pass, and that should be a Saturday. If I do get there, you can be sure, Butch, that I'll get some kind of souvenir for our 'crap book' and also to try to have my picture taken. The letter may be impossible as the materials for it are rather scarce over here.

Among the items that are rationed, is this stationery, so if my letter seemed short that is the only reason. This is the last sheet, save one which I am going to write... a note to Mom, so I'll say good night my sweet and remind you again that I do love you very much.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

Wednesday night
February 16, 1944

Darling ~

This has been a very busy day for me at work. Truthfully, I am glad it was because the day just flew by.

I went to the hospital to see my Mom. She went this afternoon to have X-rays taken… She is so frightened, it's pathetic. The doctor said she'd be there about a week until all X-rays could be taken. She's in the Mount Sinai Hospital and there are two others in the room with her. It makes it a little more pleasant for her because she doesn't have to be alone - she didn't want a private room. Dr. Kaschmann was there and he took me home.

I received the telegram today which I spoke to you about. This is what it says, "Present Address [Of] Your Husband Flight Officer Leonard Levy T-61298 for Notification of Promotion." Adjutant General, Room 436 Munitions Building, Washington DC. If I never received such a telegram I'd never believe it. I can't understand why they don't have your present address.

Tomorrow night Sadie[447] and I are going to the Bushnell[448] after we visit Mom. There is going to be a big band show - featuring Captain Glenn Miller[449]. We have good seats as Sadie bought two $500 bonds for her boss and the seating arrangement is according to the valuation of the bonds purchased.

We have had several invitations for supper tomorrow night. Faye[450], Claire[451] and Gladys[452] asked us to have supper at each one's house tomorrow.

Something very funny happened at work this afternoon right after lunch. A girl who sits near me made a sudden dash for the ladies room – holding her mouth. When she finally came back I asked her what was wrong and she said she had eaten pickles and milk for lunch. She said that she didn't believe it was a bad combination but I guess she's convinced now. She does the dumbest thing - She has us laughing all day.

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[447] Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter.

[448] Bushnell Memorial Hall in Hartford.

[449] For a brief time during World War II, big-band leader Glenn Miller was stationed at the Army Air Force Technical Training Command at Yale University in New Haven. The show at the Bushnell, featured the same musicians that performed with Capt. Miller at Woolsey Hall in New Haven.

[450] Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman

[451] Claire K. Geetter is the wife Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice (Moe) S. Geetter

[452] Gladys M. Geetter is the wife Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter

Claire called tonight to tell me she received your letter and she thought it was a very nice one. She says she'll answer it as soon as she can. Her dog, Spunky, was sick this week and she had the doctor this evening. I asked her if I could send some flowers or a box of candy to her. I'm going to buy a get-well card tomorrow and send it. If she gets Valentines - she ought to receive a get well card.

Well, darling, I guess I'll go to bed now. It's late now and I should get my sleep. So darling - remember that I love you with all my heart - and miss you more than I could ever tell.

Goodnight darling -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Capt. Glenn Miller at Woolsey Hall, New Haven, Connecticut in 1944

Saturday Morning
[February 19, 1944] undated

Darling ~

I felt just like a wife this afternoon. I bought you some shorts and jerseys and I guess it may sound silly to you, but it did give me a proud feeling.

Margie's[453] birthday is this coming Friday but I was a bit ahead of time and I bought her gift today. She's been talking about wanting to take care of her nails so I got her a manicuring set. When I gave it to her tonight she seemed very pleased, so I guess I hit on the right thing.

My mom came home from the hospital today as all X-rays have been taken. From the results… they found out she has an enlarged liver - but thank God - no cancer. As you know, that's what we were all afraid of - and although having an enlarged liver is serious, we are thankful it wasn't a cancer diagnosis - nothing could be worse.

My cousins were here from Newark. Melvin, He's the oldest boy, 18, is in the army and he was home on furlough. He also has a brother 16, and darling, what good looking cousins they are. Both of them are 6' 2" and one's dark and the other a sandy colored redhead. I guess for the first time I didn't mind kissing them! Evelyn was here also and she and I had a nice talk - it's been quite some time since we have seen each other.

I received a postcard from Eleanor yesterday. It was from Miami Beach - if you recall I told you that she and Sam are living in Tampa. Well the message was typical Eleanor - It said, "Hi, Syl" - Flew down - It's hot – Elly."

I also received a letter from you today - and it was so good to get it. The way you got your new beds and the bicycle I guess is an example of the world today. Darling about that money you are sending home - it is very sweet of you and as long as you won't need it, I'm glad you are sending it home. There are some things I want - a new gold bracelet for my watch is one of them. And, of course, whatever I don't need - I'll put into bonds. You see hon, I promised myself that as much as possible I'll buy bonds with my allotment… The bonds I have been buying are going toward that wonderful future we are going to have together.

As you know, I visited the folks tonight. Claire[454], Ben[455], Mr. and Mrs. Goralnick and Mom were having a poker game - Margie and I talked in the living room. [My] Mom gave

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[453]Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy was Norman's wife and pregnant for the first time.

[454] Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

[455] Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter

me six very pretty dish towels - Baskets of strawberries on them. She told me to make sure you break them in!

Faye[456], Lou[457], Betty Mae[458], and Holly[459] were here this afternoon. They broght the letter which you wrote to them. Betty was so thrilled about you mentioning her letters she asked me to read it to her again.

Well, sweetheart, it's late now and it's time to say goodnight once again. Oh yes, I tried to get a Monopoly set small enough to send overseas - but they don't make the boards small enough. Is there any game you would like - say a new kind of card game?

Darling - I miss you so much and I can't tell you how much I think of you. Sweetheart, I love you so much, I just wish you were here so that I could tell you so. Well, it won't be too long will it hon, when we are together again.

So my darling, Goodnight -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[456] Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman

[457] Louis B. Weidman is Faye's husband.

[458] Elizabeth (Betty) Weidman was the oldest daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman and her husband Louis B. Weidman. Betty was six at the time of writing and one-year old Holly Weidman was at home.

[459] Holly Weidman was the one year-old daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

The Ground Crew takes a breather at Cochran Field, Ga.

When you think of the job they're doing—and all it means to us—anything we can do seems so little . . .

But if you could watch their faces when they get "snapshots from home"—if you could see how they carry those prints with them through thick and thin, and look at them over and over again, long after they're battered and worn—you'd realize that sending snapshots is very important.

Film is hard to get now, the Army and Navy need so much. Dealers are rationed. So make the most of every roll you can get. Snap the faces and scenes he longs to see. Make your letter "a snapshot visit from home" . . . Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y.

REMEMBER TORPEDO SQUADRON 8? . . . how, knowing exactly what the odds against them were, this heroic band of 30 Navy fliers drove unswervingly into the massed fire of the Japanese fleet off Midway? And only one man survived? A stern example to us at home.

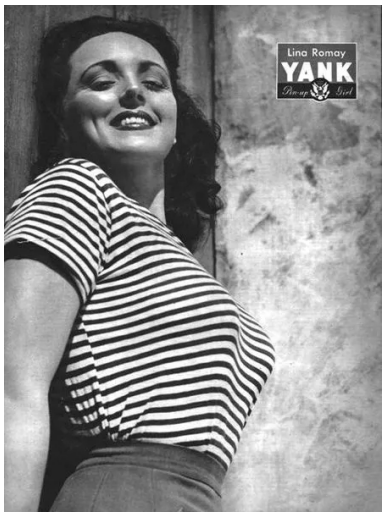
BUY MORE WAR BONDS

Visit him in SNAPSHOTS

Kodak

Sunday night
Feb. 20, 1944

Darling ~



Today has been a funny day - I didn't do much yet, before I knew it, it was time for supper. I had all intentions of staying home all day but about six-thirty, I got restless and called Rosalind. She and Ida were going to the *Far East* for supper and then to the *State*[460] to see Xavier Cugat. I had already eaten my supper so I met them at the *Far East Garden.*

There were a few girls sitting at the next table and I recognized one of them as Lina Romay, Xavier Cugat's singer .She is a very beautiful person. When we did get inside the *State* I sat behind a woman whose hat must have been a mile high and a mile wide. So you can understand when I say that Xavier Cugat sounded good because I couldn't see him. The lady left when the picture came on. I wished she had stayed because I wouldn't have missed a thing - you know the kind of picture they show at the State - all Academy Award winners. Jane Withers was in this picture and there were a group of teenage boys sitting in back of us and they couldn't stand it so they just made all the noise they could.

I sent the get well card to Spunky and signed it "Mrs. "Ziff. In case that means nothing to you - well Mrs. Ziff lives next to Claire[461] and Mo and she's threatened time and time again to have the dog pound take Spunky away. Spunky senses she hates him so whenever she sees this as if they have all they can do to keep her from jumping on her.

Gladys was here this afternoon and she was so pleased with your letter. It is nice of you … to write the letters you have written to my family and it does please me so much, not saying how much the family appreciates it.

I'll end my letter now darling, as there's not much more I can say tonight. So goodnight my darling and with all my heart I love you.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[460] The *State Theatre* was the largest performing arts venue in Hartford at the time. It seated 3880 people, had a Geneva Organ, was located at 70 Village St. and torn down in 1960.

[461] Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

State Theatre - 3880 seats

70 Village St., Hartford, Conn.

Monday night
undated February 21, 1944

Darling ~

There was so much excitement in the office today[462]. All the girls in my department and the girls in several other departments are going to be out of work about April 1. They are transferring all the work… to the office in New York. It has been rumored for quite a while but nobody was sure of just what it was all about. This morning I asked Bernie, he's my supervisor, if he knew what the story was all about and he went up to see Don Whalley - he's the personnel director and office head - and he was told that it was time that all the work was going to be sent to New York and by April 1, about 100 girls will be dismissed and the newer ones will leave before the old, but in due time all of the girls will be let go. Well when he came back with the news you can imagine the commotion that it caused. Everybody was mad because no notice had been given. The assistant in my office who has been with the company for nine years has been told to look for another job. At lunch today I thought some girls were going to talk themselves horse. Oh yes, we also got a notice thanking us for our cooperation in the past but from now on there will be no more overtime work. So we all went home at five tonight instead of seven.

As far as I'm concerned, it is good news as I wasn't too keen about my job but I couldn't get a release as I was frozen to it and if I quit it meant two months of staying idle which I didn't want. However I wish it happened a little closer to summer because if it did I wanted to go to the beach with Faye for a while before starting a new job. Well what I have decided to do is to stick to my present job and wait until I get my notice. My department may be kept on a little longer as there is so much work yet to be done. Well, what will be will be-and I'm not worried about it in the least. I just hope it will hold out for a few more months.

Issie[463] was in New Britain tonight for a few hours. He called and he wanted your new address. Did you get the letter he wrote to you about a month ago? There's a great tragedy that happened in his home. Issie told me *Silvio the Snail* died. They named the snail in the fishbowl after me.

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[462] Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

[463] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written. Issie left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the Navy, and has just learned he will be commissioned a Commander.

Moe[464] called tonight - he knew it was me who sent the card to Spunky. Your letter was very interesting today. Although you couldn't tell me everything you do at [a] briefing, I have a good idea about it. You see, I have a copy of *Pix Magazine* which really tells quite a bit about it and there are pictures of what is done, too. These pictures were taken in England.[465]

Darling, I know you must be really busy flying these days. You will have so much to tell me when this is all over - won't you? Meanwhile, darling, do your best and keep your mind on your work - it means so much.

I made up your package of underwear tonight. I won't be able to mail it until Wednesday as the Post Office won't be open tomorrow. Seeing you are gaining weight - I got four pairs of shorts in size 34 and one is a 32.

Sweetheart, it's almost three months since we have seen each other. I have missed you so much in these three months. I love you so much darling that, until you are home again, I'll miss you more everyday.

Goodnight darling
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Inserted: letter from Issie in a separate envelope.

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 19 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and a second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 20 1944 by the Control Section.

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[464] Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

[465] Sylvia and Lenny had discussed the possibility of being deployed to England.

Somewhere in England[466]
Feb 22, 1944

Dearest Wife,

It's been quite a while since my last letter and I really am ashamed of myself, but I'm hoping that by the end of this letter you will understand why it's been so long.

In one of my recent letters, if you will recall, I told you that we had a three day pass coming to us. Well, we got it but instead of three days it turned out to be almost four! Naturally we went to London and that is where my story, and excuse, starts.

We left here Friday afternoon and got into London quite late, so we went directly to the Officer's Club in town[467] and got a bed for the night. Saturday we were up early - 10:00 - and after breakfast we got into a cab and started to look for a hotel room. The cabs are of the 1920 vintage - not a modern one in the city.

The driver took us to almost every hotel in the city from the Savoy, comparable to the Waldorf in New York, down to the cheesiest one he knew of, but all to no avail; there just wasn't a room to be had. It reminded me of the weekend that we spent in New York, Butch. Finally after pestering the manager of the Savoy for over an hour, he gave us a phone number to call and at last we had rooms for the night. Just like the hotel the Taft referred us to that weekend, this was a third rate place, away from the center of things but it was clean so we took it. At first the

[466] Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent. **Royal Air Force Knettishall** or more simply **RAF Knettishall** was a former Royal Air Force station in Suffolk, England, UK. The 388th Bomb Group, which stayed at Knettishall for their entire service in the ETO, flew B-17 Flying Fortresses on missions over occupied Europe and its four squadrons consisted of the 560th, 561st, 562nd, and the 563rd Bomb Squadrons. Lenny served in the 561st Bomb Squadron.

[467] The town of Knettishall

woman at the desk said she had but one room with only two beds. There were four of us and we finally talked her into moving somebody out and giving us two rooms, one single, and one with three beds. By the time all the arrangements were made it was almost five in the afternoon.

Forgot to tell you where we had lunch. We ate in Scott's - the evening place of London where we had, of all things, (no not steak) [but] *Jugged Hare*, better known as Roast Rabbit; it was truly delicious; along with it we had a vintage wine, real tomato soup, coffee and pastry.

After leaving the hotel we went back to the heart of London, and after walking around a bit decided it was time to eat again. We found, of all things, a Jewish restaurant! So in we went, Chris[468], Rock[469], the Copilot[470] and myself. Rock and I drove the waitress crazy asking for *latkes*[471] but there were none… We did have… pickled herring with onion, chicken soup with *lokshen*,[472] roast chicken, potatoes and vegetables, real sour pickles, Jewish pumpernickel and rye bread, and finally coffee and pudding. It was a meal that I never expected to have 'over here.'

After leaving the restaurant we went into a *Brasserie* (known as a *Grille* back home) where all we could buy was beer. Being Saturday night the place was packed with soldiers, both male and female. We stayed there until 11:00, when everything in London closes down, or at least Chris and I did. Rock and Red (the co-pilot) [each] picked up a girl. From there Chris and I went to Piccadilly Circus where we amused ourselves watching the prostitute's doing business. Piccadilly is the red light district of London, and business is done out

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[468] Augustine (Chris) Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[469] Ray (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[470] Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington was the Co-Pilot in Lenny's crew.

[471] A **latke** is a type of potato pancake found in Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine. The dish, which is traditionally served during Hanukkah, can be made with grated, shredded, or mashed potatoes.

[472] The word **lo[kshen** is Yiddish for noodle. A lokshen kugel is a kugel made with noodles. There are endless variations on the noodle kugel theme; they can be made savory or sweet, topped or untopped, with dried fruit or nuts or seasonings.

in the open. We were approached more than once and the price is exorbitant. One prostitute asked me to go home with her for £5 , the equivalent of $20, when I told her that was a lot of money she said she would throw in a bottle of scotch!

12:00 rolled around and we decided to go to the hotel and that is when the fun started. There just wasn't a cab to be had - we stood on a corner for half an hour without any luck, finally a truck came by, picked us up and took us where we wanted to go, or at least in the neighborhood. It was dark, with the blackout, and neither of us had a flashlight. We finally found what looked like our hotel. In fact there was a sign but we couldn't find the door! Just as we were giving hope of sleeping we turned a corner and there was the entrance! *Smaht*, eh? Finally got to sleep, and around 6:00 in the morning Red came in, grabbed his things and that was the last we saw of him until this morning.

After breakfast Sunday morning the three of us went sightseeing. First stop was Petticoat Lane, the Delancey Street of London. It was just like it too,

the pushcarts on the streets from which one could buy anything he wanted, provided he had the coupons (ration cards) and we had none, so we contented ourselves to look until almost 1:00. From there we went to another Jewish place for dinner - we had… chopped liver with chicken fat , roast chicken with Kasha. [473]

We got into a cab and told the driver to take us to all the historical places in London. We saw St. James Palace and park, Buckingham

[473] Kasha is a type of porridge made from roasted buckwheat groats, commonly used in Eastern European cuisine. It can be served as a savory dish or a sweet breakfast cereal and is often associated with Jewish comfort food, such as kasha varnishkes, which combines kasha with pasta and onions.

Castle, Queen Victoria's monument (a beautiful memorial), Westminster Abbey, Big Ben and places I can't remember. We were allowed inside of Westminster Abbey and, Darling, it was beautiful. There were services going on and even I was impressed with the beauty and solemnity there. The walls are covered with memorials of England 's great and in the floor are buried the greatest of England's statesmen. A truly impressive sight, and that was the end of our tour. From there we went to the Officer's Clothing PX[474] and bought some needed items such as socks, underwear and I bought two pairs of pants, one pair of pinks and a pair of OD's. After taking this stuff back to the hotel we went out to eat, then Rock took off to keep a date and Chris and I went to a bar, Odenino's for a few drinks.

While sitting there, who should walk in but Mike Manone. Remember him Butch? He's the one that gave that brilliant answer to the question about the blue bar. We had a long talk, over a few Scotch and sodas, and then went back to the hotel for some sleep.

Due to the fact we were due back at 6:00 Monday evening, there was little that we could do that day, especially when we didn't get up till almost 11:00. We did manage to get to the London PX to secure our rations for this week. Among my purchases were pipes: yes my sweet, your husband is now a pipe smoker. I also bought this excellent linen finish stationery there. Truthfully, it was the only thing they had and I thought that anything is better than nothing.

The ride back to camp was uneventful but we came back to some bad news. One of the crews sleeping in our barracks went down on a raid held while we were on pass. It was hard to take because they came here with us and our crews had become good friends. It sort of took the edge off of our good time.

Around seven the orderly came in and told us that there was a raid scheduled for this morning, being just a bit overtired from our trip we *hit the*

[474] Post Exchange (PX): During World War II, thousands of post exchanges operated throughout the world, from the smallest South Pacific island to London, England.

sack almost immediately. We took off with high hopes of getting our first raid today, but Lady Luck is still looking the other way and the mission was called off and we are still virgins. It's getting to be quite a joke, every time we take off something happens and we have to turn back.

Last night when we came home, I found quite a few letters awaiting me - there were three from you, one from Betty-May,[475] one from Is, among others. How does one read his letters? It took me fully half an hour to decipher it and then I [still] couldn't make out all of it… I gather he is enjoying his work even though it is a bit different from what he is accustomed to.

My trip was quite an enjoyable one but, as you have so often said, something was missing. Honestly, sweet, it could be so much better if only you were there with me seeing those things with me seeing those things that I once thought I would only read about. Golly, but I do miss you in everything I do.

This was another banner day for me, as far as mail from you is concerned There were seven letters from you, including the works of art of Betty-May and Lorraine and the clippings - thanks a million for them. As yet no packages have arrived for me - just have to *sweat* them out I guess.

There is, probably, a lot more that I can say but right now my mind is blank so I'll call it quits for a while. Although it's afternoon here it's night back home, so I guess it's all right if I say goodnight to you my darling and say once again that I love you very very much my sweetheart. I too hope that it won't be much longer before we are together again.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

[475] Elizabeth (Betty) Weidman Klein, Sylvia's niece who was six and half years old at the time.

RATION BOOK
RATION BOOK

HOTEL CECIL

Tuesday night
Feb. 22 - 44

Darling ~

No work for me today and I spent the day at home. Sadie went to work today, so I kept my Mom company[476]. She's feeling much better. I guess the relief of knowing that it is just her liver making her feel ill has made her feel so much better.

Today David[477] and Albert[478] came to Hartford by bus all by themselves. Nate[479] met them downtown where they got off the bus. They were here for about an hour this afternoon and weren't still for a minute. In fact they had a fist fight in the kitchen because David told me about the valentine Albert sent to a girl in his room that was covered with "I love yous" and x's. This fight had to be stopped by [my] Mom pulling them apart and my poor dog took an awful beating. David used it for a punch bag until I caught him at it. I always wanted boys but after watching them I realize I have quite an order ahead of me. Betty May[480] had school today and she came here for dinner. Her "halo" suddenly appeared. She was so quick and so good while Albert and David were here I couldn't quite understand it. She made me laugh though because she had such an angelic expression on her face.

This afternoon I didn't do much - just sat around and read some articles in the *Saturday Evening Post*. About five o'clock Faye[481] called and asked me to come over for a while and she wanted to look at a five-room flat to rent on Cabot Street. I rushed over there and it began to rain. Faye and Lou left and I finished feeding Holly[482]. Betty wanted to learn how to write - she knows how to print so I wrote the alphabet and I was showing her how to write

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[476] Ever since their father Hayman Geetter died in 1940, Sylvia and her oldest sister Sadie Geetter lived at home with their mother Adelle Stolper Geetter. at 148 Magnolia St. in the North End of Hartford. The two sisters also cared for their ailing mother who was sick with thyroid cancer and a new liver diagnosis. Adelle would die in 1946.

[477] David Maranski Geetter was the oldest son of Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore S. Geetter, who was commissioned a Commander in the US Navy and trained in New London, Connecticut. David was ten at the time of this writing.

[478] Albert Leonard Geetter was the second oldest son of Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore. He was eight at the time of the writing.

[479] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had two children, Philip Henry, who was three months old at the time this was written, and Diane who would be born in December.

[480] Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman was the oldest daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Fay Geetter Weidman and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

[481] 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.

[482] Holly Weidman was the younger daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

them. I think what has made her ambitious to know how to write it so that she can read letters and write them.

Holly is so cute but I'm afraid she's going to have straight hair like me. She's walking now but she does so with great care. She's afraid of the floor coming up to meet her. I called Nate tonight and asked him how he felt - if the boys hadn't run him ragged.

Sweetheart, I hope you get the stationery I sent to you soon - after all I don't want the lack of paper to be a reason for not writing.

Well, darling, until tomorrow I guess this is about all. A million times I love you and with all my I miss you.

Goodnight darling -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and a cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 19 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 20 1944 by the Control Section.

Sylvia in front of 148 Magnolia St. Hartford, Connecticut

[Somewhere in England]
Feb 23 '44

Dearest Wife,

This letter contains , as you may have guessed from the slight change in the return address, some long awaited news. Yes, my darling wife, your husband is now Lieutenant Levy. No longer F/O [Flight Officer]. The order came through while we were on pass, and due to the fact that we've been doing so much flying of late, they had a hard time getting in touch with me. Coincidentally, in his letter to me, Is[483] apologized for addressing me as F/O thinking that the promotion had already gone through.

As I wrote last night, we were up very early again this morning, presumably to go on a raid. At the last minute it was called off and so we still have no missions to our credit. The entire base knows of our 'luck,' and when they see us they shake their head and smile. John Lindsay, the ex-cop from New York (you'll remember him if I say that he is the fellow that always had that silly look on his face) gets in his now famous remark 'Some have it, and some don't,' every time we meet.

The day became a complete success when, after being sworn in, I came back to the barracks and found another letter from you. Chris[484] says there ought to be a law against one fellow getting so much mail. The truth is, my darling, lately I've been getting more than my share. I'm afraid that if it ever stops… I'll be lost. Speaking of your letters reminds me, Butch, can you change the type of envelope you're using to something heavier? All your letters lately have come open on the way over[485].

I'm smoking my new pipe knowing that you like it. I thought that line would give added pleasure to this letter. I really enjoy smoking it, especially now that I found some American tobacco for it…

We are still talking about our weekend and that once again the Co-pilot has found his 'one and only' That makes five he's met since I've known him.

Butch, you have no idea how good I feel when you write and say that the family really likes me and in particular your Mom. I do want... them to like me and, if it's in my power, I'll never do anything to make you, or them, sorry that you picked me over the rest. I do love you so very much, my darling.

---

[483] Sylvia's oldest brother Isadore (Is, Issie) Geeter.

[484] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[485] The US Army censors were opening both Lenny's outgoing and Sylvia's incoming mail.

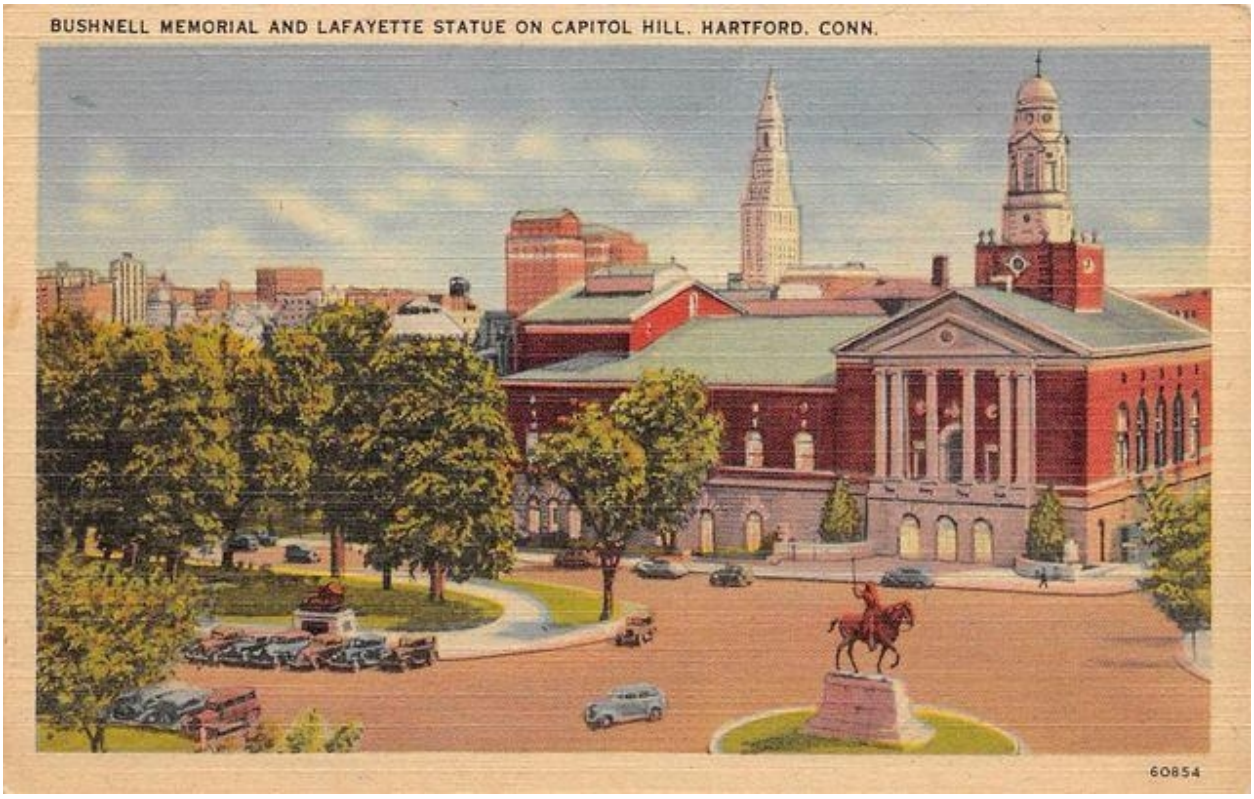
You seem to have become a rather steady patron of the Bushnell[486] of late. Good for you sweet! By the way, was *Dough Girls* on the sexy side?

In last night's letter I forgot to say that much to our regret , we took no pictures while on pass. We were planning to take some with the Co-pilots camera but, as I wrote, he disappeared for the weekend. As far as commercial photographers it would take two months of Sundays to get any results… and the price is prohibitive.

The flag is red again tonight meaning another early awakening so I'd better hit the sack shortly. Before saying goodnight I want once again… to tell you that I love you very, very much , like you and miss you

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny



[486] Bushnell Memorial Hall is a Performing Arts venue in Greater Hartford serving as a gathering place for movies, live music, dance and theatre.

Wednesday night
February 23, 1944

Darling ~

It seems as though you are certainly having delays before getting off on your first mission. Well, darling let's hope that when they do come about they pass quickly and in no time you will be home again.

Sue, the girl who sits next to me at lunch, came back from lunch so excited. She received a letter from her husband who is in the Navy and he will be home tomorrow. It's been four months since she has seen him. Gerry, the married girl I told you about that has boyfriends, gave her an envelope and on it she wrote, "Better be safe than sorry." You can imagine what was in it. Sue showed it to me and I could feel my face get hot. Bernie noticed it and he wanted to know what we had - and darn it if I didn't blush more - I wish I could get over that.

The radio and newspapers are full of the news being made by the American bombers flying over Germany. Every time I listen to the news I wonder if you were on that particular mission.

It's such a good feeling knowing that we do not have to work overtime anymore. It gives me the evening to do with as I please. It was very hard trying to go anywhere or do anything after I got home from work when I had worked overtime.

About those rooms Fay and Lou[487] looked at last night - well they didn't take them. It was the usual reason. The landlord couldn't clean them.

Did you know that Mr. Garolnik[488] sold the house.? [Your] Mom and Dad have an agreement of some kind where they can live there for three more years. But your Uncle Ralph[489] has to move, as the family who bought the house is moving in there. They want to buy a house but you know how hard that is today. When Mom told me she was sending you a nougat I knew it would make Rock[490] happy, I hope you received it by now and you both had a wonderful time eating it.

---

[487] Sylvia's younger sister Faye, her husband Lou and their two children are looking for a larger apartment in Hartford.

[488] The owner of the two family house where Lenny's family lives.

[489] Wolfe Ralph Rosenthal married Annie Levy Rosenthal and had two children, Irene Rosenthal and Myron M. "Buster" Rosenthal who were aged 29 and 27 at the time. Annie died in 1929 at age 36. Uncle Ralph remarried in 1932.

[490] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

How about your co-pilot[491] - is he still with you or have you a new one? How is Chris[492]'s ear and is the Rock as goofy as ever?

There is a girl I have seen quite a few mornings when I'm on my way to work who is as high as a kite. She can't be more than 26 and at eight o'clock in the morning she's so drunk it's terrible. This morning she was singing "Here Comes the Bride" at the top of her lungs. I don't know where she gets her liquor but it sure does the trick. You asked me if Roz is like Eleanor. No hun, she's not like her - she's quieter but she's very nice and what I like most about her is that she's a good sport.

Edith Spector, formerly Edith Kohn, twin sister of Sammy, called me this evening. She's having a gathering Friday night at her mother-in-law's house. I'm going to the Emmanuel[493] [Synagogue] first but I'll go there as soon as services are over. I haven't seen her for such a long time.

I received four letters from you today and you can understand what a good feeling it was.

---

[491] Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington was the Co-Pilot in Lenny's crew.

[492] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[493] In 1919, the Emmanuel Synagogue was established as the first Conservative synagogue in Connecticut. At the time, the synagogue was in the North End of Hartford on Woodland St.

Darling, two of the letters were rather recent - one was the 12th and the other the 14th. It makes me so happy knowing you didn't forget our anniversary date or Valentine's Day. I have the water running in the tub and I better take my bath as it's not too warm. Lou must have beat me to the draw this time. So my darling - let me tell you that I love you so very much and I miss you more every day. Take care of yourself, darling.

Goodnight darling -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

JP. Gross [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-25-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 27 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 28 1944 by the Control Section.

The Woodland Street building today

Thursday night
Feb. 24 - 44

Darling -

We had such beautiful weather today. One nice thing about this winter so far is the fact that it has been comparatively mild to last year.

This evening I went to the *Lenox*[494] with Roz. We saw Alice Faye in *The Gang's All Here.* It was in Technicolor and what made the picture [so] good [is] the photography. It was really beautiful. The co-feature was one of the *Falcon* series.

Sadie[495] is home this week doing the cooking. Well, she said she would have a surprise for supper. We had gingerbread with whipped cream. Speaking of cooking I'm afraid that whatever little I learned about cooking will be forgotten in the time I'm home. The only thing I've cooked since I've been home is an egg - and a soft-boiled one at that.

I spoke to your Mom tonight and although there wasn't much news we just talked. Everybody is well - so that's something, darling.

There's not much more to write tonight - guess this is just one of those very uneventful days. However I can't close my letters without telling you that I love you with all my heart -

Goodnight darling -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[494] The *Lenox* was a 1000-seat performing arts venue at 961 Albany Ave. in Hartford, Connecticut. This theatre was a 5-minute walk from Sylvia's house.

[495] Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geeter.

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 19 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 20 1944 by the Control Section.

Lenox Theatre - 1000 seats

961 Albany Ave., Hartford, Conn.

Friday night
Feb 25, 1944

Darling -

Right now the *Double Or Nothing*[496] program is on the radio and so far I've got most of the answers - there's a catch to that - everybody stopped at the $12 question - nobody has gone as high as the $64 one

How do you like the enclosed cartoon? I thought it was very funny. Tomorrow is Saturday again and of course I'm glad it is - it means a short workday.

Gerry bought her horoscope for this year and her birthday is two days after mine so it applies to me as well. So, we have a new pastime at work - we read it and find out what each day holds for us. Well, yesterday it stressed being friendly, so we were friendly (of course we overdid) it a bit - just for good luck.

Adelaide [Kahn] called me tonight and darling she said she saw Paul Heinrich in his latest picture last night and all through the picture she kept thinking about how much you look like him. So she called me tonight to tell me. So, hon, I guess I'm not the only one who thinks so. Remember I told you that a long time ago. She told me not to miss it but I told her that I'm apt to forget myself and call out "Lenny" in the middle of some dramatic moment.

The papers are full of headlines about the two-way bombings on Germany and that's all we hear on the news broadcast -so darling - you are making the news today.

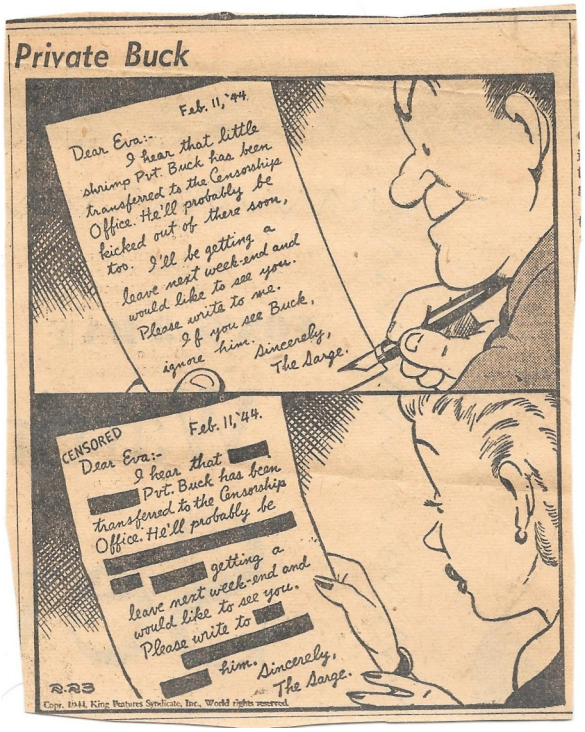
[496] In *Double or Nothing* featured Guests are asked an opening question, the answer is worth $5. Then they have one minute to ad-lib on the topic of the question, and earn money for each statement. After the ad-lib they are asked a final question, the correct answer doubles their winnings.

Faye[497] asked me if I wanted to go to New York some weekend sometime in April for the weekend. Adelaide wants to go too so when it gets a little warmer I think I'll go. Today was another beautiful day and it is so unusual for this time of the year. Well you can never tell though, tomorrow morning we may have a snow storm - then I can throw some more snowballs.

I better start getting myself ready for bed. When I think of going to bed I think of that alarm clock that goes off in the morning. I wonder whoever it was that invented the alarm clock - he must have had a grudge against humanity.

Well, my darling, it's another day gone, another day closer to when we will be together again and another good night. Goodnight, darling, all my love to you -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Enclosed *Private Buck* cartoon

[497] Sylvia's older sister Faye Geetter Weidman.

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 19 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 20 1944 by the Control Section.

The Christiani Crew[498]

Mission 1

February 25, 1944

B-17G 42-38177

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Target of first bombing mission: Pazen, Poland

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani
Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington
Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy
Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline
Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio
Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne
Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith
Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of first bombing mission: Pazen, Poland

[498] Crews were listed by the pilot's name until the aircraft assigned to them were named.

England
Feb 26 [1944]

Dearest Wife,

There is a saying that things happen in threes; this week was no exception. As you know, Tuesday I was sworn in as a 2nd Lieutenant, that was the first of the three incidents. Wednesday we went to [the] briefing and nothing happened, but Thursday and again Friday our early awakening meant *something*. Yes my darling I now have two missions over enemy territory to my credit. I can't say where we went, but if you read the [news]papers you'll know [where.][499] I was naturally very excited and nervous the first time, but this excitement wore off and except for a few moments it was similar to a [training] flight back in the States. These few moments were when we saw *flak*[500] and when the [German] fighters made a pass at us.[501] I can readily see why we were allowed to lounge around the past month - they were building us up for the let down. In the past three nights I've had exactly fifteen hours of sleep - knowing me, you can well imagine how tired I was this morning. Luckily we didn't fly this morning and so I slept until 5:00 this afternoon. Due to the fact that I was out of bed by three, and then didn't get back until almost nine, it was physically impossible to write. Please forgive me, my darling?

Chris[502] has proven our confidence in his flying; the higher ups have noticed his good work and it looks as if he is being groomed for a Squadron Leader. This means we will fly in a safer spot, and I will have a lot more responsibility.[503] We were given a ship[504] of our own today, now we have to think of a good name for it. What do you suggest, Butch?

Honestly my sweet I've had so much to write and so little time to do so and now that I've got the time my mind is going in such a whirl that I just can't think. There's been no mail for me the past three days and still no packages. Of

---

[499] Censors would have cut out any details about the two bombing missions over German-occupied territory. Obviously, Lenny is proud that his two missions were so successful.

[500] Antiaircraft artillery from the German ground forces.

[501] The faster and more agile German fighter pilots attacked the US bombers from the air.

[502] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[503] Lenny's role as Navigator of a Squadron Leader's aircraft.

[504] Aircraft

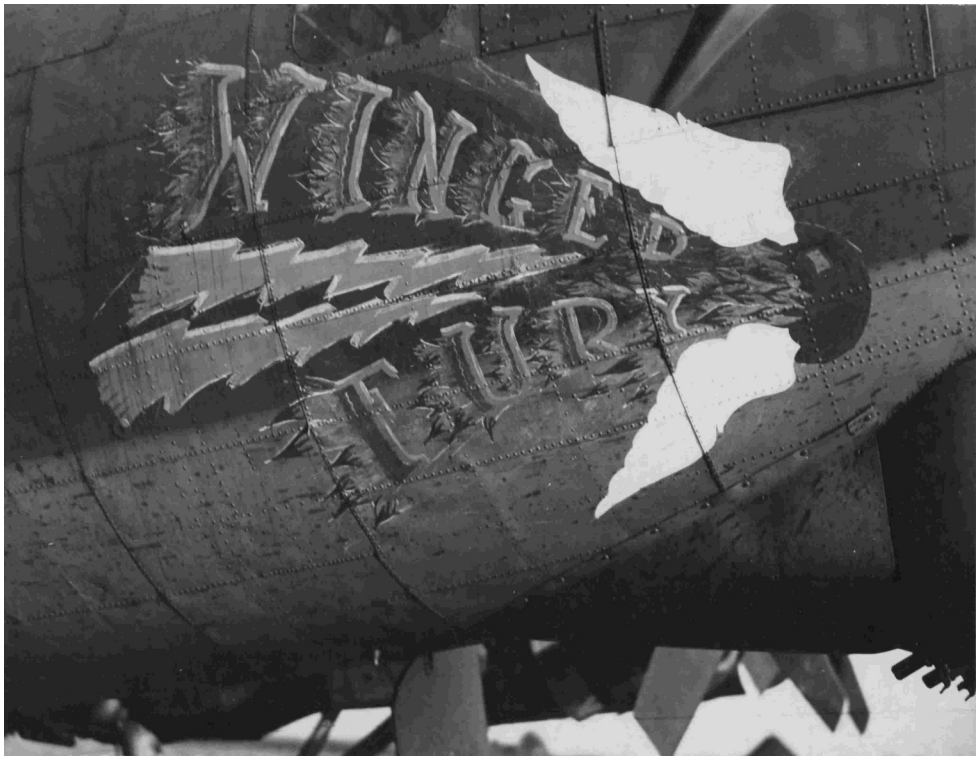
course I shouldn't complain, not having written so much myself lately, but I do have a legitimate excuse, or don't I?

Once again it is time for me to say that I love you very very much, darling and for the days that I missed [writing] I'll make it up when I come home. With these two missions in, I'm that much closer to coming home. Once again my darling, I do love you and miss you very much.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you
Lenny

How is mom feeling give her my regards as well as to The rest of the family

Love
Lenny



Saturday Night
February 26, 1944

Darling ~

In my letter yesterday I told you how I like Saturdays best because it is the shortest workday of the week. Well, it seemed that all of my accounts sent checks in today in payment of their bills and I thought I'd never apply them all. But the incentive of getting out at 11:45 - I had them all applied and balanced by that time.

for a spaghetti dinner – yes, I really like spaghetti now. We r

When we came out of the movies, it was only six o'clock and Ida and I didn't feel like going home so we went to the *Empire* for supper and had a long wait until we got a table. I must admit I felt so lonely - I work all the time.

You and I went there for Sunday night dinner - we did have such nice times together - didn't we? Well, when you are home again we'll go right on having those good times.

When we left the *Empire* we noticed that the *Palace* had two old pictures which were brought back by popular demand - so seeing that neither one of us saw them we decided to go. However, Ida couldn't take it she fell asleep during the second picture. I guess you would like to know a little more about Ida. Well, she's a typist in my office and usually she and I make a threesome. She lives in Rocky Hill but she boards in Hartford. Her mother isn't living and her father is an invalid. Her boyfriend has been overseas for over two years which is a long time, as you would agree. He was in the hospital a long time as he contracted malaria. He's back in battle now. Ida is a very sweet girl and very good-natured. I enjoy her company very much.

[505] Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman

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

Well here it is after 12:00, and your wife is tired. It is miserable outdoors tonight - it's raining and there's that cold damp. Rosalyn went to New York for the weekend but it looks as though she took a bad weekend to go. There has been no mail from you since Monday and darling I must admit I miss hearing from you so much.

Well darling, it's time to go to bed. I know that I lie in bed and think of all those pleasant memories and I'll fall asleep and have such nice dreams - so sweetheart it's good night - once again I love you so much my darling - so very much take care of yourself -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-15-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 17 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 18 1944 by the Control Section.

The Christiani Crew[507]

Mission 2

February 26, 1944

B-17G 42-38177

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (1) Pazen, Poland

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani
Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington
Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy
Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline
Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio
Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne
Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith
Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Regensberg, Germany

[507] Crews were listed by the pilot's name until the aircraft assigned to them were named.

England
Feb 27 [1944]

Dearest Wife,

Life has reverted back to what it was last week, for the present at least, and once again I'm well rested. We slept until time for dinner today, and then we called up for transportation and took a ride over to one of the nearby Fields to look up some friends from Alex. The place is only 20 odd miles from here, but it took us over two hours to get there due in entirety to the road systems of this country. There are no signs whatsoever at the crossroads and needless to say we always took the wrong turn. We finally got to our destination, spent an hour talking about the good old days back in Alex, and then came back here just in time for Chow.

Last night's party was a huge success due, no doubt, to the fact that the green flag flew for the first time in a week. Liquor was poured much in the same way as water, and there were more fellows drunk than sober. For the first time in a long time, I, too, had a little too much, and the boys told me that I was a riot when I got to the barracks. Seems that I put my pajama pants on backwards, and when I had to 'go,' couldn't, so one of the fellows took his knife and cut a hole in the pants for me. This Saturday night occurrence is known [here] as a 'drunk front' - when bad weather comes in, it is known as a front, hence the name 'drunk front.'

And now, my darling, for the choicest morsel of the month. I've written to you quite a bit about our unique Co-pilot, and by now, you should know the type of person he is. Sit back and listen to the climax - you remember my writing that he met a girl in London last week? Well, yesterday, she came out here for the weekly shindig. He left her all to himself in a corner, not even having a dance with her. She stayed overnight, and this morning, he was up at seven and has been with her all day. Just a moment ago, two of our enlisted men came in and told us that he applied for permission to marry her! The entire barracks is talking and laughing about him.

That, my darling, is just about all the news there is, and because the flag is a brilliant red, I'd better sign off and get some sleep.

Again, I want you to know that I do love you so very, very much and miss you terribly, my darling.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

Sunday night ~
February 27, 1944

Darling ~

Hello darling, how are you today? I've been thinking of you so much today. Issie and Babe[508] were here this afternoon. He looks about the same - he enjoys his life in the Navy[509] and likes being in New London. Then Nate[510] and Lou[511] came over and from then on it was noisy. When Is and Babe left, they had a card game but I don't know who was winning today - they were unusually quiet.

Sadie[512] has gone to the movies tonight. My mom is sitting in the living room listening to the radio; I bet she's asleep - she's like Uncle Barney[513] - sleeps best when the radio is on full blast. I wanted to visit your folks this afternoon but because Issie came in I had to cancel the visit. I spoke to Mom and she was just finishing her morning cup of coffee. Margie[514] is getting bigger everyday - the new niece or nephew is coming along fine.

It's been raining today and this makes the third Sunday in a row that the weather has been far from pleasant. However, it didn't keep Betty May[515] from coming over here - she's still as lovable as ever. Sadie made spaghetti for dinner and it was good. That makes having spaghetti two days in a row.

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[508] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

[509] Isidore left his job as a physician at the Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the US Navy. He is finishing his training in New London, Connecticut.

[510] Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had two children, Philip Henry, who was three months old at the time this was written, and Diane who would be born in December.

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

[512] Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and was unmarried at the time.

[513] Barney Levy was Lenny's oldest uncle.

[514] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy. She is pregnant with twin boys Richard and Steven Levy.

[515] Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman

I went to the Crown Market[516] this morning to do the shopping but it's Bedlam in that place. On Sunday morning I had to buy meat and when I looked at the woman pushing to get waited on I wished I didn't have to get *that* meat. Well, I summoned all my courage and went to the meat counter. The woman on my right was yelling at the woman on my left that she was there "Foist" and the woman on my left was twice as mad and claimed it was her turn. The butcher smiled at me - I smiled back and I was waited on "foist."

Claire just called and she wanted to tell me that your package is all packed. You better have a can opener darling - you'll need it. I could hear Adelaide supervising the package. She got a cable this morning from Jarvis - he moved recently and he arrived at his new post.

Do you know that this is my last sheet of stationery? I have to buy a box so that I can write tomorrow. Speaking of stationery - I hope you got my box of stationery that I sent to you - or as Nate said - you'll be writing on the kind with perforations! If you know Nate and you do - you know what he means by that. I hope that tomorrow will bring a letter from you darling - until then I'll be thinking of you, loving you and missing you -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[516] The Crown Market is a Kosher supermarket founded in 1940 by Sam Smith, Sam Sowalsky and Meyer Goldfield on a piece of land on Albany Avenue between Magnolia Street and Irving Street in Hartford. The business was originally a group of concessions operating in the store. The meat and delicatessen was run by the Crown founders, while the bakery was run by the Lassoff family, the fruit department run by Bob Kotik, and the fish department by Hymie Goldfarb. The grocery department was run by the Winer family. In 1943, Meyer Goldfield left the business and was replaced by Jack Sloat.

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-15-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 17, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service.

England
Feb 28 [1944]

Dearest Wife,

Your letter today was the first indication I've had that [your] Mom is in the hospital. I hope that by now the doctors have found the trouble and that it is nothing serious. Also hope that by the time this reaches you, she is home and feeling well again. Give her my best wishes for a quick recovery, Butch.

Today's mission was canceled during the night, so another easy day was spent by most of us. Poor Chris[517] had to fly with one of the new crews and check out the pilot. Rock[518] and I slept 'til almost three and then went to the show where we saw *Assignment in Brittany*. Very good.

We've all been laughing at [our] Co-pilot[519] and his latest exploit, but I'm beginning to think that maybe he has a smart idea. She has evidently taken a room in a nearby hostelry, [and] tonight she was in the Mess Hall for supper. At least he has *his* 'girl' nearby, while we who are laughing have but a picture and happy memories to keep us happy.

Funny coincidence, your letter told of Gladys and Ben[520] spending the weekend with, and in the same mail... was a letter from Lorraine.. Somehow, I still think of her as a young kid, and when she mentioned [being in] high school, I was surprised. Her letter means still another one that I have to write - at the rate I'm going, I'll never catch up.

We (the crew) have finally decided on a name for our ship.[521] It is to be officially known as the *Shack Rabbit*. I'm afraid you'll have to guess the meaning of the name. One hint, you surely know what rabbits are famous for! We hope to have a [picture of a] rabbit and a nickname under the window of each crew member. Just as soon as the name is painted on, we are going to have our picture taken as a group, and then you'll have an idea what it looks

[517] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[518] Ray (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[519] Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington is the Co-pilot of Lenny's crew.

[520] Sylvia's brother, Ben Geetter and his wife, Gladys.

[521] A Boening B-17G *Flying Fortress*, the most common of heavy bombers in England with the US Forces.

like. Rock's suggestion for the name under the Co-pilot's window is *Bugs Bunny*.

The enclosed slip of paper is, as you may have guessed, my ring size. I tried to find a jeweler around here to have it taken, but there are none. I completely forgot about it while in London. I'm really sorry, my darling, that I let it go for so long. I assure you that I shall be more than proud to wear it when I get it. I'm leaving the choice of style completely up to you. I trust your taste.

The flag is bright red again, and fearing that we are in for a long ride,[522] I'm going to hit the sack early. I do want to write a few lines to [my] Mom, haven't written since Wednesday, so this is fairly close to the end.

Once more, I want to assure you that I am feeling fine, and there is nothing for you to worry about. Just take… care of yourself for me, and I'll be happy. So, it's goodnight, my sweet, and once again, I love you so very, very much, like you, and miss you terribly.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you
Lenny

Yes, the lighter is really just what I wanted. It's in use all day, every day.

Love,
L

[522] This indicates Lenny was prepared for a longer flight plan for tomorrow's mission.

Monday night ~
February 28, 1944

Darling ~

As of late, there's never a dull moment in the office now since the story came around that our jobs will end April 1. There is constant buzzing in the ear last week about four girls in the office found new jobs and were released today. Three girls asked for releases as they had no jobs too - but as of today no releases will be issued until April 1. Well, one girl had a good job lined up and she was so disappointed when she didn't get her release - she said she cried as soon as that happened. You can imagine how noisy the office became, so now you know what I mean by my remark that there's never a dull moment and of course now I enjoy my job.

We had company tonight Mr. and Mrs. Kaplan - my sister-in-law Claire's parents[523]. Claire and Adelaide were here to visit my mom. I got rid of two of my hats. I gave my Debbie hat to Beverly and my black hat to Claire. I never wear them because I don't like them. Claire said she was glad she came over as it turned out to be a profitable evening for her. Adelaide was telling me about the $10 she won playing Bingo at the St. Michael Church last week so we made a date to go next Tuesday night. I never played Bingo for prizes with the exception of that night we went to that Carnival in Alexandria[524] - remember?

Tomorrow night I intend to visit Libby Clavin. It's a long overdue visit. Speaking of long visits brings to mind so many people I should visit as I've been asked to come there time and time again. Let's see there's Ruth Schecter, Ann Pratt, Hermie and Miriam that's Gladys[525]' sister and brother-in-law. Remember the?. I don't want to think about it anymore. I feel guilty. Well, I'll make good intentions of trying to visit them soon. Now I feel better.

Well, darling - this is about all the news for today. Goodnight, darling - I love you very much.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

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[523] Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

[524] Alexandria, Louisiana

[525] Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-26-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and a cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 27, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and a Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 28 1944 by the Control Section.

England
Feb 29, 1944

Dearest Wife,

Another day, another raid, and more importantly, another payday. The raid we went on today was more like a sightseeing tour of the country than anything else. As I mentioned in a previous letter, we are being extremely lucky in the positions we are drawing, and the danger we are placed in is lessened. I'd like very much, my darling, to go into complete details about my missions, but I'm afraid that these stories too will have to wait for that time when I'm home and in your arms.

The end of the month means but one thing in the army, payday. Just as soon as the interrogation was over with, I went to the finance office and drew my pay. It was not quite as much as I expected. They forgot to pay me for one month's flying time, but there was enough to enable me to send you an extra $200. You should receive it in two or three weeks. Do with it as you wish.

No mail again today, my sweet, and I'm beginning to worry. Is there something wrong at home? Please don't keep anything from me, as waiting for news is worse than reading bad news. I do think that it is just the faulty mail system, but again, don't hold anything from me, please, my darling.

For quite some time, Butch, I've been meaning to tell you of the work that the various organizations are doing for us. The best way to explain what is on my mind, I guess, is to tell you which ones are doing good and which are nothing but a lot of show.

If and when the Red Cross[526] has another appeal for funds, give till it hurts, sweet, for they are really *taking over* here. Not only do they have an office on most bases, but they also maintain a club on each block for the enlisted man. In

[526] American Red Cross workers provided assistance to all servicemen and women wherever they were stationed or deployed at home and overseas. Services were also extended, with limitations, to some civilian groups, such as the merchant marines, civilian pilots in the Army Transport Command, and to the armed forces of the Allies when they were in the United States or serving with the U.S. military. Military and Naval Welfare Service was basically of three kinds: Camp, Club, and Hospital.

towns such as London, they have tremendous club rooms where a soldier can have anything up to and including a place to sleep. In London alone, they have three or four such places for enlisted men and two for officers. The Officers Club in London run by the Red Cross, besides having rooms, also has an all-night cafeteria where at times you can even get real "Yank" hamburgers.

As for the USO[527]... they use some of the biggest names in the world of entertainment, but who gets to see them? Only those lucky enough to be stationed near a large city even get the chance to *sweat out* the line for tickets. Or they send shows around to the camps, but the performers wouldn't rate billing in a third-class vaudeville house back home. It seems odd to me, but in the States where the need for morale building is not as great, the entertainment is much better…

Having been up since two this morning, I'm getting just a bit sloppy, I'd better end this and get some much-needed sleep. I do love you so much, my darling, and you can feel sure that although you're not there in person, at least in my mind, you are on every raid I made. I think of you constantly, my darling, more so every day.

Goodnight my sweetheart –
I love you

Lenny

[527] 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. Since 1941, it has worked in partnership with the Department of War, and later with the Department of Defense, relying heavily on private contributions and on funds, goods, and services from various corporate and individual donors.

Your RED CROSS
is at his side
1944
WAR FUND
1944 WAR FUND

Tuesday night
February 29, 1944

Darling ~

Today I bet a girl a half-pound of Mary Oliver's [chocolate] if she would take advantage of it being leap year day and propose to an old bachelor in the office. Well, she took me up on it - of course, she told him it was only a dare but I wish you could have seen the expression on his face. He didn't know what to make of it and he looked so dumbfounded. We all got a laugh out of it so it was well worth the loss of the bet. The girls in the office think it's a good idea that our jobs won't be for long because if I keep on the way I do we'd all get fired.

Mary Oliver and the Strand Theatre

1017 Main St., Hartford, Conn.

Darling, you never mentioned whether you received my valentines - did you? I sent you two of them to be sure you got one, in case one got lost. Speaking of valentines, Ruth Schecter received roses today from Walt that he had wired to her for Valentine's day. She said that everybody in Sicily has seen the picture she sent him of the baby - of course that's a slight exaggeration.

I hope you did get your three day pass so that you could go to London for the weekend. If it were possible for you to take those pictures you mentioned, it certainly would be nice.

I went to Libby's[528] house tonight. It was snowing when I left and I was covered with snow when I got there. Her baby is so cute and for sixteen months he speaks so well. I visited until eleven and I was sorry I stayed that late because the weather is so bad tonight – well, it doesn't matter now because here I am and I'm thawed out. It is very cold outdoors.

Mom received the letter you wrote on your last sheet of stationery. I hope that until you get the stationery I sent you, you can manage somehow to get some paper on which to write your letters home.

Well, darling, it's time to say good-night. Take good care of yourself - give my regards to Rock and Chris.

Goodnight, darling ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

W. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt.AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 21, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 22 1944 by the Control Section.

[528] Libby Handler is one of Sylvia's closest friends. She graduated in the same 1938 class at Weaver High School, where she was also a member of the Girls Business Club along with Sylvia (Ronnie) Ronner, Eleanor Kohl, Sylvia Geetter, and others who have stayed in Hartford and remained good friends.

War Brides[529] 1943 - Hartford, Connecticut

Adelaide Kalin	Bonnie Spector	Sylvia Levy	Libby Handler	Margie Levy	Nettie Siegel

[529] Titled by Sylvia in a photo album.

Shack Rabbits[530]

Mission 3

February 29, 1944

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (2) Pazen, Poland and Regensberg, Germany.

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani
Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington
Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy
Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline
Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio
Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne
Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith
Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Brunswick, Germany

[530] The Lt. Christiani crew wished to name their aircraft *Shack Rabbit*, which had already been named by another crew in 1943. They could have chosen *Shack Rabbit 2.* Instead they selected *Shack Rabbits.*

Wednesday night ~
March 1, 1944

Darling ~

Another month has gone by and it was a pleasant feeling to tear off the month of February on my calendar this morning. It meant one thing to me, one month of separation was over and we are one month closer to that time when we will be together again.

Hartford is having a big Red Cross Drive this year. It seems rather unnecessary to have such an extensive campaign for donations and I think everybody realizes how important the work of the Red Cross is today. They had a parade today and the fellows from Bradley Field and Rocky Hill had to do their left-right.

This afternoon was a complete waste of time in the office. Nobody did very much and everybody was fooling...

[missing page]

I guess by refusing to give out releases, they did the wrong thing because the girls' attitude towards their work is [now] indifference. The girl who sits in front of me is in a ticklish situation now. She has [a] bad appendix and [was] warned by a doctor about a month ago to have an operation as soon as possible. Well, she's afraid to be operated on as her sister died from an appendix operation three years ago. Well, she decided that she would get her release by saying she was going to have her operation – which she really isn't - what she's going to [is] look for another job. But, my boss was one step ahead of her because through

his various "informers" he found out just what her intentions were - so he's giving her a release but… it will be for "medical attention." Now, when she looks for another job she will have to explain what that means and naturally it will be almost impossible for her to get a job because no company will want to hire her when she is in bad need of an appendix operation which can take her out of her work with no notice. So, she has to take this release and she certainly is sorry she asked for it.

I went to a dress shop on Albany Avenue this evening with Sadie. She is looking for a new dress and she heard of this new dress shop and she thought she would find something she might like. It was opposite Kent Street so you can see it was a walk from my house and it was so windy we were practically blown there and back. She didn't buy anything but as long as we were near the library I got some books to read.

I was just listening to Frankie "Swoonatra" He does sing some songs very well I guess I'm beginning to live up to my name of "Shoo-Shoo."

Darling, is there anything you need that I can send to you? I hope you won't neglect to mention anything you may want in your letters - so hon - you won't forget will you?

My goodness - it's getting late - it seems that the time just flies when I write to you - but there is no better way to pass my time.

Darling ~ I hope that with this letter I could send all of my love - but it would take more than a letter. I love you so very much sweetheart and I miss you more and more everyday. Have you heard that new song "I wish I could hide inside this letter[531]" -? well, darling - I wish I could, and as the words go - "I'd seal me up and send me out to you." That would be wonderful!

Goodnight, darling ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[531] As performed by Lawrence Welk with vocals by Jayne Walton. See lyrics below.

I Wish That I Could Hide Inside This Letter

Performed by Lawrence Welk
Recorded December 2, 1943
Written by Nat Simon, Charlie Tobias

My heart's in this letter I'm sending
The same as the others I write
I close it and then start pretending
The same as I do every night
I wish that I could hide inside this letter
And seal me up and send me out to you
What a surprise in store
They'd bring me to your door
I'd pop right out and kiss you
like you've never been kissed before
We'd be so happy we could cry together
And then we'd love the way we used to do
I wish that I could hide inside this letter
And seal me up and send me off to you

We'd be so happy we could cry together
And then we'd love the way we used to do
I wish that I could hide inside this letter
And seal me up and send me off to you
Special delivery
I'd V-mail this female to you

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

W.C. Williams [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 21, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 22 1944 by the Control Section.

Lucky Strike
PRESENTS
"YOUR HIT PARADE"
Frank Sinatra
Starring
America's Singing Sensation
LUCKY STRIKE MEANS FINE TOBACCO
So round, so firm, so fully packed . . .
so free and easy on the draw
LUCKY STRIKE
"IT'S TOASTED"
CIGARETTES
LUCKY STRIKE

V Mail
March 2, 1944

Darling ~

I'm writing this in the office just before we start work for the day. In my letter last night I forgot to tell you that I bought a kit for your shaving things and I am sending it to you this week. The reason why I didn't send it last week is because we are allowed to send one package a week (with the request of course) and I sent your underwear out last week.

I better get to work now my adding machine is still covered and everybody around me is busy working. I'll write a long letter tonight - so until then ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J.R. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-15-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and a cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 20, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and a second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 21 1944 by the Control Section.

Shack Rabbits

Mission 4

March 2, 1944

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (3) Pazen, Poland, Regensberg, Germany and Brunswick, Germany.

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani
Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington
Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy
Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline
Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio
Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne
Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith
Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Chartres, France

England
Friday, March 3

Dearest Wife,

As I mentioned in a recent letter, my letters to you will be less regular than they have been in the past, but only because we are being kept so busy now. In the past three days, I've flown three times, twice on regular combat missions, and once as an instructor. Yes, my sweet, I said as an instructor. The other day, when a practice flight was scheduled, I was told to fly with one of the new crews and help the navigator get started. Can you imagine my surprise when I find out that the fellow I was to teach was formerly an instructor at Selman Field[532]? He graduated about a full year before I did, and taught at Monroe till a year ago, January. There were, however, a few things he didn't know about navigation over here, so I didn't appear too dumb.

Phillip Brejansky - Navigator[533] - 563th Bomb Squadron

[532] Selman Army Airfield is an inactive United States Air Force base, approximately 7.7 miles east of Monroe, Louisiana. It was where he received his Pre-flight training as a Navigator.

[533] Once a crew has completed five missions, the US Air Corps takes official photographs of the crew: a group shot similar to the one on the next page and 10 crew shots at their stations in the aircraft.

The two combat missions have boosted my total to five, meaning that I will soon wear the Air Medal. This is an automatic award given for five missions. What do you think of your husband now, my darling?

There is a saying, 'All things come to the one who waits.' Today, I not only got a letter from you, the first one in a week, but also two packages, the first two you sent out. Needless to say, I now have a goodly supply of candy. Thank you very much, Butch. Was very glad to hear that Mom is out of the hospital. I was beginning to worry, not having heard from you in so long. Give her my regards.

The weather over here is the one thing that reminds me of New England. For a while, the days were warm. Then the other day, we woke up to find the ground covered with snow. Since then, it has been rather cold, and we have an acute coal shortage. A long time ago, I promised you a picture of the crew. Just as soon as our plane is finished up, that is, when the name and the other things are painted on, we are to have a crew picture taken by the base Photo Department. It is all settled, and they have promised us enough copies for each.

B-17 42-30340 "Screaming Red Ass" & Crew, 563rd Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb

Group Standing L to R are: 2nd Lt. Harry L. Cotter 1st Lt. William K. Bowler 2nd Lt. Bruno A. Manno Kneeling from L to R are: T/Sgt. Denton E. Walthall T/Sgt. Matthew Bejma S/Sgt. Willis D. Condren S/Sgt. Calvin Hoagland S/Sgt. Roy T. Patterson S/Sgt. Fred C. Kerr

My darling, I'm thrilled you felt just like a wife when you went out shopping for shirts and jerseys that day. I'm very glad that you had that proud feeling. I'll always do my best to keep you feeling that way. I do love you so very much, my darling.

There is no rest far the wicked on the Air Forces in the ETO[534], meaning that the red flag is flying again, so your "baby" must go to bed very shortly. These early morning awakenings are really tough on one who loves his sleep as much as I do. Again, my darling, I love you very, very much and miss you terribly. Until that day comes when we shall be together again, always remember that. Not that I'll ever let you forget.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

[534] European Theatre of Operation, which was the area of military operations for the United States Army during World War II in Europe from 1942 to 1945.

Friday night ~
March 3, 1944

Darling ~

This is going to be my first letter addressed to Lt. Leonard Levy and it makes me so proud to be able to do so. Mom received the letter in which you told her all about it and she told me about it tonight. Again darling - let me congratulate you and may your gold bars bring you all the luck in the world.

I received the letter you wrote to me on February 22 - yes, the nice long one that came in separate envelopes. I am so happy you had such a good time in London and darling no excuse was necessary for not writing. However, did you get me the souvenirs for my scrap-book[535]? I was hoping you would send something - have you darling? If you couldn't find anything for the scrapbook - it's perfectly ok. I know it's because there was nothing to send.

I can see where you'll get very little sleep when you come home dear, I'm going to keep you awake telling me about all the things you are seeing and have yet to see. Just think of all the interesting stories you will be able to tell our children. Did Rock look up his relatives in London? I must say that prostitution is a good profession in England. I get a kick out of the trouble you and Chris had getting back to your hotel - it surprises me that you did find it after all. I hope that it won't be long before you can have another weekend and have a good time again.

I just came home from the Emmanuel[536]. There were quite a few sailors from Trinity there and they were all so young - I went with Libby. It is snowing now but I don't think it will snow very long.

[535] Sylvia collected souvenirs Lenny sent her from the bases and nearby cities he was deployed to. This scrapbook was lost years later.

[536] Formed in 1919, Emanuel Synagogue in Hartford was Connecticut's first Conservative congregation. In 1920, members dedicated its first synagogue in the former North Methodist Church on Main Street. With a growing membership, the congregation purchased farmland on Woodland Street in Hartford's Upper Albany neighborhood. A new synagogue, designed by Ebbets and Frid, was completed in 1927. The former Hartford synagogue is now Faith Seventh Day Adventist Church.

So, you received Issie's[537] letter at last. I knew you would have difficulty reading it because I have that trouble myself.

By the way, in your letter you mentioned that Rock and Red went out together. Does that mean that Red is getting to be more sociable? That really surprised me because the Rock had so many "outs" with him.

It's another coincidence, meeting Mike at that bar. How is he? Is he stationed near you?

No, your stationery isn't very pretty but it's beautiful to me because it is something for you to write your letters on - and that's all that counts.

Tomorrow, I am mailing you your new kit for your shaving things etc. I hope you will like it - and I hope it won't take as long to get to you as my other packages are doing.

Today the girls at work were talking about the Devil and some of them believe that the Devil actually makes people devilish - and they all tell me that I have the Devil in me. Some of the things I do at work is what causes them to think it. As usual, I'm always up to something. Yesterday the boss on the other side of the room called up my boss to tell the girls to be quiet as we were disturbing his department - and do you know who was at the bottom of it - yes - me! This is what started it - a girl brought in her wedding pictures and Bernie, he's my supervisor, had one on his desk. Well, I made believe I was jealous - so I drew a picture which was supposed to be my wedding picture and I must admit - it was no pin-up girl. Well, I left it on Bernie's desk and that started it all. The girls got around the desk - and were laughing and talking and innocent me - I was busy at my desk. *Shmaht* huh, hon. I guess you'll still have your hands full when you come home, darling.

I'm enclosing an article taken from the *[Hartford] Times*. It's about Ivan Finkle. I thought you would enjoy reading it - especially after bumping into him recently.[538]

Darling, about those delays you've had taking off for your first mission - please don't feel bad about it - remember what you always say - "Everything Happens for the best." I have to tell myself that a good many times and I find that it always turns out to be true.

Hon, I'm getting sleepy - so I guess it's time to say goodnight. I know it won't be long before you will be here and I can kiss you goodnight again - Until then - darling - remember -

---

[537] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written. Isidore left his job as a physician at the Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the US Navy. He is finishing his training in New London, Connecticut.

[538] Ivan Nathan Finkle was stationed in Knettishall AFB in the same Bomb Group 561 as Lenny. He graduated from Weaver High School in Hartford two years after Sylvia.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-17-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 20, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 22 1944 by the Control Section.

Contents: Article (undated): **Sergeant Finkle Wins Citation**

March 3, 1944

Sergeant Finkle Wins Citation

Tech.-Sgt. Ivan N. Finkle, son of Louis Finkel of 15 Milford Str., a member of the Eighth Air Force, stationed in England, who recently completed 18 missions, has been awarded the Air Medal and two Oak Leaf Clusters.

According to a citation, Sergeant Finkle was commended for "exceptional meritorious service while participating in aerial flight. The skill, coolness and courage displayed by the enlisted man (Sgt. Finkle) reflects great credit upon himself an[d] the Army Air Force.

Sergeant Finkle is a member of the crew of the *Blitzing Betsy*.

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Sergeant Finkle is a member of the crew of the "Blitzing Betsy."

Collapses

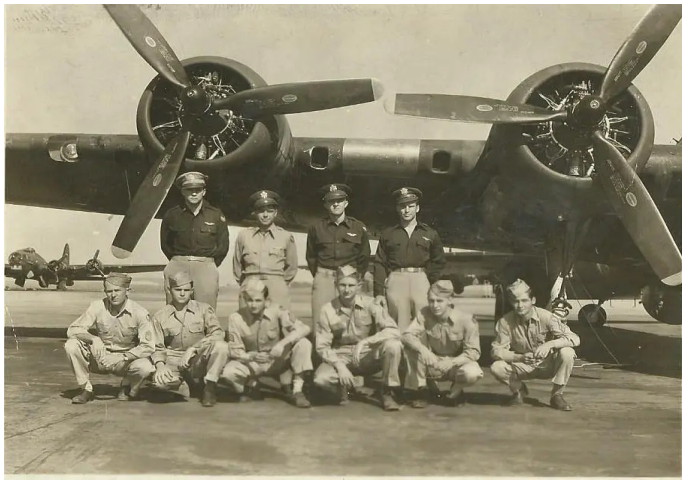
Allied Headquarters, Naples—(AP)—American heavy bombers again attacked Rome's railroad installations today, the Mediterranean Allied Air Force announced.

"Flying Fortresses attacked Littorio and Tiburtina freight yards," the announcement said, "while Liberators bombed the main Viterbo Airdrome 35 miles north of Rome."

"Early reports," the statement said, "indicate the railway yards were well covered and that the airdrome bombing was good. Both the Fortresses and Liberators were escorted by fighters."

It was believed a sizeable force struck the Italian capital's chie: freight yards through which mili-

Blitzin' Betsy



B-17G-15-DL #42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy'

Aircraft delivered to Denver 10/2/43; Gr Island 10/21/43; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 10/25/43.

Crew:

Pilot: Lowell H. Watts
Co-pilot: Robert M. Kennedy
Navigator: Emmett J. Murphy
Bombardier: Edward J. Kelley Jr.

Waist gunner: Raymond E. Hess
Waist gunner: Donald W. Taylor
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Joseph B. Ramsey
Radio Operator: Ivan N. Finkle
Ball turret gunner: Robert M. Sweeney
Tail gunner: Harold A. Brassfield

Shack Rabbits

Mission 5

March 3, 1944

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (5) Pazen, Poland, Regensberg, Germany, Brunswick, Germany,Chartres, France and Berlin,Germany.

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani
Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington
Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy
Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline
Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio
Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne
Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith
Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Berlin,Germany

Shack Rabbits

Mission 6

March 4, 1944

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (6) Pazen, Poland, Regensberg, Germany, Brunswick, Germany and Chartres, France and Berlin,Germany twice.

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani
Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington
Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy
Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline
Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio
Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne
Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith
Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Berlin,Germany

England
3 – 6 – 44

Dearest wife –

Spare time is, of late, a very rare thing but when I sit down to write to you it is the best, and happiest part of my day. You have no idea how good it makes me feel to be able to sit down and 'talk' to you.

Since my last letter to you I have added another mission to my name – they are starting to add up, my sweet. The only bad feature of having them so fast is that at night we are so tired that we simply hit the 'sack' and are out until the orderly wakes us in the morning. Last night we didn't even bother to dress and go to the weekly shindig. Rock[539] went to bed while Chris[540] and I went to the show for a few hours of relaxation. The picture was *Girl Crazy* and it did have a few laughs in it. Slept until 10:00 this morn' and then had to get up to attend a group meeting. Chris had to fly as an instructor again this afternoon – I put my time to good use by taking a much needed bath. I was honestly shades lighter when I got through; it is so darn inconvenient to wash around here that we just let it go until we become unbearable to ourselves.

Syl, Mom finally wrote me the story of Margie[541] – of course it was just her side of the story and I still can't make any sense out of it. Her folks must have had a reason (good or bad) for doing what they did and knowing Margie the way I do I'm inclined to think she did more than her share in provoking them into it. I'm of the opinion that it is a dirty trick on Mom + Pop but I think they had no alternative to do what they did. I'm wondering what will be when the baby is born. Frankly my darling I'm truly happy that we were as careful as we were. I do so want a child of my own but I want to be with you when the time comes.

So once again you are to be a lady of leisure – I too hope that it holds out until summer so that you will be able to go to the shore with Faye – didn't know that you didn't care for your present job. Just what is wrong with it Butch?

Started to read one of the books you sent the other night and almost finished a can of nuts along with the book – both were very good. Reading material is scarce also but then I don't miss that too much as there isn't the time to read anyhow. Told Chris that you wanted to send out a 'Monopoly' set and he wanted to know if you could also send the time along with it.

---

[539] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

[540] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

[541] Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy who is a Private in the US Army. Margie is pregnant with twins and living with Lenny's mother and father in Hartford, Connecticut.

It's time once again to say goodnight to you my sweet – Remember always , my darling, that I love you so very, very much and miss you more with each passing day.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

Black Monday

Mission 250

March 6, 1944

On Monday 6 March 1944 the US 8th Air Force for the first time mounted a full scale daylight attack on Berlin, capital of the Third Reich. As a result of the hard fought battles on the way to the target, over it and during the return flight, 75 US 4 engine bombers and eleven escorting fighters failed to regain their bases; in no other days fighting before or after, would the 8th Air Force lose a greater number of aircraft.

A total of 730 bombers were sent to Berlin, of which 504 B-17 Flying Fortresses and 226 B-24 Liberators. The formation flew a fairly direct route to Berlin, which passed over Southeast Drenthe on both the outward and return journeys. 801 American fighters were sent along to escort the bombers. These were of the P-38 Lightning, P-47 Thunderbolt and P-51 Mustang types. Approximately 10% of the bombers did not return: a total of 75 bombers were lost. This day would become known as 'Black Monday'.

Introduction from

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe

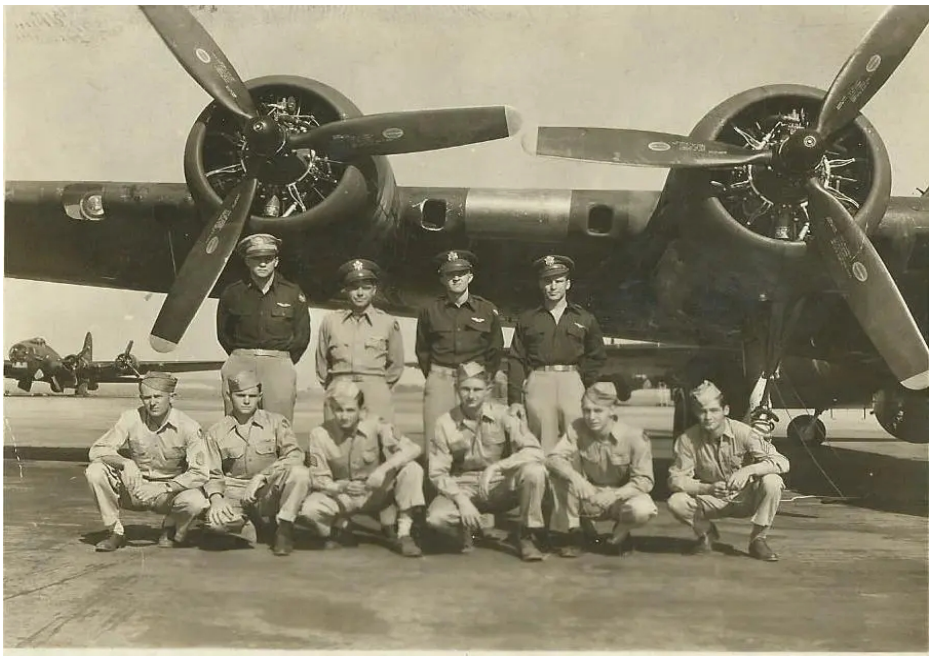
https://www.slodrenthe.nl/

Target Berlin Mission 250: 6 March 1944
By Jeffrey Ethell and Dr Alfred Price
Green Hill Books London

Blitzing Betsy

Mission 21

March 6, 1944



B-17G-15-DL #42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy'

Aircraft delivered to Denver 10/2/43; Gr Island 10/21/43; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 10/25/43.

Crew:

Pilot: Lowell H. Watts (Prisoner of War)
Co-pilot: Robert M. Kennedy (Prisoner of War)
Navigator: Emmett J. Murphy (Prisoner of War)
Bombardier: Edward J. Kelley Jr. (Prisoner of War)

Waist gunner: Raymond E. Hess (Killed in Action)
Waist gunner: Donald W. Taylor (Killed in Action)
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Joseph B. Ramsey (Prisoner of War)
Radio Operator: Ivan N. Finkle (Prisoner of War)
Ball turret gunner: Robert M. Sweeney (KIA)
Tail gunner: Harold A. Brassfield (KIA)

After taking off from RAF Knettishall at 0801 hrs, B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' of the 562nd Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group was flying the same direct route to Berlin. B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' was part of B Group, led by B-17G 42-40054 'Jinny', along with 17 other B-17 Flying Fortresses. The aircraft was carrying the usual crew of ten.

On the return from a mission to Klein Machnow, Berlin on March 6, 1944, B-17G #42-37886 Blitzin' Betsy was severely damaged by attacks from several FW190s causing it to collide with another 388th B-17, namely #42-40054, exploding in mid-air and crashing near Emmen, Holland.

The formation followed the route and, despite several attacks by German fighters, successfully arrived at Berlin. The first group (B Group) dropped its bombs at 13:47 and hit Oranienburg, a northern district of Berlin. The second group (A Group) waited a little longer; they dropped their bombs at 14:07 and hit Wittenberg, northwest of Berlin. After completing their mission, the formation flew back towards England.

As B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' approached the Dutch/German border without fighter escort, the crew soon spotted German fighters approaching from the front and rear. Edward J. Kelley Jr., the bomb aimer, and Joseph B. Ramsey, the flight engineer, opened fire on the Focke Wulf Fw 190s approaching from the front. Harold A. Brassfield, the tail gunner, opened fire on the Fw 190s attacking from the rear.

The navigator of B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy', Emmett J. Murphy, fired a few bursts from the forward side guns and felt his knee buckle as he was hit by shrapnel. He also saw smoke coming from the bomb bay and opened the hatch to see a blaze. He tried to extinguish it but the fire extinguisher did not work. In fact, the bomb bay was not on fire but the engine and wing were on fire and flames were coming in through a large hole.

Harold A. Brassfield shouted over the intercom, *"I got one, I got one!" And almost immediately he shouted, "I got hit in the eye!"* Donald W. Taylor, the left side gunner, left his gunnery position to help him.

Pilot Lowell H. Watts reports: *"Our plane was set on fire by 20-mm incendiary shells fired by Fw 190s from positions 11, 12 and 1 o'clock. From the intercom conversation I got the impression that we were also being attacked from the rear, although I did not see this. The 20-mm shells entered our plane through the nose section and exploded under my feet near the fuel lines and main oxygen supply. The combination of incendiary shells, 100-octane gasoline and oxygen was of course extremely flammable and the fire spread very rapidly."*

The shooting down of B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' was attributed to Hauptmann Hugo Frey, flying Focke Wulf Fw 190A-6 Wnr. 470083. Hauptmann Hugo Frey also crashed with his aircraft on 6 March 1944, after having shot down a total of four B-17 Flying Fortresses, at Erm. It is unknown whether the gunners of B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' were the cause of its crash.

Lowell continues: *"I remember someone calling over the intercom that the plane was on fire and at the same time noticing smoke and flames coming from under my seat. Since we were flying in the forward position of the low squadron, I was in the co-pilot's seat on this mission. I requested the navigator to use a hand-held extinguisher in an attempt to control the fire.*

"Further action would be useless," Lowell said. *"At that moment I gave the order over the intercom to abandon the plane, but received no acknowledgement. Whether this was due to the fact that the communication system on board had been shot to pieces or to general confusion, I do not know. The alarm switch in a B-17 is located on the left wall next to the pilot's seat; the fact that I was in the right seat made it impossible for me to operate the alarm. I did not hear him ring, and whether my co-pilot, Bob Kennedy, operated the alarm I do not know, although it was my impression that the bell did not ring.*

The flames were now so intense that I could no longer see outside or even the instrument panel. I called Bob over the intercom for help. When I got no answer, I turned my head in his direction and found that he had already left the aircraft. The nose hatch, which allowed the officers in the front of the aircraft to exit, was still open, further fanning the flames. My lack of visibility made it impossible to determine exactly what happened next .

As the crew left the aircraft, I pushed the wheel forward, as there was a burning aircraft on my left, descending below the formation. I leaned forward to engage the autopilot. Just as I felt it engage, there was a violent jolt and great confusion, which I only learned later was caused by my aircraft having collided with the command aircraft of our formation, which was flying above us and was being flown by Captain Job." This was B-17G 42-40054 'Jinny'.

" *Since I could not see anything because of the fire, I did not know that our aircraft had actually started to climb, although I was trying to descend. Personally, I believe that our aircraft had been damaged in the tail section, which changed the trim and caused the aircraft to climb instead of descending. I tried to reach the throttles to reduce the power, but the aircraft went into what I suspect was a kind of spin. This caused so many G-forces that I was unable to take my hand off the autopilot controls to operate the throttles. Because of the fire in the cockpit, I am not certain, but I had the impression that both inner engines were also on fire.* "

Emmett J. Murphy tells his side of the story: *"During the frontal attack we were hit in the inner engines by 20 mm shells; one shell went through the Plexiglas nose, missed Ed Kelley's head and mine, and exploded in the oxygen tanks under the cockpit. The whole thing started burning. So Ed jumped out the forward hatch and I followed him, singeing my eyebrows. Bob Kennedy also jumped in time, having to knock out the fire on his chest parachute before it could hook up."*

Emmett J. Murphy was just diving out of the hatch when the explosion occurred: *"When I last saw our plane, hanging from the parachute, it was on its back in a steep dive, burning like a torch with its engines screaming and running wild. Then it exploded. We were flying at an altitude of 15,000 feet* when *we were hit and I opened my parachute after dropping perhaps 7,000 feet* , *wanting to get away from the plane and out of the battle area as quickly as possible.*

As I hung from my parachute I saw our fighter escort – P-47 Thunderbolts – coming up and a big dogfight developing. If we had held out a little longer the Germans would undoubtedly have been driven off."

Lowell H. Watts jumps back a few seconds in the story: *"Knowing that my ball turret gunner, Bob Sweeney, could not have had an opportunity to escape, I tried to relieve the G-forces on the plane by pulling back on the wheel with all my strength. I was now aware that the windshield, the top of the cockpit and the dorsal turret were destroyed and that I was, quite frankly, sitting in a burning pile of scrap metal. The G-forces finally subsided somewhat, but I am not certain of the position of the plane at that moment. We had been in a spinning dive for so long that I expected the plane to crash to the ground at any moment.*

At the same moment there was an explosion in the aircraft and I was catapulted out of the top of the cockpit with considerable force. As I was wearing a back parachute and not a chest type, my parachute was in place and I was able to open it shortly before I hit the ground. An Fw 190 shot past me into the depths with the pilot apparently wounded or dead in the cockpit and crashed close to where I landed."

Lowell H. Watts, Joseph B. Ramsey, Ivan N. Finkle and Raymond E. Hess were all thrown from the plane by the explosion. All but Raymond E. Hess managed to open their parachutes. He was found a short distance from the wreckage with his unopened parachute still on.

The collision marked the end of both B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' and B-17G 42-40054 'Jinny'.

from

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-37886-blitzing-betsy/

Suzy Sagtitz

March 6, 1944

Delivered Cheyenne 25/9/43; Gr Isle 8/10/43; Romulus 12/10/43; Assigned 562BS/388BG Knettishall 14/10/43; Missing in Action Berlin 6/3/44 with

Montgomery Givens, Co-pilot: Harry Teat, Navigator: Ken Betts, Bombardier: Larry McMillan, Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Roy Kesanen, Radio Operator: Jim Geraghty, Ball turret gunner: Tom Foulds, Waist gunner: Jack Karr, Tail gunner: Dan Walstra (9 Prisoner of War); Waist gunner: Willard McGee (KIA-killed by enemy a/c, over Holland) Missing Air Crew Report 3082. SUSY-SAG-TITZ.

Suzy was shot down at 15:05 hours by Hauptmann Hugo Frey in his Fw 190, who himself was killed in the air to air battle, after shooting down 4 B-17s in the battle. Enemy aircraft crashed at Oud Schoonebekerveld, alongside Dommerskanaal, near Emmen, Hol.

Suzy was a loaner AC, Givens AC 'Quarterback', was being repaired from battle damage from March 4 Berlin Mission.

from

American Air Museum
https://www.americanairmuseum.com

Shack Rabbits

Mission 7

March 6, 1944 - Black Monday

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani (Prisoner of War)
Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington (Killed in Action)
Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy (Prisoner of War)
Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (Prisoner of War)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline (Prisoner of War)
Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr. (Prisoner of War)
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio (Killed in Action)
Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne (Killed in Action)
Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith (Killed in Action)
Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom (Killed in Action)

Target of this bombing mission: the VKF Ball Bearing Works at Erkner, an eastern suburb of Berlin, about seven miles from the city center.

Shack Rabbits failed to hit the primary target in Berlin (VKF Ball Bearing) and dropped bombs on the secondary target. On the way back, close to the Dutch border, *Shack Rabbits* fell slightly back from the formation and was attacked by a German Focke-Wulf Fw 190A-6 Wnr at around 14:50. 470083, flown by Hauptmann Hugo Frey. This attack damaged the aircraft to such an extent that the crew of *Shack Rabbits*' was forced to leave the aircraft. Five of the ten crew members manage to bring themselves in safety with their parachute. The other five either failed to leave the plane or their parachute malfunctioned. The aircraft crashed and its remains were later found in a swamp at Neu-Ringer, 14 miles north of Nordhorn, Ger.

Butch and Lenny

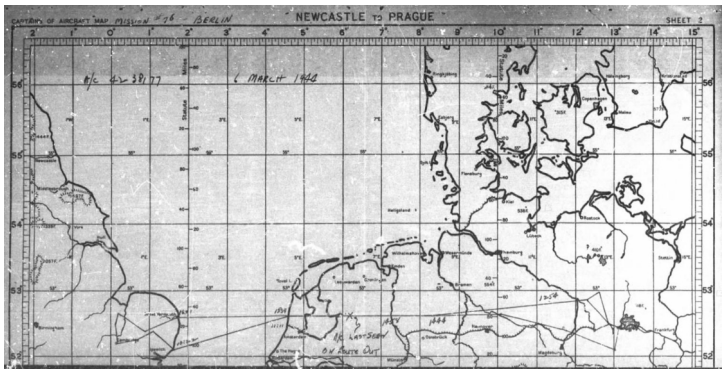
A POW Love Story

Part 3: Prisoner of War 1944-45

by Sylvia Geetter Levy and Lt. Leonard Levy

Edited by Alan Neal Levy

After taking off from RAF Knettishall [England], B-17G 42-38177 *Shack Rabbits* of the 561st Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group flew the same direct route to Berlin. The aircraft was carrying the usual crew of ten.



The formation followed the route over the IJsselmeer and southeast Drenthe and, despite several attacks by German fighters, successfully arrived at Berlin. Due to these attacks, A Group lost four aircraft on the outward journey. The first group (B Group) dropped its bombs at 1:47 PM and hit Oranienburg, a northern district of Berlin. The second group (A Group) waited a little longer; they dropped their bombs at 2:07 and hit Wittenberg, northwest of Berlin. After completing their mission, the formation flew back towards England.

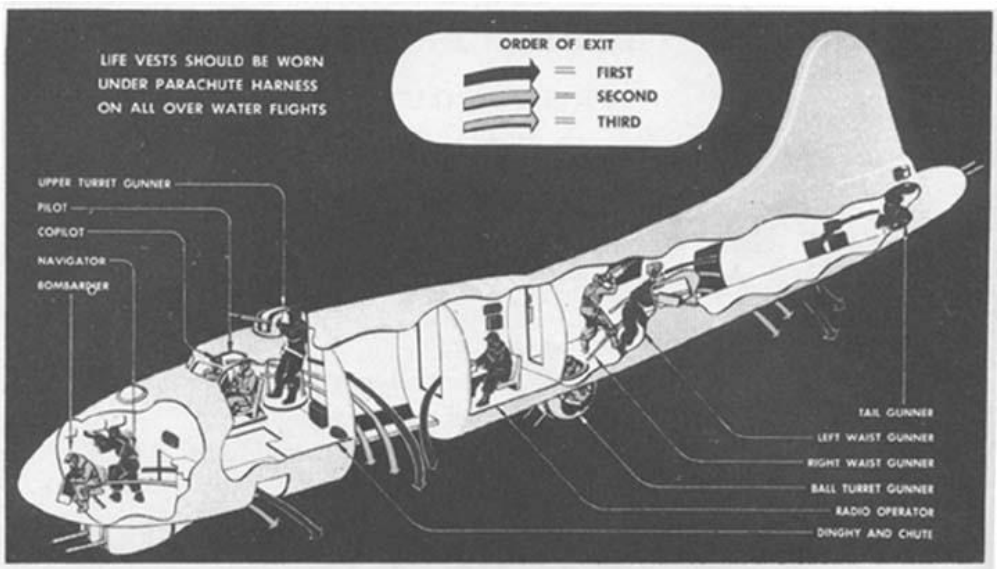
Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[1]'s

Berlin Battle

[1] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1. His Log was recently discovered and published.

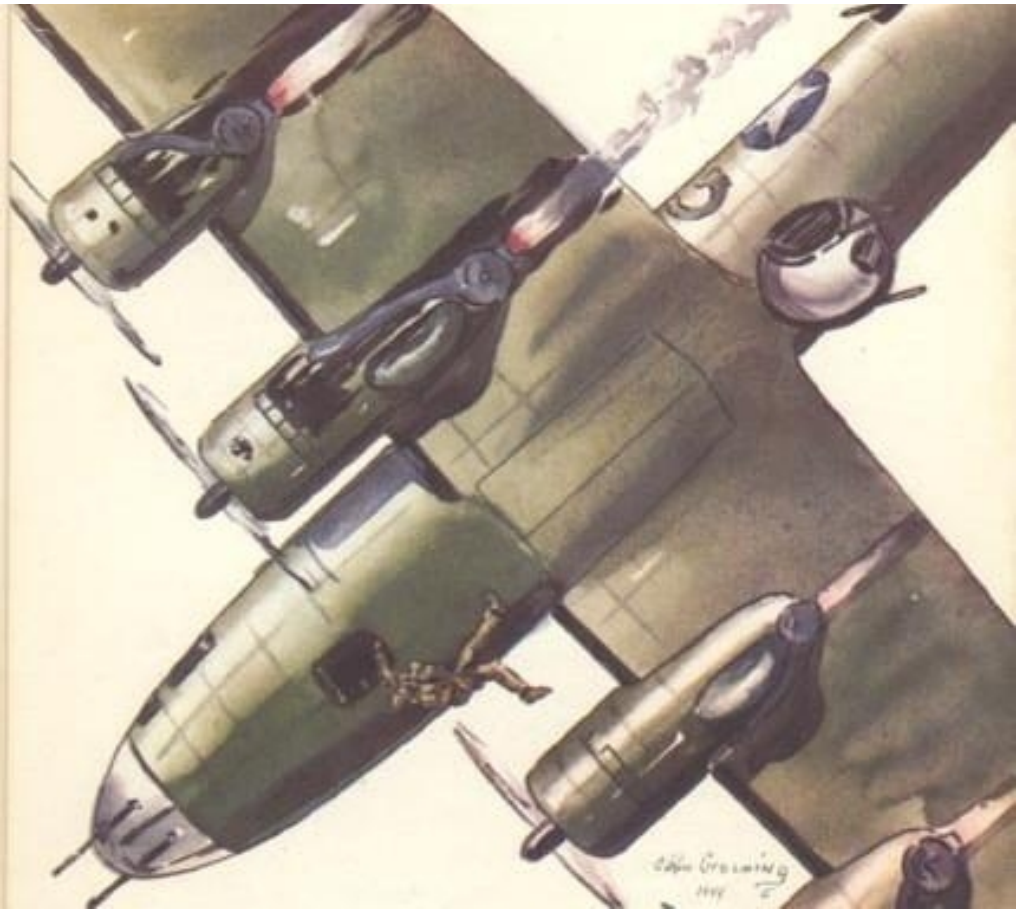
In addition to B-17G 42-38177 *Shack Rabbits*, other aircraft crashed in the border area on 6 March 1944. At seven of these, Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe has placed a Lost Wings information panel. [Three of the aircraft were B-17s from the 561st Bomb Squadron: B-17G 42-37886 *Blitzing Betsy*, B-17G 42-31135 *Suzy Sagtits*, and B-17G 42-38177 *Shack Rabbits*"]

On the return flight, close to the Dutch border, navigator Lt. Leonard Levy informed the crew that they were approaching the Zuider Zee. The crew responded with a cheerful attitude, and began to eat Mars bars as a sign of relief. Immediately after this, at around 14:50, B-17G 42-38177 *Shack Rabbits* was attacked by a number of Focke Wulf Fw 190s and Messerschmitt Bf 109s which attacked out of the sun, making them difficult to spot. During the first attack, Lt. Rock Newmark, manning the two Browning M2 .50 caliber machine guns in the chin turret, was hit by the 20+30mm shells fired by the German fighters. He was wounded in the arm.



Bailout Procedure for B-17

The inner left engine was also hit, and a hit to the oxygen tank turned it into a fire-breathing entity. The plane was beyond saving, so Lt. Leonard Levy decided to open the escape hatch. Before he and Lt. Raymond R. Newmark left the plane, they saw pilot Lt. Augustine B. Cristiani and co-pilot Lt. Clarence D. Farrington preparing to leave the plane as well. As they looked toward the tail of the plane, they saw flight engineer and dorsal turret gunner Sgt. Salvatore Ciaccio trapped in his turret, *"his clothes burning from head to toe*. "



Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[2]'s

Navigator Bailing from a B-17

Of the ten crew members, five managed to parachute to safety: Lt. Raymond R. Newmark was the first to leave B-17G 42-38177*Shack Rabbits*. He was found shortly afterwards in farmland near Neuringe. He was briefly cared for by a farmer and his family...

[2] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1.

Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[3]'s

Bailing Out

Lt. Leonard Levy was the second to leave the plane. He also landed near Neuringe. William A. Pope and William N. Kline then left the plane. They were housed overnight in a Neuringe barn by a farmer.

Pilot Lt. Augustine B. Cristiani was the last to exit the B-17. He also landed safely at Neuringe and spent the night in a barn. The five surviving crew members who bailed out turned themselves in by walking to the police station in Lingen.

[3] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1.

Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[4]'s

Running

Both wireless operator Sgt. William B. Mayne and ball turret gunner Sgt. Rupert G. Smith were hit by 20mm rounds from the German fighters, mortally wounding them. They soon succumbed to their wounds. Salvatore Ciaccio jumped out of the plane without a parachute, still burning.

Tail gunner Sgt. John C. Griscom soon radioed to abandon the plane. However, he was found dead at Georgsdorf. The cause is unknown. The same goes for Lt.Clarence D. Farrington; he also managed to leave the plane with his parachute but was also found dead at Neuringe. Crew members say that he was either injured and therefore failed to open his parachute, or that his parachute was damaged by the fire, causing him to fall to his death.

The shooting down of B-17G 42-38177 *Shack Rabbits* can most likely be attributed to Hauptmann Hugo Frey, flying Focke Wulf Fw 190A-6 Wnr. 470083. Hauptmann Hugo Frey also crashed with his aircraft on 6 March 1944, after having shot down a total of four B-17 Flying Fortresses, at Erm. It is unknown whether the gunners of B-17G 42-38177 *Shack Rabbits* were the cause of its crash.

[4] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1.

Shack Rabbits Lost Wings information panel, Twist[5], Germany

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'[6]

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
Drenthe Air War Research Foundation

[5] 52°37'21.2"N 7°02'55.9"E

[6] https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-38177-shack-rabbits/

Hauptmann Hugo Frey

(14 April 1915 – 6 March 1944)

The industrial areas of Berlin and Genshagen, Germany are the primary targets for Mission [250.] A combined force of 730 heavy bombers are dispatched from 1st, 2nd and 3rd Air Divisions… A total of 69 aircraft Failed to Return, a loss rate of 9.452%. While that loss rate was considered very high, the strategy of attacking high profile targets in order to draw up the Luftwaffe does pay benefits with 179-36-93 of German aircraft claimed. It is not the loss of aircraft that is so devastating to the Luftwaffe but *the loss of pilots*.

8th Army Air Forces Mission 250[7]
American Air War Museum in Britain

Hugo Frey was a Luftwaffe ace and recipient of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross during World War II. On 6 March 1944, Frey was killed over Sleen, the Netherlands after attacking a formation of Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers. He was posthumously awarded the Knight's Cross on 4 May 1944. During his career he was credited with 32 aerial victories including 25 four-engine bombers, all on the Western Front.

- Wikipedia entry

[7] https://www.americanairmuseum.com/archive/mission/8th-air-force-250

The shooting down of B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits' can most likely be attributed to Hauptmann Hugo Frey, flying Focke Wulf Fw 190A-6 Wnr. 470083. Hauptmann Hugo Frey also crashed with his aircraft on 6 March 1944, after having shot down a total of four B-17 Flying Fortresses, at Erm. It is unknown whether the gunners of B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits' were the cause of its crash.

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'[8]

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
Drenthe Air War Research Foundation

[8] https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-38177-shack-rabbits/

Bronze Medal
March 10-11, 1944

2nd Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy is awarded a Bronze Medal for completing his fifth combat mission over enemy territory. Despite being injured inside the *Shack Rabbits* while it was under attack by German ace fighter pilot Hauptmann[9] Hugo Frey, this is the only medal ever awarded to Lt. Levy.

Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy saved at least one person on *Shack Rabbits* while it was under attack by Hptmn. Hugo Frey. After leaving his Navigator's station, he opened the Escape Hatch and checked on the pilot and copilot, who were still in the cockpit.

As he tried to get Lt. Clarence (Red) D. Farrington ready to bail out, he was shot by a single bullet in the right bicep which lodged in Lt. Levy's arm and left Lt. Farrington free from any physical wound. Although Red appeared uninjured, he may have been in shock.

Pilot Lt. Augustine (Chris) B. Cristiani was operational, but the *Shack Rabbits* was not. He quickly decided to save the crew and not to save the B-17. Lt. Chris Christiani gave the order to bail out.

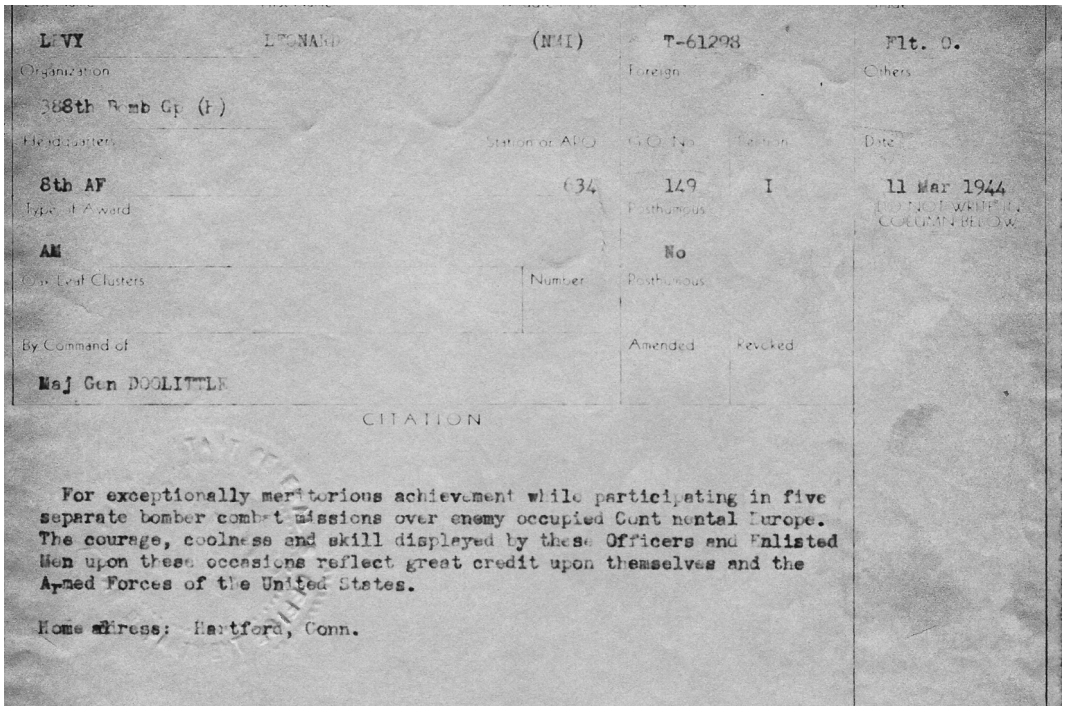
As the freshly injured Lt. Leonard Levy prepared to bail out, he saw that Bombardier Lt. Raymond (Rock) Newmark was severely injured, but still manning a machine gun turret

[9] Hauptmann is an officer rank in the German, Austrian, and Swiss armies, typically translated as "captain." It is equivalent to the rank of captain in the British and US Armies.

not assigned to him. Lt. Leonard Levy guided his friend Rock from the turret, adjusted his parachute, tapped him on the shoulder and watched him jump.

Oh God, Lt. Leonard Levy thought. I'm next. As he checked his parachute he tried to remember his training. I have to count 1 to 10 before I pull the ripcord. Remember to count 1 to 10. Count 1 to 10.

After ensuring the safety of the bombardier and potentially saving the life of the co-pilot, Lt. Leonard Levy stepped out of *his* Flying Fortress, rapidly counted **1, 2, 10**, pulled his ripcord, watched the parachute unfurl and landed *safely* in Neuringe, Germany.



LEVY LEONARD (NMI) T-61298 Flt. O.

Organization: 388th Bomb Gp (H)

Headquarters: 8th AF

Station or APO: 634

G.O. No.: 149

Section: I

Date: 11 Mar 1944

Type of Award: AM

Posthumous: No

Oak Leaf Clusters

Number

Posthumous

By Command of: Maj Gen DOOLITTLE

Amended

Revoked

DO NOT WRITE IN COLUMN BELOW

CITATION

For exceptionally meritorious achievement while participating in five separate bomber combat missions over enemy occupied Cont nental Europe. The courage, coolness and skill displayed by these Officers and Enlisted Men upon these occasions reflect great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States.

Home address: Hartford, Conn.

Sgt. Salvatore Ciaccio

(July 7, 1921 – March 6 1944)

Salvatore Ciaccio was born on July 7, 1921, the son of Ignazio and Adela Ciaccio. Salvatore had two younger brothers: John P. Ciaccio (1923) and Joseph Ciaccio (1925). Little is known about Salvatore and the family, but they lived in Brooklyn, New York, [where he] worked at Acme Air Appliances Company.

At the beginning of the war, Salvatore applied for the American Air Force. Salvatore was accepted and… [started] his training as a flight engineer and gunner.

After completing his training, Salvatore was assigned to the 561st Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group, which was stationed at RAF Knettishall in England. From there, Salvatore flew seven missions against Germany.

During Salvatore's last mission, his clothes caught fire. Distraught, Salvatore jumped out of the plane without a parachute and died.

In 1947, the Roman Catholic Church of Ascension, 86th Street and 55th Avenue, dedicated a shrine and flagpole to the parish's victims, including Salvatore and his brother John (who also died in 1944).

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'[10]

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
Drenthe Air War Research Foundation

[10] https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-38177-shack-rabbits/

Lt. Clarence Darryl (Red) Farrington

(1917 – March 6 1944)

Clarence Darryl 'Red' Farrington was born in 1917 in Lenox, Madison County, New York. He was the son of William Mortimer Farrington and Mary Jane Sollitt Betsinger. Red had two older brothers and one older sister; William, Frederick and Alice. He also had two younger brothers; Adrian and Harry.

Red attended Canastota High School. After that, he joined the New Process Gear Corp. Syracuse. At the beginning of the war Red enlisted in the United States Air Force. His basic training was at Enid, Oklahoma and he was later stationed at Victory Field, Vernon, Texas. Red received his wings at the Twin Engine Bomber Training School at Pampa Texas in June 1943. After completing his training, Red was assigned to the 561st Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group, which was based at RAF Knettishall in England. From there, Red flew six missions against Germany. During Red's last mission, he was unable to exit the plane in time and was killed in the crash.

Red was awarded the following awards: Air Medal, Purple Heart, United States Aviator Badge Army, World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, Army Presidential Unit Citation, Army Good Conduct Medal and European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign.

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'[11]

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
Drenthe Air War Research Foundation

[11] https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-38177-shack-rabbits/

Staff Sgt. John Clayton Griscom

(April 29, 1922 – March 6 1944)

Staff Sgt. John Clayton Griscom was born on April 29, 1922, the son of Clayton Denn Griscom (originally from Salem, New York) and Jeanne Marie Zielinski (from Paris). The family lived in Paris, where John was born.

The family left Cherbourg for New York on July 9, 1932, aboard the SS Leviathan. They arrived there on July 15, 1932, after which they settled in Salem, New York. After a few years, John went to work for the US Department of Defense. Not long after, John signed up for the US Air Force. John was accepted and he started his training as a gunner.

After completing his training, John was assigned to the 561st Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group, which was based at RAF Knettishall in England. From here, John flew 25 missions against Germany. During his last mission, he was unable to exit the plane in time and was killed in the crash.

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'[12]

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
Drenthe Air War Research Foundation

[12] https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-38177-shack-rabbits/

Sgt. William (Bill) Burtle Mayne

(May 26, 1920 – March 6 1944)

Sgt. William Burtle "Bill" Mayne was born on May 26, 1920, to William Burtle Mayne and Selina Griffith in Mayfield, Pennsylvania. Bill had one older sister, Evelyn Grace Mayne. Bill's father, a World War I veteran, died on December 24, 1922.

Bill attended Mayfield High School, graduating in 1938. He then went to work as a brakeman on a locomotive.

On December 19, 1941, Bill enlisted in the United States Air Force. Bill was accepted and he began training as a radio operator.

After completing his training, Bill was stationed with the 11th Bomb Group in the South Pacific, specifically Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands. Here Bill flew as a wireless operator on B-17E 41-9227 'Yankee Doodle Jr.'.

From Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands, the crew flew missions against Japanese shipping and bombing raids on Japanese targets. The crew of B-17E 41-9227 'Yankee Doodle Jr.' was responsible for sinking at least two Japanese ships (a cruiser and a transport) and shooting down at least six Japanese aircraft.

After completing his tour, Bill returned to America in 1943. Here he decided to sign up for another tour. This time Bill was assigned to the 561st Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group, which was stationed at RAF Knettishall in England. From here Bill flew eight missions against Germany.

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'[13]

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
Drenthe Air War Research Foundation

The crew of B-17E 41-9227 'Yankee Doodle Jr.' at Guadalcanal,
Sgt. Bill Mayne is marked with the arrow

[13] https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-38177-shack-rabbits/

Sgt. Rupert Garland Smith

(May 28, 1919 – March 6 1944)

Sgt. Rupert Garland "Snuffy" Smith was born on May 28, 1919, to Claude Alexander Smith and Mary Leona Madewell. Rupert was an only child. The family lived in McIntosh, Oklahoma.

Rupert married Gertie Marie Winkle in 1935, and together they had one daughter: Patricia Louise Smith.

In August 1942 Rupert enlisted in the American Air Force. Rupert was accepted and given identification number '18096277'. After this he could start his training as a gunner.

Rupert was nicknamed 'Snuffy' by his crewmates because he was the smallest of the bunch, but also the smartest.

After completing his training, Rupert was assigned to the 561st Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group, based at RAF Knettishall in England in 1943. From here, Rupert flew seven missions against Germany.

During Rupert's seventh and final mission, he was seriously injured and was unable to leave the aircraft. He died in the crash.

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'[14]

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
Drenthe Air War Research Foundation

[14] https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-38177-shack-rabbits/

Wednesday night
March 8, 1944

Darling ~

Libby[15] called me earlier this evening to go to the movies with her. I would have gone. I had just been to the movies last night and not getting to sleep until very late, I decided I'd go to bed early tonight.

Tomorrow night I am going to your mom's for supper and of course, knowing mom - she'll have everything I like.

I'll stay in this weekend as Sadie[16] is going to New York for the weekend. She has a friend there and I guess they'll take in a few shows. She doesn't see that fellow she used to write me about when we were in Alexandria[17]. He is younger than she, and he was getting too serious and because of the age difference, she decided to call it off. However, he still writes to her every week and she does likewise. I guess it would be called a platonic friendship now. He's living in Chicago now - what he's doing there I don't know - but I gathered that from the postmark on his envelopes.

I received the letter long overdue from Frances - she told me Chris[18] had a good time in London, and she's happy about the fact that you and Chris get along so well. She just began to work recently as she was expecting her sister-in-law from Australia to come to the States, but her brother is back in Australia so she's not coming now. She wrote a very nice letter and I was glad to hear from her.

I am sending you three different kinds of pipe tobacco - small packages - not knowing what you preferred. Let's see there's Briggs, Bond Street and Union Leader -I hope you will like one of them. Darling, is there anything in particular you would like to have me send to you? I know you haven't received any of my packages yet - but you'll get them eventually~

---

[15] Libby Handler graduated from Weaver High School in Hartford, Connecticut in 1938 with Sylvia and they have remained close friends.

[16] Sadie Geetter is Sylvia's oldest sister. Like Sylvia she is a working woman and they both pay rent for a shared bedroom in their mother's house at 148 Marigold St. in Hartford, Conn.

[17] Originally known as Alexandria Army Air Base, the base was opened on 21 October 1942 and during World War II performed Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress aircrew training. It was placed on inactive status on 23 September 1946, although a small cadre of Army and Air Force personnel (331 Comps Squadron) remained assigned to Alexandria Municipal Airport throughout the late 1940s. Located 5 miles northwest of Alexandria, LA, about 170 miles northwest of New Orleans, LA.

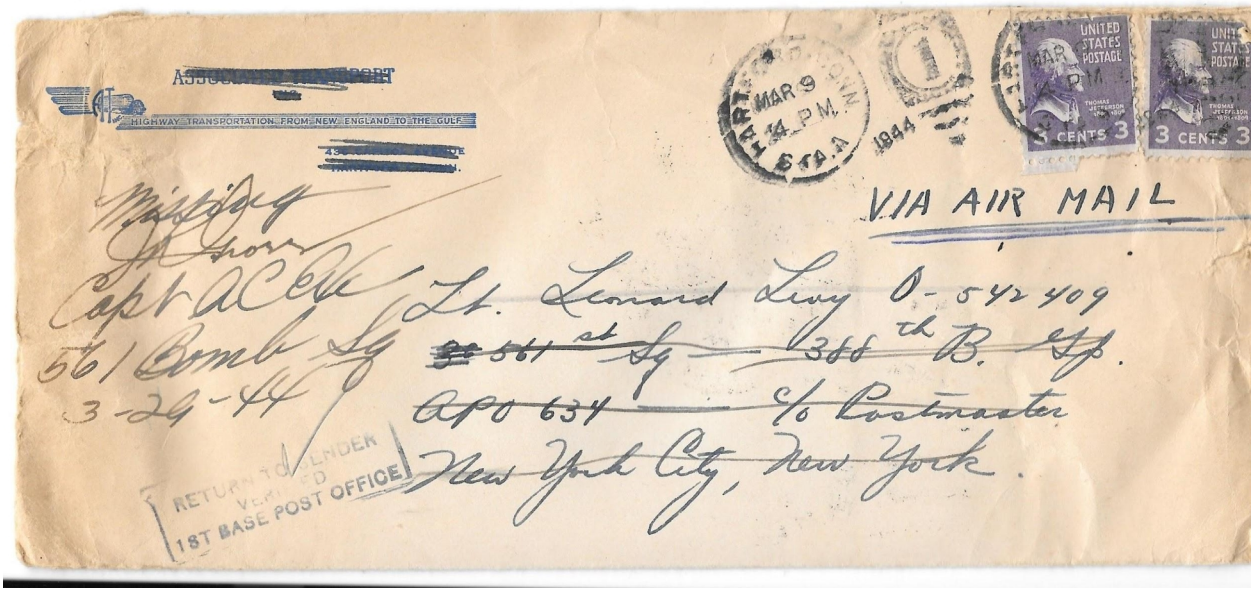
[18] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew. Frances is his wife.

You asked me what I thought would be a good name for your ship – Hon - I thought you were going to name it "The Hot Rocks" - I thought that was as good a name as you could have. I don't think I could give a better name.

I'm hoping tomorrow will bring a letter from you. There's one good thing about Tomorrows - there's the chance your wishes will come true. Of course my biggest wish for the tomorrows to come is that you will be home soon - I do miss you so much and with all my heart -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

The envelope was from Sylvia's employer, Associated Transport Inc. With name and address crossed out but legible: 436 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Conn. The logo and slogan were not crossed out: AT Inc. Over a speeding truck "Highway Transportation From New England to the Gulf"



Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

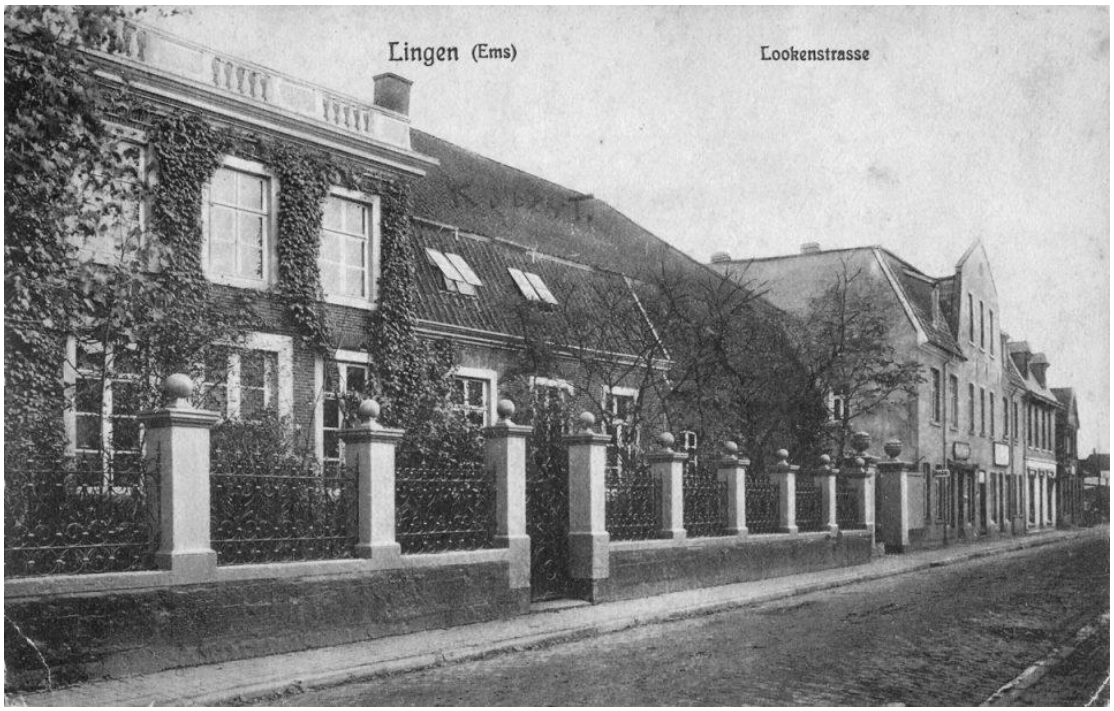
J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-29-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 31, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service

Life Magazine 02-28-1944

Lingen Police Station and Plantlunne Air Base

(March 7, 1944)



The five surviving crew members[19] of *Shack Rabbits* turned themselves in at the police station in Lingen. They were shortly turned over to soldiers from the nearby Plantlunne Air Base in Germany. Sgt. Pope Jr. and Sgt. William Kline were processed, interrogated and sent to Dulag Luft for further interrogations.

The officers and good friends also had to complete Missing Crew reports on the five crew who perished. Due to his serious injury, Bombardier Lt. Rock Newmark received a typist to complete his Casualty Questionnaire. Pilot Lt. Chris Christiani and Navigator Lt. Lenny Levy completed their Casualty Questionnaires in pencil.

[19] The surviving crew included Pilot Chris Christiani, Navigator Lenny Levy, Bombardier Rock Newmark, Waist gunner William N. Kline, and Waist gunner Bill Alfred Pope Jr.

Thursday night
[March 9, 1944 undated]

Darling ~

I was anxiously looking forward to coming home this evening as I found out that there were three letters from you. However, I didn't go directly home as I went to [your] mom's for supper. Yes, I had a truly delicious meal and my one regret was that you couldn't be with me to enjoy it too. I'm sure, however, that when you do come home, Mom will make a meal that will put this one to shame.

I added something else to the furnishings of our home-to-be. Mom gave me a very big bath towel - one that you can wrap around yourself. I know it is one you will enjoy using and I remarked about that to mom.

Everybody is fine and we had a pleasant evening just talking. I came home with her a while ago and I have just finished reading your letters.

Darling I guess I'm a bit slow-witted but I can't get the connection of "Shack Rabbit" as the name of your new plane. Yes, I know what rabbits are known for but I still can't see what that has to do with the plane. You'll just have to enlighten the subject somehow in one of your letters. Maybe, if I think about it, it will come to me - so I'll think about it.

I found your enclosed ring size in one of the letters and I intend to see Mr. Kurland Saturday. Thank you for trusting my taste in selecting your ring. I will try to get you a ring you will like. I am going to get a plain gold band - and it won't be a wide one. I always thought a man's wedding ring should be plain and not decorative or showy. It will be engraved with our initials and date of our marriage - does that sound all right, darling?

I was surprised when I read about your Co-pilot's intentions to get married. He certainly is just bound to get married. Yes, darling, I agree that at the present he can have a laugh on folks like us [with] just a Picture and memories to keep us happy. But, when the time comes for them to part - which is inevitable in wartime - will his love be deep enough so that memories and just pictures keep him happy? That will be the time for him to know whether he can have that last laugh.

Darling, I wish I were in your arms right now and I could tell you how much I love you. I wouldn't have to tell you then how much I miss you because I'd be so happy. I do miss you so much darling and I love you so much. Take good care of yourself and remember that with all my heart -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-26-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 27, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 28 1944 by the Control Section.

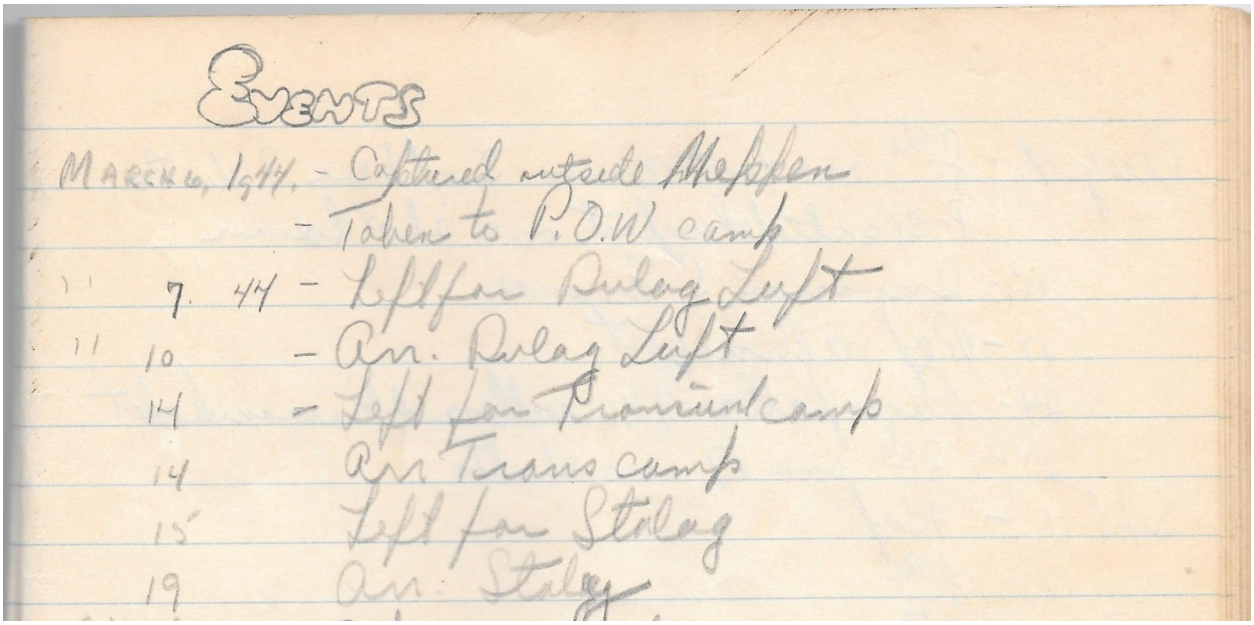
Life Magazine 02-14-1944 page114

Lenny's Logbook[20]

March, 1944

Events

March 6, 1944 – Captured outside Merkken
- Taken to P.O.W. camp
March 7, 1944 – Left for Dulag Luft
March 10, 1944 – Arr[ived] Dulag Luft
March 14, 1944 – Left for Transient Camp
March 14, 1944 – Arr[ived in] Transient Camp
March 15, 1944 – Left for Stalag [Luft 1]
March 19, 1944 – Arr[ived in]Stalag [Luft 1]


EVENTS
MARCH 6, 1944. - Captured outside Merkken
- Taken to P.O.W camp
" 7. 44 - Left for Dulag Luft
" 10 - Arr. Dulag Luft
14 - Left for Transient camp
14 Arr Trans camp
15 Left for Stalag
19 Arr. Stalag

[20] Among supplies shipped via the International Red Cross to U.S. prisoners of war in Germany during World War II were blank composition books supplied by the YMCA. Lenny did not return with any hardcover Logbook or Diary. This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

Remains Buried - Fallen Crew

March 10, 1944

The fallen crew members of **B-17G 42-38177 *Shack Rabbits*** were temporarily buried at the cemetery in Lingen. [Raymond] Rock Newmark was present when Salvatore Ciaccio and Rupert G. Smith were buried on 10 March 1944. Although they were badly burned, Robert R. Newmark was shown the legible dog tags of his two comrades. The ceremony was performed by a captured French priest. The fallen crew members were repatriated after the war to the Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial in Neupré or back to the United States.

Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Tech Sgt. Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio (Killed in Action)

Co-pilot: Lt. Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington (Killed in Action)

Tail gunner: Staff Sgt. John Clayton Griscom (Killed in Action)

Radio Operator: Technical Sgt. William Burtle Mayne (Killed in Action)

Ball turret gunner: Sgt. Rupert Garland Smith (Killed in Action)

B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'[21]

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
Drenthe Air War Research Foundation

[21] https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-38177-shack-rabbits/

Friday night ~
March 10, 1944

Darling ~

I am getting to be a regular Friday night member of services at the Emmanuel[22] I went again tonight. I enjoy going to the services and I hope to go every Friday night in the future.

In your letter yesterday you mentioned the good the American Red Cross is doing. We are having the Red Cross Drive here at home this month and I'm so glad you told me how much you thought of the work they are doing. I always knew that they did so much for the men in services and their families but hearing it from you makes me feel all the more anxious to give - and when I do darling it will be as you put it - "till it hurts."

You were worried because you have received no mail from me in several days. Darling, there is nothing wrong at home - I have been writing to you daily and above all things, I am not keeping anything from you. There is no need to - everything is coming along fine at home - I'm in the best of health and your folks are fine - so darling - you see - there is no need to worry. When you don't get mail for several days just try to think of the jackpot you will get when the mail does arrive - because I know there will be one at the end of each wait.

Sadie left for New York today and I hope that the weekend will be as nice as it has been today.

Ebner[23] is now in the hospital at Bradley Field. I spoke to his sister tonight and she said he's perfectly all right except for the fact that he gets severe headaches every now and then and they are keeping him under observation to find out what is causing them. I've been calling his folks pretty often and his mother told me how happy he was because his sister named her new son Leonard. Mrs. Glooskin tells me that Ebner thinks so much of you that I had better watch out. I must admit that I am happy knowing you have a true friend because true friends are few and far between.

Well my darling - there's not much more I can say tonight. I'll say goodnight for now and until tomorrow with all my heart -

I love you

[22] The Emmanuel Synagogue in the North End of Hartford (Greenfield St.)

[23] Ebner Glooskin graduated in the same Weaver High School class of 1938 as Sylvia. Ebner has become friends with Lenny since Lenny and Sylvia began dating.

Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-26-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 27, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 28 1944 by the Control Section.

Saturday night ~
March 11, 1944

Darling ~

Here it is Saturday again. I mailed your kit this afternoon and I made a prayer that you would get it soon.

This afternoon I had a phone call from Rosalyn and I met her mother and kid brother. It was very good , but when I had finished I was so full. After dinner I went to Mr Kurland for a ring and I found one I thought you would like. It's a plain one as I said I wanted to get, but it has ridging on the edges which gives it more of a flat look. I think you will like it. Expect to get it about Thursday as it is being initialed and it won't be ready until then. Mr Kurland said that it is very difficult to get an accurate ringing size by measuring the finger with paper or string as paper and string stretch. However, he gave me a size he thought would be most accurate. But, if it is too large or too small the only thing you can do will be to take it to London with you and get a guard put on it if it is too large or have it stretched if it is too small. I'm keeping my fingers crossed that it will fit you darling.

Rosalyn[24] and I went to the movies this afternoon. We saw Paulette Goddard And Fred McMurray in *Standing Room Only* . It was entertaining and we enjoyed it. She came home with me and we had supper here. We didn't do much, just talked and had a quiet evening. She left about 15 minutes ago and for no reason I am sleepy now. I saw Margie[25] downtown

[24] Sylvia 's friend from work.

[25] Sylvia's sister-in-law Marjorie (Margie) Levy is married to N. Norman Levy, is pregnant with twins and living with her in-laws.

this afternoon with Helen. They had been to the movies too and were on their way home. Our buses came along as soon as we met, so it was hello and goodbye at the same time.

I have a book I've been intending to read. I think I'll take it to bed with me and make my intentions good. I can't help but think how different Saturday nights are from what they used to be.

Well darling, I'd better get to bed. I wish I could tell you how much I love you but no matter how I try - I just can't. I guess saying "I love you" we'll have to do it darling - at least until you are home once again.

Goodnight darling
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-26-44

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Dulag Luft
March 10-14, 1944

Events

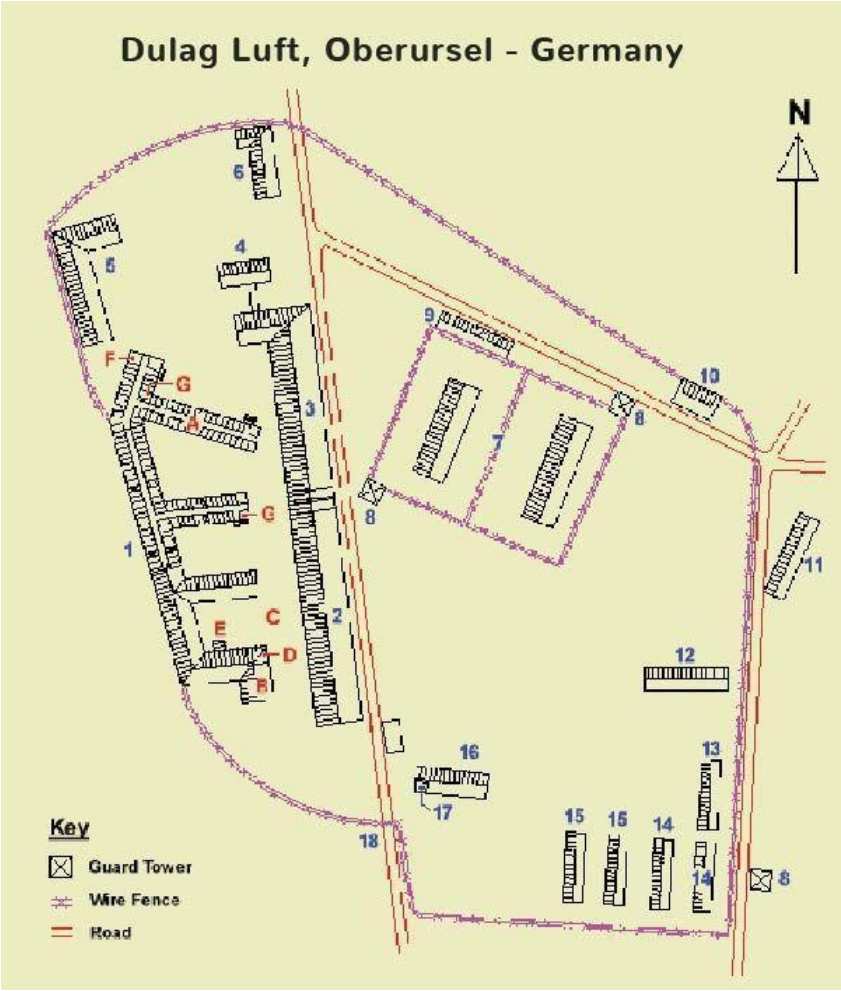
March 10, 1944 – Arr[ived] Dulag Luft
March 14, 1944 – Left for Transient Camp [Auswertestelle West]

Lenny spends four days at Dulag Luft. He does not see any of his fellow *Shack Rabbit* crew .

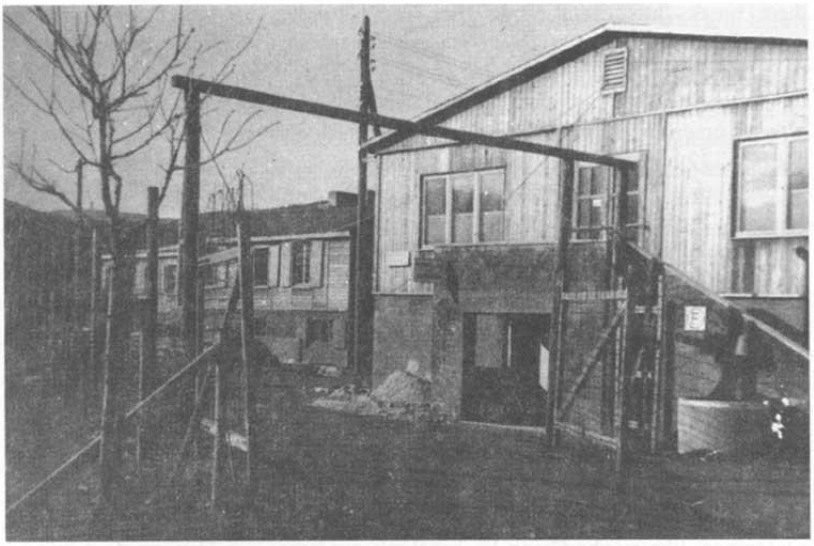
Dulag Luft, is the German prison camp through which thousands of Allied airmen captured in western Europe passed. An extremely efficient interrogation center, Dulag Luft was composed of three locations: the **Interrogation Center** at Oberusal; the hospital at Hohemark; and the transit camp Auswertestelle West (evaluation Center West) which was off the main Frankfurt-Homburg road and near the trolley stop of Kupforhammer.

The camp's purpose was to prepare prisoners for transfer to a permanent camp. This involved helping them to adjust to life in captivity, began with the interrogation center, where a variety of means were used to extract any useful information from them. Every prisoner was presented with a questionnaire, ostensibly from the German Red Cross, which asked a wide range of questions, many military in nature.

Dulag Luft (the word is a corruption of the German *Durchsgangslager Luftwaffe*, or air force transit camp) was near the town of Oberursel, about 10 miles (16 km) northwest of Frankfurt-am-Main in western Germany. It occupied a large, pleasant-looking farmhouse that had once been part of an experimental farm.



Upon arrival at Dulag Luft, prisoners were undressed and their clothes searched. They were then put into individual cells described as solitary confinement. They were there visited by a reception officer and sometimes by an interpreter as well if the reception officer was not fluent in the language of the prisoner. The reception officer would endeavor to persuade the prisoner to answer all the questions on the form.

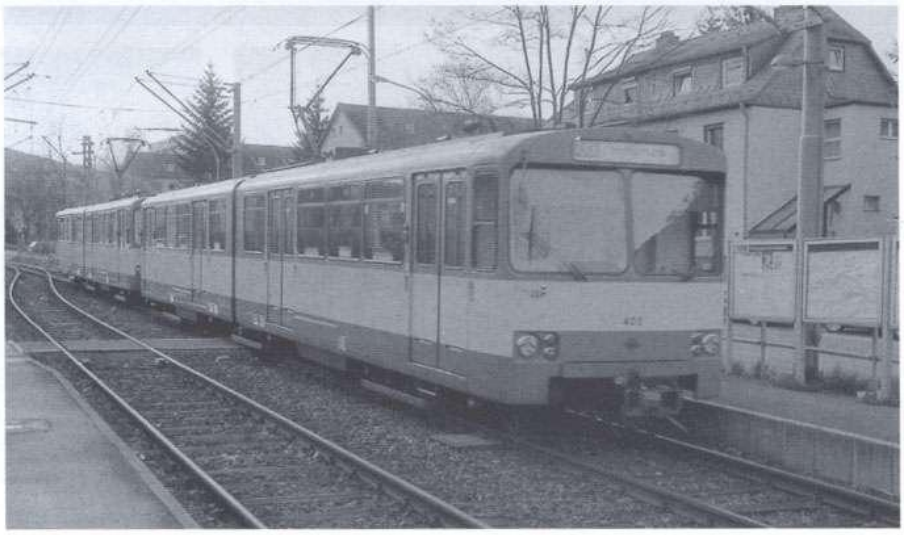


THROUGH THESE PORTALS . . .
Some of the finest fighter and bomber crews of the Allied forces passed through this gateway to the cooler at the interrogation center based at Oberursel.

These interrogations were sometimes held in the cells, but more often in the rooms of the officer detained. Usually such interrogations were quite short, as, for instance in the case of an air gunner, who would have little information; but sometimes in the case of a pilot or prisoners who were particularly security minded, the interrogations might continue for three or four days, often twice per day.

Auswertestelle West (evaluation Center West) was situated 300 yards north of the main Frankfurt-Homburg road and near the trolley stop of Kupforhammer. (this was) the third-stop after Oberusal (50-12 N - 8-34E). Oberursel is thirteen kilometers northwest of Frankfort am Main.

Above: 'Kupferhammer — all change for Dulag Luft.' From here prisoners would cross the road (Hohemarkstrasse) to walk to the camp. Note that these POWs are in fact *leaving* Dulag Luft and about to board the tram for Frankfurt. (Bundesarchiv)



In early 1941, the interrogation center, comprising 129 solitary confinement cells, was opened. The center designated "Auswertestelle West", or Evaluation Center West, later grew to about 200 cells, many equipped with electronic listening devices.

Sunday night ~
March 12, 1944

Darling ~

What a morning we had! About nine o'clock the doorbell rang and rang - I was sound asleep but I just jumped out of bed, put on my robe and went to see who it was. It was Issie[26], he came in last night and he was making his rounds early. He asked about you, and told me he wrote to you this week. He looks fine but I still can't get used to seeing him in his Navy uniform. He left about 10:00 and I ate my breakfast and began to clean the house. The telephone rang and it was my cousin Evelyn who was here with her boyfriend and she wanted to bring him up to meet me. So I put aside my dust cloth and had my visitors. He seems like a very nice fellow and he has a good sense of humor. I couldn't help but think of the time you were doing the same thing - making the rounds and meeting the family.

They stayed for about an hour. He is going to be in this country for about 12 days. He goes back and forth but just what he does, I don't know. When they left, I made a date for the future to meet them in New York some weekend and have a real good time - by the future - I mean when you are home and this is all over.

After we had our dinner - just Mom and me. Sadie[27] is still in New York – Mom went downstairs for a walk. It was really beautiful outdoors today and it felt as though Spring can't be very far away.

I was just thinking about what I did to my dress at work Friday. I had on my light green gabardine dress - you never saw this dress and I dropped my fountain pen in my lap and my dress was all spotted with ink. I let out a scream and I scared everybody in the office. Well, I have a right to scream, I ruined my dress - and just before it happened a girl was complimenting me on the color of the dress - and then that had to happen. It's the first time I ever did that - but I hope it is the last.

Claire[28], Moe and the children were here this afternoon. They walked here instead of coming by their car - and they all were exhausted. Moe almost fell asleep on the chair.

---

[26] Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David Maranski, Albert Leonard, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written. Isidore left his job as a physician at the Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the US Navy. He is finishing his training in New London, Connecticut.

[27] Sadie Geetter is Sylvia's oldest sister. Like Sylvia she is a working woman and they both pay rent for a shared bedroom in their mother's house at 148 Marigold St. in Hartford, Conn. She is also the primary caregiver for her ailing mother.

[28] Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

Do you know what today is? It's been nine months now since we were married. The months seem to be flying by. However, if we put the actual time we were together it would make us just newlyweds - I pray darling that the time when you will be home will be soon so that we can go on where we left off. However, until that day comes - be it sooner or later - I'll love you more everyday. So in memory of this day - a very special "I love you" -

Goodnight darling,
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-26-44

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Monday night ~
March 13, 1944

Darling~

I went to sleep very early last night and I was awakened about midnight by the pounding of the rain on the roof. Yes rain still has its effects on me - and as I listen to it I begin to think about you and me, and how much I love you. I finally fell asleep once again into such a beautiful slumber only to be awakened by that darn alarm clock. I still think the man who invented alarm clocks should have been hanged. It's been raining all day - and from what one of the girls in the office said - it looks like spring will be here soon.

This evening when I came home from work I was happy to find a letter from you. Now you have five missions and naturally as they begin to add up I can't keep but think it won't be long before you will be home[29] telling me all about them. And you are going to get your first metal soon. You asked me what I think of my husband - well - I'm very proud of him and I love him with all my heart.

Did the candy in the packages stay fresh? You mentioned that you saw the picture *Assignment in Brittany* the other day - and for the life of me - I can't remember definitely if that's the book I sent to you. Is it? If it is - well - it's just a co-incident. Do you have the time to read books - and if so, would you like to have me send you one every so often? If there is anything you would like in particular you won't forget to tell me so will you darling?

The girls in the office[30] tell me I have a way with the Irish. What makes them say that is the fact that my two fat and [age] forty bosses seem to like me and their names are Shea and O'Day.

The other day Mr. Shea came over to my desk and under his breath - which is his usual manner in speaking to me - he said he would like to put his arms around me and hug me with all his might. He no sooner said that than he was on his way down the aisle, as though he had said nothing.

Sue, she's the girl who sits next to me, looks at me and I look at her and we don't know what to make of him. What I can't understand is that I never look at him, speak to

[29] Sylvia Geetter Levy knew that 25 combat missions would complete Lenny's assignment in England - and free him to return home. He completed his first five in one week. At that rate, he would be home in another four weeks.

[30] Sylvia Geetter Levy was a bookkeeper at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time.

him, or smile at him - but he always has something to say to me. As far as Mr. O'Day is concerned, he's very conservative but every time he passes my desk he always gives me a big smile and asks me how his "Brown eyes" are today? Darling, with such keen killer-dillers around... Sue and the rest will have a laugh out of it. I told Sue that Mr. Shea's beer-belly is so big, he could never even get his arms around me. But if he even tries…

This evening Roz and I stopped in Sage's[31] to look at the exhibition of painting and sculpture work of the high school students that have won Scholastic awards. Some of them showed real talent and it's a shame that perhaps they won't be able to go on with it. By that I mean the boys who are just 17 will be going into the service soon.

Ida asked for a release today as her dad is very sick and she has no mother, she has to stay with him until he is back on his feet. But they won't give it to her as there will be no releases until April 1, so she said she will just stay out of work and when April 1 rolls around she will come in for her release. One of the girls in my office got a release two weeks ago as she was going back to Vermont - which is her home. Well, something happened... so she didn't go back. She wanted Mr. Watley - he's the personnel director, to change her release so that she could get another job but he refused to do it - so she has to wait 60 days before her release becomes void. Yes, hon, the girls are all angry in the office but it isn't doing them any good. It doesn't bother me because I like the girls with whom I work and I enjoy my work even if it is hard at times. It keeps me busy, yet we have fun and that's really why I want to work. I'm not working to make a career of it.

[31] The Sage Allen Department store on Main St. was considered a smaller but respected rival to the larger and dominant G Fox & Co. store a block away

The career I want is to have you home, have our own place and raise a family. I still want sons. I told Margie[32] she should have the daughters, so that Mom will have her granddaughters. Mom wants her to [have] a girl so very much.

Did Mom tell you that Norm[33] is going to Indiana to start his training all over again? It seems as though the fellows didn't do very well on their last maneuver so they have to train all over again. Mom and I had to laugh when we both had the same thought - that they would keep up the good work and make a career of taking their training over and over again.

Knowing how much you enjoy your sleep darling, I do feel sorry for you when you get so little of it. Well, darling, when you come home, I'll let you have breakfast in bed on Sundays so that you can roll over to go back to sleep. Of course, you'll have to move over - because I'll be right there with you. *Smaht*!

I'm looking forward to the pictures you are going to have taken of the crew. I hope you will get them soon as I am anxious to see it.

Darling, I guess I've said about all there is to say for tonight. So, in closing let me tell you that I'm thinking of you constantly, loving you deeply and missing you terribly. Take good care of yourself.

Goodnight darling,
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

[Color "Crippled Children" stamp on rear envelope]

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-4-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 7, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service

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[32] Sylvia's sister-in-law Marjorie (Margie) Levy is married to N. Norman Levy, is pregnant with twins and living with her in-laws at 108 Colebrook St. in Hartford, Connecticut.

[33] N. Norman Levy is Lenny's younger brother who enlisted in the US Army and hoped to join Lenny in the Air Corps. He was found to be medically unfit for overseas assignment. He is now a Private and assigned to Basic Training in Indiana, reasonably close to his wife In Hartford, Conn.

SAGE-ALLEN
SAGE ALLEN
SAGE-ALLEN & CO
SAGE-ALLEN
SAGE-ALLEN & CO
SAGE-ALLEN

Auswertestelle West
March 14-15, 1944

Events
March 14, 1944 – Left for Transient Camp [Auswertestelle West]
March 14, 1944 – Arr[ives in] Transient Camp [Auswertestelle West]
March 15, 1944 – Left for Stalag [Luft 1]
March 19, 1944 – Arr[ives in] Stalag [Luft 1]

Lenny spends one night at Auswertestelle West, which is the transit camp (translated as Evaluation Center West.) It was located in the Botanical Gardens, just north of the main Frankfurt-Homburg road and near the trolley stop of Kupforhammer.

The camp's purpose was to further prepare prisoners for transfer to a permanent camp. This involved helping them to adjust to life in captivity, another interrogation and arranging travel to Stalag Luft 1. *Auswertestelle West grew* to about 200 cells, many equipped with electronic listening devices. The camp was destroyed in Allied bombings between 22 & 29 March.

March 15, 1944
Wednesday night ~

Darling ~

I'm enclosing a letter I received from Tubby today. As you will note - it took quite a while to get to me. Instead of sending you the address - I thought you'd get the same kick out of reading his letter as I did. You'll have to tell him all the news since you left Grand Island because I told him I was leaving it all to you.

I called Ebner[34] last night and his sister told me he came home from the hospital and he's fine. He wasn't able to answer the phone when I called - he was taking a nap. But I'm certainly relieved that he's all right again. I really was worried about him. Today I hit the jackpot, I received 4 letters. One from you - that was the best one - one from Eleanor[35], the enclosed letter and a letter from Frieda Jacobs. Sam will be going overseas soon. I guess because Eleanor is back in Cleveland again and she's going back to work. She's still the same comical Eleanor. She had to tell me the good news - no twins this month. Freda wants me to come to Leominster for a weekend. I think I'll go there again when it gets a little warmer. Last night I visited Libby[36]. She had a get-together and I didn't get home until after eleven. When I did get home, I suddenly got a terrific headache and after several attempts to write to you - I just had to give it up. So darling you'll have to forgive me but I'm afraid I wouldn't have written a very intelligible letter.

Mom asked me to come over for supper tomorrow night. Ebner is dropping in later on in the evening so he'll see us both at the same time.

Friday night the girls in my section are going out to dinner and the movies at a get-together before the department breaks up. Of course, I'm going too because it seems as though I get into more trouble in the office and that makes me eligible to be one of the gang.

I've come to the end of another letter. Darling, until I write again tomorrow ~ with all my heart I love you and miss you. Take good care of yourself -

Goodnight darling,
I love you

---

[34] Ebner Glooskin graduated in the same Weaver High School class of 1938 as Sylvia. Ebner has become friends with Lenny since Lenny and Sylvia began dating.

[35] Eleanor (Kohn) Ellison is a childhood friend of Sylvia's whose husband Sam is also trained with Lenny at Selma Field, Monroe, Louisiana.

[36] Libby Handler is one of Sylvia's closest friends. She also graduated in the same Weaver class as she and Ebner and has stayed in Hartford, Conn. and remained good friends.

Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-4-44

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Enclosed letter:

Sunday 13 1944

Hello Duchess,

How's every little thing in the best state in the Union? This is "Tubby" talking (at least that's probably what you'll remember me by.) I'm writing because I'd like to get in touch with Len again. Last I saw him was in Grand Island, Nebraska. From there my crew flew a B-17 over to Italy (where I'm now stationed) by the South Atlantic Route. Believe me the more you see of the world the more you appreciate the U.S. After the war I guess I'll get married and settle down, so if you know of any available beauties tell them to write. I'd appreciate it if you'd send Len my address, also I'd like to have his and Joe Levine's (if you know it) if it isn't too much trouble.

My address

Lt. Fred Leiby
347 B. SQ 99 B. GR
APO 520 New York New York

Notice I'm using Lieutenant although I didn't get it yet but I'm expecting it any day.

Thanks ever so much.

yours very truly
Lt Fred Leiby (formal)
Tubby (informal)

Fred Leiby rose to the rank of Colonel before his B-17 was also shot down. He was a POW in Stalag Luft III in Sagan.

Thursday night ~
March 16 1944

Darling,

I didn't go to [your] mom's for supper tonight as I had planned. Sadie[37] had to go out this evening, and one of us usually stays with my mom as we don't like to leave her home alone in the evening – so I had to call off my visit.

I was speaking to Margie[38] and everybody is fine at home. They are expecting Ebner[39] to visit them tonight. Walt Schecter – who was in Italy until now - is in England. Ruth received a letter today which is the first one she had in a while - it was a surprise to her that he should be there – it seems rather sudden.

I am reading a book that's quite different from the usual trend of novels. It's about the life of a Jewish rabbi and his family. It's very interesting and, of course, being Jewish it is so much more enjoyable because a good deal of it has expressions in Yiddish.

I made a date with Margie to meet me downtown Saturday afternoon and we'll go to a movie. I expect to pick up your ring then as it should be all engraved by then

Tomorrow night, the gang is going to the Seafood for dinner and then we're going to the movies.

Ruth Schecter just called me. She told me she received six pairs of silk stockings from Walt. Hon, if you ever see silk stockings well, I wear size 10. Is that hint enough? He's with a new crew and his APO is 638 – now I'm wondering if that's anywhere near you.

Tomorrow is St. Patrick's Day and I guess I'll see plenty of the "Wearin' of the Green" in the office. Some of the girls were going to buy green carnations but when they found out they were thirty-five cents each, well they decided green ribbons will serve the purpose as well.

---

[37] Sadie Geetter is Sylvia's oldest sister. Like Sylvia she is a working woman and they both pay rent for a shared bedroom in their mother's house at 148 Marigold St. in Hartford, Conn. She is also the primary caregiver for her ailing mother.

[38] Sylvia's sister-in-law Marjorie (Margie) Levy is married to N. Norman Levy, is pregnant with twins and living with her in-laws at 108 Colebrook St. in Hartford, Connecticut.

[39] Ebner Glooskin graduated in the same Weaver High School class of 1938 as Sylvia. Ebner has become friends with Lenny since Lenny and Sylvia began dating.

They are drafting quite a few fathers now. Of course, when Gladys[40] and Claire[41] get together they talk about what they will do when Moe and Ben are taken. They certainly get themselves all hepped up -

By the way hon, I'm curious to know just what your Co-pilot[42] is doing about getting married. Is he really getting married?

Today when I passed the Internal Revenue Office it was funny to see it so empty. Up until yesterday it was jammed with people filing their returns. Sadie took care of mine so I didn't have any trouble filing mine and it is a good feeling knowing it's taken care of.

It's been raining all day today - that makes the second day in a row it seems more like the month of April - we have more rain than the customary March winds right now.

Right now, there is an Operatic version of *Mares Eat Oats* on the radio and it sounds so funny. The fellow singing it has a beautiful Operatic voice - deep baritone - and it sounds ridiculous because the words are so silly.

Darling, I bought a roll of green toilet tissue to give as a gift to Sue for St. Patrick's Day. I might as well be practical. We are always pulling jokes on each other. Today she gave me a gift. She said it was a keepsake - as somebody had given it to her - and she had been saving it for years waiting to give it to someone who deserved it as much as she did. Well it is the cutest little skunk. I nicknamed it *Suzie-Q* after her.

Well sweetheart, I guess I haven't another thing to write tonight - at least as far as news is concerned. However, as always, I want to tell you that I love you very much.

Goodnight darling,
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

---

[40] Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

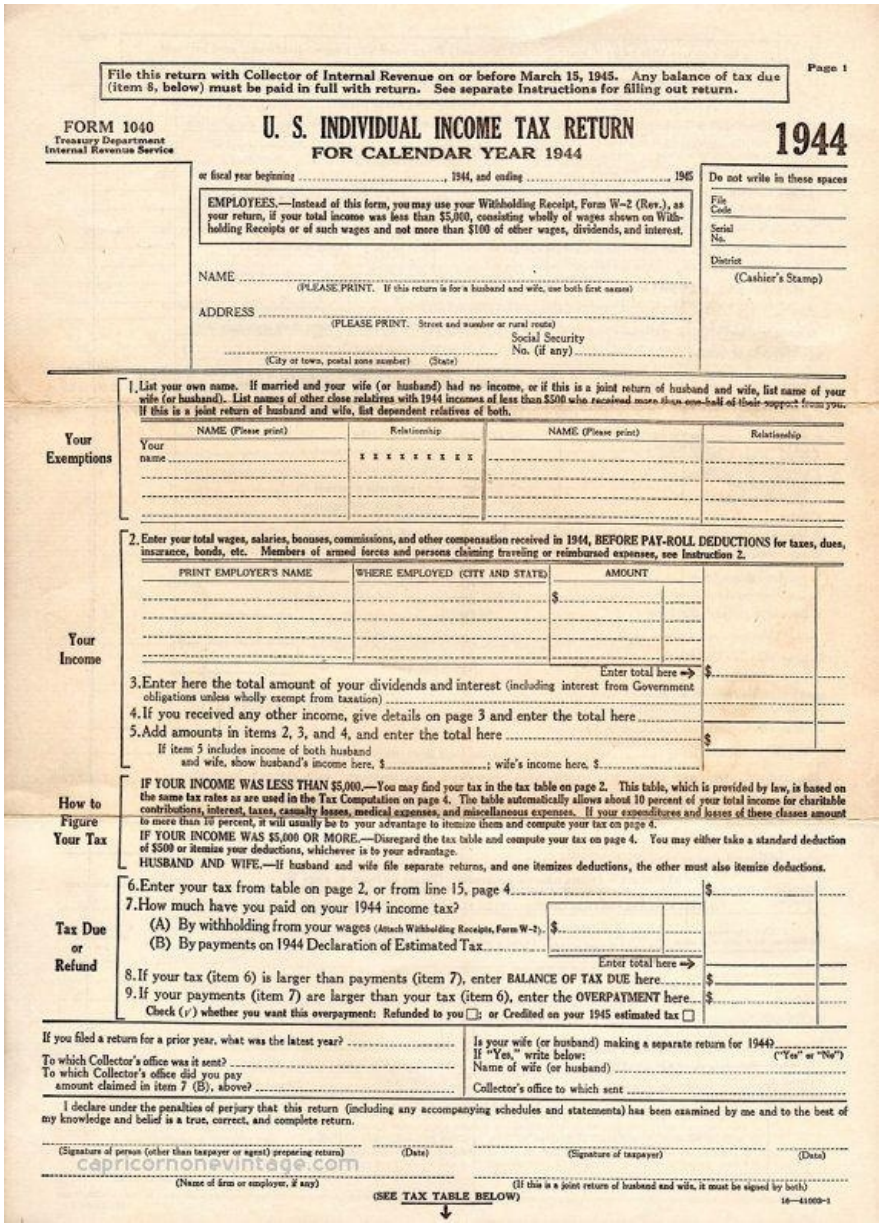
[41] Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

[42] Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington was the Co-pilot of *Shack Rabbit*. In his missing crew report, Lenny states he, "may have been wounded after leaving [the] cockpit to bail out and [his] parachute may have been slightly burned due to fire through the entire aircraft."

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-3-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 5, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service and a second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 7, 1944 by the "Control Section"



File this return with Collector of Internal Revenue on or before March 15, 1945. Any balance of tax due (item 8, below) must be paid in full with return. See separate Instructions for filling out return.

Page 1

FORM 1040
Treasury Department
Internal Revenue Service

U. S. INDIVIDUAL INCOME TAX RETURN
FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1944

1944

or fiscal year beginning ....., 1944, and ending ....., 1945

EMPLOYEES.—Instead of this form, you may use your Withholding Receipt, Form W-2 (Rev.), as your return, if your total income was less than $5,000, consisting wholly of wages shown on Withholding Receipts or of such wages and not more than $100 of other wages, dividends, and interest.

NAME .....
(PLEASE PRINT. If this return is for a husband and wife, use both first names)

ADDRESS .....
(PLEASE PRINT. Street and number or rural route)

..... Social Security No. (if any) .....
(City or town, postal zone number) (State)

Do not write in these spaces
File Code
Serial No.
District
(Cashier's Stamp)

Your Exemptions

1. List your own name. If married and your wife (or husband) had no income, or if this is a joint return of husband and wife, list name of your wife (or husband). List names of other close relatives with 1944 incomes of less than $500 who received more than one-half of their support from you. If this is a joint return of husband and wife, list dependent relatives of both.

NAME (Please print)	Relationship	NAME (Please print)	Relationship
Your name	x x x x x x x x	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....

Your Income

2. Enter your total wages, salaries, bonuses, commissions, and other compensation received in 1944, BEFORE PAY-ROLL DEDUCTIONS for taxes, dues, insurance, bonds, etc. Members of armed forces and persons claiming traveling or reimbursed expenses, see Instruction 2.

PRINT EMPLOYER'S NAME	WHERE EMPLOYED (CITY AND STATE)	AMOUNT
.....	.....	$.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

Enter total here → $.....

3. Enter here the total amount of your dividends and interest (including interest from Government obligations unless wholly exempt from taxation) .....
4. If you received any other income, give details on page 3 and enter the total here .....
5. Add amounts in items 2, 3, and 4, and enter the total here ..... $
If item 5 includes income of both husband and wife, show husband's income here, $.....; wife's income here, $.....

How to Figure Your Tax

IF YOUR INCOME WAS LESS THAN $5,000.—You may find your tax in the tax table on page 2. This table, which is provided by law, is based on the same tax rates as are used in the Tax Computation on page 4. The table automatically allows about 10 percent of your total income for charitable contributions, interest, taxes, casualty losses, medical expenses, and miscellaneous expenses. If your expenditures and losses of these classes amount to more than 10 percent, it will usually be to your advantage to itemize them and compute your tax on page 4.
IF YOUR INCOME WAS $5,000 OR MORE.—Disregard the tax table and compute your tax on page 4. You may either take a standard deduction of $500 or itemize your deductions, whichever is to your advantage.
HUSBAND AND WIFE.—If husband and wife file separate returns, and one itemizes deductions, the other must also itemize deductions.

Tax Due or Refund

6. Enter your tax from table on page 2, or from line 15, page 4 ..... $.....
7. How much have you paid on your 1944 income tax?
(A) By withholding from your wages (Attach Withholding Receipts, Form W-2). $.....
(B) By payments on 1944 Declaration of Estimated Tax .....
Enter total here → .....
8. If your tax (item 6) is larger than payments (item 7), enter BALANCE OF TAX DUE here ..... $.....
9. If your payments (item 7) are larger than your tax (item 6), enter the OVERPAYMENT here ..... $.....
Check (✓) whether you want this overpayment: Refunded to you ☐; or Credited on your 1945 estimated tax ☐

If you filed a return for a prior year, what was the latest year? .....
To which Collector's office was it sent? .....
To which Collector's office did you pay amount claimed in item 7 (B), above? .....

Is your wife (or husband) making a separate return for 1944? ..... ("Yes" or "No")
If "Yes," write below:
Name of wife (or husband) .....
Collector's office to which sent .....

I declare under the penalties of perjury that this return (including any accompanying schedules and statements) has been examined by me and to the best of my knowledge and belief is a true, correct, and complete return.

(Signature of person (other than taxpayer or agent) preparing return) (Date) (Signature of taxpayer) (Date)

(Name of firm or employer, if any) (If this is a joint return of husband and wife, it must be signed by both)

(SEE TAX TABLE BELOW)

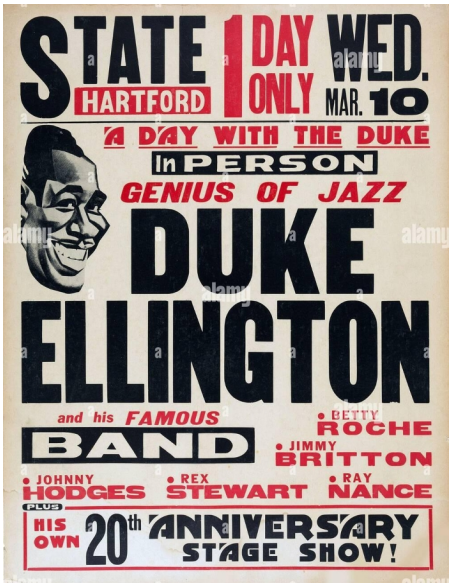
16—41003-1

capricornonevintage.com

Friday night ~
March 17 1944

Darling ~

This morning I was given a green bow by the Irish girls in my department, as they call me "Abie's Irish Rose – Mrs. Levy." Some of the girls brought in green balloons and we each had one tied to our adding machines. It's a good thing the boss in the department is Irish because nobody else would have tolerated such nonsense.



We went to *Seafood* for dinner this evening and we had a very good dinner. After dinner we went to the *State*[43] [*Theatre*.]

Duke Ellington[44] is there this week and he was good but very loud. I believe all of Hartford was there and they certainly were an appreciative audience - I never heard such applause and carryings-on.

This afternoon a girl showed Sue a typed copy of definitions of words - and of course, the definitions aren't like the ones Webster has in his Dictionary. Some of them were really raw although they were funny. Sue copied them on a piece of our office stationery and just for fun she wrote one of our terminals' address on the top left of it. Well, when five o'clock came around she had quite a few letters she had to mail so she hurriedly put them in envelopes and addressed them to the proper terminals. Well, without looking - she picked up the sheet of stationary she had written those definitions [on] and she just glanced at the top [and] seeing the name she had jokingly written on the top - she put it in an envelope - addressed it to that terminal and mailed it. Well, this evening at supper she remembered the paper and then she realized what she had done… . She addressed it to one of our branch offices and the man in that office stands for no foolishness. We laughed so much - but it's not funny. I guess any day now, we'll see the head boss charging down the aisle demanding my boss make an explanation for such goings-on during working hours. Sue said that when she does get it back from the branch office, before he comes down to fire her - she'll bet he makes a copy of it to put in his wallet. So Darling, from this little episode you can well imagine how

[43] The State Theatre was the largest performing arts venue in Hartford at the time with 3880 seats and was at 70 Village St. It opened in 1926 and was demolished in 1960.

[44] The ad on the left is from the single show performance given the year before.

much is accomplished by us on a working day. No wonder my department is in receivership by the bank and 100 girls are being dismissed April 1.

Your check arrived today and mom told me the postman kept ringing the bell as he did not want to leave it in the mailbox - that was considerate I thought because so many things can happen to a check. I certainly do appreciate you sending it home, darling. Most of it will go into War Bonds, but it will pay my income tax and now I can buy that needlepoint I had my eye on. In case you are wondering what needlepoint is, well it's sort of like embroidery and I want to make a seat for a chair and when we buy our furniture we can have a chair made for it - the chairs are like desk chairs and they are beautiful and if the work is handmade it is considered very beautiful. Well, here's hoping I do a good job on it. With all my heart, I'm looking forward as much to the time when you are home again and all the dreams we have now will come true - and will be so very happy. Oh darling, I love you so much. I have faith in God that this will be over soon - and everything will be right again.

So darling it's good night again ~ and in saying goodnight once more let me say I love you.

Goodnight darling,
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-1-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 5, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service and a second
cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 7, 1944 by the "Control Section"

Travel to Stalag Luft 1
March 14-15, 1944

Events
March 15, 1944 – Left for Stalag [Luft 1]
March 19, 1944 – Arr[ives in] Stalag [Luft 1]

Lenny spends five days travelling to a permanent POW Camp. Stalag Luft 1 is located two miles northwest of the village of Barth, Germany, on the Baltic Sea. The first Allied prisoners entered the camp on 10 July 1940 (French and British POWs).

Arriving at Main Gate

Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[45]

Early in 1944 the camp consisted of two compounds designated as South and West compounds, containing a total of seven barracks, in which American officers and British officers and enlisted men were housed. A new compound was opened the last of Feb. 1944 and was assigned to the American officers who were rapidly increasing in number.

[45] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1. His Log was recently discovered and published.

Further compounds were opened in quick succession. Finally Stalag Luft I consisted of four sub-camps: a Main Compound, Compounds North I, North II and North III. All north compounds housed exclusively officers from the American Army Air Force (USAAF). However, some US POWs remained in the Main Camp together with the British Royal Air Force (RAF) POWs. Among the RAF POWs there were also volunteers from various German-occupied countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, France, Norway, Greece and Yugoslavia, as well as airmen from the countries of the then British Commonwealth such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

In addition, there was a German administrative area and a German Fore-Camp for the guards, in which there was a fenced-in barracks for the Soviet soldiers.

The two Kommandants that operated Stalag Luft 1 during Lenny's term were:

- Oberst Willibald Scherer, Oct. 42 to Jan. 45

- Oberst Gustav Warnstedt, Jan. 45 to Apr. 45

Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy's Kriege ID[46]

#3528[47]

[46] POWs at Stalag Luft 1 were all issued steel IDs measuring 2 ⅜ x 1 ⅝ x ⅛ inch. They were most likely produced by the slave labor of the Barth Concentration Camp which the Germans operated from the same complex. The concentration camp, officially KZ-Außenlager Barth, was a *sub-camp* of Ravensbrück concentration camp and was in use from November 1943 to spring 1945. It housed prisoners who performed forced labour in the nearby Heinkel-Flugzeugwerke factory, the railroad yard and in the fields of Barth.

[47] Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy AC was issued ID # 3528. This is a reasonable estimate of the POW population at Stalag Luft 1 at the time of Lt. Levy's arrival. The population of the Concentration Camp was probably higher than this.

Sunday night~
March 19 1944

Darling ~

This morning… Betty May[48] called. She wanted to come here for her usual Sunday visit. I was still asleep, so Mom told her to call at 10:00 - so sure enough at 10:00 on the dot the phone rang - I awoke and answered the phone. She wanted to know if she could come here - and I told her she could – then she told me not to clean the house until she came as she was going to help me. When Faye[49] heard that, she had to talk to me and ask me what kind of charm I have on Betty as she never says that to her. I guess the reason why Betty likes to come here is because she can ask me a million questions and I try to answer them. In our course of conversation today - she suddenly became serious and she said she misses two uncles very much. I asked her who they were - and she said my Uncle Lenny and Uncle Is[50] - but she misses you more because you are further away.

Well, tomorrow is the first day of Spring. I noticed that the buds are coming out on the trees - so that ought to confirm the fact. I didn't go out today as I didn't want to leave Mom alone. Sadie[51] had to go out this afternoon and after last night, I'm afraid to leave her home alone too much.

I've been working on my needlepoint and I find it interesting. Now everybody wants to know how many years it will take me to finish it.

Tomorrow is Monday again - and that means another week of wasting the Associated Transport's time.

How is your stationery holding out? I hope you received the stationery I sent you.

Darling, this is about all the news for today so until tomorrow~

Goodnight darling,
I love you

---

[48] Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman was Sylvia's niece.

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

[50] Sylvia's oldest brother, Isidore left his job as a physician at the Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the US Navy. He is finishing his training in New London, Connecticut.

[51] Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and was unmarried at the time.

Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-15-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 20, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service and a second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 21, 1944 by the "Control Section"

Monday night ~
March 20 1944

Darling ~

Spring has certainly ushered in with a bang! We've had the worst snowstorm today we've had all winter. In fact it snowed all last night and it's still snowing.

I didn't go to work today as I didn't think [my] mom was well enough to be left alone today. She's much better now so I'll be back in the office tomorrow.

Having all this time on my hands today, I managed to accomplish quite a bit. There were so many little things I've been meaning to get done but somehow I've been putting them off. Well, today I did them and I feel good about it.

Did you have those pictures taken of the crew as yet? I'm anxious to see them. Are you still gaining weight? After all - I might as well know if I have a fat husband now. I spoke to [your] mom this afternoon and she was going out this evening to her poker club. I'm really happy that she manages to go out several nights a week because it would be terrible if she stayed in every night. It would give her time to think and that would do her no good whatsoever.

Norm sent home his pictures which she took recently. Mom says it's not very good but it's better than the last picture he sent home. Knowing the photographers around Army camp, you can understand why his pictures haven't been very good ones.

Well sweetheart, I must get supper ready so I don't have much more time to write. In closing - remember that I love you very much and miss you more than words can say. Take good care of yourself and once more -

Goodnight darling,
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-15-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 20, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service and a second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 21, 1944 by the "Control Section"

Tuesday night ~
March 21 1944

Darling ~

Ebner[52] called tonight as he is leaving for camp tomorrow night. He wanted to… drop by later in the evening but I was invited to a friend's house who was having a gathering. He's in the best of health and his regret is that his furlough wasn't long enough - as usual - the time just flew by and he couldn't do all the things he wanted to. He told me to send his regards until he... gets back and can write.

This evening I visited Ruth Friedman - she's married to Harold Friedman, his father owns Friedman's rugs next to Silverman's restaurant. He has a brother Stanley and I met him tonight. He knows you - perhaps you recall who he is. Well this was a long overdue visit. She's been asking me to come over for years now and tonight she had about six girls who were in this club I was in when we were in high school[53].

She lives on Seyms Street and from the outside of her house you'd never expect it to be as lovely as it is inside. She has her home furnished in modern furniture. I never cared much for modern furniture because it is always arranged so that it has a cold appearance. However, this is the first time I saw modern furniture look comfortable. What gave me a kick was her bedroom. It was really different - but very pretty. She had twin beds and they were pushed up next to each other so that it looked like one very large bed, and in the back there was a large mirror covered with drapes. It looked like something you would see in the movies not on Seyms St.

We spent the evening chatting and Libby[54] and I brought our needlepoints - and we were both working on them. As usual the time skipped by and before we knew it, it was 12:00. Ruth wouldn't let us leave until we had coffee and cake, so we didn't leave until almost 1:00. By the time I got home, it was late – in fact it's very late now - but I can't go to sleep without writing to you first.

---

[52] Ebner Glooskin graduated in the same Weaver High School class of 1938 as Sylvia. Ebner has become friends with Lenny since Lenny and Sylvia began dating.

[53] This is a reunion of the Girls Business Club from Weaver High School, one of three high schools in Hartford, Connecticut where all the girls attending still live.

[54] Libby Handler graduated from Weaver High School in Hartford, Connecticut in 1938 with Sylvia and they have remained close friends.

Today I set a record for the Associated. I had to balance my accounts today - we do it once a week - and I have $1,785 more than I should have. We checked back and can't find any errors, so I have a profit of $1785 for Associated. Seeing that my department, the Accounts Receivable Dept. is in receivership by the bank, I guess I'm trying to get the department back on its feet by my own methods. *Smaht*!

Darling it's getting very late and there's not much more that has happened today. I'll end this letter now but before I do - let me tell you something funny - for two nights in a row I dreamed I gave birth to a daughter - what do you make of it - I told Sadie[55] about it and she said such dreams better not come true now because I need a lot of explaining.

Well my darling it's good night again - I wish I could kiss you goodnight but I heard of miracles happening so maybe one of my x's will jump up and give you a real smack-a-roo. So goodnight my darling, I love you with all my heart.

Goodnight darling,
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

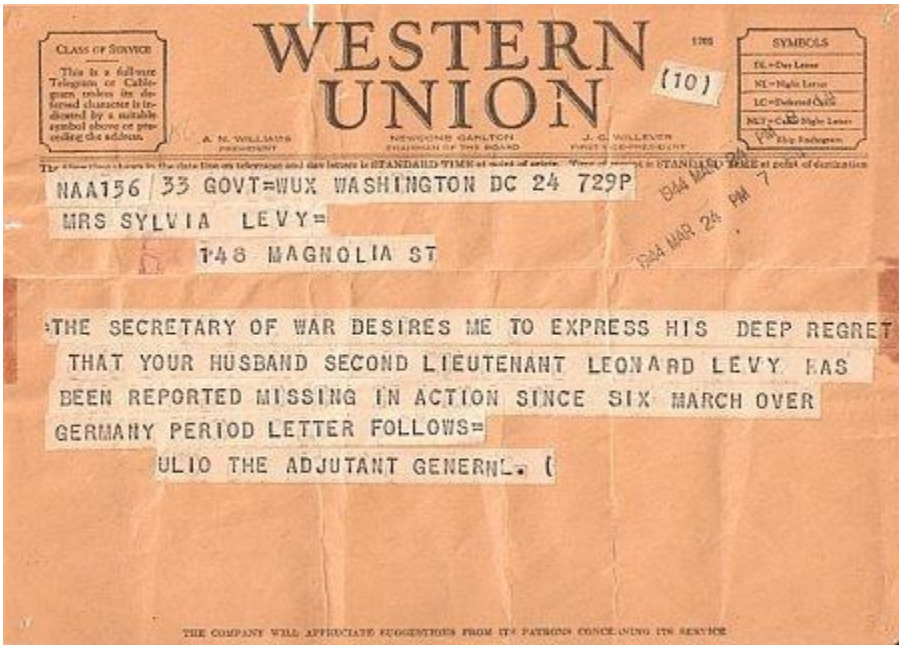
Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 18, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service.

[55] Sadie Geetter is Sylvia's oldest sister. Like Sylvia she is a working woman and they both pay rent for a shared bedroom in their mother's house at 148 Marigold St. in Hartford, Conn. She is also the primary caregiver for her ailing mother.

On about this date, Sylvia received a telegram similar to this:



WESTERN UNION

(10)

NAA156 33 GOVT=WUX WASHINGTON DC 24 729P

MRS SYLVIA LEVY=

148 MAGNOLIA ST

THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR HUSBAND SECOND LIEUTENANT LEONARD LEVY HAS BEEN REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION SINCE SIX MARCH OVER GERMANY PERIOD LETTER FOLLOWS=

ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERNL. (

Six Hartford Area Soldiers Reported Missing in Action

Six Greater Hartford soldiers are missing in action in the European and Mediterranean areas according to a War Department casualty list published today.

Leonard Levy

Reported as missing in Europe are S/Sgt. Daniel F. Carroll, nephew of Miss Helen Tull, of 161 Campfield Ave., Hartford; S/Sgt. Victor H. Clifford, husband of Mrs. Dorothy E. Clifford, 20 Mills Lane, Bloomfield, and Flight Officer Leonard Levy, husband of Mrs. Sylvia G. Levy, 148 Magnolia St., Hartford.

Missing in the Mediterranean area are Pvt. Alfred J. Cagne Jr., son of Mrs. Margaret Cagne, 171 Bonner St., Hartford; Pvt. Frank Marocchini, son of Mrs. Catherine Marocchini, 408 Nott St., Wethersfield, and Pfc. Thomas E. Quinn, brother of Miss Mary Quinn, 236 Sigourney St., Hartford.

Wednesday night ~
March 22, 1944

Darling ~

Tomorrow I am finally getting around to doing something I've been wanting to do for such a long time. About nine of us in the office are going down to the Blood Donor Center. The only thing that bothers me is that I won't be able to eat for four hours after breakfast and I have the habit now of eating in between meals – as the girls are always bringing in food. This morning I had a terrible longing for (I don't know how to spell it - but I'll try to spell it the way it sounds) *A-Pizza* – you know that Italian bread with tomatoes and stuff all over it. (What a description!) Well, coincidentally a girl in my office brought in one she bought in a new Italian shop nearby – so I asked her to bring me one tomorrow. I'll have to save it until the afternoon.

In tonight's paper I read about a woman who gave birth to a 25 pound baby and it had a full set of teeth. However, the baby didn't live more than a day. It was her 12th child.

In case you are wondering about the enclosed slip of paper that says "let Lennie or Levy do it." Well, Sue gave it to me. It's the letterhead on one of the customer's stationery and she got the bright idea to write that on top. She told me to send it to you and I surprised her when I told her I would. I told her about Passover[56] and that we don't eat bread then – and then she asked me if I do - and I said that I observe the holiday[57]. So, to be funny she said she was going to bring in sandwiches and eat them in front of me. However, I reminded her that by April 9, we won't be working for the Associated any longer. Every day, our boss walks through the department and watches us as if he's making a mental list of who are going to be the first 100 girls to be dismissed. We nicknamed him *Hawksbrow* - and we think we should give him a magnifying glass as a parting gift.

There hasn't been any mail from you for a week now and I miss your letters terribly. There has been a delay in mail from England so I'm hoping that perhaps tomorrow will bring word from you.

---

[56] Passover, or *Pesach* in Hebrew, is a major Jewish holiday that commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, as described in the biblical Book of Exodus. It involves various rituals, including the Seder meal, and lasts for seven or eight days, during which leavened bread is forbidden.

[57] Sylvia Geetter Levy attends the Emmanuel Synagogue on Greenfield St. in Hartford, Connecticut at the beginning and end of *Pesach* and eats unleavened bread (or matzah) for the duration .

Sweetheart, I hope you are getting my mail regularly now. I wish I could tell you how much I miss you, but I guess just saying so very much we'll have to do - and Hon -

I love you more everyday.

Goodnight darling,
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

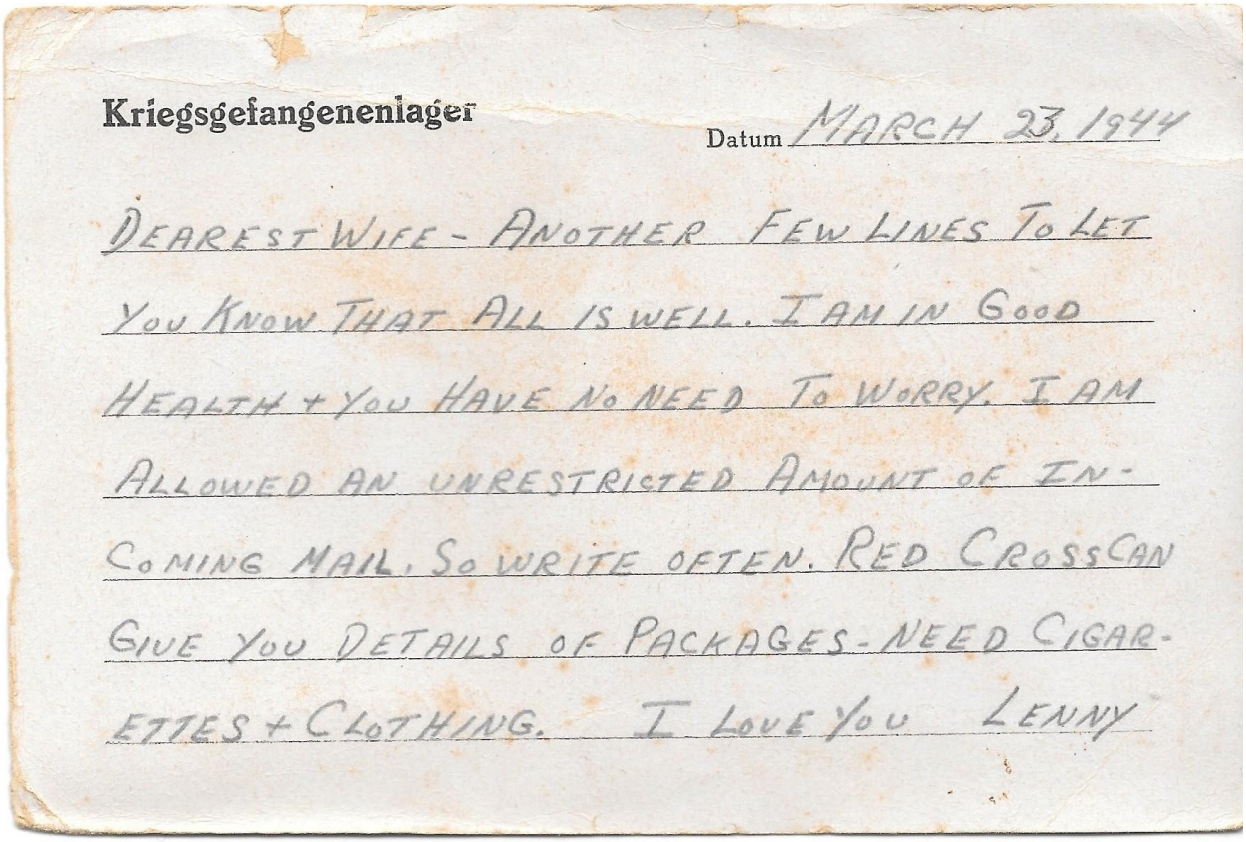
J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and a cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 18, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service.

Main St. DowntownHartford - Looking North

Kriegsgefangenenlager[58]
Tuesday, March 23[59] 1944

Dearest Wife – Another few lines To let you know that all is well. I am in good health and you have no need to worry. I am allowed an unrestricted amount of incoming mail. So right often. Red Cross can give you details of packages - need cigarettes + clothing. I love you. Lenny



Kriegsgefangenenlager

Datum MARCH 23, 1944

DEAREST WIFE - ANOTHER FEW LINES TO LET YOU KNOW THAT ALL IS WELL. I AM IN GOOD HEALTH + YOU HAVE NO NEED TO WORRY. I AM ALLOWED AN UNRESTRICTED AMOUNT OF IN-COMING MAIL. SO WRITE OFTEN. RED CROSS CAN GIVE YOU DETAILS OF PACKAGES - NEED CIGAR-ETTES + CLOTHING. I LOVE YOU LENNY

[58] Prisoner-of-war camps

[59] Lenny originally wrote March 21, erased it and penciled 23. He apparently received the card when he was at Dulag Luft on March 11, 1944.

Kriegsgefangenenpost

Mit Luftpost
Nach Nord America

Postkarte

GEPRÜFT
SG

An

Mrs. Leonard Levy

Gebührenfrei!

Absender:

Vor- und Zuname:

Lt. Leonard Levy

Gefangenennummer: Not Alloted

Lager-Bezeichnung:
Dulag Luft

Deutschland (Allemagne)

Empfangsort: 148 Magnolia St.

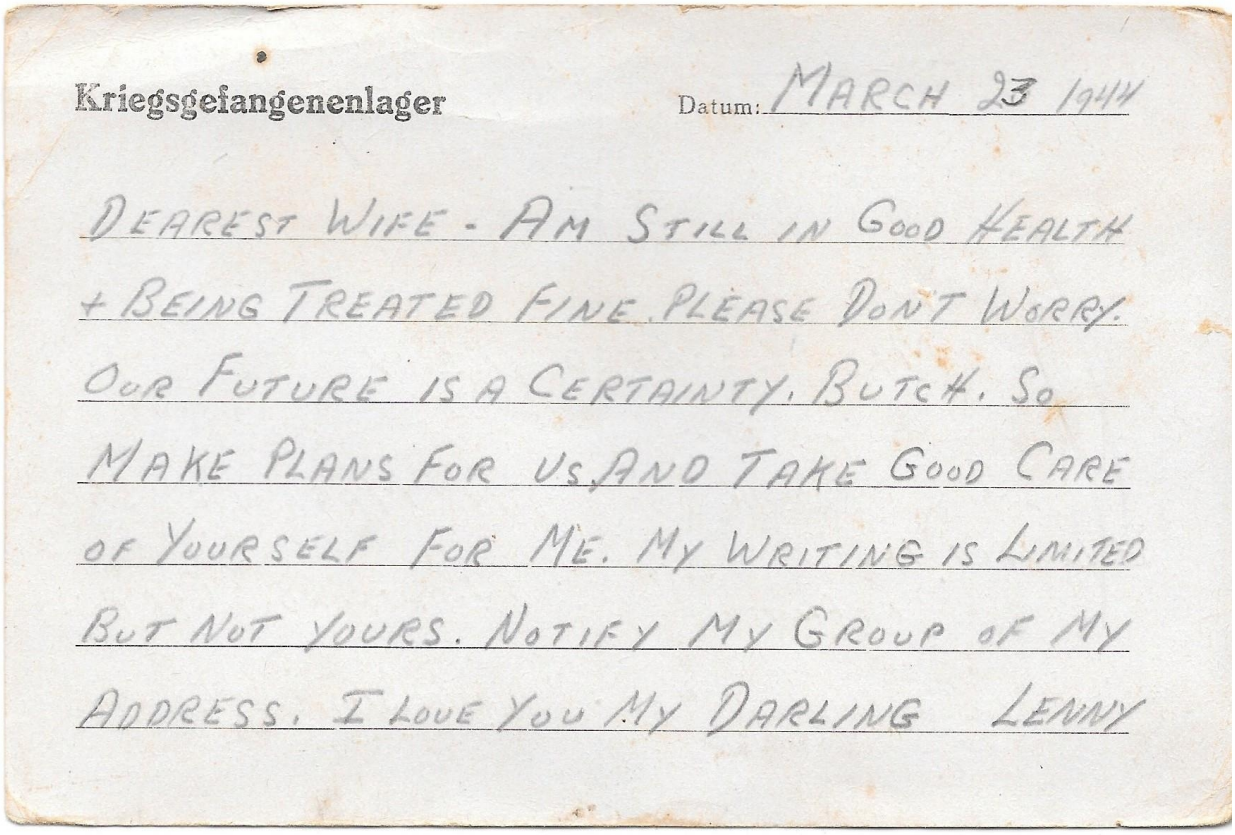
Straße: Hartford s Conn.

Land: United States of America
Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

Return Address is *Dulag Luft*

Kriegsgefangenenlager[60]
Thursday, March 23[61] 1944

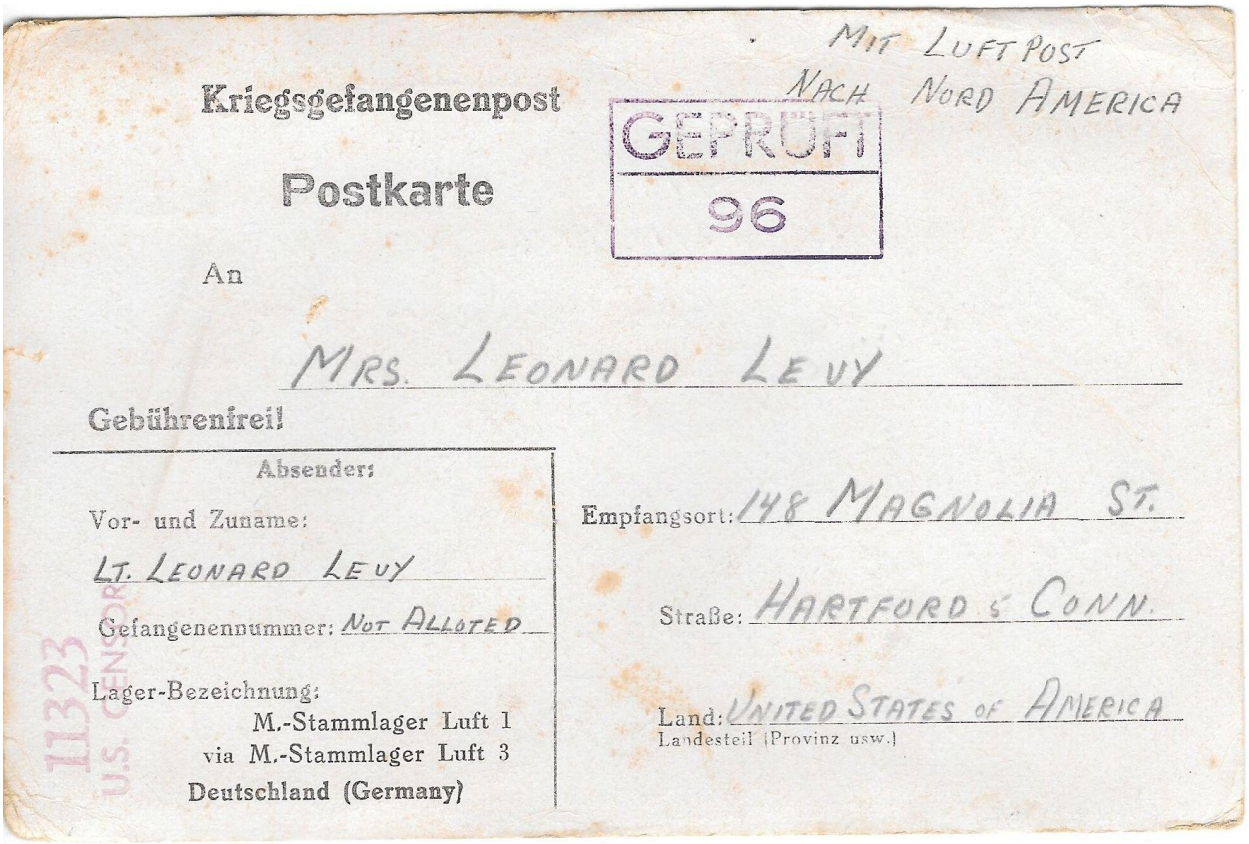
Dearest wife - Am still in good health and being treated fine. Please don't worry. Our future is a certainty, Butch. So make plans for us and take good care of yourself for me. My writing is limited but not yours. Notify my group of my address. I love you my darling. Lenny


Kriegsgefangenenlager Datum: MARCH 23 1944

DEAREST WIFE - AM STILL IN GOOD HEALTH
+ BEING TREATED FINE. PLEASE DON'T WORRY.
OUR FUTURE IS A CERTAINTY, BUTCH. SO
MAKE PLANS FOR US AND TAKE GOOD CARE
OF YOURSELF FOR ME. MY WRITING IS LIMITED
BUT NOT YOURS. NOTIFY MY GROUP OF MY
ADDRESS. I LOVE YOU MY DARLING LENNY

[60] Prisoner-of-war camps.

[61] 21 can be seen as the number underneath.



MIT LUFTPOST
NACH NORD AMERICA

Kriegsgefangenenpost

Postkarte

GEPRÜFT
96

An

MRS. LEONARD LEVY

Gebührenfrei!

Absender:

Vor- und Zuname:

LT. LEONARD LEVY

Gefangenennummer: NOT ALLOTED

Lager-Bezeichnung:
M.-Stammlager Luft 1
via M.-Stammlager Luft 3
Deutschland (Germany)

11323
U.S. CENSOR

Empfangsort: 148 MAGNOLIA ST.

Straße: HARTFORD 5 CONN.

Land: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Kriegsgefangenenlager[62]
Thursday, March 25[63] 1944

Dearest wife - This is probably the only letter[64] you'll get from me due to the paper shortage. I will however write as many [post]cards[65] as allowed. Once again I want to say that I am uninjured and in good health - believe me my darling and don't worry, Butch, my sweet. Our future is assured now and I want you to make plans for it. Your allotment and my pay will continue. So we will have no financial worries thanks to the Red Cross[66]. I have all that I need. Give them a good donation to show my appreciation. As you know Chris[67] is with me and he too is all right. Rock[68] was slightly wounded but should be ok soon. Please darling in your first package include candy as well as cigarettes and clothing. I really miss it here. Notify my group in England of my predicament.They will know what to do. Please darling comfort the folks as much as possible and take good care of yourself. Write every day and please don't worry I am perfectly all right. I love you, my darling and someday we'll be together. I love you Lenny

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

[62] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[63] 21 can be seen as the number underneath.

[64] Eighteen of these fragile, Kriege-letters made their way to Sylvia. Most took over a month to arrive. This letter was not stamped with a Hartford post office stamp.

[65] Only five of the Krieg-Postcards survived.

[66] The Red Cross parcels included tins and packets of such items as jam, cheese, powdered milk, meat, sardines, margarine, raisins, chocolate, coffee, sugar, and crackers.

[67] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of *Shack Rabbits*.

[68] Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of *Shack Rabbits*. He is at a hospital still being treated for his injuries.

MARCH 25 1944

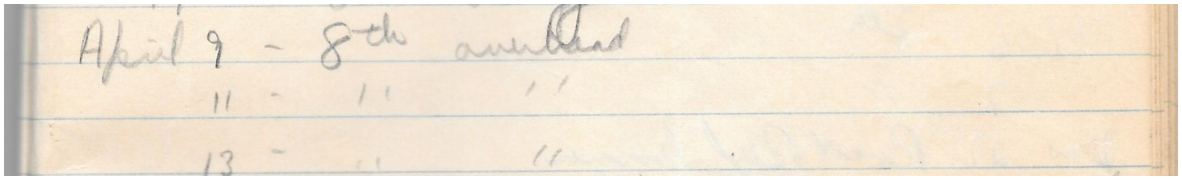
DEAREST WIFE — THIS IS PROBABLY THE ONLY LETTER YOU'LL GET FROM ME DUE TO THE PAPER SHORTAGE. I WILL HOWEVER WRITE AS MANY CARDS AS ALLOWED. ONCE AGAIN I WANT TO SAY THAT I AM UNINJURED AND IN GOOD HEALTH - BELEIVE ME MY DARLING AND DONT WORRY. BUTCH MY SWEET OUR FUTURE IS ASSURED NOW AND I WANT YOU TO MAKE PLANS FOR IT. YOUR ALLOTMENT AND MY PAY WILL CONTINUE SO WE WILL HAVE NO FINANCIAL WORRIES. THANX TO THE RED CROSS I HAVE ALL THAT I NEED. GIVE THEM A GOODLY DONATION TO SHOW MY APPRECIATION. AS YOU KNOW, CHRIS IS WITH ME AND HE TOO IS ALL RIGHT - ROCK WAS SLIGHTLY WOUNDED BUT SHOULD BE O.K. SOON. PLEASE DARLING IN YOUR FIRST PACKAGE INCLUDE CANDY AS WELL AS CIGARETTES AND CLOTHING. I REALLY MISS IT HERE. NOTIFY MY GROUP IN ENGLAND OF MY PREDICAMENT - THEY WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO. PLEASE DARLING COMFORT THE FOLKS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF. WRITE EVERY DAY AND PLEASE DONT WORRY I AM PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT. I LOVE YOU MY DARLING AND SOMEDAY SOON WE'LL BE TOGETHER. I LOVE YOU

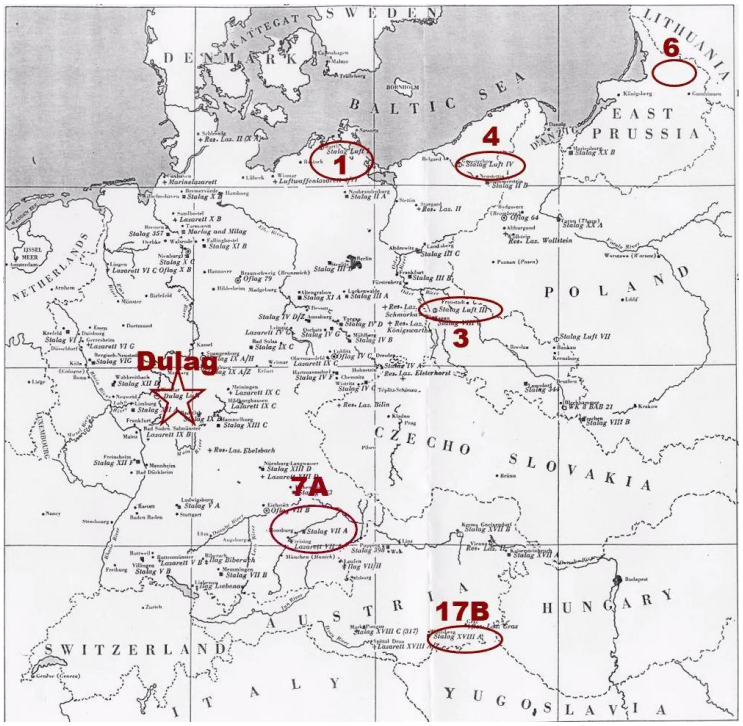
LENNY

Lenny's Logbook[69]
April, 1944

Events

April 9, 1944 – 8th[70] overhead[71]
April 11, 1944 – 8th overhead
April 13, 1944 – 8th overhead





[69]This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

[70] On 22 February 1944, the Army reorganized its Air Forces in Europe by renaming Eighth Air Force as the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe. This is a note that on this day, Lenny saw planes, probably in formation flying overhead.

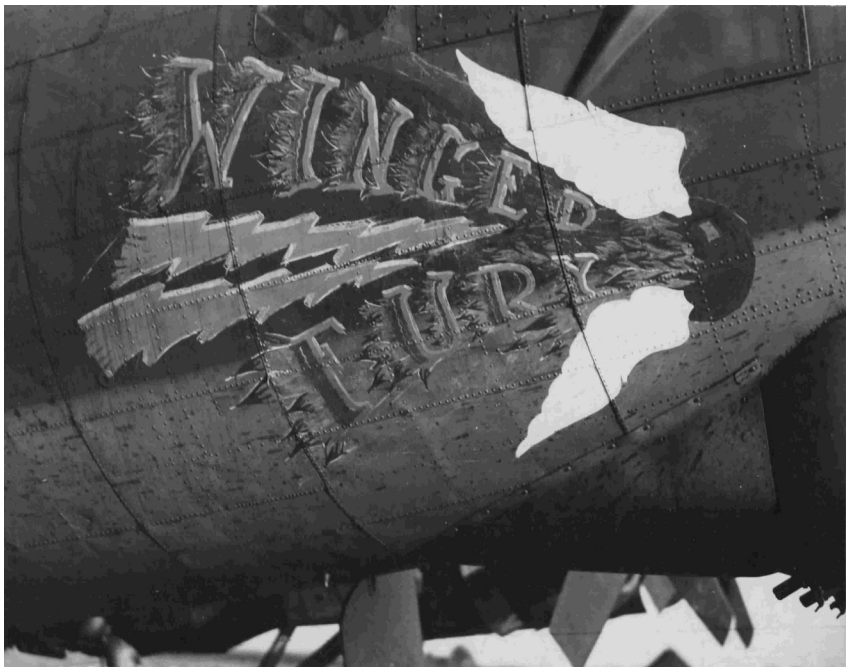
[71] The location of Stalag Luft 1 marked with a ('1" on the map) is known by the 8th Air Force, and the prison camp is said to have shielded the town of Barth from Allied bombing.

Stalag Luft 1

Art by Stalag Luft 1 POW Lt. Charles L. Early

Later Missions

13 April 1944

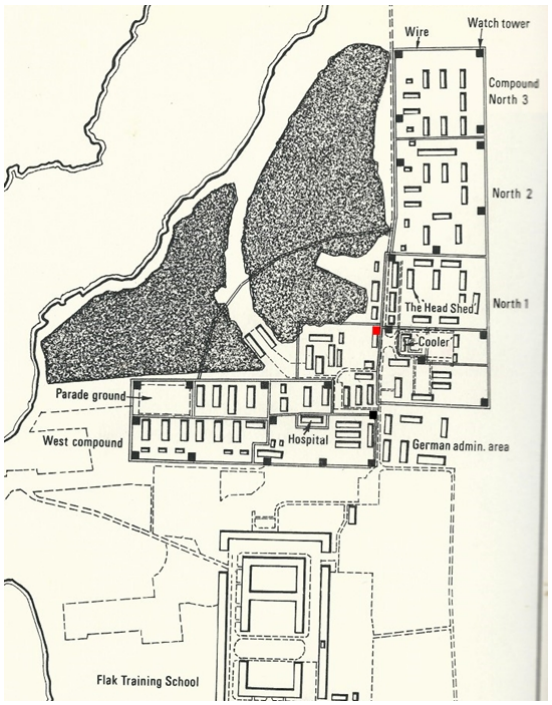


B-17G-5-BO #4231138 "Winged Fury" Code: F 388th BG - 562nd BS

Assigned to the Vince Sundstrom Crew Shot down 13 April 1944 with the A. Nelson Crew

Radio Broadcast

14 April 1944



The name and address of 2nd Lieutenant Leonard (Lenny) Levy and the name and address of his wife, was heard on a German radio broadcast, most likely in Barth, Germany. Lt. Levy spoke with a group of other American prisoners of war on an April 14, 1944 broadcast which was picked up globally by shortwave radio. He declared he was in good health. and urged his wife to be brave. The broadcast was picked up by shortwave radio operators.

> Stalag Luft I [was] located near Barth, Germany. Barth was a small town on the shores of the Baltic north of Berlin. The camp itself was on a small peninsula northwest of the town… at the base of a small peninsula jetting into the Baltic – water on three sides made escape more difficult. Originally there was but one compound – the west. At first this was occupied only by the RAF, but later Americans were also held there. Since many arrived and few departed – very few, the prison was soon overcrowded and it was necessary to expand.
>
> Lt. Robert R. Swartz
> Prisoner of War, Stalag Luft 1[72]

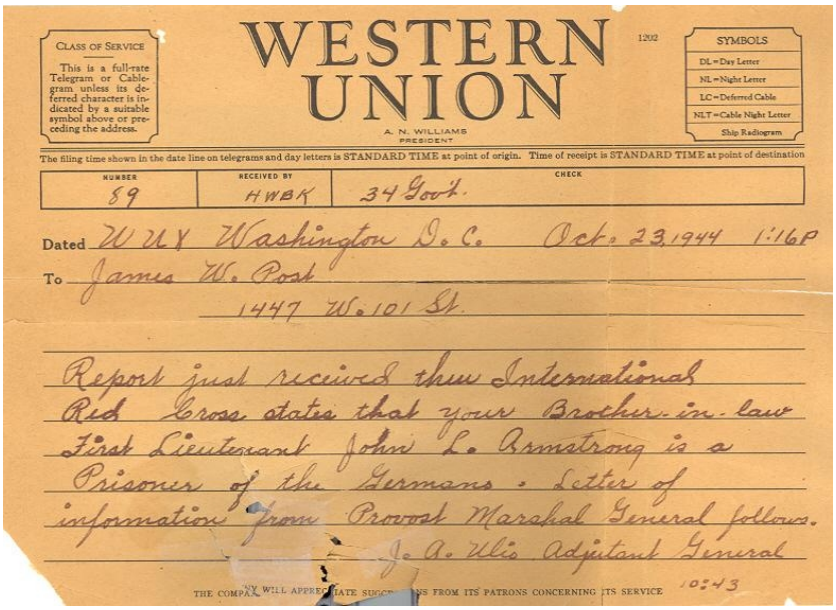
[72] http://merkki.com/swartzrobert.htm

Radio Broadcast

15-29 April 1944

After the name and address of 2nd Lieutenant Leonard (Lenny) Levy was heard on April 14, 1944, on a German radio broadcast, dozens of postcards and letters were sent by people who had heard Lenny's name. Sylvia received the first one (a telegraph) on April 15, 1944. (All of them were in the scrapbook that was lost.)

They sat in dimly lit rooms far into the wee hours of morning. Their faces illuminated by the faint, yellow glow of a short-wave radio dial, they carefully tuned through crackling frequencies during the dark days of World War II to listen to the propaganda broadcasts from Berlin, the enemy capital nearly 4,000 miles away. They were everyday citizens who independently served as ex-officio intelligence agents, sometimes finding hope and joy for the families of American and Canadian POWs in the enemy broadcasts designed to create only despair and disillusionment.



CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

1202

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS
DL = Day Letter
NL = Night Letter
LC = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter
Ship Radiogram

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

NUMBER	RECEIVED BY	CHECK
59	HWBK	34 Govt.

Dated WUX Washington D. C. Oct. 23, 1944 1:16P

To James W. Post
1447 W. 101 St.

Report just received thru International Red Cross states that your Brother-in-law First Lieutenant John L. Armstrong is a Prisoner of the Germans. Letter of information from Provost Marshal General follows.

J. A. Ulio Adjutant General

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE 10:43

Mrs. Sylvia Levy received several telegrams from people across the globe

Each night, these few Americans closely listened to the broadcasts of "Axis Sally[73]," waiting for information about soldiers and airmen taken prisoner by the Germans. The broadcasts included names of POWs, sometimes service numbers, hometowns, and the names of family members.

Short-Wave Radio Monitors Let Families Know of Their Capture
published in On The Shortwave.com[74]

[73] Mildred Elizabeth Gillars was an American broadcaster employed by Nazi Germany to disseminate Axis propaganda during World War II.

[74] https://www.radioheritage.com/otsw/capture.html

222 Vreeland Ave.,
Paterson, N. J.
April 18, 1944.

My dear Mr. Harding:-

While listening to a short wave radio broadcast from Berlin last night they gave the name of 1st. Lt. William John Harding # O-801276 of 427 East 66th St., New York City with you as next of kin, as a prisoner of war of the German Government.

I felt I should pass this information on to you with the thought it might relieve worry and anxiety on your part.

Yours very truly
Beatrice R. Mitchell
(Mrs. G. M. Jr.)

Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening

Senior Compound Officer - North 1

April 18, 1944 - April 30, 1945

Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening was born on November 12, 1914 in Carroll, Iowa. He made his first flight in June 1921 and flew 27 missions during the Second World War before being shot down over Naples on 17 July 1943. He was seriously wounded and taken prisoner in Italy. On 18 April 1944, he was transported from Italy to Stalag Luft I. After the war, his cartoon book about his time in Stalag Luft I, “Not as Briefed”, was published.

StalagLuft1.de

On 18 April 1944, Greening arrived at Stalag Luft I POW camp, where he stayed for the duration of the war. Making productive use of his time once again, Greening turned to art. He organized classes, taught 75 students the basic principles of drawing and painting, drew portraits, sketched combat scenes as described by his fellow prisoners, put on a "Display of the Week" in the mess hall, and organized the "Kriegie Kraft Karnival" on 21–23 July 1944 with art work and models on display from all over the camp. After the war, Brown & Bigelow printed *Not as Briefed*, which contained 75 of Greening's paintings, with J.M. Coppinger's introduction and captions

After the German surrender, and the Russian occupation of the area, the POWs were flown out by B-17s and C-46s, with Greening flying out on 14 May 1945. Greening was able to transport 56 crates of arts and handicrafts made by the POWs. Some of this collection was used by Greening to prepare a POW Exposition, which included a reproduction of the camp's 16-man room, solitary confinement cell, and escape attempts. The exposition opened on 1 October 1945 in the Rockefeller Center Museum of Science and Industry. The exposition appeared in several US cities before concluding in Washington, D.C., that September

Wikipedia[75]

[75] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalag_Luft_I

Pow Wow

18 April 1944

Pow Wow (stylised in all caps) was a German underground newspaper, run by prisoners of war in the Stalag Luft I camp in Nazi Germany. Its name stood for Prisoners Of War - Waiting On Winning and its motto was "The only truthful newspaper in Germany - to be read silently, quickly, and in groups of three".

It gave prisoners information on what was happening outside of the camp, and how close the war may be to being over. It grew from a small penciled newsheet read by hundreds into a neatly printed 2,000 word daily, eagerly perused by thousands. At the height of its circulation, it had over 9,000 readers and was translated into French and Russian as well as English.

They received their information from new prisoners and smuggled in German newspapers and, most crucially, a secret radio. On some occasions, they were able to receive information faster than German media. When *Pow Wow* received the news of the Normandy landings, they had to delay publication, because the prisoners' excitement would arouse suspicion

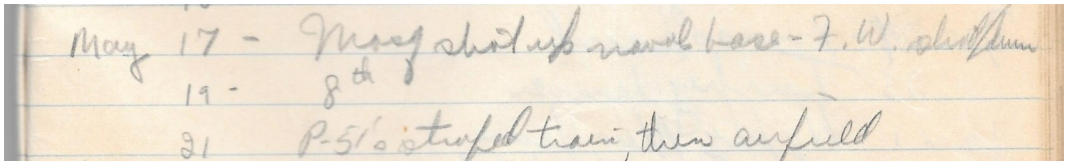
Pow Wow was started by Lowell Bennett, an American war correspondent, but he was discovered, and in April 1944 control of the paper was given to Ray Parker, an American pilot who had been shot down in April 1944. He became editor of *Pow Wow* within weeks of arriving at Stalag Luft I, after being shot down and captured, when his senior officer in the camp, J. R. Byerly heard he had been a reporter for the Los Angeles Examiner

Although the Germans knew about *Pow Wow* and tried to destroy it, from March 1944 to May 1945 they didn't manage to stop a single issue. Parker was discovered three months before the end of the war and forced to cease publishing, but survived the war and moved back to the United States

Lenny's Logbook[76]
May, 1944

Events

May 17, 1944 – Mosq[77] shot up naval base[78] - F..W.[190[79]] shot down
May 19, 1944 – 8th [overhead][80]
May 21, 1944 – P-51's strafed train; then airfield[81]


May 17 - Mosq shot up naval base - F.W. shot down
19 - 8th
21 P-51's strafed train, then airfield

Yak Attack - art by Roy Grinnell

[76]This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

[77] The **de Havilland DH.98 Mosquito** is a British twin-engined, multirole combat aircraft,used during World War II
[78] The location was probably the nearby German base in Barth.

[79] The **Focke-Wulf Fw 190**, nicknamed *Würge* (Shrike) is a German single-seat, single-engine fighter aircraft designed by Kurt Tank at Focke-Wulf in the late 1930s and widely used during World War II.

[80] Eighth Air Force as the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe. This is a note that on this day, Lenny saw planes, probably in formation flying overhead.

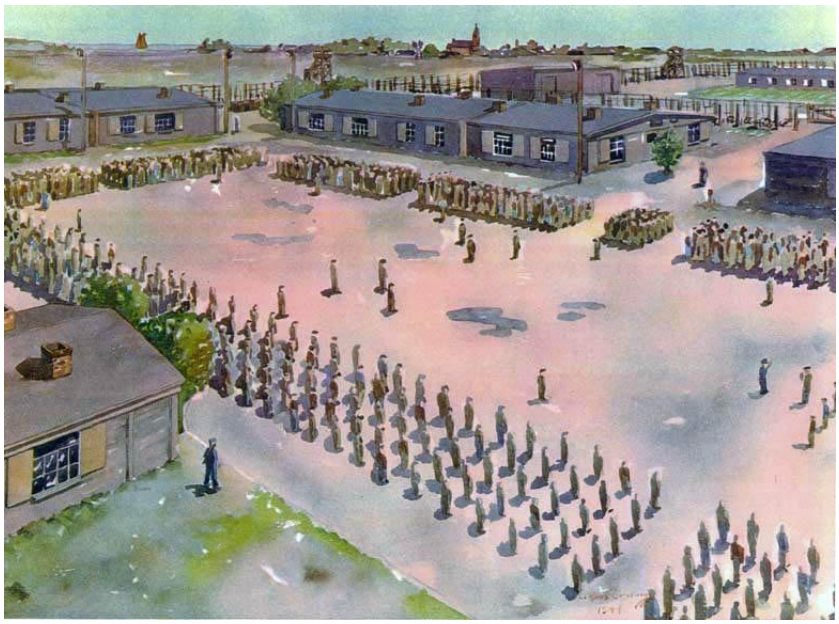
[81] Again this is US aircraft on a strafing (low altitude) run visible to Lenny at the adjacent POW camp.

As POWs we were under two separate, distinct organizations. First there was the German camp organization. When we arrived the camp was under control of the Luftwaffe, control passed from the Luftwaffe to the S.S. and finally to the Wehrmacht. We were forced to abide by the rules of the Germans, but cooperation was unheard of. Whenever a new German order came out it was S.O.P. to ignore it until forced to comply. Within the camp we had our own American organization. Naturally we observed and obeyed all orders from our officers.

Most of our time as kriegies was leisure – leisure can certainly become tiresome. However, there were certain routine activities worth describing in giving a true picture of our life.

Roll call twice daily was required by the Germans. The times varied with the season, but it was usually held around 0900 and in the middle of the afternoon. We were formed by squadrons in the athletic area. A German officer and two enlisted men would count the squadrons, while other enlisted men checked the barracks. If the Germans were not satisfied with the total, they went through the process again. Often we stood for some time before the Germans were satisfied. While the Germans were counting we read the daily bulletin, and when the squadrons had all been counted we had morning calisthenics. If the Germans were not satisfied at roll call we could expect an "identity parade" in the evening. The Germans would come through the rooms calling each man by name and he was to answer with his POW number.

Lt. Robert R. Swartz
Prisoner of War, Stalag Luft 1[82]



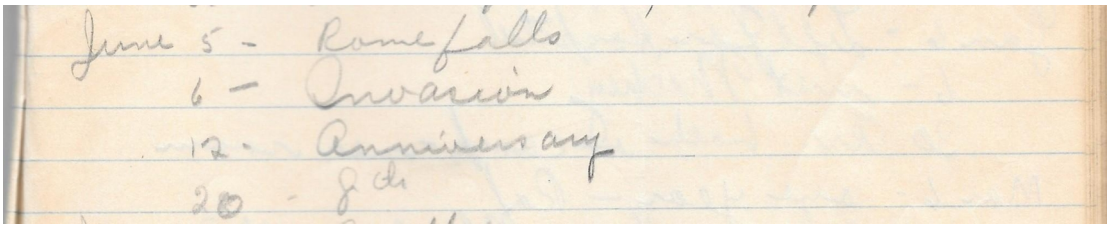
Roll Call - Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[83]

[82] http://merkki.com/swartzrobert.htm

Lenny's Logbook[84]
June, 1944

Events

June 3, 1944 – Rome Falls
June 6, 1944 – Invasion
June 12, 1944 – Anniversary
June 20, 1944 – 8th [overhead][85]


June 5 – Rome falls
6 – Invasion
12 – Anniversary
20 – 8th

June 3, 1944 – Rome Falls

On this date the glory attached to capturing Rome, which had predominated throughout the Allied campaign, was upstaged just two days later, June 6, 1944, when the Allies launched the much more strategically important Operation Overlord, beginning with the amphibious landings on Normandy.

Minneapolis Morning Tribune

ROME FALLS TO ALLIES

City 95 Per Cent Unharmed

Deluge, Terrific Winds Take Toll

Rainfall Estimated at Nearly Two Inches in Loop South Side

ROLLING PAST THE 'ROMA' SIGN

Yanks Speed 15 Miles to Enter Italy Capital

U.S. HEAVIES LASH EUROPE

ROME AT LAST! ALLIES RIDE TANKS AND OTHER VEHICLES INTO ETERNAL CITY

SOLDIER DROWNS IN MINNETONKA

Hitler Complains Allies Fail to Heed Rome Open City Bid

ENEMY PURSUED NORTH OF ROME

[83] Charles Ross Greening was the highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1. His Log was recently discovered and published.

[84] This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

[85] Eighth Air Force as the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe. This is a note that on this day, Lenny saw planes, probably in formation flying overhead.

D-Day
June 6, 1944

ON DUTY day and night CALOX TOOTH POWDER

The Evening News

NO. 19,455 LONDON, TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 1944 ONE PENNY

LATE EXTRA

SENIORS FISH MEAT PASTES The Best Possible!

Monty is Leading the Great Assault on Europe

ALLIES INVADE FRANCE

4,000 Ships and Thousands of Other Craft Take Our Army Across Channel: 11,000 Planes

BLACKOUT 10.57 p.m. to 5.8 a.m. Moon rises 9.14 p.m. Moon sets 6.31 a.m.

WE DRIVE 10 MILES INLAND: HITLER THERE

AN ARMADA OF 4,000 SHIPS, WITH SEVERAL THOUSAND SMALLER CRAFT, ALL BACKED BY 11,000 FRONT-LINE AIRCRAFT, TO-DAY CROSSED THE CHANNEL TO INVADE FRANCE.

Mr. Churchill gave this news in the Commons to-day, three hours after an Allied communique—at 9.01 a.m.—had given the official news for which the world had been anxiously waiting—the invasion of Western Europe.

This is what the Allied communique said:

"Under the command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France."

As a supplement to this communique it was announced that General Montgomery is in command of the Army group carrying out the assault. This Army group includes British, Canadian and U.S. forces.

Later, it was officially revealed that the landings took place in Normandy between 6 a.m. and 8.15 a.m.

Shore Batteries Largely Quelled

Mr. Churchill, besides giving the invasion armada figures, told the Commons:

"Massed airborne landings have been successfully effected behind enemy's lines. Landings on beaches are proceeding at

ST MALO
CAENS
TROUVILLE
R. ORNE
R. SEINE
R. VIRE
BARFLEUR
JERSEY
CHERBOURG

SKY FILLED WITH PLANES FOR HOURS

"NOTHING LIKE IT BEFORE."

THE fiercest blitz of all time on the Continent was launched from Britain hour after hour throughout the night and to-day, smashing targets before the actual invasion began, then giving all-out support to our landings.

From the South-East Coast came the report: "Nothing like it has been seen before. Air craft seemed to be pouring out in enormous strength."

The attacks have been going on all night, we supposed. Since last night our planes were still going out at noon to-day.

Across the East Coast, too, strong forces of Allied bombers went out, and there was great fighter activity.

Transport channels over Northern France were pounded throughout the night by Dutch Mitchells of the R.A.F., Polish and Australian units of the R.A.F. 2nd Tactical Air Force.

Smoke Screens Laid

Attacks were concentrated on roads, railways, bridges, embankments, cuttings and junctions, and on other points in the transport network over a huge area where traffic blocks would be a nuisance to the Germans.

There was a large amount of cloud over France, and a number of the Mitchells did not bomb.

Mosquitoes nearly all found their targets. Pilots reported successful attacks on a convoy, and also "had a good time" on the roads.

"There was very little movement on the roads," said one pilot. "Only the odd small convoy—probably the rations coming up."

R.A.F. Stations were engaged in "exciting operations over the English Channel, took over from

0 MILES 100
SWITZERLAND
DUTCH COAST
BELGIUM
HOLLAND
GERMANY
PARIS
CAEN
ST MALO
BREST

A BIRD'S-EYE INVASION VIEW

I SAW THE ARMADA FROM THE AIR

From TOM DOWNES, "Evening News" War Reporter with the R.A.F.

AT dawn to-day grim-faced infantrymen who for weeks had lain hidden in woods and villages of England, storming the beaches in Northern France.

From the radio operator's desk of a pathfinder I saw the armada of the Invasion fleet passing out. They were in an hour's round which we circled several times.

There were rows and rows of ships, stretching away until they faded into the haze which made up sea and air to give a background

FULL VICTORY —NOTHING LESS

EISENHOWER'S CALL

BATTLE WILL GROW IN SCALE AND INTENSITY

Premier's Glowing Confidence in Commons Statement To-day

MR. CHURCHILL began his Commons statement to-day on the invasion by apologising for his absence earlier. Questions, he said, went more rapidly than expected. He went on:

The House should, I think, take formal cognisance of the liberation of Rome by the Allied armies under the command of General Alexander, with General Clark, of the United States Services, and General Oliver Leese, in command of the Fifth and Eighth Armies respectively.

This is a memorable and glorious event which rewards the

WE SECURE 2 BEACHHEADS

British and Canadians have secured beachheads at two points at least, and dug in.—Official.

MONTY: "WE ARE A TERRIFIC TEAM"

General Montgomery, on his eve of battle speech to war correspondents said: "I personally feel very confident regarding events in this invasion.

"The party is in my opinion about to win the match."

He believed Rommel would win at defending operations in the West.

"We are a great allied team—a terrific allied team. The integration of the British Empire and America going out to battle together. I don't think any other two nations could work together as we do. The war will end when the war is going to end, but I don't believe the Germans can go on much longer with this business.

"The German soldier is a terrific good, but I don't think he is as good as we believe he is and as good as he used to be. He has been on the defensive a very long time, and I believe it must affect his morale."

LANDINGS ON 80-MILE FRONT

—Berlin

German radio reported landings in Normandy on an 80-mile front from Trouville to Barfleur on the tip of the Cherbourg Peninsula. Great masses of Allied airborne troops dropped deep behind German lines.

"WE LAND ON ISLANDS OFF FRANCE"

Allies gained foothold on several islands off coast of France.—German radio.

TIVOLI TAKEN, SAYS ALGIERS

Algiers radio reported French

The **Normandy landings** were the landing operations and associated airborne operations on 6 June 1944 of the Allied invasion of Normandy in Operation Overlord during the Second World War. Codenamed **Operation Neptune** and often referred to as **D-Day** (after the military term), it is the largest seaborne invasion in history. The operation began the liberation of France, and the rest of Western Europe, and laid the foundations of the Allied victory on the Western Front.

51618AC

THIS EDITION IS TO BE READ SILENTLY, QUICKLY, IN GROUPS OF THREE

POW WOW

Volume III, Number 14 Stalag Luft I June 6, 1944

INVASION!

YANKS-BRITISH LAND IN EUROPE!!!

THE INVASION OF NORTH-WEST EUROPE HAS BEGUN. Since pre-dawn this morning, Allied shock-troops have been landing on a 95-mile front between Cherbourg and le Havre on the north coast of France. The greatest military operation in history -- the blow to free Europe from Nazism.-- has at last been struck.

B-U-L-L-E-T-I-N-S

German Radio, late this afternoon, reported a major naval battle off the coast of Belgium.

Nazi Communique of June 5: "Despite German offer to exclude Rome from the battle area, American armored formations penetrated to the center of the city in the morning of June 4. Bitter street fighting continued until the evening."

Nazi Communique of June 6: "American armored forces were repulsed at Tivoli, fourteen miles north-east of Rome.

North Compound, evening June 6: Our grand-father guardians packed their equipment and drove off in trucks

A terse statement from the Nazi High Command, at 2pm today, announced:

"The long-expected and long-prepared invasion of the north coast of France started about Midnight, after a heavy air bombardment of the coastal defenses

"Air-borne troops landed at several places between le Havre and Cherbourg, followed by landing craft, supported by light and heavy naval bombardment.

"Our defenses were not surprised. There was bitter fighting in the sectors attacked.

"The air-borne troops were engaged before landing. The paratroops were, for the most part, captured or killed.

"In spite of the fire from enemy naval units, our Channel defenses kept up their fire on the landing craft.

"The action is now in full progress"

= = = = = = = = = = =

All day yesterday, U.S. bomber and fighter armadas tore at the French coast. London reported that 500 Fortresses and Liberators bombed Boulogne and Calais during the morning.

At noon, very great forces of U.S. and British medium bombers hit specialized objectives all along the coast.

During the afternoon, continuous fighter sweeps were maintained all over the north of France, on dive-bombing and strafing missions.

Last night, in immediate prelude to the landings, R.A.F. Bomber Command struck with all its weight at the coast defenses.

Before dawn, U.S. and British parachutists, glider- and air-borne forces were dropped behind the German coastal

(continued back page)

defenses.

Simultaneously, Rangers and Commandos waded ashore at several points between Cherbourg and le Havre.

Over their heads roared the drum-fire shelling from scores of Allied warships. Ahead of them, dive-bombers, attack-bombers and fighters scourged the Normandy beaches.

Close behind them came the shock - divisions of U.S., Canadian and British amphibious forces.

British troops were returning to France almost four years to a day of their expulsion from those same shores. American soldiers were fulfilling their President's promise to the enslaved peoples of Europe.

Allied supporting forces are now flooding across the Channel from south-England debarkation ports in invasion ships of every type. The German communique admitted that defensive shore-fire was not able to halt the reinforcement.

Nazi motorized divisions are driving towards the beach-head from their garrison and assembly areas at Lille, Abbeville and Paris. It is yet unknown if French patriot forces have gone into action.

Few details of the actual landing, the effectiveness of German defenses, or the scale of the operation are yet to hand.

It is not yet clear if the present invasion is the intended concentration point of the Second Front.

News bulletins over the German Radio this afternoon declared that very heavy casualties had been inflicted on the first waves of the attackers. Many gliders and transport planes were claimed shot down.

Allied air support is expected to surpass by far the maximum effort provided in Italy to our Fifteenth Army Group. Eighth Air Force Bomber Command is now able to put up more than 2,000 heavy bombers in a single attack.

Fighter Command is able to maintain 1,500 sorties daily. Ninth Air Force medium bomber and fighter strength is reliably estimated at 1,000 sorties daily.

Britain's R.A.F. will contribute 1,500 heavy bombers, with an average bomb-load of seven tons each, for night pulverization of German rear-areas. A thousand R.A.F. fighters have been readied for their share of the air support. An additional 500 medium bomber sorties can be provided by the R.A.F. Tactical Air Force.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[86]
Thursday, June 15[87] 1944

Dearest wife - A year ago today was truly a highlight in my life - one that will always bring back nothing but the pleasantest of memories. That day saw the fulfillment of all my hopes and dreams - One year ago today I married the sweetest grandest girl in the world. My love for you, Butch Darling, has grown in that year and some day soon I hope [to] be able to show you how much. Believe it or not Syl, but your husband has become a barber - I cut the hair of all the fellows in the room. No complaints so far - my job as sports director is going [well] and today I tried out for a part in the play *Waiting for Lefty* that we are to produce. There is a great distance between us tonight, my darling, but soon we'll be together. Keep your hopes high. I love you

Lenny[88]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

[86] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[87] 21 can be seen as the number underneath.

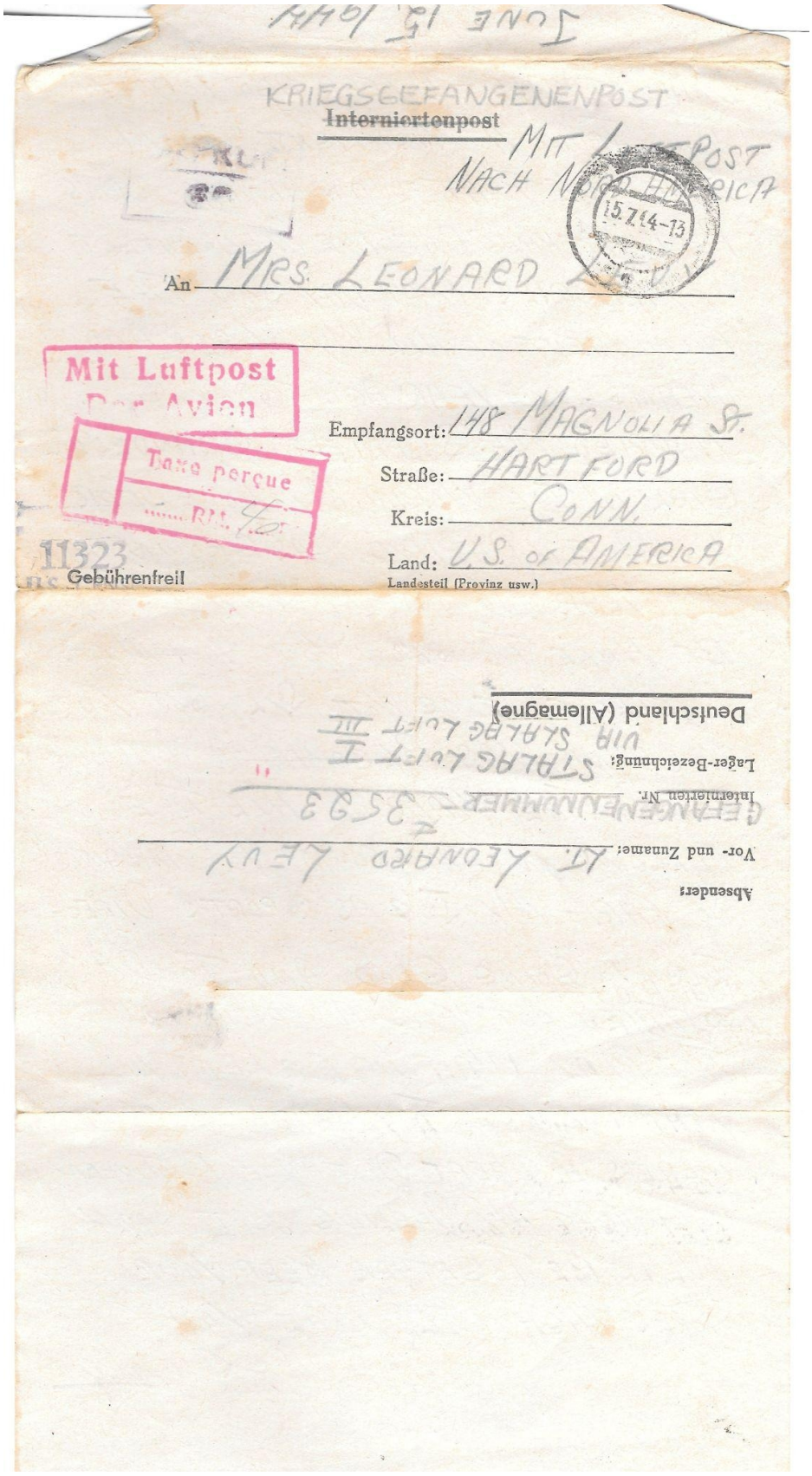
[88] Signed (written in script)

DEAREST WIFE – A YEAR AGO TODAY WAS TRULY A HIGHLIGHT IN MY LIFE – ONE THAT WILL ALWAYS BRING BACK NOTHING BUT THE PLEASANTEST OF MEMORIES. THAT DAY SAW THE FULFILLMENT OF ALL MY HOPES AND DREAMS – ONE YEAR AGO TODAY I MARRIED THE SWEETEST GRANDEST GIRL IN THE WORLD. MY LOVE FOR YOU, BUTCH DARLING, HAS GROWN IN THAT YEAR AND SOMEDAY SOON I HOPE BE ABLE TO SHOW YOU HOW MUCH.

BELEIVE IT OR NOT SYL, BUT YOUR HUSBAND HAS BECOME A BARBER – I CUT THE HAIR OF ALL THE FELLOWS IN THE ROOM. NO COMPLAINTS SO FAR. – MY JOB AS SPORT'S DIRECTOR IS GOING GOOD AND TO-DAY I TRIED OUT FOR A PART IN THE PLAY "WAITING FOR LEFTY" THAT WE ARE TO PRODUCE.

THERE'S A GREAT DISTANCE BETWEEN US TONIGHT MY DARLING BUT SOON WE'LL BE TOGETHER KEEP YOUR HOPES HIGH I LOVE YOU

Lenny



KRIEGSGEFANGENENPOST

~~Interniertenpost~~

MIT LUFTPOST NACH NORD AMERICA

15.7.44-13

An MRS. LEONARD LEVY

Mit Luftpost
Par Avion

Taxe perçue
..... RM. 40

Empfangsort: 148 MAGNOLIA ST.

Straße: HARTFORD

Kreis: CONN.

Land: U.S. of AMERICA

Landesteil (Provinz usw.)

11323

Gebührenfrei

Absender:

Vor- und Zuname: LT. LEONARD LEVY

GEFANGENENNUMMER 3593

Internierten Nr.

Lager-Bezeichnung: STALAG LUFT I
UIR STALAG LUFT III

Deutschland (Allemagne)

JUNE 15, 1944

Kriegsgefangenenlager[89]
Friday, June 30[90] 1944

Dearest wife - Things are truly looking up for us here - this past week we saw motion pictures twice. (*Lilly Mars* was one of them) And best of all fresh vegetables are starting to come in - the Germans are giving us some and our gardens are going to give us quite a good harvest. My health is still good - In fact ,my only worry is you and your health my darling. Please take good care of yourself for me, Butch, and think only of our future - it is indeed bright. The weather of late has been good and my tan is getting darker. I'm storing up quite a bit of knowledge thanks to our library[91] and so I'll not lack a source for conversation, between that and my daily experiences of the past few months. Once again my darling, take good care of yourself and don't worry about me. I love you Butch, very much. Goodnight my darling. I love you.

Lenny[92]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

The Library in South Compound - Stalag Luft 1 (Barth, Germany)

[89] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[90] 29 can be seen as the number underneath.

[91] The library was located in the South Compound, which was the older part of the POW camp with mostly British RAF prisoners.

[92] Signed (written in script)

The library was one unit that had an important bearing upon our life. There were times when without a book to read life would have been dull and difficult. Thanks to the YMCA, for once in our lives when we had plenty of time to read we had books.

At first the choice of books was not good, but it improved with time. In December we started to receive Armed Services Editions and from there on we had excellent books. To give you an idea of our reading I'll list a few of the better books I read.

Forward the Nation - Donald C. Peattie
Love at First Flight – Spalding & Carney
Goodbye Mr. Chips – J. Hilton
Circling Year – Van De Water
The Robe – L.C. Douglas
Magnificent Obsession – L.C. Douglas
Paul Revere – Esther Forbes
Death Comes For The Archbishop – W. Cather

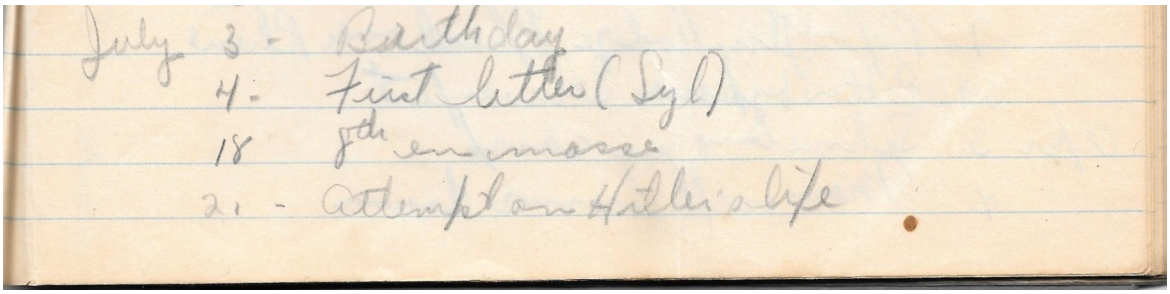
Lt. Robert R. Swartz
Prisoner of War, Stalag Luft 1[93]

[93] http://merkki.com/swartzrobert.htm

Lenny's Logbook[94]
July, 1944

Events

July 3, 1944 – [Lenny's] Birthday
July 4, 1944 – First letter (Syl)
July 18, 1944 – 8th [overhead][95]
July 20, 1944 – Attempt on Hitler's Life


July 3 - Birthday
4 - First letter (Syl)
18 8th en masse
21 - Attempt on Hitler's life

July 3, 1944 – [Lenny's] Birthday

On this date Lenny turned 26 years old. It was his 119th day as a Prisoner of War, or *Kriege*. It was his 105th day at Stalag Luft 1. It was his 220th day since the tearful farewell scene with his wife, and it was his 122nd day since he received any mail from Sylvia.

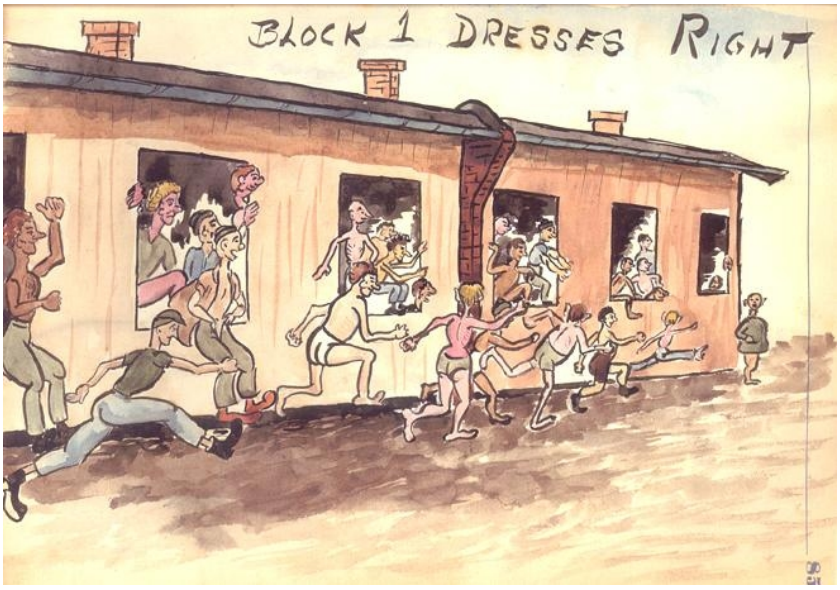
[94]This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

[95] Eighth Air Force as the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe. This is a note that on this day, Lenny saw planes, probably in formation flying overhead.

Fourth of July Celebration - Stalag Luft 1

July 4, 1944

We celebrated the 4th with a day-long program of sports[96], music, speeches etc. (From Lenny's 44.07.08 letter.)



Block 1 Dresses Right

Art by Stalag Luft 1 POW Lt. Charles L. Early

[96] As the "Sports Director" at Stalag Luft 1, Lenny was probably quite busy.

Hartford Circus Fire

July 6, 1944

The Hartford Circus Fire occurred on July 6, 1944, during a performance of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, resulting in the deaths of at least 167 people and injuring over 700. It is considered one of the worst fire disasters in U.S. history.

Start Every Day Right

The Hartford Courant

Weather Forecast
Fair, Continued Warm
Further Details on Page 13
Sun rises 5:25 a. m., sets 8:28 p. m.

ESTABLISHED 1764, VOL. (DAILY EDITION) CVIII — HARTFORD 1, CONN., FRIDAY MORNING, JULY 7, 1944.—22 PAGES — Member of the Associated Press — 4c PER COPY

139 Die, More Than 225 Hurt In Circus Fire
Five Arrested On Manslaughter Charges
U.S. Troops Menace Heights Above La Haye

Closing Ring About Nazis' Anchor Point

Storm To Forest's Edge, Probably Still Hold Railroad Station In Northern Outskirts

Foe's Rear Areas Mauled From Air

Chartres, Argentan, Cerences Pummeled By Allied Planes; 3 Towns Liberated

Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, Friday, June 7—(AP)—U. S. troops closing a ring about the enemy anchor of La Haye du Puits have slammed to the edge of the Forest de Mont Castre, where strong enemy forces lie in wait, and are threatening the last wooded heights dominating the town, Supreme Headquarters announced last night.

Front line dispatches said the only escape route out of the road and rail junction on the south was under artillery fire, and reported savage fighting toward the heights of the forest, three miles east of La Haye, whose capture would unhinge [illegible] defenses [illegible] La Haye on the west and the bog, Marais de Gorges, on the east.

Supreme Headquarters said that doughboys fought twice into La Haye in the last 48 hours and twice were forced back, although they probably still held the railroad station in the northern outskirts.

Capture of the heights might force the enemy to withdraw as far as Lessay, five miles south of La Haye, and Periers, nine miles southeast.

In the brightest, hottest day in Normandy since D-Day, another column coming around the great bog on the east forged beyond the village of Culot, which the Germans once regained with a counterattack, and fought to within a mile of Sainteny, five miles southwest of Carentan, widening the narrowest sector of the whole front in an advance of more than a mile.

Fight for Airfield.

Both British and Germans poured armor and infantry into the battle raging for Carpiquet airfield, only three miles east of Caen on the road to Paris, and the night communique said a number of enemy tanks were destroyed.

With the skies cleared at last, and the Allies free to throw their Sunday aerial punch at the enemy, German communications took a severe mauling as hundreds of warplanes went bombing and strafing transport, roads and rails all the way behind the front and on back to the Paris area.

Rail lines were cut by bombs at many points, fuel dumps were left blazing at Chartres, Argentan and Cerences and dive bombers attacked troops massing to oppose the American push southwestward from Carentan.

A dispatch from General Eisenhower's advanced command post declared that more and more Allied troops and vehicles, "an astonishing total," were piling up along the beachhead for the decisive battles ahead.

Germans Mass Troops.

British and Canadians around Caen battled the greatest mass of German manpower ever concentrated on a narrow front in this or in World War I — one division to slightly less than three miles of front, supreme headquarters said.

In general, the Allies kept up the progress which had liberated 1313 square miles of French soil since D-Day, just one month ago yesterday, an average of about 43 square miles a day. The Americans liberated three towns—Glatigny, four miles southwest of La Haye, Scorman, nearby, and La Butte, six miles east at the edge of the Marais de Gorges.

French Patriots Active.

Far behind the front the French Underground was fighting so well that the supreme command released a special communique detailing its accomplishments, five districts liberated, vital enemy troop lines south of Normandy choked off, and whole enemy divisions engaged.

Mortensen Asks Flags Be Flown at Half Staff

Mayor Mortensen has requested that all flags displayed in Hartford today be flown at half staff to mark the city's tribute to the scores who perished in the circus fire.

Job Ceilings Lifted For Disaster Work

Employment ceilings for all persons needed to assist in work connected with the circus fire have been lifted, William O. Ennis, WMC Area Director, announced Thursday night.

Undertakers, cemeteries and rescue squads may employ as many persons as needed, Mr. Ennis declared, saying that the USES office is recruiting help. Anyone who needs assistance is asked to contact the USES office.

Speaking for Mr. Ennis, Assistant Director Arthur A. Nielsen said Thursday night that the WMC officials had received many calls asking permission to hire extra workers. The temporary lifting of employment ceilings applies only to those concerns aiding in relief work, he commented.

U.S. Troops Go Ashore On Manim

Island Flanking Japs' Noemfoor Airdrome Is Captured Without Resistance

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS.

Advanced Allied Headquarters, New Guinea, Friday, July 7.—United States troops have occupied Manim Island off American-invaded Noemfoor Island, headquarters announced [illegible].

Manim was seized by July 5 without opposition. Its occupation provides a flank position for the one remaining Japanese-held airdrome on Noemfoor. That airdrome, Namber, is the present objective of U. S. forces driving across Noemfoor, off North Dutch New Guinea.

The two other Noemfoor airdromes, Kamiri and Kornasoren, already are in American hands.

A Japanese counter attack on Noemfoor was repulsed, headquarters reported.

Allied air raiders sank three small Japanese vessels and damaged one in waters near New Guinea. Sixteen barges also have been sunk or damaged.

5 More Jap Ships Sunk.

U. S. Pacific Fleet Headquarters, Pearl Harbor, July 6.—The sinking of five more Japanese ships and destruction of nine more planes in the Bonin Islands during a Fourth of July foray by an American carrier task force was disclosed today by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz.

This brought to 41 the total enemy ships sent down by carrier planes and raised Nipponese air losses to 835 since June 10 when the Fifth U. S. Fleet moved into the Marianas to pave the way for invasion of Saipan. In addition to the 41 carrier plane victims, 17 enemy surface craft have been sunk by other methods.

Sinkings 600 Miles Off Tokyo.

The five additional sinkings, including two destroyer escorts, were scored in the vicinity of Chichi Jima, 600 miles south of Tokyo.

Special Program Arranged Today At Camp Courant

Music and Comedy Will Be Provided For Children By Theater Artists

CAMP COURANT FUND	
Previously acknowledged	$7530.18
Malcolm G. Campbell, Jr.	2.50
In memory of Elsie Elaine	5.00
Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Wagner	5.00
Junior Victory Carnival	9.00
Belle R. Gaylord	10.00
Civitan Club of Hartford	25.00
	$7585.69

Today the youngsters at Camp Courant have a special treat in store, for Abe Lyman, members of his band, and Gene Sheldon are coming out to entertain them with a program of music and comedy. Rudy Frank, manager of the State Theater, hopes that he will be able to bring a group of stars out to the camp each week this summer.

Monday morning, buses will pick up the boys and girls at 9 a. m. from the Tower on North Main Street and at the Old State House for the first day of the second week of healthful, happy camping.

Flames Of Death Sweep Across Big Top Filled With Circus Crowd

While panic-stricken thousands fought their way from the blazing big top Thursday afternoon, a young amateur photographer caught this graphic picture of flames eating their way across the enormous canvas in a few all too brief moments. (c) Spencer Terell.)

Mayor Gives Victims Full Aid Of City

Office Used As Clearing House For All Circus Fire Rescue and Hospital Agencies

A clearing-house for all agencies cooperating in the rescue and hospital work in connection with the circus disaster was established at the mayor's office Thursday afternoon by Mayor Mortensen, who worked with a staff until early today to coordinate hospital and identification tasks.

The mayor was notified of the circus fire by a reporter for The Courant shortly after it broke out, and he left immediately with the newspaperman for the scene. He assisted in rescue work there for more than two hours, and then toured the Municipal Hospital, where hundreds of volunteer workers toiled to save the lives of 150 men, women and children taken from the fire scene.

Headquarters then were set up in the mayor's office and helping him there were Police Commissioner Michael A. Connor, Assistant Corporation Counsel Frank Covello, Republican Town Chairman Frank C. Tisdale, Maintenance Supervisor Thomas F. Foley, Budget Director Robert L. Duffy, Buildings Superintendent Edward F. Killian, and Executive Secretary Samuel Gould.

Nephew Located.

The mayor's nephew, Donald Mortensen, at first was reported missing, but Thursday night Mayor Mortensen said he had been located. "He left the circus and went to a show," the mayor said.

The daughter of City Assessor Harry J. Ward was unhurt, and the wife and two children of Alderman Allen L. Hopkins also emerged unharmed. After being missing for some time, the wife and two children of Alderman-at-Large Paul J. Motto were found, but Mrs. Motto was under a doctor's care Thursday night. Her foot became caught in one of the cages, and only with the help of one of her children who came rushing back to the mother's assistance was she able to extricate herself.

Mayor Mortensen made several broadcasts during the night, notifying Central Connecticut residents of the latest casualty tolls and what was being done for the injured.

At the scene of the disaster, he made this statement.

"I am overwhelmingly grieved that Hartford should suffer such a terrible tragedy. The city authorities have already begun to take action to protect the interests of the community. I am proud of the way the Hartford policemen and firemen, and all those other agencies both from this city and outside, have performed their tasks here. The city is deeply grateful to all those who aided."

Police Commissioner Michael A. Connor, chairman of the Police

(Concluded on Page 3, Column 1.)

'Flying Wallendas' On High Wire When Flames Swept Through Tent

Five members of the "Flying Wallendas," Herman, Carl, Joe, Helen and Henrietta Wallenda, were on the center high wire, about to begin their act when the fire broke out.

"It didn't seem to spread fast," Herman said later. "I thought I had time to lash the bicycles which we had put on the wire ready to begin our act. But when the flames hit the roof, we saw we had to get down fast."

They slid down the ropes near the center ring and started for the performers' exit through which the animal act had left, Herman said. "But people were so crowded in there that we saw we didn't have a chance.

"So we climbed over the cage that lines the exit. That was easy for us. We're performers. But the public couldn't get out that way."

After they had got out, Helen Wallenda couldn't find her 7-years-old daughter Carla who, she thought, had been in the audience. The child had been playing outside the tent with the daughter of another performer and had been herded to a safe place by police when the fire broke out.

Herman said that most of his equipment was safe. "But what good is our equipment now?" he asked, as he assembled it in the charred center of the ring. "We have no circus."

Tossed Cigarette Blamed For Fire By Ushers, Police

Six Attendants' Efforts With Water Buckets Fail; Detectives Near

Six circus ushers who fought the fire from its inception and three Hartford policemen who were nearby told The Courant that the blaze originated from a cigarette thrown against a sidewall of the big tent by a man using the men's toilet room outside the southwest corner of the arena, about 150 feet east of the main entrance.

"We used firebuckets until our water was all gone," said Kenneth Gwinnell, of New Haven, an usher. He said he was joined by Mike Dare, assistant usher, of Pittsburgh, Pa., Paul Runyon, of Sarasota, Fla., J. Raymond Morriss, of Chattanooga, Tenn., and Thomas Tucker, of Davisville, R. I., all members of the staff of 75 ushers headed by John M. Carson, chief usher, of Sarasota, Fla.

Mr. Carson estimated there were 6000 people in the tent, approximately half of its capacity, when the blaze started.

The toilet room consisted of a four sided canvas screen.

The eyewitnesses interviewed by The Courant agreed that the fire started at the bottom of a sidewall and crept rapidly upward toward the big top, a new canvas. A strong southwest wind swept the flames northeasterly across the tent.

The three Hartford detectives, Thomas Barber, Paul Beckwith and Thomas Kershaw, were standing near the main entrance. They cut ropes and assisted scores of spectators to safety. The detectives agreed with the ushers that the fire apparently started from a cigarette,

(Concluded on Page 2, Column 1.)

113 Children, Mothers Not Yet Located

Heartrending Stories Unfolded At Brown School Clearing House By Parents

From 6 p. m. on the Brown School on Market Street served as a clearing house of information regarding missing children. By late Thursday night 113 children and mothers who had accompanied them to the circus were reported by authorities at the Brown center as missing. Also, about 20 children found wandering about by police were taken there and in every instance were later called for by relatives.

In contrast to the happiness revealed in reunions of mothers and children and fathers and children was the sorrow seen in the faces of parents saying they had been everywhere else and had been told Brown School was the last resort before making the trip to the morgue at the State Armory. In a few instances, even while persons were inquiring for children, others came in to report they had found children and had taken them home. Unfortunately the number of happy anticlimaxes were few compared to those with no news of their loved ones.

Volunteers Plentiful.

Volunteers were plentiful at Brown School from the Red Cross, American Legion and other organizations. From the beginning Mrs. Thomas Tyska, of the Blood Donor Service, was on duty along with Philip Wilcox, of Legion Post No. 23, Wethersfield. Lieutenant John Shages, of the Police Department, and Policewomen Vera Conroy and Ella Brown were constantly on duty.

As time went on, the stories unfolded at Brown School became more touching, fathers telling of entrusting one child to a stranger outside the tent and going back for another, only to find the first one had disappeared. Others who saved part of their family and went back to save others were themselves lost in the conflagration.

The following were still listed with authorities at the Brown School late Thursday night as missing:

Agatha, Marie, 13, 13 Village Street, East Hartford.

Akerhad, Elaine, 15, 17 Colonial Street.

(Concluded on Page 2, Column 1.)

List of Injured

At Hartford Hospital.

Boardman, Dorothy, 138 Zion Street.
Boardman, Katharine, 138 Zion Street.
Brannon, David, 25 River Road, Wethersfield.
Brannon, Gladys, 25 River Road, Wethersfield.
Brown, Anna Reduker, 63 Glastonbury Avenue, Rocky Hill.
Bushnell, Mary, Saybrook.
Carrozza, Ida, 447 North Terrace Avenue, Mt. Vernon, N. Y.
Conlon, Thomas, 78 Mayflower Street.
Fryer, Karen, 63 White Street.
Fryer, Katherine, 63 White Street.
Fryer, Michael, 63 White Street.
Kokoski, Gladys, 43 Warren Street.
Kornelia, Stanley, 15 Pease Avenue, Middletown.
Larson, Robert L., 138 Lyon Street, New Britain.
Libby, Judith, 3 Burbank Road, Wethersfield.
Libby, Juliette, 3 Burbank Road, Wethersfield.
Libby, Lawrence, 3 Burbank Road, Wethersfield.
Marcyomack, Stacia, 115 Mayflower Street, Elmwood.
Mattison, Howard, 256 Spring Street, Meriden.
Mehlhorn, Rita F., 228 Maple Avenue.
Metrelis, Dora May, 35 Somerset Street, Wethersfield.
Metrelis, Norma, 35 Somerset Street, Wethersfield.
O'Brien, Madeline, 309 Overlook Terrace.
O'Brien, Nadine, C-309 Charter Oak Terrace.
Peck, Florence, 346 South Whitney Street.
Peck, Robert, 346 South Whitney Street.
Richl, Bertha, 23 Whitmore Street.
Roy, Eugene, 43 Warren Street.
Sampson, Sarah, 63 Freeman Street.
Schimmel, Heidi, 48 Arnoldale Road, Manchester.
Smith, Mrs. Joseph, 491 Hudson Street.
Smith, Judith, 491 Hudson Street.
Staples, Mable, 32 Hart Place, Keene, N. H.
Tyler, June Florence, 29 Vernon Avenue, Rockville.
Tyler, Viola, 29 Vernon Avenue, Rockville.
Conlon, Mrs. John, no address.
Conlon, John, Jr., no address.
Frost, Barbara, 44 Capen Street.
Livingston, Ralph, 8, 1 North Quaker Lane, West Hartford.
Fortier, Ann, 288 Naubuc Avenue, Glastonbury.
Boyer, Albert, 7, 131 George Street.

(Concluded on Page 2, Column 1.)

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Panic And Blaze Trap Hundreds

Relatives Seek Their Dead at State Armory, Hospitals Crowded; Cages Block Exit for Many as Flames Sweep Over Big Top in 10 Minutes; Many Ordered Back, is Charge; Wide Inquiry Started, Inquest Set for Tuesday

One hundred and thirty-nine persons were killed and upwards of 225 injured within 10 minutes Thursday afternoon when fire, apparently starting from a carelessly discarded cigarette, swept through the big tent of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey's Circus at the Barbour Street show grounds in the worst civilian disaster in Connecticut's history.

Thursday night, as the death list grew, every hospital in Hartford was crowded with the injured. The big State Armory on Broad Street was turned into a morgue. There the bodies of men, women and children, most of them burned beyond recognition, lay on canvas Army cots, covered by blankets.

As investigations into responsibility for the disaster were pressed by police officials, Prosecutor S. Burr Leikind of the Police Court announced the arrests, on charges of manslaughter, of four circus officials. Mr. Leikind said the men, who were taken into custody by Hartford Police, are: J. A. Haley, vice-president; John Brice, circus chief of police; George W. Smith, general manager and Leonard Aylesworth, boss canvas man. Mr. Leikind said other arrests will be made.

At 2 a. m. today Prosecutor Leikind stated that charges had been dropped as concerned Mr. Brice but that two additional circus employees had been arrested. They are Edward Versteeg, chief electrician, and David Blanchfield, chief wagon man.

Bonds of $15,000 each were set in the cases of Haley and Smith and $10,000 in the cases of the others.

60 Bodies Identified.

Frantic relatives, each accompanied by a nurse and a policeman, were led, a dozen at a time, through the rows of cots. Many were unable to establish certain identity but late Thursday night more than 60 bodies had been identified. As soon as identification was positive, medical examiners permitted the removal of the bodies to undertaking establishments.

Governor Baldwin, State Police, the State's Attorney's office, Coroner Frank E. Healy, Hartford police and an investigating committee named at the circus grounds by Mayor Mortensen began a coordinated inquiry to fix responsibility for the disaster. Special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation also joined the investigation but as far as could be learned had found no evidence of sabotage, a possibility to which Federal investigation is limited.

Wind Fans Flames.

The animal acts were over and the Flying Wallendas had taken their places on the high wire when a tiny flame crept from a canvas toilet room outside the southwest corner of the big top not far from the main entrance and spread upward toward the big top, under which 6000 men, women and children were seated.

It was 2:40 p. m., 20 minutes after the performance got underway. Ushers ran to the blaze with buckets of water but the flames roared out of control. A strong southwest wind caught them and swept them northeasterly across the tent top. For a few seconds the crowd was calm. Then someone screamed "Fire!" and the panic began.

Children Thrown to Safety.

"It was the worst thing I've ever experienced," said State Police Commissioner Edward J. Hickey, who later took charge of the rescue and relief efforts to which doctors, nurses, soldiers and policemen from all parts of central Connecticut responded. Mr. Hickey, who had shepherded nine of his nieces and nephews, ranging from four to 14

(Concluded on Page 2, Column 4.)

Known Dead

State Armory

The following list of dead in the circus fire have been identified at the morgue in the State Armory:

Barry, Gail, 6, of 36 Curtis Street, identified by aunt.
Berman, Mrs. Rose, 39, of 24 Stillman Road, Wethersfield.
Berman, Judith, 8, same address.
Birch, Arland, 12, of 232 Orange Street, Meriden, identified by Lawrence Birch, father.
Birch, Shirley Ann, 9, of 232 Orange Street, Meriden, sister of the above, identified by Lawrence Birch, father.
Bradley, Helen, 20, Fairview Street, Simsbury, identified by Mary DuHaskas, 341 Hudson Street, Hartford.
Berube, Anne L., 5, of 23 Church Street, Plainville, identified by father.
Carrier, Jacqueline, 4, 77 Orange Street, Hartford, identified by mother, Mrs. Rolande A. Carrier, same address.
Connolly, Edward F., Jr., 11, 51 Eastview Street, Hartford, identified by Richard Casey, 68 White Street, friend of family.
Connolly, Rita Ann, 13, of 51 Eastview Street.
Conlon, Evelyn L., 27, 78 Mayflower Street, Elmwood, identified by Louis Conlon, relation unknown.
Coty, Dorothy, 18, 116 Prospect Street, Bristol, identified by Kenneth Coty, presumed father.
De Le Vergne, Elizabeth, 34, of Meriden, identified by husband.
Demartino, Anna, 37, of 84 Barbour Street, identified by husband.
DeNezzo, Joseph A., Jr., 1[illegible], 104 Edwards Street, Hartford, identified by Joseph DeNezzo, father.
DeNezzo, Mrs. Katherine J., 35, 104 Edwards Street, Hartford, identified by Joseph DeNezzo, husband.
Dineen, William, 8, 73 Martin Street, Hartford, son of Detective Sergeant and Mrs. William J. Dineen.
Duhamel, Alice B., 23, 77 Orange Street, Hartford, identified by Mrs. Rolande A. Carrier, same address.
Elliott, Jane M. N., 42, of Center Street, Wethersfield, identified by H. C. Christianson, brother-in-law.
Elliott, Richard, 4, of Center Street, Wethersfield, identified by H. C. Christianson, uncle.
Gallucci, Mary, 8, 106 Edwards Street, Hartford, identified by Joseph A. DeNezzo, 104 Edwards Street, Hartford.
Gallucci, Mrs. Rose, 35, mother of above, identified by Joseph A. DeNezzo.
Goff, Muriel, 4, of 82 Bellevue Square, identified by Robert Wells, a friend.
Goff, Maurice, 24, of 82 Bellevue Square, identified by Arnold Goff.
Goldstein, Mrs. Sylvia, 25, Andover Street, Hartford, identified by Sergeant (first name unknown) Weinstein, uncle.
Goldstein, female, first name unknown, age 3, Andover Street, Hartford, identified by Sergeant Weinstein.
Grant, Mrs. Hulda, 28, 143 Cannon Street, Meriden, identified by Frank Callato, friend.
Hess, Minnie, 42, of [illegible] Bay Parkway, Brooklyn, N. Y., identified by Hyman Karuk.
Kellin, Shirley, 17, of 1218 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford, identified by Sam Kellin.
Kuhnly, Mrs. Dorothy, 35, White Street, Rockville, identified by John Burke, Rocky Hill, friend.
Lapuk, Seymour, 8, of 240 Cornwall Street, identified by father.
Metcalfe, Marjorie, R., 31, of 66 Vernon Avenue, Rockville, identified by brother, Dr. Metcalfe.
Murphy, Charles W., 4, of 4 Crown

(Concluded on Page 2, Column 5.)

Kriegsgefangenenlager[97]
Friday, July 8 1944

Dearest wife - Today has been the happiest day I've spent in a long while. We celebrated the 4th with a day-long program of sports, music, speeches etc. The finishing touch was given when a letter was handed to me. It was from you - the first one. By getting it, I became a celebrity, as it was the first one in the barracks and one of the quickest to arrive here. It was wonderful to get Butch darling, and a relief to know that you know I'm all right. I still am enjoying good health and now that I've heard from you my worries are lessened. Yesterday being my birthday, your letter was the best present I ever got. I do love you very much my darling. By now Margie must have had those twins. How are she and they? Once again sweet - please don't worry as all is well with me. Regards to all at home. Goodnight Butch. I love you

Lenny[98]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Art by Lt. Charles Law Early[99]

[97] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[98] Signed (written in script)

[99] http://merkki.com/earlycharles.htm

Tower of North[100] Compound - Stalag Luft 1 (Barth, Germany)

Since it was a prison, our compound was enclosed with barbed wire. There were two fences, ten feet high, strung with horizontal and vertical barbed wires. The fences were about four feet apart and the area between the two was covered with coils of barbed wire. Ten feet inside the fence was a double strand of barbed wire that served as a warning wire. The compound was guarded by six towers – one on each corner and ones in the middle of each exterior side.

Lt. Robert R. Swartz
Prisoner of War, Stalag Luft 1[101]

[100] Lenny was in North Compound, which was the newer part of the POW camp, built to accommodate the growing number of young American men being shot down over Germany.

[101] http://merkki.com/swartzrobert.htm

Stalag Luft 1 – Daily Bulletin

July 9, 1944

OFFICE OF THE GROUP COMMANDER
GROUP I, USAAF, NORTH COMPOUND
OFLAG LUFT I, BARTH, GERMANY

July 9, 1944

BULLETIN:

1. MENU

BREAKFAST	DINNER
Prunes	Stew
Barley	Chocolate Pudding
Coffee	Coffee

2. No ground school today.

3. Remember Wing Commander Ferrer's talk in the Mess Hall at 1430 hours today. Subject of the talk will be Proposed Peace Terms.

4. All Prisoners of War from Georgia, Florida and Alabama are urged to attend a meeting in the Library in Block 4 at 1600 hours today.

5. There will be a meeting of Lt. Col. Hubbard's proposed Flight Group in the tent adjoining Block 4, tomorrow, Monday after evening roll call.

6. There will be a meeting of Prisoners of War from North and South Carolina in the tent on the West end of Block 8 after roll call this evening.

7. There will be a meeting of the Texas Prisoner of War club in the single tent between Blocks 4 and 5 immediately after evening roll call.

8. Church services for members of the L.D.S. will be held in Block 2, Room 16 at 1130 hours today.

9. Catholic Mass at 1130 hours today in the Mess Mall.

10. Protestant services will be held in the large Mess Hall at 1300 hours today.

11. It's coming!!! The Group 1 sponsored production "Waiting for Lefty". Exact date of arrival will be announced in tomorrow's bulletin.

12. All personnel are again reminded that they are required to wear pants, shirt and shoes to morning and evening meals. Anyone failing to do so will be asked to leave the Mess Hall and obtain the proper uniform.

By order of Lt. Col. HUBBARD

J.M. LITTLE, 1st Lt.

From Stalag Luft 1 Online: http://www.merkki.com/dbjuly944.htm

Attempt on Hitler's LIfe

July 20, 1944

July 20, 1944 – Attempt on Hitler's Life

The **20 July plot**, sometimes referred to as **Operation Valkyrie**, was a failed attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler, the chancellor and leader of Nazi Germany, and overthrow the Nazi regime on 20 July 1944. The plotters were part of the German resistance, mainly composed of Wehrmacht officers. The leader of the conspiracy, Claus von Stauffenberg, tried to kill Hitler by detonating an explosive hidden in a briefcase. However, due to the location of the bomb at the time of detonation, the blast only dealt Hitler minor injuries. The planners' subsequent coup attempt also failed and resulted in a purge of the Wehrmacht.

Kriegie Kraft Karnival

July 21-23, 1944

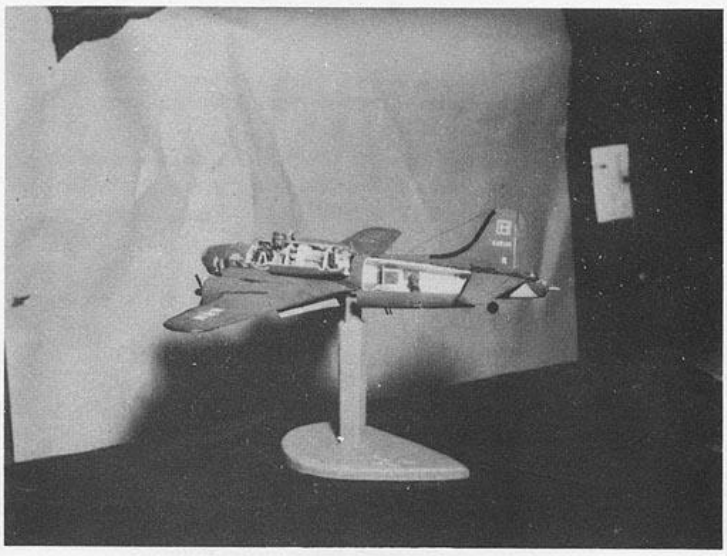
In July… we had *Kriegie-Kraft-Karnival*. It consisted of a play about a mad artist. Had an exhibit of different types of Red Cross parcels and the exhibit of *Pow-Wow*, our camp newspaper.

The biggest attraction was the hand craft exhibit, painting, drawings, carvings, sculptures, models, airplanes, boats and plaques. All in all it was very good.

Every day there was a big chocolate cake given as a door prize, 16 x 16 x 6". What a cake! The last day they drew for lighters and cigarettes. I won one-hundred cigarettes. Colonel Spicer drew my name and called for Hoppy, which was my nickname in the hospital…

I had three things entered in the exhibit, soap carvings: a racer, model T and a post-war Streamliner job. Later I built a V-8 engine scale model out of wood. All parts were removable, head, carburetor, etc. The entire exhibit is to travel through the States when we return. It is for the benefit of the Red Cross.

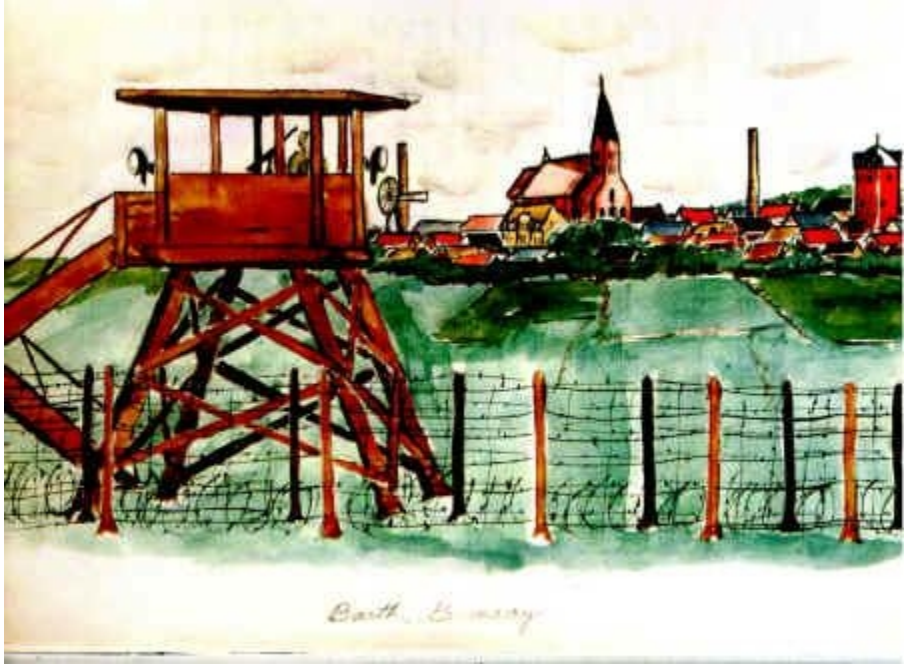
Lt. Robert Dean
Stalag Luft 1 Memoir[102]



B-17 Model

This was carved from bed slats. It is complete to crew members and the power-gun turrets are movable.

[102] https://458bg.com/combat-crews/mcmains/



Barth Germany by Daniel McCarthy

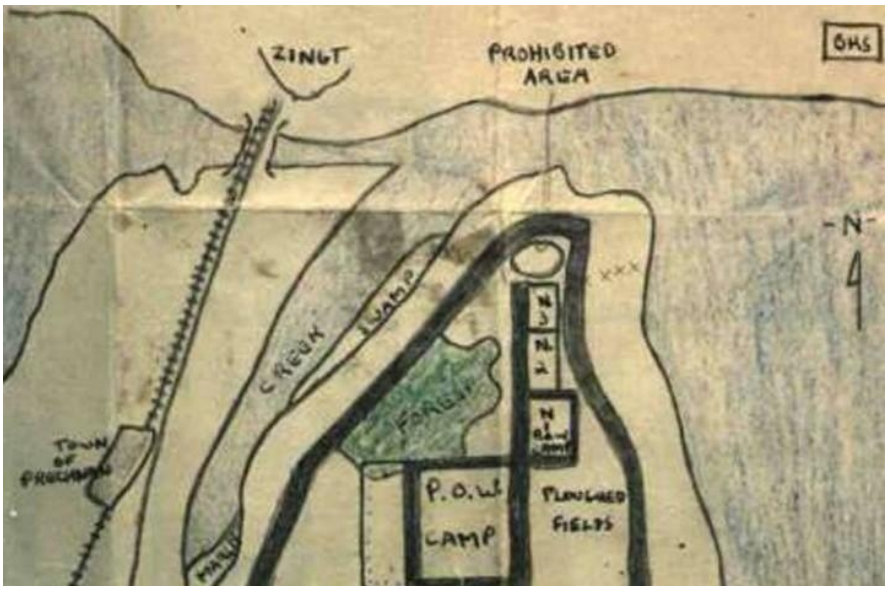
A watercolor perspective of the main gate at *Stalag Luft* I, drawn by aviator Jack Friend in his *Wartime Log*. It shows the large guard tower at the entrance and the German war flag flapping in the wind on a summer day.

A Sad but True Story by Roger Wilco[103]

[103] Lt. Kenneth C. Reimer (KG 4452)

Kriegsgefangenenlager[104]
Monday, July 24 1944

Dearest wife - No mail since the first one but I'm still getting enjoyment out of that one by reading it at least once a day. I'm still feeling fine and everything is ok. A few days ago some of us were given a *Parole* for a few hours and allowed to go swimming in the ocean. It was a grand feeling - plus a great relaxation.



Good Swimming Here[105]

The next day, we had movies again - *George Washington Slept Here* - good for a few laughs. Yesterday, I saw *Waiting for Lefty* - put on by the dramatic club - very good. The above, plus the fact that there is always a ball game, is proof that time does not hang heavy on our hands. By now you should have received some of my mail - don't forget to make plans for our future. I love you my darling more than words can say - please take good care of yourself - for me - Butch, and remember always that I love you very much. Lenny[106]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

[104] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper lette, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[105] The best swimming is in the large bay to the East of POW North 3. There is also decent swimming in the Creek which also empties into the same lagoon.

[106] Written in capital letters.

The official[107] photograph of the play performed by Lenny's fellow POWs

The empty stage from the set of the play Lenny's fellow POWs[108]

[107] Labeled by Sylvia Geetter Levy as *Propaganda Photo* issued by Germany

[108] Image from http://merkki.com/swartzrobert.htm

We tried to entertain ourselves and pass the time. There were organized productions. Each compound had its own orchestra and dramatic organization. The orchestra, glee club, solo musicians and comedians all gave two fine variety shows… North 2 hosted the drama productions. The first was a variety show and the other was a fine job on *The Man Who Came To Dinner.* The orchestras were quite capable considering the difficulties they encountered. The kriegie orchestra produced all their own arrangements and even found time to compose a few songs as well. Each new show seemed to feature a new song.

Lt. Robert R. Swartz
Prisoner of War, Stalag Luft 1[109]

Photos of Drama production - Stalag Luft 1 (Barth, Germany)

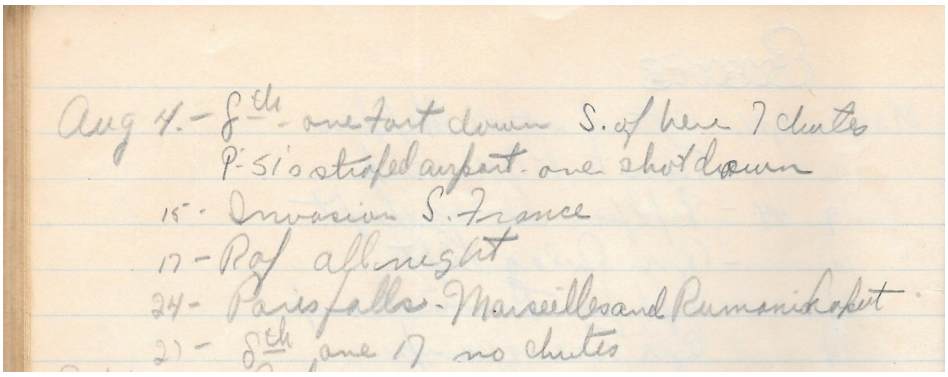
[109] http://merkki.com/swartzrobert.htm

Lenny's Logbook[110]

August, 1944

Events

August 4, 1944 – 8th [overhead][111] one Fort[112][ress] down S[outh] of here 7 [para]chutes
- P-51s strafed airport - one shot down
August 15, 1944 – Invasion S. France
August 17,1944 – RAF all night
August 24, 1944 – Paris falls - Marseille and Rumania kaput


Aug 4.- 8th one fort down S. of here 7 chutes
P-51's strafed airport. one shot down
15.- Invasion S. France
17 - Raf all night
24 - Paris falls - Marseilles and Rumania kaput.
21 - 8th one 17 no chutes

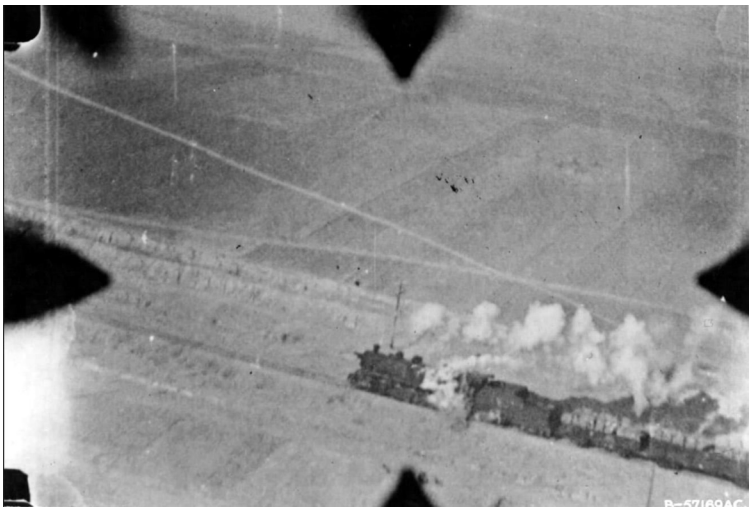
August 4, 1944 – 8th [overhead][113] one Fort[ress] down S[outh] of here 7 [para]chutes
- P-51s strafed airport - one shot down

[110] This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

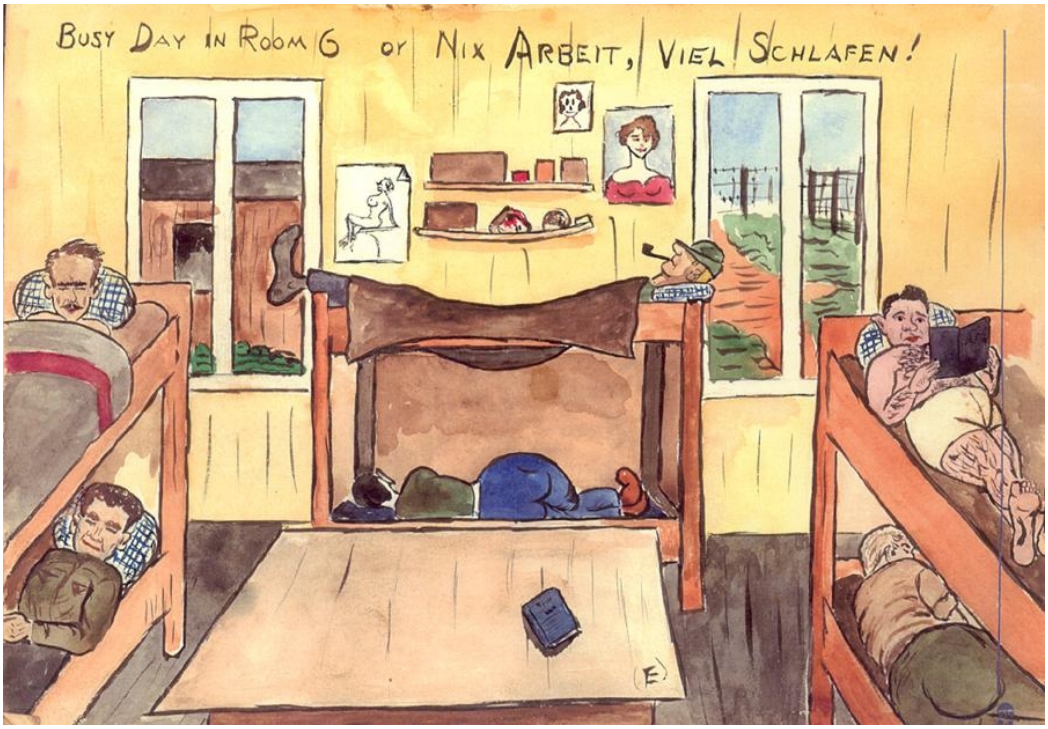
[111] Eighth Air Force as the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe. This is a note that on this day, Lenny saw planes, probably in formation flying overhead.

[112] A Flying Fortress (B-17G) like Lenny navigated, was seen going down South of the camp.

[113] Eighth Air Force as the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe. This is a note that on this day, Lenny saw planes, probably in formation flying overhead.



PF-51 gun sight of a speeding train



Best Day in Room 6, or Nix Arbeit, Viel Schlafen[114]*!*

Art by Stalag Luft 1 POW Lt. Charles L. Early

[114] No work, a lot of sleep

Kriegsgefangenenlager[115]
Monday, July 24 1944

Dearest wife - Another month brings another quota of letters, and enables me to write to you again and to assure you once more that I'm feeling fine and still in good health. The weather - cold for a while - has turned warm and the sunbathers are out in full force. Last week we held an arts and crafts exhibit - it's surprising what some fellows can do with limited supplies. I deeply regret not having any talent along that line. Some new fellows were brought in the other day and once again we have caught up with the outside world - including the latest antics of *Lil Abner*. The mail situation has slowed down again and I'm *sweating out* your second letter. Rumor has it that packages came in - maybe I'll be one of the lucky ones this time. Keep your hopes up my darling and think only of the future and always remember that I love you. Lenny[116]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

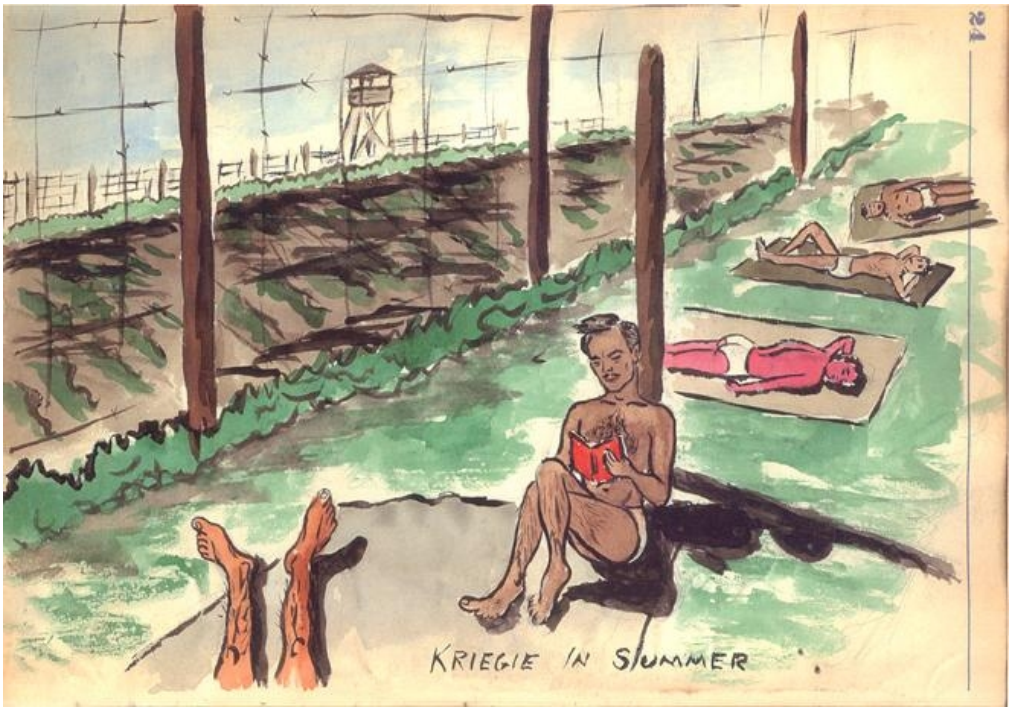
Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[117]

Flying Fortress, 1944

[115] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[116] Written in script.

[117] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1. His Log was recently discovered and published.



Kriegie in Summer

Art by Stalag Luft 1 POW Lt. Charles L. Early

Operation Dragoon

August 15, 1944

August 15, 1944 – Invasion S. France

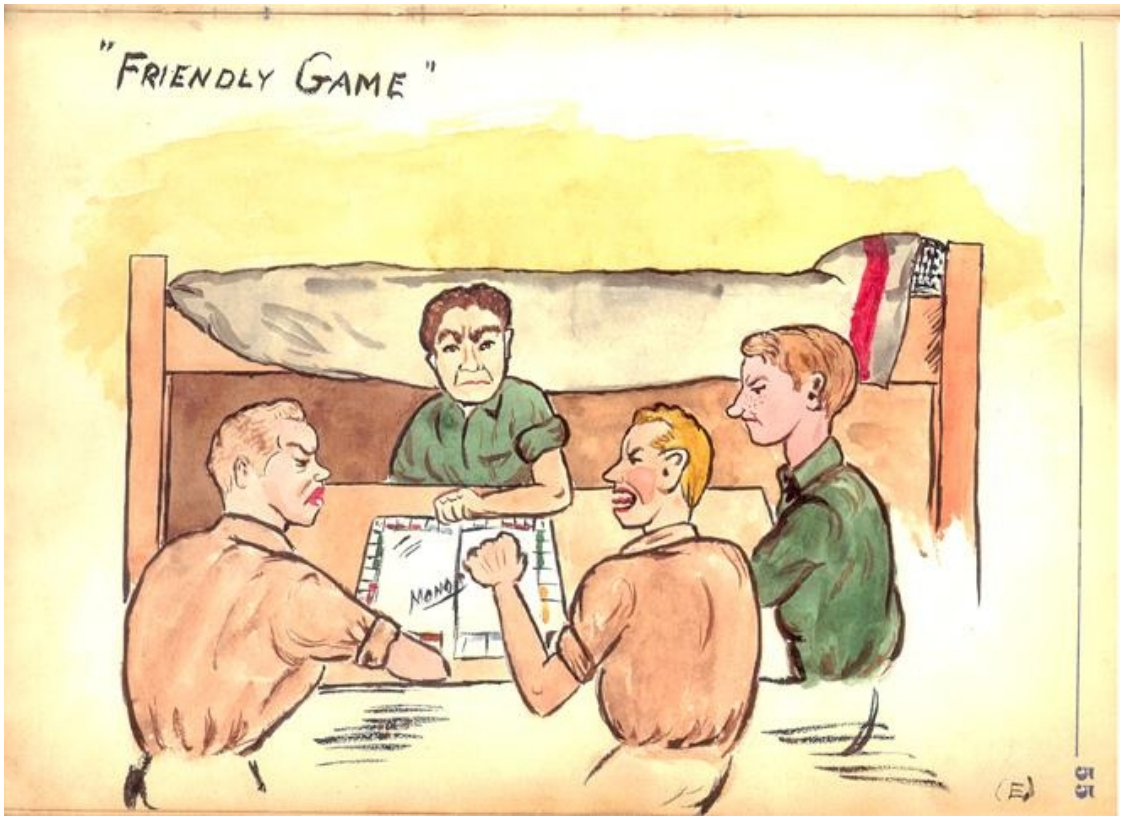
Operation Dragoon (initially Operation Anvil), was the code name for the landing operation of the Allied invasion of Provence on 15 August 1944. Although initially designed to be executed in conjunction with Operation Overlord, the June 1944 Allied landing in Normandy, the lack of enough resources led to the cancellation of the second landing.

By July 1944 the landing was reconsidered, as the clogged-up ports in Normandy did not have the capacity adequately to supply the Allied forces. Concurrently, the high command of the French Liberation Army pushed for a revival of the operation, which would involve large numbers of French troops. As a result, the operation was finally approved in July to be executed in August.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[118]
Monday, August 18 1944

Dearest wife - A few more lines to let you know that I'm still in good health and getting along fine. Time spent in plans for the future passes fast. Life consists of eating, sleeping and playing Monopoly - I am getting fat! Butch, my darling I love you very much - Take good care of yourself and don't worry. I love you, Lenny

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)



Friendly Game

Art by Stalag Luft 1 POW Lt. Charles L. Early

[118] Prisoner-of-war camps.

Cards were the most popular form of individual entertainment. The decks of playing cards in the YMCA parcels were a most welcome addition to our stock. Bridge, cribbage and Euchre were the most popular games. In addition to cards, chess, "chop", and checkers were other popular games.

When the weather permitted most available areas were the scene of some athletic contest. The YMCA furnished sporting goods and it was constantly in use. Playing catch, softball, football and volleyball were most popular. There were golf clubs available, so golfers devised balls and laid out a course.

Lt. Robert R. Swartz
Prisoner of War, Stalag Luft 1[119]

Lt. Lenny Levy

Stalag 1 Athletic Director

[119] http://merkki.com/swartzrobert.htm

Kriegsgefangenenlager[120]
Sunday, August 20 1944

Dearest wife - A few lines to let you know that I received two more letters One from you telling of your new job and one from mom there is nothing like getting mail here- please Butch write often and long. I am in the best of health. I love you, Lenny

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[121]

Arrival at Stalag-Luft 1, 1945

[120] Prisoner-of-war camps.

[121] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1. His Log was recently discovered and published.

Paris Falls

August 24, 1944

August 24, 1944 – Paris falls - Marseille and Rumania kaput

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times.

LATE CITY EDITION

Showers, ending before noon; clearing, quite later today. Temperatures Yesterday—Max., 88; Min., 81. Sunrise, 6:10 A. M.; Sunset, 7:51 P. M.

Copyright, 1944, by The New York Times Company.

VOL. XCIII. No. 31,624. NEW YORK, THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 1944. THREE CENTS IN NEW YORK CITY

PARIS IS FREED; RUMANIA QUITS; MARSEILLE AND GRENOBLE WON; GERMAN FLIGHT NEARS A ROUT

BREAK IN BALKANS

King Proclaims Nation's Surrender and Wish to Help Allies

NAZIS IN AREA FIGHT

New Bucharest Regime Asks United Nations Aid Against Hungary

By DANIEL T. RIGGHAM

BERNE, Switzerland, Aug. 23—In a brief proclamation to the Rumanian people broadcast from Bucharest at 9:25 o'clock this evening, King Michael of Rumania ordered his armed forces to cease fire against the forces of the Allies, saying he had accepted their terms of unconditional surrender in the name of the nation.

The youthful King called on the nation to take up the fight immediately by the side of the Soviet forces on Rumanian soil against their common enemy, Germany.

Dramatic and apparently sudden as was the entire announcement the Germans were obviously forewarned, for when the home broadcast service at Bucharest interrupted its regular transmission at 8:24 P. M., within thirty seconds the two powerful Bucharest transmitters were shrouded by interference from a battery of German [illegible]

President Tells Delegates 'Four of Us' Can Keep Peace

Staying Friends and Meeting Often May Mean Generations Without War, He Says —Washington Studies U. S. Plan

By JAMES B. RESTON

WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—President Roosevelt told delegates to the Washington Conversations on International Organization today that if the United States, Soviet Russia and Great Britain could maintain their new and close friendship and spread that friendship around the world "we may have a peaceful period for our grandchildren to grow up in."

Speaking informally to the delegates at the White House during a recess in their labors to draft an effective security league, Mr. Roosevelt seemed to emphasize the special responsibility of the great powers in maintaining peace, by the use of force if necessary.

"We have got to make not merely a peace but a peace that will last," the President said, "and a peace in which the larger nations will work absolutely in unison indeed Roosevelt told delegates to the Washington Conversations on International Organization today that if the United States, Soviet Russia and Great Britain could maintaining their new and close friendship and spread that friendship around the world "we may have a peaceful period for our grandchildren to grow up in."

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"We have got to make not merely a peace but a peace that will last," the President said, "and a peace in which the larger nations will work absolutely in unison in preventing war by force. But the four of us have to be friends, considering all the time on the basis of getting to know each other."

Although no representative of China was present, the President's reference to "the four of us" was interpreted as an indication that when Mr. Roosevelt thinks of "the great powers" he counts China as one of these nations.

It was a remarkable fact, Mr. Roosevelt said, that the great powers had attained such unanimity during the war, and he added that the hope of the future lay in the ability of the nations to perpetuate that unity for a long time to come.

"The prisoners of 17, 18, 20 that

Continued on Page 13

The text of the President's remarks is on Page 13.

RED ARMY SPEEDS DEEP INTO RUMANIA

Bendery and Akkerman Taken —Polish Plane Center Falls

47 RAILROADS SUED AS WESTERN TRUST

J. P. Morgan & Co., Kuhn-Loeb and Two Associations

FRENCH TAKE PORT

Pockets of Resistance Are Being Cleared Up in Marseille

ARMY JUNCTION SEEN

American Dash Inland Said to Have Carried to Annecy, Near Border

By The Associated Press

BERNE, Aug. 23—Marseille, France's second city and greatest seaport, fell to the swift onslaught of French infantry and armor today as American forces swept 240 miles inland from the Mediterranean and were within less than 240 miles of a junction with Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's legions below liberated Paris.

Only eight days after the landings in southern France the inspired Poilus battered their way into the heart of Marseille against slight resistance and tonight were cleaning out pockets of last-ditch defenders.

The unexpectedly easy capture of the great port assures the Seventh Army an adequate flow of supplies and reinforcements for speedy confirmation of the threat toward northern France. Prior to the city's fall, other French troops had cut the last escape route for the Ger-

HAILING THE LIBERATION OF PARIS

Lily Pons leads the gathering in Rockefeller Plaza in singing "The Marseillaise"

The New York Times

GRIMNESS TINGES JOY OF FRENCH HERE

Concern for Kin and Thoughts of Tasks Ahead Mingle With

French Armored Division Sent Into Paris by Bradley

The following dispatch by a representative of the Columbia Broadcasting System, the first American correspondent to enter Paris, was called to London and broadcast from there.

By CHARLES COLLINGWOOD

PARISIANS ROUT FOE

50,000 FFI Troops With Civilians' Aid Battle Germans 4 Days

POLICE HELP REBELS

Turn Ile de la Cite Into Fortress—Casualties Among People High

By RAYMOND DANIELL

LONDON, Aug. 23—Paris is free again and, because of that, the rest of the world can breathe a little more freely. In a manner befitting a capital with the history and tradition of Paris, its own citizens rose and threw off the tyrant's yoke as soon as their own troops and the Allies' armies of liberation had given them the opportunity to challenge their conquerors on equal terms.

In leaving it to the French themselves to announce that the enemies had been hurled and the Tricolor had been raised over their own gracious and lovely capital, the Allies were following a policy that was both strategically and politically sound.

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's columns were able to continue their eastward sweep unimpeded by the need for pausing to mop up, and France, which was knocked out

August 24, 1944 – Paris falls

Crowds line the Champs Elysees to view the Free French forces of General Leclerc's 2nd Armored Division pass through the Arc de Triomphe

RUMANIA QUITS! JOINS ALLIES !!!

POW WOW

Volume VI, Number 2 Stalag Luft I August 24, 1944 3

PARIS FALLS

THE FRENCH PATRIOTS THREW OFF THE MANTLE OF ALIEN OPPRESSION TODAY AND PARIS, ONCE MORE THE CAPITAL OF AN ALLIED FRANCE. AFTER MORE THAN FOUR YEARS OF GERMAN OCCUPATION THE GREAT FRENCH CITY WAS RETURNED TO ITS OWNERS -- AND THE JOB WAS DONE BY ITS OWNERS.

Hitler's defeat in 1940 has been fully avenged, and French fighting men have seized their capital from the German Occupation Forces. This spectacular news followed after four days of heavy street battling throughout the city.

At first the battle was victorious only in parts. All Vichy officials and all German occupation authorities and their troops have been arrested. French Interior Forces are in complete control of the entire city.

Orders have been issued by the Free French authorities over Paris Radio that a full-scale uprising is to begin immediately over the whole of France.

Announcing this historic news, an Allied spokesman declared today from London:

"Paris has suffered the humiliation of being occupied by the enemy for four years and two months and now -- by the patience and courage of the French people -- has regained its freedom."

* * * \

PARIS FALLS (cont)

German forces in north-western France. It is thus likely that the total of killed, wounded and captured in the Normandy trap was in the region of 75,000, remaining casualties having been inflicted on other sectors of the front.

* *

FRENCH CAPTURE MARSEILLE

Mediterranean Hq., Aug. 23...Close on news of the fall of Paris, French Interior Headquarters dramatically announced today the capture of Marseille, second city and first port of France.

A week-long guerrilla battle has raged in and around the great southern French city and patriots have each day reported an increasing circular pressure.

This morning, before the city's capture was completed, Patriot Hq. announced that 475 Germans were killed and over 4,000 taken prisoner during yesterday alone.

Allied armored forces were meanwhile plunging northward through the Rhone River Valley. Mediterranean Hq. announced that one force has driven 119 miles north of the Rhone Estuary, emphasizing that this was not a flying column but a whole army advance.

This gain brought our units to within 30 miles of Lyons and abreast of Grenoble, both cities reportedly under control of French Interior Forces.

Seventeen thousand German prisoners have been taken during the first nine days of the invasion, added Gen. Wilson's communique, and steady progress continues along all other sectors of the rapidly deepening front.

A third invasion of France was reported today by Berlin Radio, locating the landing operations around St.Jean de Luz, only a few miles north of the Franco-Spanish frontier and on the Atlantic coast.

No Allied statement was made of the progress of intention of this force, but from the German announcement, the landing appeared on a relatively small scale. It is possibly an effort to prevent the Germans from effecting a wholesale withdrawal from the southwest of France without opposition or pressure.

* *

SHORTER ITEMS FROM THE WORLD'S NEWS

Moscow - A further 40-mile stretch of the Vistula River's west bank has been cleared and Soviet bridgeheads considerably deepened and expanded. In Rumania yesterday (before that country's capitulation)

(continued middle next column)

RUMANIA CAPITULATES (cont)

the 15th USAAF -- and to the rich grain fields of Rumania is now decisively ended.

Rumania's move may also greatly influence the conduct of Germany's remaining allies of Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland whose contribution to the Axis war effort has been steadily lowered during the past months.

From a military point of view, Nazi forces in Serbia, Croatia, Albania and Greece are now three-quarters isolated from their mother country.

Young King Michael has issued a radio appeal to "all true Rumanians" to stand by the throne and to throw out the Germans. Nothing is yet known of the fate of Premier-Dictator Antonescu and his Fascist Iron Guard.

Only yesterday, reported 15th USAAF Hq., 1,200 planes from Italian bases hit targets through-out Rumania.

* *

SHORTER ITEMS FROM THE NEWS (cont)

the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Armies were hammering southward without opposition. Gains of up to 40 miles south of Jasy were announced and 400 localities were claimed freed of German and Rumanian troops. Soviet pressure continued both in the Warsaw and far northern sectors of the East Front.

London -British warships, patrolling the French Atlantic coast, yesterday sank eight German ships between Brest and Lorient.

Italy Hq.-Allied air units of the Balkan command today evacuated over 900 wounded patriots from Yugoslavia to Italy

Tokyo -The last 20th USAAF raid against the southern Jap island of Kuichi was carried out by 60 bombers Sunday night, announced a Jap communique. Ten were claimed downed.

Washington -President Roosevelt has returned to Washington after a 15,000 mile tour of the north and south Pacific

Berlin -An interAllied Conference has opened in Washington, attended by representatives of Britain, Russia and the United States, to plan post-war international security.

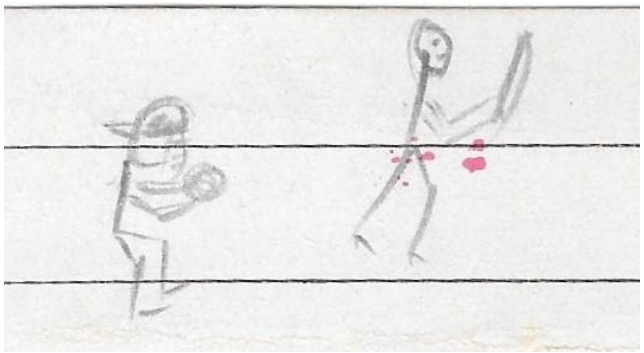
Berlin -Fifteenth USAAF bombers hit Vienna and un-named targets in Silesia during Tuesday. Fifty-seven planes were claimed down, U.S. Bomber Hq. admitted that "heavier air opposition than usual was encountered".

Berlin -Lord Mayor Goerdeler, implicated in the attempt on Hitler's life has been caught. But, Gen. Lindemann, another of the plotters, is still loose.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[122]
Monday, August 25 1944

Dearest wife - It's been a long time since the last letter, but only because the supply of paper varies. My health is still the best and my tan is getting deeper every day - the weather is perfect. Time is still spent mainly at the ball diamond - either as a player (the Conn[ecticut] club has won and lost a game) or spectator. Once in a while, I umpire a game - thank God there are no bottles to be had to throw. No mail since Mom's letter, but it is starting to come in in bunches. So my hopes are high. By now, your plans for our future should be pretty definite - if not make haste. If you haven't already done so Butch, enclose a few pictures in your next letter - they are permissible - I miss you my darling with all my heart. Until I can once more hold you in my arms, remember I love you. Lenny[123]

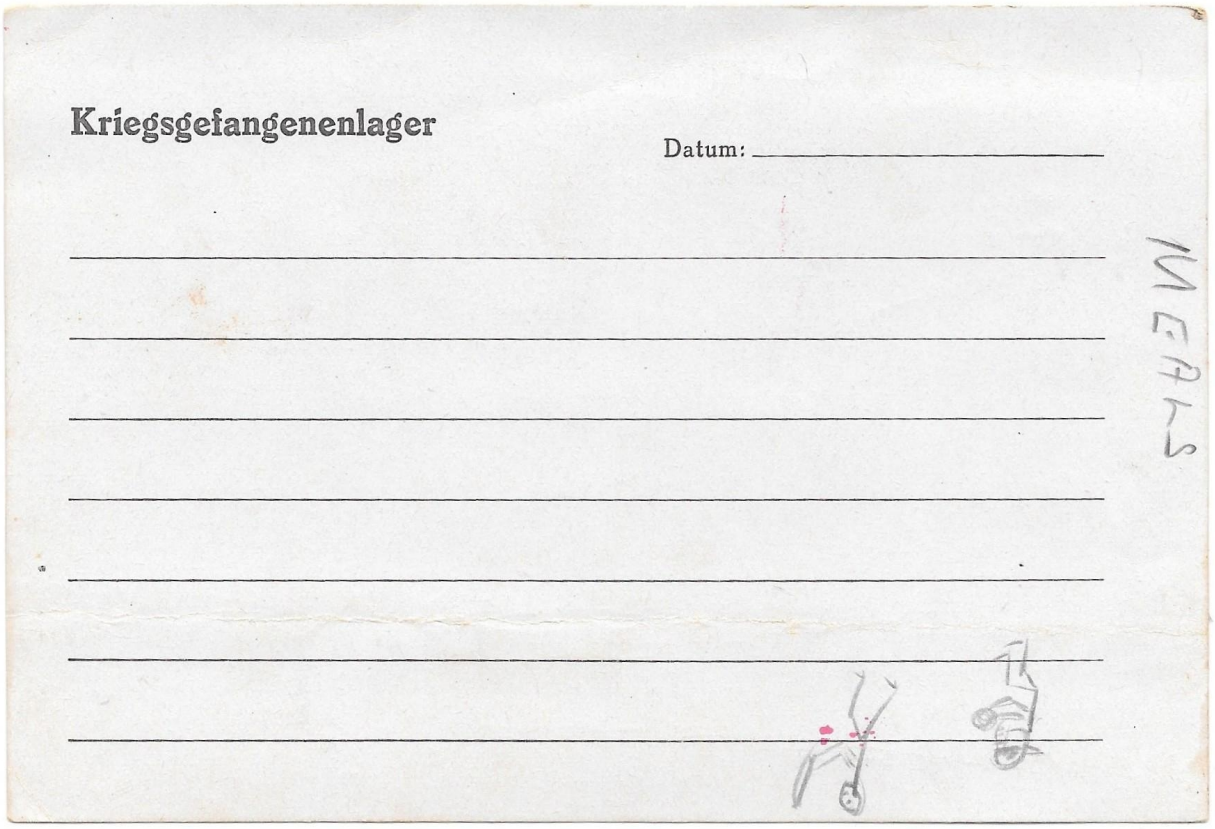
Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)



Baseball Doodle by 2nd Lt. Leonard Levy

[122] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[123] Signed - written in script.

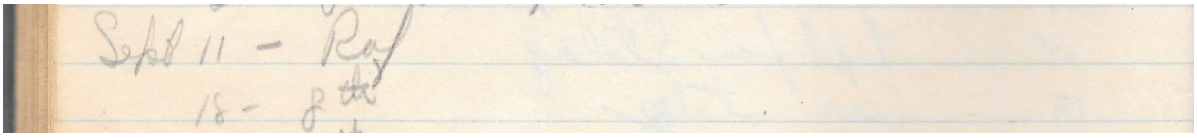


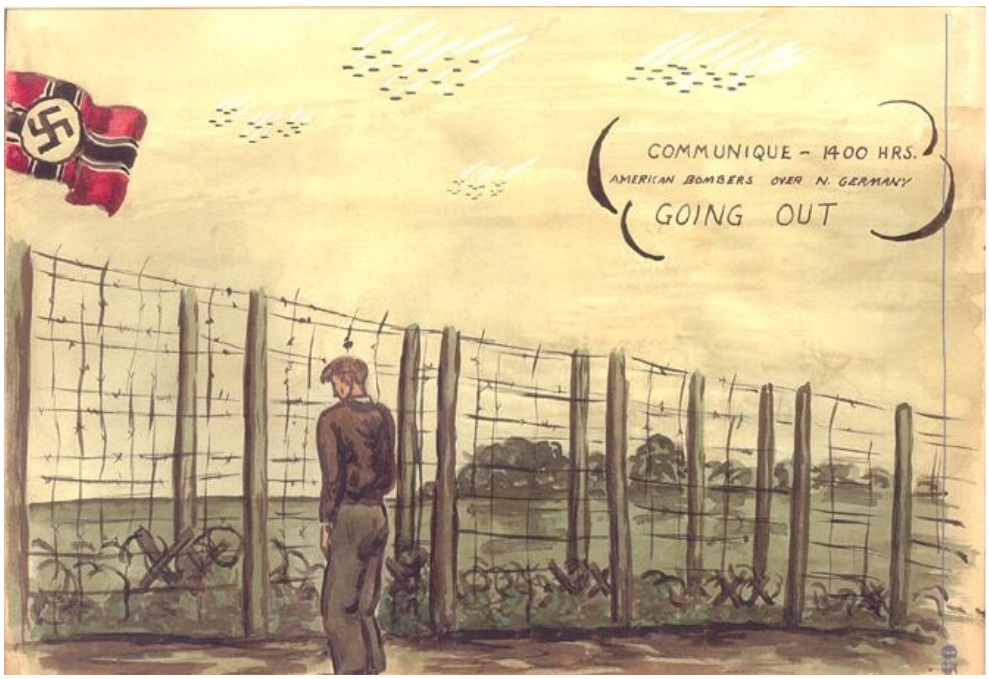
from a blank Kriege-card

Lenny's Logbook[124]
September, 1944

Events

September 11, 1944 – RAF (Royal Air Force)
September 18, 1944 – 8th [overhead][125]





Going Out

Art by Stalag Luft 1 POW Lt. Charles L. Early

Another favorite activity in fair weather was walking. Of course barbed wire placed restrictions upon movement, but just inside the warning wire encircling the compound was a well-trodden, heavily traveled path. Our walks were full of exercise, but there was little of scenic value. The north and south sides offered nothing but views of other compounds.

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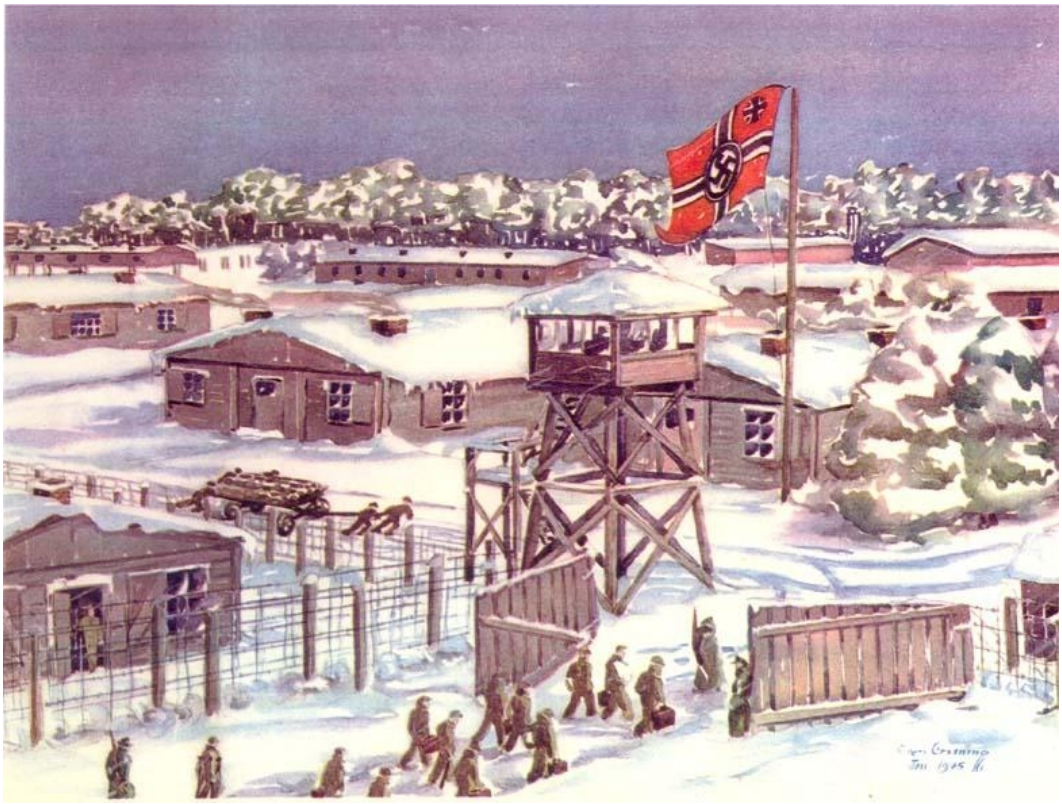
[124] This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

[125] Eighth Air Force as the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe. This is a note that on this day, Lenny saw planes, probably in formation flying overhead.

The west side furnished a small wooded area to break the monotony. Only the east side offered an interesting panorama. To the southeast was the village of Barth. The town was dominated by the large, square, solid rather grotesque, poor, gothic church. The only other object to break the roof line was an old steel windmill. North of Barth was a factory featuring a large cement smoke stack, which often reminded me of the paper mill at home. Due east and to the northeast was the bay and the two peninsulas in the distance.

Lt. Robert R. Swartz
Prisoner of War, Stalag Luft 1[126]



Entering Camp

Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[127]

[126] http://merkki.com/swartzrobert.htm

[127] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1. His harcover Log was recently discovered and published.

"The Only Truthful Newspaper in Germany"

POW WOW

Volume VI, Number 21 Stalag Luft I September 18, 1944

ALLIES INSIDE GERMANY

[illegible].....AMERICAN TANKS PUNCHED A THIRTY-MILE SALIENT THROUGH LUXEMBOURG YESTERDAY TO DRIVE FIVE MILES ONTO GERMAN SOIL. ALLIED FIGHTINGMEN WERE GEARED AGAIN TO TOP SPEED, AFTER A THREE-DAY PAUSE TO REINFORCE AND REGROUP, AND THE MARCH TO BERLIN WAS BEGUN.

Locale of the break-through across the old German frontier was disclosed to be immediately northwest of Trier.

Allied front reporters wired the amazing news that "the Germans are fleeing before us....blowing up bridges and mining roads..."

Although our forces were so far only five miles inside the Reich, and had not yet reached the Siegfried Line, the report revealed a gain of 30 miles within 24 hours. For it was only yesterday that advanced U.S. spearheads rolled in to the capital of Luxembourg.

British 2nd Army forces achieved a no less important though hardly as historic gain yesterday smashing the German defenses along the Albert Canal in northern Belgium. By last night, British reconnaissance units had pushed "well into Holland", although the exact locality was not identified.

Simultaneously, patrols of the American 3rd Army joined up with Gen Patch's 7th Army south of Troyes. The Allied front through easternmost France and Belgium was now one continuous line, stretching from the Swiss frontier to above the Dutch-Belgian frontier.

French troops of the 7th Army have wiped out a pocket of Germans near Dijon and other units have cut the last road from the south into the Belfort Gap where the Germans are making a stand.

On the Channel coast, Canadian troops have expanded their bridgehead across the Ghent Canal and Polish troops effected a new crossing. Twelve thousand more prisoners were taken in this area yesterday.

American 3rd Army forces are heavily engaged with strong enemy forces along the Moselle front between Metz and Nancy and the position at this point is momen-

(continued top col. 1, page 2)

GREAT DAY & NIGHT RAIDS AGAINST GERMANY

London, Sept. 18.....Powerful, round the clock air assaults were kept up during the past 72 hours across the whole breadth of the breached German fortress.

Sunday night, a RAF armada pummelled the industrial Rhine town of Darmstadt, while squadrons of Mosquitos harassed the Berlin area.

During Monday, the greatest force of RAF bombers ever launched in a daylight attack struck at three synthetic oil plants in the Ruhr.

Simultaneously, over 1,000 American Forts and Libs, supported by hundreds of fighters, pounded oil targets throughout the Reich.

Aerial opposition against the American force was stiff; 175 interceptors were shot down and 77 of our planes were missing.

Fifteenth Air Force heavies were out over Hungary and southern Germany at the same time, but met considerably lighter resistance.

RAF tactical bombers and fighter-bombers, and 9th USAAF aircraft, meanwhile screened the northwest German sky and low-level attacks were carried out up and down the Rhine and in the Ruhr.

Last night, strong RAF forces kept up the unprecedented air blows with attacks across the north and northeast of Germany. Targets for these raids have not yet been announced.

The strategic raids being carried out by heavy bomber forces into Germany do not decrease the tactical support given out ground troops along the Nazi frontier. Groups of U.S. and RAF bombers are almost continuously over the battle-area.

ALLIES INSIDE GERMANY (continued)

tarily a stalemate.

United Kingdom troops gained high ground immediately north and overlooking the city of le Havre where the German garrison was still holding out.

In Brest, the Breton port, street-to-street fighting was going on and Allied observers declared that this city's fall may be regarded as imminent.

The Channel ports of Boulogne, Calais and Dunkirque still resisted although all were individually isolated and their reduction was equally only a matter of time.

Ostende, reiterated London, was firmly in British hands, and the German claim to be evacuating a trapped army northward to the Scheldt estuary was therefore proved false. The increasing number of prisoners coming into British and Canadian hands was also a reliable clue that the German escape-route is bared and mopping-up was in progress.

German newspapers yesterday had no news of the new Allied offensive into Germany and Holland as it began only a short time before their publication.

But summaries of the situation immediately before the attacks opened indicate the enemy expected an imminent resumption of the full-scale offensive.

One Berlin newspaper declared, "the situation in the west is at present in a state of flux....it is not stagnant, but there is not yet a great enemy offensive. But it should be acknowledged that the present battles are leading up to a great Allied offensive...."

A London report was quoted in the German paper, declaring "the Germans were able to reorganize their defenses because the four Allied armies are too far distant from their supply bases..." Another reported, "the Germans have formed a new defense line along the Moselle, as a result of our supply difficulties, and are disputing every yard of ground. The Germans have brought up reinforcements and are offering heavy artillery fire!"

Another German report claimed that the air attacks against le Havre had killed 1,300 French civilains but that only 16 Germans had lost their lives and 34 were wounded.

French patriot forces, said Berlin, sent an ultimatum to the fortress of La Rochelle (on the French Atlantic coast) but it was refused and fighting continues. This is evidently one of the few areas where the Germans were not able to evacuate in time to escape the junction of the 3rd and 7th Armies at Troyes.

* *

SOVIET PATROL ENTERS EAST PRUSSIA

Moscow, Sept. 12.....A Red Army reconnaissance force crossed the East Prussian frontier yesterday, carrying out an extensive patrol, then withdrew to the main Soviet lines only a few miles east of the border.

All other sectors of the East Front were quiet, although Berlin reported spasmodic Soviet attacks all along the line.

Tito's Guerrilla Army, marching east to meet the Soviets at the junction of the Serbian-Rumania frontier, cleared several more towns and villages in northern Serbia yesterday.

In the Rumanian province of Transylvania, Soviet forces cleared more roads on the way to Klausenberg in southern Hungary.

Berlin reported more terms of the Russo-Rumanian armistice today. The Rumanian Army is being disarmed and formed into labor batallions to reap the harvest and the Rumanian province of Moldavia is to become a Soviet Republic.

Bulgaria's armisitice terms were quoted by Berlin as (1) a complete occupation of the country by Russian troops, (2) all Bulgarian shipping to make port immediately, (3) all political and war prisoners to be released immediately, (4) all anti-Jewish laws to be annulled, and (5) a large war indemnity is to be paid to Russia.

* *

SHORTER ITEMS FROM THE WORLD'S NEWS

Italy Hq. - The towns of Prato and Pistolia, northwest of Florence, have been captured by the 5th Army. Heavy fighting continues near Rimini.

Pacific Hq. - A U.S. naval and air task force attacked the Philippines last week, wiping out an entire Jap convoy of 52 vessels and destroying 68 Jap planes. Tokyo reported heavy air attacks against Mindanao, Palau and Yap Islands, claiming 32 planes destroyed. Tokyo also reported another B-29 raid against southern Manchuria, claiming 40 bombers for a loss of 6 fighters.

London - One RAF pilot chalked up a total of 60 "kills" against the German rocket-bombs (or "doodle-bugs" as known in London) and one night-fighter squadron accounted for 212 during the raids. Heaviest hit sections of London were Croydon, Lewisham and Beckenham.

Quebec - Attending the 2nd Quebec Conference, which will plan the destruction of Japan as the 100 planned Germany's end are nearly all the British and American staff chiefs with Churchill and F.D.R.

back furiously from long-prepared defenses.

American battleships, cruisers and supporting warships of the Pacific Fleet stood offshore bombarding the Japanese shore installations, while carrier-based aircraft dive-bombed and strafed the enemy in close support of the advancing ground troops.

MacArthur's men on Morotai also went in under a powerful

Chungking— (AP) —Chinese forces in north Burma and Chi[illegible] Yunnan province have estab[illegible] contact somewhere in Yu[illegible] and the Chinese now are in control of [illegible] trail between [illegible]yina and Tengchung, a Chin[illegible] army spokesman announced to-day.

Nazis Attack Finn Isle; Troops Clash in North

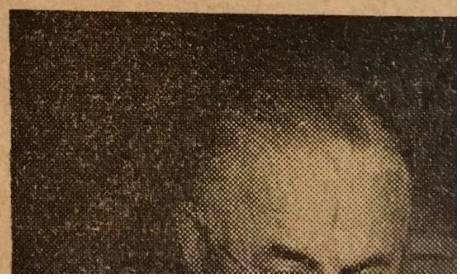
Stockholm —(UP)— War between German and Finish troops, actual if undeclared, was reported today to have broken out in northern Finland and on an island off the south coast.

A Finnish communique said a German amphibious force attacked the island of Hogland in the Gulf of Finland last night. Fighting was in progress on the island today, it said, after the Nazis established a small bridgehead despite the sinking of nine of their invasion ships.

Reliable sources later reported that fighting had broken out between the Germans and Finns in northern Finland. Three German divisions in the Salla area were reported partly enveloped by Russian troops. Informants said their fate depended on the development of Finnish military measures in North Finland against the Nazis.

Notables at Times

250 Attend Opening Of Landmark; Baldwin Among Many Speakers



Formal opening of The Times Tower and grounds atop Talcott Mountain, yesterday, brought together 250 prominent newspaper

Kriegsgefangenenlager[128]
Friday, September 15 1944

Dearest wife - Received two more letters from you yesterday and once again my morale has reached a high point. Mail is the bright light in our lives here Butch, so urge everybody to write. I am still in the best of health, and there is no need for you to worry - just take good care of yourself, my darling, for I love you so very much, Butch. The weather has turned cold and consequently I'm spending more time inside - this however enables me to work on my log[129] - a gift from the YMCA, in which I hope to keep a record of my stay here. By this time, Marge[130] no doubt has her hands full - are they twins? Your frequent change of jobs has me confused. I do hope you found something to your liking - don't forget some pictures in your next letter. Regards to everybody, and all my love to you. Goodnight my darling I love you Lenny[131]

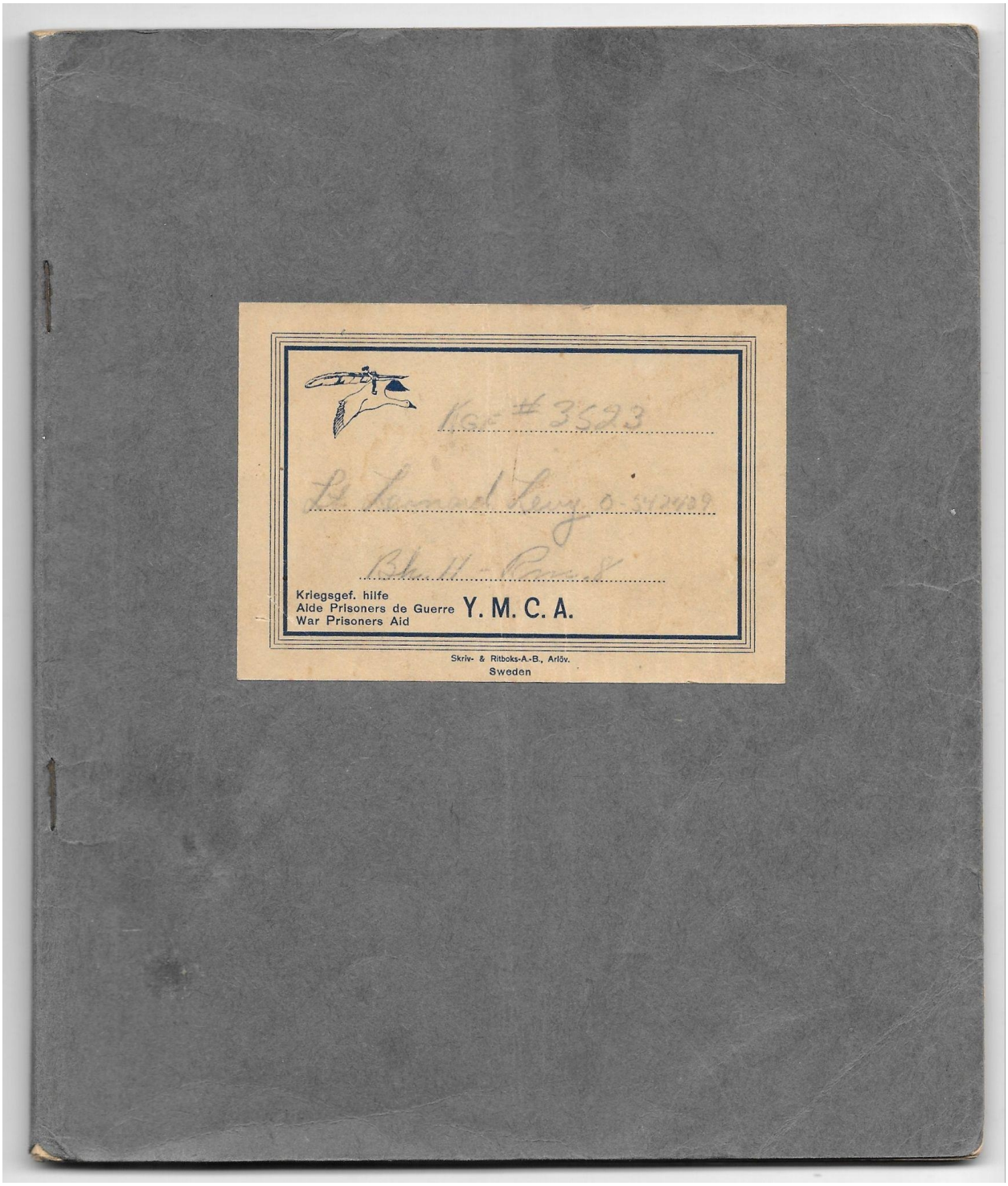
Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

[128] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[129] Lenny would have treasured the Log if only it held 150 bank pages, as it did. 'A Wartime Log - A Remembrance From Home Through The American Y.M.C.A.' Published by The Prisoners' Aid Of The Y.M.C.A., Geneva, Switzerland. These **hard-backed** books were sent into Prisoner of War camps inside Red Cross parcels by the YMCA and were intended to help keep those occupants busy and entertained during their incarceration. The diary provided space for stories, drawings and paintings, poems, lyrics, photographs, clippings and so on. This is the American version with red blocked title and liberty bell on the front cover. Marked with the owner's name but otherwise blank bar an inserted sheet with various autographs/signatures.

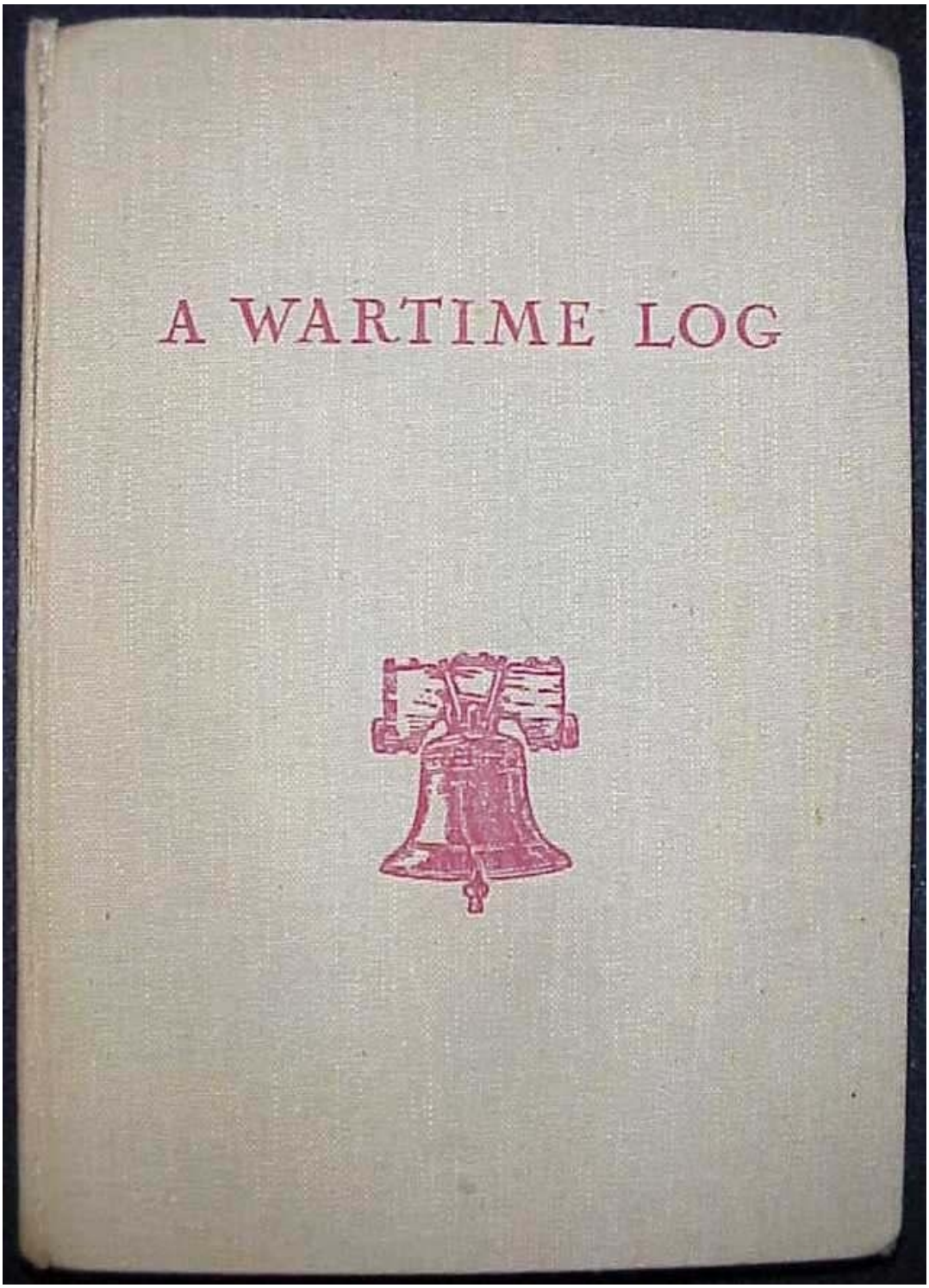
[130] Lenny's sister-in-law Marjorie (Margie) Levy is married to N. Norman Levy, recently gave birth to twin boys and lives with his parents at 108 Colebrook St. in Hartford, Connecticut.

[131] Signed - written in script.



Lenny's soft-covered, composition, Log

On label: Barracks #11 - Room #8



The Hardcover Log[132]

[132] Lenny received a hardcover log - others from Stalag 1 are cherished heirlooms.. It probably contained daily - and lengthy - letters to Sylvia. Perhaps Lenny used his soft-covered book for the sketchy List of Dates, First Day Meals and the one lengthy -after-liberation entry it contains. Unfortunately, the hardcover book never made it back to the USA.

"The Only Truthful Newspaper in Germany"

POW WOW

Volume VI, Number 24 Stalag Luft I September 16,

SIEGFRIED BREACHED

ALLIED SUPREME HQ., SEPTEMBER 15.....Yank fighting-men burst through the vaunted Siegfried Defense Line on the German frontier yesterday, shattering its chain of gun emplacements and encircling the city of Aachen, announced Gen. Eisenhower's Headquarters. Nazidom's last perimeter defense has been breached. The road to the Rhine and Hitler's industry-packed Ruhr lies before our armies.

American tank spearheads, under a sky dark with aerial artillery, punched thru the network of pill-boxes, traps and gun emplacements southeast of Aachen and nullified in a day the whole Nazi defense system on the western frontier.

Simultaneously, British and American divisions rumbled into Germany at a new point, capturing the Belgian city of Maastricht and crossing the border north of Aachen.

By nightfall, these forces were six miles inside the Reich and had linked up with U. S. units east of Aachen to encircle the city.

Allied Headquarters announced that our forces were on the outskirts of the city and London military observers declared its fall to be imminent.

The Gestapo has fled from this area, added front reports, and the Allied Military Government has already moved in and is in operation.

Along the Moselle front U. S. 3rd Army forces pushed forward to even out an inward bulge in our line. One column has driven 37 miles during the past two days from Neufchateau to capture Epinal in the Vosges Mountains.

Another force, using the bridge-head across the Moselle as a starting point, moved 16 miles southeast of Nancy to the area of Luneville where strength is being built up to cross the Meurthe River.

The gains on this sector lengthened the Allied front along the MoselleRiver to 120 miles, from immediately west of Trier to Epinal. Moreover, the German 19th Army was further threatened on its right flank by our southward driving columns.

In the northernmost Belgium, British and Army forces moved across the Scheldt

(Continued top col. 1, page 2)

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GREAT NEW LANDINGS IN PACIFIC

Pacific Hq., Sept. 15.....American amphibious forces struck westward towards the Philippines today with two great landings on Palau and Yap Islands. Latest battleships of the U. S. Navy covered and prepared the landings, disclosed a communique from the joint headquarters of General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral Chester Nimitz.

The Japs were reportedly taken completely by surprise and initial losses were described as very light. No planes or ships were lost during the first 12 hours of the landings.

Admiral Chester Nimitz' Marine forces went ashore on Palau and Yap Islands, 1,200 and 750 miles respectively from our latest landings on Guam Island.

Simultaneously, U. S. Army forces went ashore on Morotai Island and Hamla-Hara, both further west towards the Philippines.

A naval and air assault unparalleled in the Pacific to date heralded the new amphibious operations. Five hundred Jap planes were destroyed and 173 vessels sunk or badly damaged in the terrific air-sea hammering preceding the landings.

Included in naval squadrons supporting the operation, disclosed Washington were America's latest battleships of the Wisconsin Class (57,000 tons).

The new landings brought American troops to less than a thousand miles from Manila, scene of military disasters in the first days of the war. The Japanese hold on the Caroline Islands, including the naval base at Truk, is now completely encircled and our forces have jumped half-way to the Dutch East Indies.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

SIEGFRIED LINE BREACHED (cont)

Canal towards the river estuary northeast of Antwerp, across which the Germans are still withdrawing into Holland.

Berlin's communique today admitted the loss of Maastricht and spoke of an Allied offensive between that city and Aachen.

"In this sector, the Canadian 1st, the British 2nd and American 1st Armies have begun their break-through offensive", added a radio commentator.

"South and southeast of Aachen", continued the German report, "the Allies succeeded in breaking through the outpost positions of the West Wall".....

Very heavy fighting was claimed in progress in the Nancy area and around Belfort where the American 7th Army is pushing into the Burgundian Gap. But of this battle, Berlin declared that the 3rd and 7th U. S. Armies were fighting only to gain jumping-off positions for an offensive through Alsace into southwest Germany.

Brest, Boulogne and Cap Gris Nez were claimed still holding out, although it was conceded that only a few fortresses were left in Brest which has been burning for several days.

In contrast to the Allied report of "no hostility and no fear" exhibited by the Germans in Eupen yesterday, Berlin Radio claimed that "American troops who entered Eupen met only hate and disdain. The population", said the German report, "is hostile and shows no cooperation".

Where Berlin obtained such information is difficult to explain, since by German admission the town has been in U. S. hands since yesterday.

German propagandist dreamt further florid descriptions of the terrible conditions existent in France since Allied occupation. Said one report: "In Paris there is a great night-life, plenty of Champagne -- but no condensed milk for the babies...."

* *

SOVIETS MASS AT EDGE OF WARSAW

Moscow, Sept. 15.....While a steady artillery barrage across the broad Vistula River pounded German positions in Warsaw, Red Army divisions massed only one half mile from the city for a final offensive to clear it of the enemy.

Lublin Radio has broadcast to Polish patriots inside the capital, praising them for their martyrdom and telling them "help will arrive soon".

Russian divisions, following the capture of Praga, are separated from Warsaw only by the Half-mile stretch of the

(continued top next column)

Vistula River. Earlier last month, Red Army tanks actually crossed the river and drove into the city, but were thrown out after hard German counter-attacks.

Berlin's communique spoke of the battle for Warsaw, admitting the loss of Praga and describing increasing Soviet pressure on three sides of the Polish capital.

But the chief German interest today was focused on the front between Warsaw and the East Prussian frontier where 40 Russian infantry divisions, heavily supported with artillery and dive-bombers, were engaged in an all-out offensive.

Strong Soviet attacks were also in progress between Sanok and Sandomierz, at the southern end of the central Polish line.

In Finland, declared a London report the Germans have attacked the Finns and attempted to seize an island in the Baltic. London believed that the Germans were trying to maintain their line in Finland and that heavier fighting would soon spread throughout the country.

In the Balkans, where Soviet and guerrilla forces are engaged in a joint offensive to clear Yugoslavia, 500 US heavies supported the operations with widespread attacks against enemy concentrations.

Athens airfield in Greece was heavily bombed and a large number of transport aircraft destroyed on the ground.

* *

SHORT ITEMS FROM THE WORLD'S NEWS

London -A message from Gen. Eisenhower's Hq has been broadcast by the BBC to Denmark, calling on them to collect military information and to protect vital installations against German demolitions. "Hinder enemy movements.....the day of liberation is near", added the message.

London -Long-range flying bombs were again over southern England and London last night. A Ministry of Home Security communique disclosed today that through air bombardment, 107,000 houses have been destroyed in Britain and 170,000 damaged. Flying-bombs destroyed and damaged an additional million homes, although damage to many was slight.

Italy Hq. -Eighth Army pressure is increasing against Rimini, 1 1/2 miles to the north of our forward positions. Fifth Army divisions are meeting heavy resistance. Berlin spoke of a major Allied offensive in progress, with its focal point near Coriano and Pistoia, north of Florence.

Berlin - The Allies intend to demand Germany's surrender after the Quebec conference, forecast Nazi writers.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[133]
Saturday, September 23 1944

Dearest wife - Another letter telling you all the news possible - I am still in the best of health and keeping busy to avoid becoming bored with our life here. Ball playing takes up most of my time, and the rest is filled in somehow. Had a surprise the other day when we played a game against the South compound (the other part of the camp.) Leo Mascolo was one of the players. We had a long talk and plan to have more. No new mail has come in, so I'm still reading the old ones. Tell the family I'd sure like to hear from them, too. Butch darling, it's thoughts of you and our future that make life worthwhile - all day is spent in making plans, and never a day goes by, but I think of you and how much love I have for you. Take good care of yourself for me. Regards to all - I love you very much - Lenny[134]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Stalag Luft I consisted of a West Compound (also referred to as the South Compound) and North Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Compounds, separated by German quarters. According to Lt Col Charles Ross Greening, Senior Officer in North Camp 1, "Our barracks were rough, wood

[133] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75” x 8.25”

[134] Signed - written in script.

frame structures standing on small foundation posts about 8 to 10 inches off the ground. The Germans had dug a series of shallow trenches underneath the barracks to allow guard dogs to creep along and detect any tunnelers. Occasionally, the German guards themselves crawled into the trenches and listened to the conversations of the prisoners in their rooms."

Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[135]'s

The Guard Tower, 1944

[135] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[136]
Saturday, September 30 1944

Dearest wife - Two more letters from you today and once again my morale is at its high point. One of the letters told of the twins. Give my best to Marge[137], and kiss Richard and Steven for me. (Those are two sensible names.) Tell Norm[138] that at present he is a better man, but just wait until I get home. Butch darling don't let Marge or the kids want for anything (you know what I mean) - I'm still in the best of health and although it's turning colder I still manage a few ball games per week. Like you my darling, I'm keeping a record of my life here so that when I read yours you'll be able to read mine. Time goes slow my darling but when I think of you waiting, it makes it all [go faster.] I do love you so very much, Butch, and when we are together again I'll try to prove it to you. Take care of yourself and remember I love you - Lenny[139]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

[136] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[137] Sylvia's sister-in-law Marjorie (Margie) Levy is married to N. Norman Levy,recently gave birth to twins Richard and Steven and they are living with her in-laws at 108 Colebrook St. in Hartford, Connecticut.

[138] Lenny's brother N. Norman (Norm) Levy is a Private in the US Army and is stationed in Indiana.

[139] Signed - written in script.

Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[140]'s

The Mess Hall, 1944

[140] Charles Ross Greening was the highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1.

Lenny's Logbook[141]
October, 1944

Events

October 6, 1944 – 8th [overhead][142]
October 7, 1944 – 8th [overhead]

Kriege in Winter

Art by Stalag Luft 1 POW Lt. Charles L. Early

[141]This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

[142] Eighth Air Force as the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe. This is a note that on this day, Lenny saw planes, probably in formation flying overhead.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[143]
Friday, October 8, 1944

Dearest wife - Sunday afternoon and it's raining which brings memories of you to me so vividly. I miss you terribly Butch, and love you more than I'll ever be able to say. Quite a shipment of packages have come in - as yet none for me, but my hopes are high. If you haven't already done so send along a pipe or two - also instead of cigarettes make a tobacco or cigars - I have plenty of cigarettes thanks to the Red Cross. Include plenty of candy and dehydrated stuff, plus a large size can of cocoa (Nestle's.) My health is still perfect, hope the same is true of you and the family. How are [your] Mom's eyes? Hope the operation was a success. Once again, tell everybody to write. My incoming mail is not limited - don't forget the pictures. Give some of my love to the twins - some more to the family - and all of my love to you - for I do love you - Lenny[144]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Red Cross packages arrived at Stalag XVIII-A,
helped supplement the POWs' meager German food rations
(Bundesarchiv N 1578 Bild-013-08 Foto: Berg, Erik)

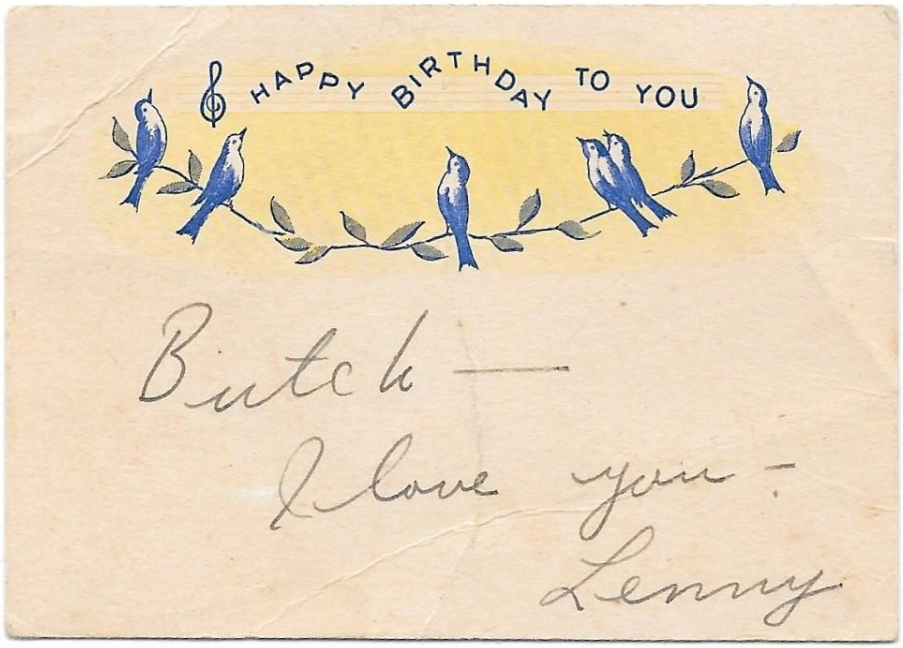
[143] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper lette, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[144] Signed - written in script.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[145]
Monday, October 16, 1944

Dearest wife - Today has been truly a good one. I received two letters from you and one from mom plus six cartoons of cigarettes. Both were welcome, but the letters more so. Your letter about the books was good news, and I'm eagerly awaiting them. I know that this will arrive late my darling but "Happy Birthday" to you and may the next one see us together. I do love you so very much, Butch. I can just imagine Dad and Mom and the fuss they're making over the twins - don't forget to send pictures of them, plus you and the family. Chris[146] got the news today that he is to be a father and is quite happy about it all. Give my regards to everybody, and do take care of yourself, my darling. I love you- Lenny[147]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)



Enclosed: Lenny's improvised Birthday Card to Sylvia

[145] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[146] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani was the Pilot of Lenny's plane which the crew named Shack Rabbits.

[147] Signed - written in script.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[148]
Saturday, October 28, 1944

Dearest wife - [missing top line[149]]... letter from you today - by far the quickest one yet - just a little over one month. You speak of us taking a trip, when I get home - It sounds like a good idea - write me more of the details? As yet, Chris[150] has not had first hand news on his being a father, and doesn't know whether it's a girl or boy. Rock[151] is not at this camp, so if he should write to you let me know. Butch darling, you apologize for being sentimental once in a while - go on being so, for I do love you so very much. My name has finally been posted for a package from home - should get it tomorrow - thanks a lot for it darling. This is your birthday, my love, and I'd give anything to be with you, but it looks like everything will wait for next year. Goodnight my darling, Always remember - I love you - Lenny[152]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Prisoners play cards at Stalag XVIII-A. (Bundesarchiv N 1578 Bild-013-08 Foto: Berg, Erik)

[148] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[149] The top fold of the mailer was ripped, and is missing the first line of text and the date Lenny mailed it.

[150] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani was the Pilot of Lenny's plane which the crew named *Shack Rabbits.*

[151] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark was the Bombardier of Lenny's plane which the crew named *Shack Rabbits.*

[152] Signed - written in script.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[153]
Wednesday, November 8, 1944

Dearest wife - As my card has no doubt told you, the past two weeks have seen me receiving three packages and no less than fifteen letters! Needless to say, it has made

[153] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

me quite happy. The packages arrived in good shape - the pipes were a godsend - please continue to send pipe tobacco - no cigarettes as I have plenty. Include plenty of dehydrated foods, cocoa and candy in the rest of them. All I need in the line of clothes are some woolen socks. The weather has turned cold - outside of a game of football once in a while, most of my time is spent reading. Butch darling, I've completed a set of plans for our future home; two floors, six rooms - can already see us in it. I miss you terribly my darling, when we are together, we shall truly make up for all this. I do love you so very much. Regards to all the family. Please send some pictures. Good night my darling - I love you - Lenny[154]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Package Delivery - Stalag Luft 1

[154] Signed - written in script.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[155]
Monday, November 20, 1944

Dearest wife - Today I received the second parcel you sent me - it contained exactly what I needed and wanted: the gloves, scarf and socks were just in time - it's getting cold here. Butch darling, what I really want to say in this letter is that I miss you so very much, and love you more than mere words can tell. You and our future are on my mind constantly. All my time is spent planning the future, so that it will be one long honeymoon - I do love you so very much my sweet. That was quite a storm you folks had - much damage around home? As before sweet, my health is excellent. I hope yours is the same. Chris[156] and I have entered a bridge tournament - we'll let you know the results. Once again, don't forget to send some pictures of yourself! Give my regards to all in all my love to you - I love you Butch - Lenny[157]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Prisoners play cards at Stalag XVIII-A.
Bundesarchiv N 1578 Bild-013-08 Foto: Berg, Erik

[155] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

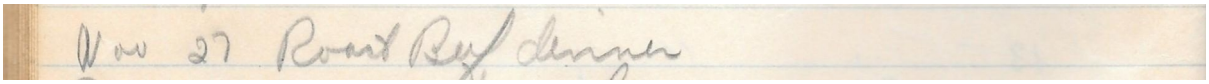
[156] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani was the Pilot of Lenny's plane which the crew named *Shack Rabbits.*

[157] Signed - written in script.

Lenny's Logbook[158]
November, 1944

Events

November 27, 1944 – Roast Beef dinner


Nov 27 Roast Beef dinner

The Germans furnished us with only the bare necessities. We had tables, chairs, beds and one cup, bowl, knife, fork and spoon per man. It did not take the kriegies long to construct essential items and substitutes for many of the things considered necessary at home. Most of the kriegie kitchen utensils were devised from "klim" cans – standard terminology for all powdered milk cans.

[158] This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

Pans for cooking were essential. All sizes were developed, but they were usually square or rectangular. We had one unusual pan. It was made from a piece of stove pipe and proved to be an excellent frying pan.

Potato mashers were of many designs. The two I was familiar with were a stick and a tin can filled with gravel and fitted with a handle. “Klim mixers” were a vital necessity. Once again I was familiar with two types. The one resembled the beater portion of an eggbeater. The other was a fanlike affair that worked equally well. “Klim cans" were also utilized for stove grills, ovens, pails and coffee pots.

Lt. Robert R. Swartz
Prisoner of War, Stalag Luft 1[159]

Stove - Room 6

Art by Stalag Luft 1 POW Lt. Charles L. Early

[159] http://merkki.com/swartzrobert.htm

Kriegsgefangenenlager[160]
Wednesday, November 29, 1944

Dearest wife - It's been a month since, last I heard from you - I do hope everything at home is all right. Please darling, do not keep anything from me in your letters. I am still in good health and although the weather keeps me indoors most of the time, I manage to keep occupied. I've become quite good at fudge making, and the other night I whipped up a batch of potato *latkes* - they reminded me of, because they were so different - [but] not half as good. Chris[161] and I are doing fair in the bridge tournament, winning almost as many as we lose. He sends his regards. Butch Darling, I miss you terribly - my mind is constantly on you and our future. It's really going to be… all right. I do love you so very much darling. My regards to everybody at home. All my love to you - I love you - Lenny[162]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

[160] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[161] Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani was the Pilot of Lenny's plane which the crew named *Shack Rabbits*.

[162] Signed - written in script.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[163]
Monday, December 11, 1944

Dearest wife - After a month's lapse, I received mail from you - two letters and the pictures of the twins - God but they're fine looking boys. But why, dearest, send me a picture with your head cut off[164]? Please Butch, send me lots of pictures of you. Thanksgiving has come and gone, and for a change we had a good meal - Roast Beef (in cans) that we've been saving for months. For once, we left the mess hall full. Your idea of my going to college when this is over is a good one, but it wouldn't be fair to you my darling - I've argued it out with myself, and I realize that the only thing I want to do is keep busy making you happy in a home of our own. The bridge tournament is over. We didn't do so well - nuff said - my darling I miss you and love you more than words can ever tell. Please take good care of yourself. Give my regards to all the family - I love you - Lenny[165]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Stalag-Luft-1 - Group-Photo - Christmas

[163] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[164] Probably from the German censors.

[165] Signed - written in script.

Col. Hubert Zemke - Senior Allied Officer

December 16, 1944 - April 30, 1945

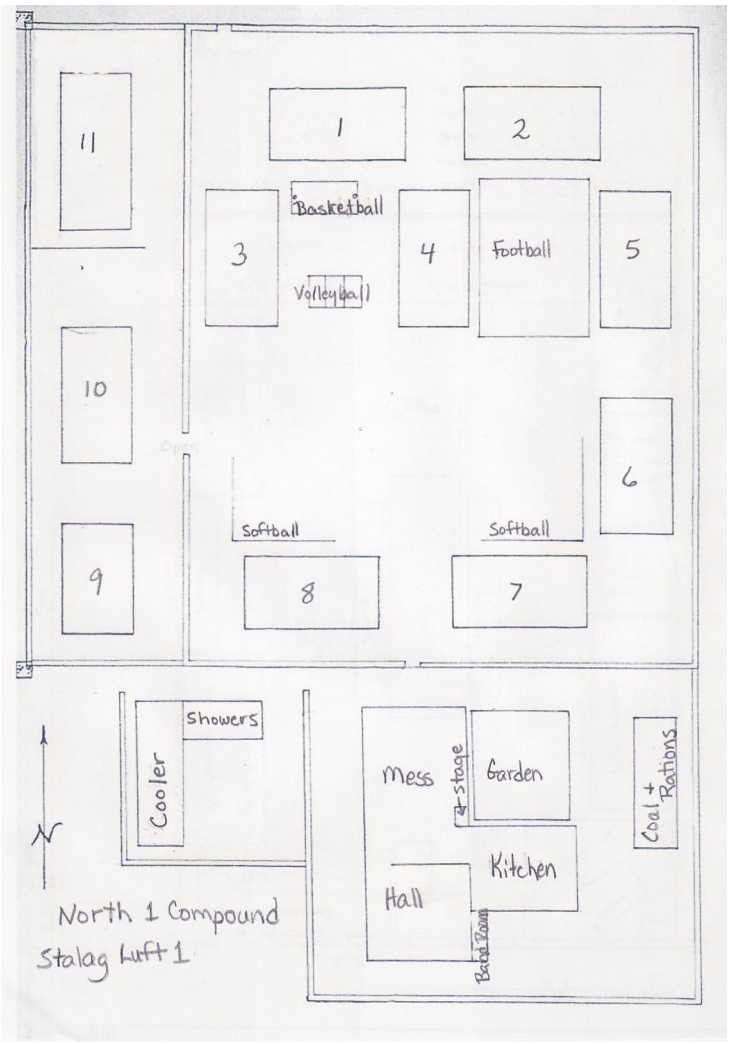
Col. Hubert Zemke was a child of German immigrants in Missoula, Montana. He became not only one of the best American fighter pilots, but had also gained international experience in various theatres of war since 1941…

On a mission on 30 October 1944, while flying in un-forecasted turbulence, the wing of Zemke's P-51 tore off. Zemke had to bail out and became a prisoner of war in October 1944… He arrived in Barth by train. As the highest ranking officer in the camp, he replaced the previous Senior Allied Officer (SAO), Colonel Jean Byerly. Colonel Hubert Zemke's headquarters (Head Shed) was located in Barrack 9[166], Room 21 of North I.

StalagLuft1.de

Col. Zemke became Senior Allied Officer of Stalag Luft I at Barth, on December 16, 1944, in command of the 7,000 Allied prisoners of "Provisional Wing X". Conditions were deplorable: insufficient food, inadequate clothing and medical attention, a lack of military discipline among some POWs, and indifferent or hostile German officials.

[166] Leonard (Lenny) Levy was in Barracks 11 of the same North 1 Compound two buildings north of Col. Zemke.



Stalag Luft 1 - North 1 Compound[167]

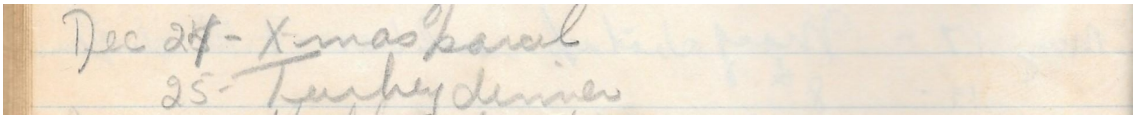
Col. Zemke established his leadership of the POWs, who numbered 9,000 by the end of the war. Gradually he developed working relations with the German camp commandant and staff and achieved some improvements in living conditions.

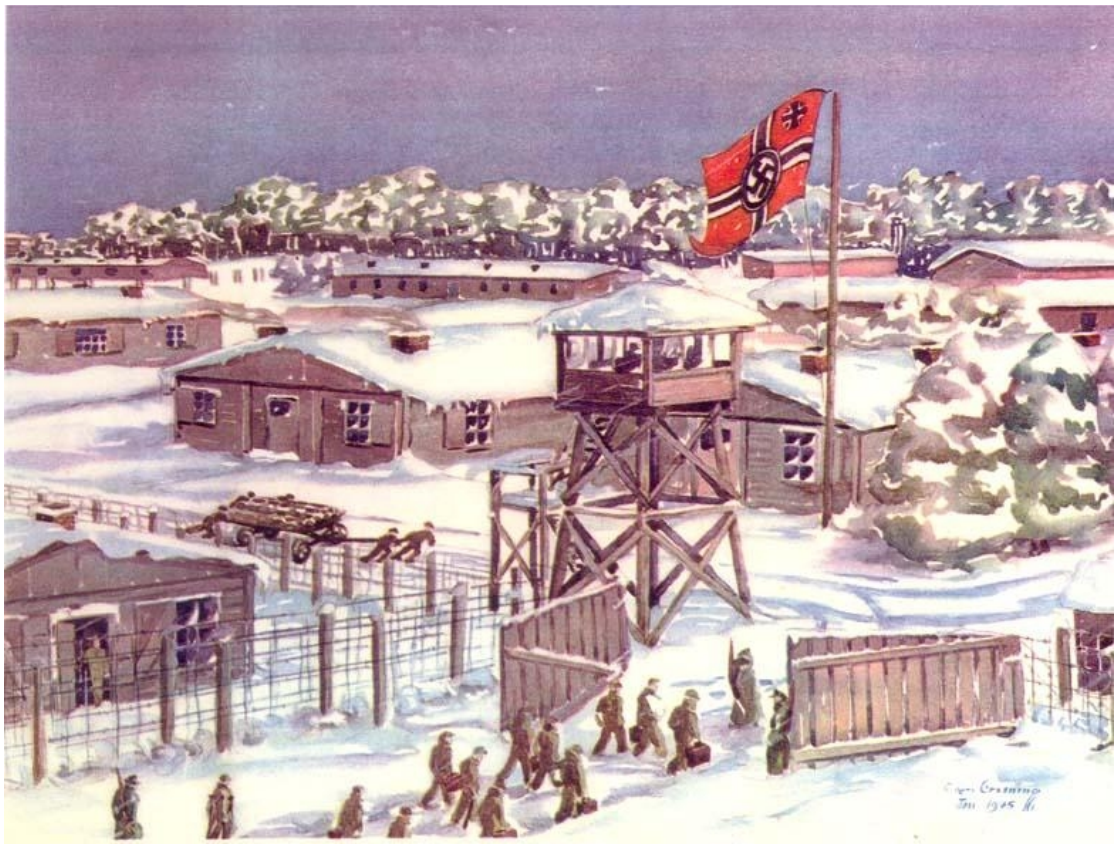
[167] Public Image from *Stalag Luft 1 Online* at http://www.merkki.com/

Lenny's Logbook[168]
December, 1944

Events

December 24, 1944 – Xmas Parcel
December 25, 1944 – Turkey Dinner





Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[169]

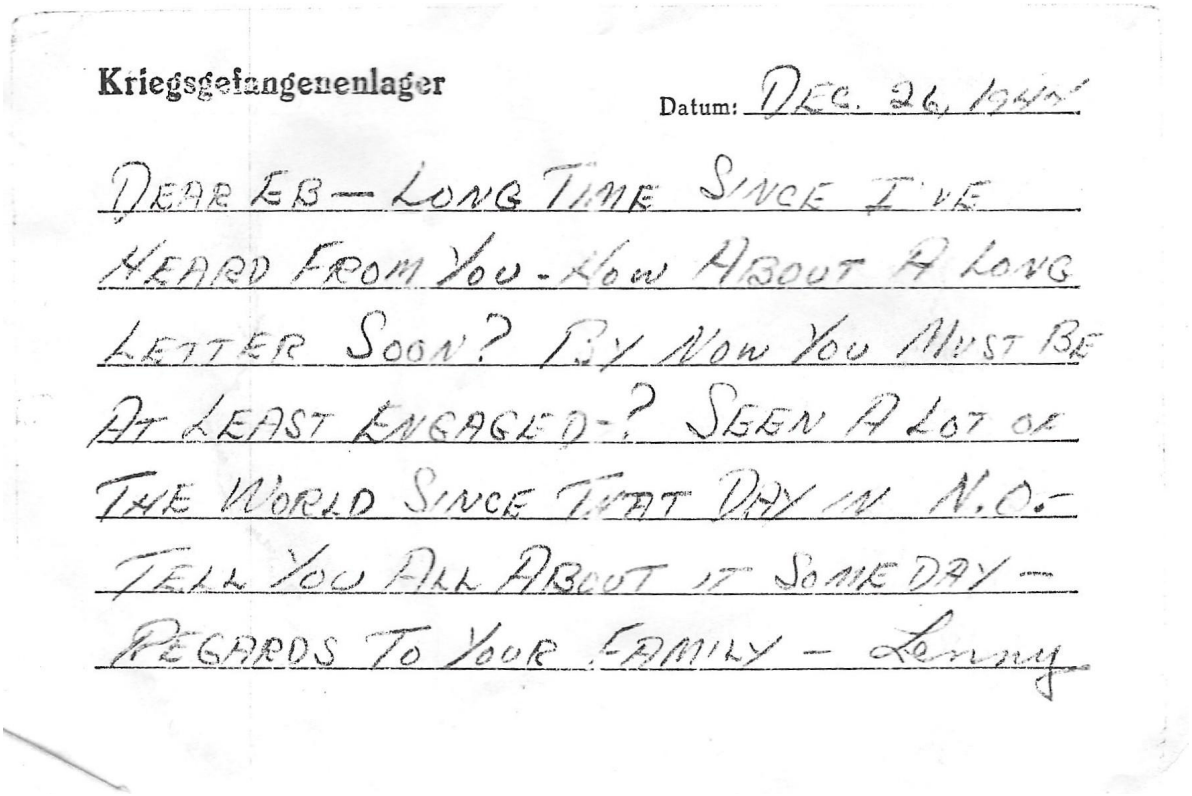
Arrival at Stalag-Luft 1, 1945

[168] This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

[169] Charles Ross Greening was the second highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1. His Log was recently discovered and published.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[170]
Friday, December 26 1944

Dear Eb[171] - Long time since I heard from you - How about a long letter soon? By now you must be at least engaged? [I've] seen a lot of the world since that day in N. O[172]. Tell you all about it someday - regards to your family - Lenny



Kriegsgefangenenlager

Datum: DEC. 26, 1944

DEAR EB — LONG TIME SINCE I'VE HEARD FROM YOU - HOW ABOUT A LONG LETTER SOON? BY NOW YOU MUST BE AT LEAST ENGAGED -? SEEN A LOT OF THE WORLD SINCE THAT DAY IN N.O. - TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT SOME DAY — REGARDS TO YOUR FAMILY — Lenny

[170] Prisoner-of-war camps.

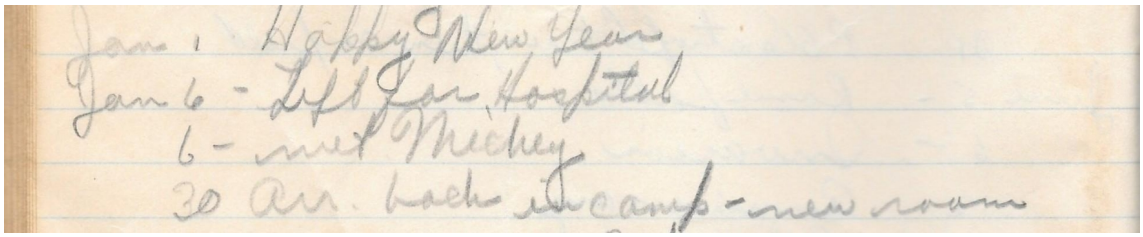
[171] Ebner Glooskin was a former friend of Sylvia's. They both graduated from Weaver High School in the class of 1938. Lenny was in the class of 1936 and became friends with Ebner after they enlisted in the Army.

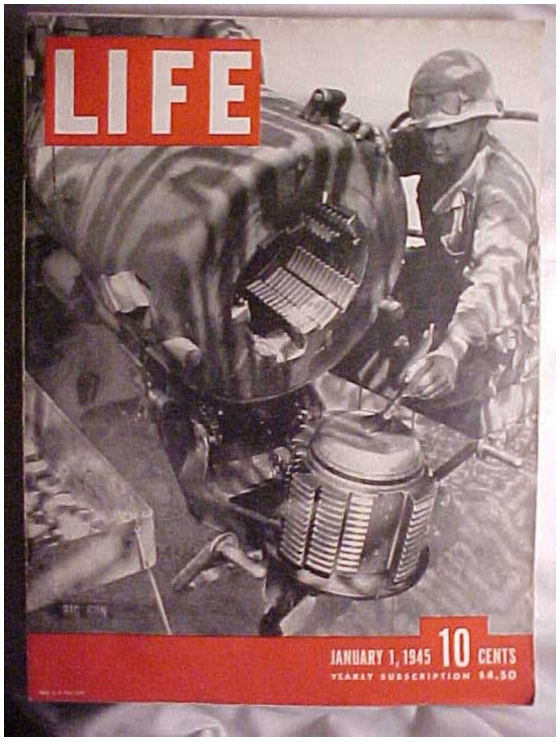
[172] New Orleans.

Lenny's Logbook[173]
January 1, 1945

Events

January 1, 1945 – Happy New Year
January 6, 1945 – Left for Hospital
January 6, 1945 – Met Mickey
January 30, 1945 – Arr[ived] back in camp - new room


Jan. 1 Happy New Year
Jan 6 - Left for Hospital
6 - met Mickey
30 Arr. back in camp - new room



[173] This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

Heilstätten Hohenlychen Sanatorium

January 6-30, 1945

"Shortly after the first of the year my sinus attacks became acute and I was sent to a hospital[174] sixty miles north of Berlin."

Leonard Levy in his letter of June 6, 1945

It was common practice for American POWs to be sent to German hospitals, or *sanatoriums,* for treatment of serious conditions, particularly if they were suffering from respiratory illnesses or tuberculosis. The hospitals in the area of Berlin are:

1. **Beelitz Heilstätten** - Originally established as a sanatorium for lung diseases, it was repurposed as a military hospital during the war and is known for its extensive medical facilities. From Berlin, it is roughly 550 kilometers (about 342 miles) to the southwest.
2. **Hohemark Hospital**, which was part of Dulag Luft, located near Oberursel, about 20 kilometers north of Frankfurt. This hospital was known to treat POWs during World War II.
3. Additionally, various military hospitals in **Berlin** itself were designated for POW treatment, but detailed names of hospitals specifically north of Berlin are less clear in the available sources.
4. **Heilstätten Hohenlychen Sanatorium** - This facility was primarily used for treating military personnel, including injured SS members. It is, however, precisely 60 miles north of Berlin.

[174] 60 miles north of Berlin is a small town called Lychen. In the early twentieth century, the city was a health resort with a health center called the Heilanstalt **Hohenlychen**. In 1935, SS officer and doctor Karl Gebhardt became head of the clinic and transformed the clinic from a treatment center for tuberculosis patients to an orthopedic clinic.

Heilstätten Hohenlychen Sanatorium

January 6-30, 1945

In January 1945, Heilstätten Hohenlychen was under the administration of the SS[175] and was primarily managed by Dr. Karl Gebhardt, who was a prominent physician and a member of the SS.

He supervised many questionable medical experiments there, including an attempted arm transplant from a Ravensbruck prisoner onto a German man, but he became infamous for his experiments on 72 Polish women who became known as “the Rabbits.”

Heilstätten Hohenlychen was a complex of sanatoriums, primarily designed for the treatment of tuberculosis and other respiratory diseases. The term "Heilstätten" translates to "healing places" in German, and these facilities were part of a broader movement in the early 20th century to provide specialized care for patients with chronic illnesses.

[175] The German SS, or *Schutzstaffel*, was a major paramilitary organization of the Nazi Party.. It grew to become a powerful entity responsible for enforcing Nazi policies, including the Holocaust, and operated throughout Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II

The complex included several buildings, each serving different functions, such as:

1. Sanatoriums for Tuberculosis: These were specifically designed to treat patients suffering from tuberculosis, utilizing fresh air, sunlight, and rest as part of the therapeutic regimen.

2. Rehabilitation Facilities: Some buildings were dedicated to the rehabilitation of patients recovering from serious illnesses or surgeries, providing a peaceful environment conducive to healing.

3. Medical and Administrative Buildings: The complex also housed medical staff, administrative offices, and support services necessary for the operation of the sanatoriums.

Overall, Heilstätten Hohenlychen was a significant medical facility in its time, reflecting the healthcare practices and architectural styles of the early 20th century.

Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, was at Hohenlychen Sanatorium in January 1945. He was receiving treatment for health issues during that time. The sanatorium served as a medical facility for high-ranking SS officials, and Himmler's stay there was part of his efforts to recuperate from various ailments.

Dr. Karl Gebhardt attempted to negotiate with the International Red Cross. He sought to strike a deal that would allow for the evacuation of certain patients from Hohenlychen Sanatorium, particularly those who were seriously ill, in exchange for the Red Cross's assistance in providing medical supplies and support.

This effort was part of a broader strategy by some Nazi officials to present a more humane image of their medical practices and to gain favor with international organizations. However, these negotiations were ultimately unsuccessful, and the Red Cross was aware of the broader context of the Nazi regime's actions, which included widespread atrocities and war crimes.

Jewish POWs

January 30, 1945

"Coming back to camp, after a month of treatment, I found that all the boys of Jewish faith had been segregated into one barrack, so I had to leave Chris and move in with what turned out to be a bunch of swell fellows."

Lenny in his letter of June 6, 1945

The Jewish POWs

One group of prisoners of war in Stalag Luft I who were subjected to the Nazi racial ideology were 400 to 500 Jewish airmen, mainly officers from the USA. They constantly and not unjustly feared being separated from the other prisoners and losing all protection. According to an order of the German High Command they were basically treated as correctly as the other inmates. They did not have to wear a yellow star and were allowed to receive letters and parcels – both from family members and the Red Cross – and were given basic medical care when needed. Religious services were also permitted, but without the traditional Jewish rituals.

In January 1945, the Germans segregated the Jewish prisoners from their comrades in two barracks of compound North I. Many feared that this was done to send them to an extermination camp and asked their non-Jewish comrades to inform their families if they did not return home with them. Colonel Zemke, as Senior Allied Officer, made it abundantly clear to the German camp commandant that the responsible would be accused as war criminals after the war, if they did not treat the Jewish POWs correctly.

The separation remained in place and fortunately no further repression took place. However, it remains unclear why the western Jewish POWs were not mass murdered like the civilian Jews in Europe or the Soviet POWs (Jews among them had a mortality rate of over 60%).

Text from https://stalagluft1.de/en/compound-north-i/

Prisoner of War Post[176]
Thursday, January 31, 1944

Darling -

Yesterday I received a letter from Eleanor [Ellison, pictured below]] and she is so excited about her coming baby. You know Eleanor's sense of humor, so you can well imagine how comical her description was, of her first visit to the Doctor.

She expects her baby at the end of July. She is busy looking for an apartment and buying furniture. She informed me that she has already purchased a studio couch, so that if I… ever visit her, I will have a place to sleep. At the present time she is living with her in-laws and is anxious to move out. She warned me never to live with in- laws, but that is something I have always known. It is one of those things that very seldom works out. Darling, I expect to receive your personal belongings soon[177]. I have been notified that they are on the way. I have no idea what I will get but whatever it is, I will keep everything in good condition until you come home.

Errol Flynn the movie actor is still keeping in the limelight with his women troubles. In yesterday's paper another girl claimed he is the father of her baby. He is a glamorized Mayer Mosseson. There I go being a brat again. Yesterday, I took photos at a studio and the photographer, a slick thing, asked me if I would like a job modeling. That's the second offer in two weeks. Can you imagine me as a model? I can't.

My darling, you are always with me and I pray you are well. Please take care of yourself for me. I am waiting for the happy day when we will be together again. I love you

Sylvia

[176] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is the American version of one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.5" x 12.5" Only one of these fragile, POW-letters survived. Most took over a month to arrive. This letter was stamped with a New York post office stamp on November 28, and presumably, was one of many that didn't find Lenny. It probably arrived at 148 Magnolia St. about December 1, 1945.

[177] Probably his footlocker from Knettishall AFB in England.

February, 1945

After Zemke arrived in the camp, conditions began to deteriorate for the men in Stalag Luft I. One POW, bombardier Oscar Richard, resident of Stalag Luft I since January 1944 reported in his book *Kriegie: An American POW in Germany*, "German power lines were ripped away in several vital places, and our electric lights were out for over a month. The water went on and off periodically, and we were caught short several times because we had no containers in which to store water."

In February, the Germans also cut off the Red Cross parcels which had helped to sustain POW life by supplementing the meager German rations. Richard refers to this period as "the famine." POWs became too weak to do anything but lie in their bunks and dream about food.

At that time, 8,346 prisoners of war were in Stalag Luft I, 7,202 of which were Americans , 1,144 British, 260 Canadians, 59 Australians, 49 South Africans, 30 New Zealanders, 5 Rhodesians, 1 Liberian, 34 newcomers (according to a report by Monsieur *Bovey*, a representative of the Swiss protecting power).

Stalag Luft I.de

Kriegsgefangenenlager[178]
Undated

[Dearest wife] … [two-thirds of letter is missing]

… contain delicacies of all kinds - at least our stomachs will be happy that day. Please take good care of yourself my darling, and always remember that I love you. Give my regards and love to all of the families - and once again - I love you - Lenny[179]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

Art by Stalag Luft 1 POW Lt. Charles L. Early

Parade

[178] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper lette, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[179] Signed - written in script.

Stalag Luft 1 – Daily Bulletin

February 26, 1945

Office Of Group Commander
USAAF North Compound I
Stalag Luft I Barth, Germany
February 26, 1945

Daily Bulletin:

1. Menu: Br - (None till further Notice)
Dinner: German Soup (no potatoes)

2. Official: No Light and Water. This Hdg. has been notified that water may be shut off at any time in the rooms as necessary without warning so it is recommended that a supply be kept on hand.

3. Official: Red Cross Food will run out Sunday. No more parcels are in camp and none expected. Conserve what food you have if any.

4. Official: Any persons desirous of helping to dig a well, report to Group Maintenance officer at 11:00 Hrs. today.

5. Official: German Authorities have informed us that the coal ration will be cut another 20% effective immediately. They can guarantee no more coal. Come on Joe.

6. Official: Personal will refrain from taking garbage from Mess Hall garbage tins for obvious reasons.

7. Official: Some instances of ground glass in the bread have been reported from the South Compound. Cut your slices thin and report any glass to Hdgs.

8. Official: Personnel are requested to save cellophane from cigarette packages for delivery to the Hospital for making bandages for they are short of same.

9. Official: German Memorandum Feb. 24 "Any Prisoner of War found outside his barracks or looking out of windows during an Air Raid will be fired upon without warning."

10. Official: Personnel who received bones from the Mess Hall for purposes of making soup; will return same immediately. - (For Re-Issue - they've already been cooked twice)

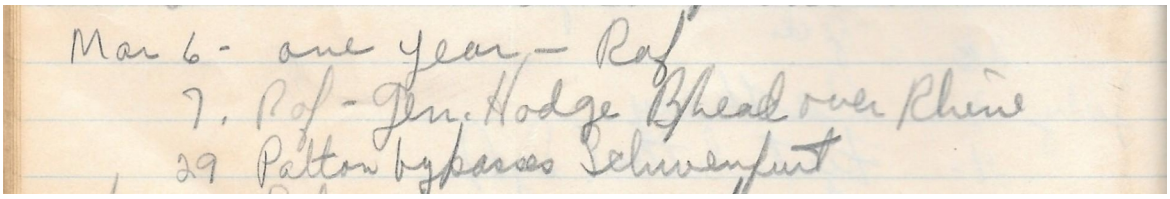
Lt. Col. Greening

G. C. Mozier
Maj., A.C.
Adjutant

Lenny's Logbook[180]
March 1, 1945

Events

March 6, 1945 – one year - RAF[181]
March 7, 1945 – RAF - Gen. Hodge Bhead over Rhine
March 30, 1945 – Patton bypasses Schwenfurt


Mar 6 - one year - Raf
7. Raf - Gen. Hodge Bhead over Rhine
29 Patton bypasses Schwenfurt

"March was uneventful unless the fact that we almost starved means anything. They were indeed dark days - moldy bread, watery turnip soup and undrinkable coffee being our complete diet. Finally during the last weeks of the month, thousands of Red Cross parcels arrived and our morale went up."

Leonard Levy, in his June 6, 1945 letter

March 6, 1945 – one year - RAF

On this date Lenny noted the passage of one year since his Black Thursday plane crash and capture by the Germans. It was his 119th day as a Prisoner of War, or *Kriege*. It was his 327th day at Stalag Luft 1. It was his 466th day since the tearful farewell scene with his wife, and he was receiving some mail from Sylvia.

[180] This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

[181] The Royal Air Force was seen above Stalag Luft 1.

Beachhead on the Rhine
March 7, 1945

March 7, 1945 – RAF[182] - Gen. Hodge B'head over Rhine

The US Army's surprise capture of the Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine River at Remagen, Germany, broke open Germany's defenses in the west.

[182] The Royal Air Force was seen above Stalag Luft 1.

Rock[183] Newmark home in the US
March 11, 1945

March 11, 1945 – Brooklyn Daily Sun

Eagle Staff photo

EXCITEMENT FOR THREE—1st Lt. Raymond Newmark, just back from a Nazi prison camp, and his mother, opera lovers both, meet Eleanor Steber in her dressing room right after her debut in "La Traviata."

[183] Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark was the Bombardier of Lenny's crew. He was treated at the hospital in Dulag Luft for his injured leg and released early from his stay at Stalag Luft 3. Lt. Newmark is one of the 463 wounded US army men just returned from Germany by diplomatic exchange.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[184]
Thursday, March 19[185], 1945

Dearest wife - Nothing much to write about knowing what a letter means - here I am. Spring is just about here and our garden is just about ready to go. We plan to have quite a variety this year but whatever comes will be greatly enjoyed by all. We really miss our fresh vegetables.

My darling, this should reach you just about on our second anniversary. God only knows how I prayed for us to be together on this one, but I guess it just isn't in the cards. I want you to know my darling with all my heart and so I love you, think of you and miss you. Someday we'll be together and make up for all the lost time. Happy (?) Anniversary, my sweet and once again I love you. Regards to all the family and to you my sweet I say - I love you - Lenny[186]

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

[184] Prisoner-of-war camps. This is a one-page, fold-up and mail paper letter, measuring 5.75" x 8.25"

[185] Two dates appear: March 19 on the top left was when Lenny wrote the letter and March 22, 1945 on the flap was the date he mailed it.

[186] Signed - written in script.

Kriegsgefangenenlager[187]
Friday, March 30 1945

Dearest wife - The weather has turned quite warm and I'm back in summer uniform - thanks to you, for the khaki pants. Have received quite a few letters from you and Newton the past few days. I am still in good health. Regards to all. I love you, Lenny

Stalag-Luft 1, 1945

Return address is Stalag Luft 1 (via Stalag Luft 3)

[187] Prisoner-of-war camps.

Stalag Luft 1 – Daily Bulletin

March 31, 1945

OFFICE OF THE GROUP COMMANDER
GROUP I, USAAF, NORTH COMPOUND
OFLAG LUFT I, BARTH, GERMANY

March 31, 1945

1. Menu:

Breakfast	Dinner
American Cereal	Fried Spam (1/4 per man) Mashed Potatoes Cole Slaw Gravy

2. NOTICE: Catholic Choir rehearsal after 4th Mess this evening in Large Mess.

3. NOTICE: Personnel interested in the results of yesterday's Meeting of the Mess Committee, contact your Squadron Commander.

4. OFFICIAL: It is now a Group order that articles will no longer be thrown over the fence between this Compound and North 2.

5. OFFICIAL: All porcelain bowls will have be turned into the Mess Hall before 1200 hours today. This includes absolutely every bowl and plate with the exception of ten each from the Sergeants Blocks 12, 13, and 14. All red water pitchers will also have to be turned in. Arrangements will be made for future possible issue of these pitchers. It is anticipated that soon, hot water may be on the tables. This cannot be done until these pitchers are turned in.

6. OFFICIAL: Squadron Commanders will inspect their respective Blocks at 1200 hours today.

7. OFFICIAL: In order to stop a typical kriegie rumor, the statement that there would be no address directory in "Behind Barbed Wire" is not true. The directory includes all four

compounds.

8. OFFICIAL: Due to the coal shortage in the Compound, the Laundry Schedule, effective today, will be extended, where by participants Will do their laundry once every ten days instead of every seven days. The purpose of this new schedule is to make available more hot water daily. The following schedule for the laundry boiler in the Sergeants compound is effective commencing today:

0830 - Laundry - Bl. 13 (8 bundles)
1330 - Hot water for brews.
1500 - Hot water for all purposes.
1630 - Hot water for all purposes.
1800 - Hot water for brew only.

NOTE: During the periods scheduled for brew water, please take only the amount needed for your brew making at that particular time as this source has to supply the whole Compound.

9. Block 4, Room 3:

0900 Catholic Mass
1200 Jewish Church Services
1500 Business Accounting

By order of Lt. Col. GREENING

G.C.HOZIER, Major
Adjutant

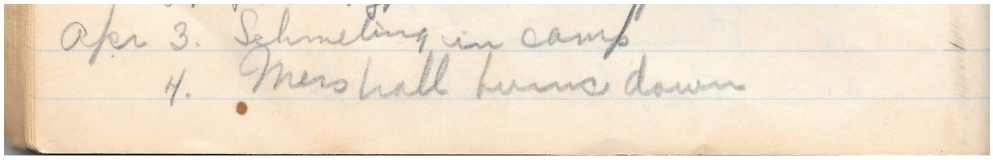
From Stalag Luft 1 Online: http://www.merkki.com/dbjuly944.htm

Lenny's Logbook[188]

April, 1945

Events

April 3, 1945 – Schmeling in camp
April 4, 1945 – Mess Hall burns down


Apr 3. Schmeling in camp
4. Mess hall burns down

"Disaster… struck early in the morning of April 4th - our mess hall burned completely down. Luckily, very little food was lost. Now we had to cook in our room plus sleeping and living there. Because of my cooking knowledge, I was made room cook - a job I held until the very end. We made the most of a bad situation and at times thanks to parcels from home manage to have some fairly good meals.

Things rode on fairly smoothly throughout April…"

Leonard Levy, in his June 6, 1945 letter

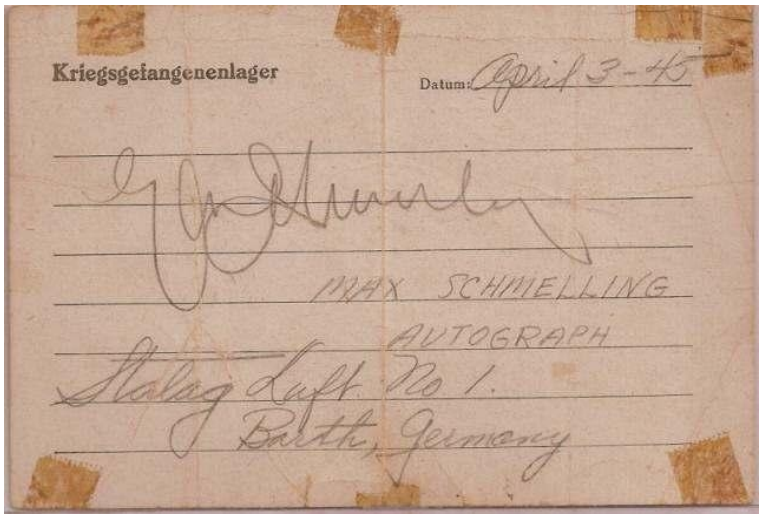
[188] This document comes from a blue, paper covered composition, more than half filled with blank pages, and measuring 6.75" by 7.875."

Max Schmeling

I saw Schmeling in Germany during the winter of 1944-1945 when I was a prisoner of war. He was being sent around by the Luftwaffe, no doubt as a hedge against their forthcoming defeat, as a public relations gesture. The camp I was in, Stalag Luft 1, was an officer's camp filled with 8th and 15th Air Force as well as some Royal Air Force officers who had been shot down in the air war that was still raging.

The news that he was in the camp swept over us like wildfire; because we had nothing to do but to follow rumors, we congregated around the quarters of our commander, Col. Zemke. There Max was inside and of course he stood up and waved to us and we went back to our barracks. After he left we all received a harsh note from Zemke saying that he was disgusted with us for acting like "schoolkids."

William A. Pace[189]
Rolling Hills Estates



Autographed Kriege Card - Not collected by Lenny Levy

[189] https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-feb-09-le-immig9.2-story.html

Mess Hall Fire
April 4, 1945

April 4, 1945 – Mess Hall burns down

April 4, 1945 – Mess Hall burns down

"Disaster… struck early in the morning of April 4th - our mess hall burned completely down. Luckily, very little food was lost. Now we have to cook in our room."

Leonard Levy, in his June 6, 1945 letter

Art by Lt. Col. Charles Ross Greening[190]

Mess Hall at Stalag-Luft 1, 1945

[190] Charles Ross Greening was the highest ranking American officer at Stalag Luft 1.

Kriege March

January - April 1945

The *Long March* refers to a series of forced marches during the final stages of the Second World War in Europe. From a total of 257,000 western Allied prisoners of war held in German military prison camps, over 80,000 POWs were forced to march westward across Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany in extreme winter conditions, over about four months between January and April 1945.

The Long March by Alan Moore

Some of these POW refugees arrived at Stalag Luft I, where the camp began to suffer from overcrowding. The Stalag Luft I Kriegies began to prepare for a similar fate. They were told to make sleds and sew rucksacks out of garments in order to carry their belongings on the journey to a new camp deeper in the German Reich.

Then, life changed again for the Kriegies, in mid-April as the Red Cross lifeline was reopened and security restrictions relaxed. Morale soared and suspicions were that the Germans knew they were beaten and wanted to make nice. The shift in attitude was evident, and around this time some of the German guards even began to salute Zemke.

Plans were made by Zemke for a peaceful power transfer in the camp. He even had signs posted in the camp, in plain sight for camp Kommandant Oberst von Warnstedt, who assumed control in January 1945, detailing how the enemy would be treated fairly once the surrender happened. There was constant artillery booming in the distance.

StalagLuft1.de

Stalag Luft I — POW WOW — April 14, 1945

PATTON DRIVING INTO SAXONY; ALLIES HOLD 100 MILE FRONT ON ELBE

London, Apr 13....Patton's armored columns were well beyond the Saale River today, driving thru Saxony toward Dresden. Further north, a 100 mile front was established on the Elbe. Allied forces ranged along a 150 mile front from Wittenberge to south of Zeitz are 90 to 125 miles from Soviet troops on the Oder and Neisse Rivers.

Armored units of Patton's 3rd advanced a total of 48 miles from the Jena area today into the industrial region of Saxony, contained in the triangle formed by Halle, Dresden and Plauen. The town of Zeitz, 13 miles southwest of Leipzig, was entered after a 20 mile advance. This spearhead then pushed 28 miles further east to reach and cross the Mulde River northwest of Chemnitz and only 35 to 40 miles from Dresden. Jena, scene of Napoleon's defeat of the Prussians 150 years ago, was captured. Erfurt has been cleared. 1 column mopped up 150 towns and villages in 24 hours.

Further north, the Elbe River has been reached on a 100 mile front. Some units of the 9th gained the Elbe only 55 miles from Berlin. British columns, advancing 60 miles in 24 hours, reached Tangermunde on the west bank of the Elbe, 55 miles from the German capital and 30 north of Magdeburg. Tangermunde has been entered and by-passed. According to Berlin, 2 fast British spearheads driving from north of Brunswick reached Salzwedel and Wittenberge. Salzwedel is 25 miles southwest of Wittenberge. These towns were not mentioned by London.

1st Army units on Patton's north flank are just 7 miles from Leipzig in the area east of Merseburg, where Berlin reported that the Saale had been reached. Other elements are closing on Halle, northwest of Leipzig, in the advance from Eisleben. Yesterday Hodges' 1st took 25,000 POWs, mostly in the Ruhr, to make their total 80,000. The Ruhr city of Duisburg was captured. Berlin disclosed that a thrust on the Southern flank of the industrial area had advanced 16 miles northwestward from Olpe to Lindenschied. The pocket is only 20 miles wide between this city and Witten, on the Ruhr River.

In the south, Patch's 7th continues to gain ground toward Nuremburg. French 1st Army troops are approaching Stuttgart.

Canadian forces in Holland have cleared 1/2 of Arnheim and are pushing forward across the plains from their Issel bridgeheads. Berlin revealed that Canadian units had forced a bridgehead across the River near Deventer, and admitted that recco thrusts had reached the Orange Canal northeast of Meppel, 40 miles south of Emden.

British units pushing northward along the east bank of the Ems River were reported only 10 miles from the port of Emden. There are no details of the drive toward Hamburg from the Bremen area.

On the completion of the 1000th bridge since "D"-day of the Rhine offensive, Montgomery declared today, "The German Army is completely and utterly finished. We have nearly 2,000,000 POWs, and will continue to cut off chunks of the Reich until the end."

GERMAN COMMUNIQUE 1400 Apr 14 -- In northwest part of front, fighting on Issel, Ems, Weser and lower Elbe. On Elbe southeast of Magdeburg, counter-attacks in progress against Allied bridgehead. In Ruhr, on Rhine and in the mountain areas, fighting increased in severity. Superior Allied forces repulsed. In central Bergland Allies thrusting north and southeast. Recco fbrces reached Saale at Halle, are moving forward on both sides of Zeitz. In Harz Mts, American assaults from west and south, entrance into mountains was frustrated. Fighting continues southeastof Thuringian Forest. Heavy defensive fighting at Saale River between Jena and Saalfeld (20 southwest Jena). South of there, weaker attacks against Frankenwald (unlocatable). In Main triangle at Bamburg, river crossed and city entered from east. In Steiger Forest, attacks from west repulsed at Gerolzhofen (11 mi. southeast Schweinfurt). Stronger attacks between Neustadt-on-Asch and Heilbronn, further advance hindered by German attacks in flanks and rear. In northern part of Black forest and in Rhine plains, attacks continue. Several kilometer gains south of Rastatt, which was lost.

(continued back)

WEST FRONT (continued)

COMMENTARY 1400 Apr 14 -- New bridgeheads over Elbe and Saale, bridgehead established at Saale-Elbe junction, counter-attacks in progres. Further south, broad front established on Saale between Elbe and Weissenfels, crossings repulsed. Area south of Weissenfels now focal point of West Front battle. Naumburg in German hands, recco thrusts on both sides of the city and in area of Jena pushing east. Fighting at Regau (7 miles southsouthwest Leipzig), Zeitz and along autobahn further south. Heavy fighting further south at Rudolstadt and Saalfeld.

EAST FRONT - London Apr 13 -- A Soviet Order of the Day announced that Vienna has been cleared. During the recent drive into Austria, 11 German tank divisions were routed, and 1400 tanks and self-propelled guns destroyed as well as 2250 field guns. 130,000 POWs were taken. A 2nd Order of the Day revealed that the Soviets have crossed the border into Moravia and captured Goding on the west bank of the March River. This town lies 35 miles southeast of Brunn, capital of Moravia Province.

GER COMM 1400 Apr 14 -- Fighting on both sides of upper Raab River. New Russian forces in action east of (?) and southeast of St. Polten (32 miles west Vienna). Vienna garrison resisting superior forces on west bank of Danube. Small Russian gains in March triangle. Several attacks between March and the source of the Nitra thrown back. Nothing new on remainder of front, except for Samland peninsula, where 20 Russian divisions are attacking with strong artillery and air support, achieving several breakthrus.

LONDON Apr 13 -- Messages of tribute and condolence on the death of Pres. Roosevelt have been reaching Washington from all the United Nations. Roosevelt was taken to the White House today and will be buried at Hyde Park on Sunday. Tomorrow was set aside by Pres. Truman as a day of mourning. Roosevelt was stricken yesterday at Warm Springs while being sketched by an artist. He was overcome with a severe headache, soon became unconscious, and died in a few hours.

Congress met today,, voted condolences to the President's family, and adjourned. In his 1st official proclamation, Truman said, "I earnestly recommend that the people assemble in their places of worship to pray for him whose death we mourn." Churchill told the House of Commons, "It is not fitting to continue our work today. We can show our respect by adjourning." It is the 1st time Parliament has ever adjourned for a foreign statesman. Churchill and H. M. The King sent messages to the family, the country and the new President.

From Moscow came Stalin's message, "The Soviets greatly valued Pres. Roosevelt as the organizer of the fight for freedom." De Gaulle said, "In the eyes of mankind, Roosevelt was the symbol of the United Nations fight for freedom." Gen. Eisenhower pledged unremitting action to finish the job.

Harry Truman is our 33rd President. The Vice-Presidency is vacant, but Stettinius as Sec'y of State is next in line. Truman conferred with Cabinet and military heads today as well as representatives of the United Nations. He will speak to a joint session of Congress tomorrow. Truman has stated, "I will make every effort to carryon as I believe the President would have done." The Cabinet is staying on. Truman announced that the San Francisco Conference would be held as scheduled.

AIR FRONT - London Apr 13 -- 8th USAAF heavies smashed at rail yards at Neumunster, north of Hamburg today. Berlin and Munich were hit 3 times during the day. There was no opposition from the Luftwaffe over the Ruhr pocket. 266 German planes were destroyed today, mostly on the ground.

LONDON -- Apr 13 -- Bohol Island, north of Mindanao, was captured today. American subs have sunk 15 more Jap ships. B29s hit Tokio.

The 8th Army offensive in Italy, launched from the Adriatic to south of Bologna is meeting stiff resistance, although German units on the right flank south of Lake Commacchio seem to be partially disorganized. 5th Army troops on the Ligurian coast are continuing their advance toward Spezia.

Liberation of Stalag Luft 1
April 30, 1945

In April 1945 when it became obvious that *Stalag Luft 1* would be overrun by the Soviet Army, the senior Allied Officers drew up a defense plan. The plan required the seizure of the POW camp itself and the capture of the nearby Barth airfield.

In the last week of April, Commandant von Warnstedt met daily with Lt. Col. Zemke and tried to order the entire camp to take to the road, just steps ahead of the Russians advancing rapidly from the East. Zemke refused and held ground.

On April 30, 1945, the camp Commandant received a message that the POWs were to be put on 24 hour standby to move to a new location in the Hamburg area. He had several conferences with the Senior Allied Officer (SAO) and shared his orders to move the camp to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Russians. Lt. Col. Zemke stated that the POWs would not move unless force was used, so the German Commandant realized that "the end was near," and all the guards were withdrawn. They agreed that von Warnstedt and the guards would leave under the cover of darkness and head towards the American lines to surrender.

At about 10:00 that evening, the guards turned out the perimeter and street lights. A few moments later these same guards were observed marching out of the camp leaving the gate unlocked. As soon as this news was conveyed to the Zemke, he formally took over the camp. The following morning the POW "military police" of the camp were put in charge of all guard stations, to see that the men remained orderly and stayed in the camp. Another organization was formed to serve as exterior guards to prevent wandering parties of Germans from coming into camp.[191]

[191] https://www.b24.net/powStalag1.htm

Freedom
May 1, 1945

"Then came May Day, and with it the Russians. They in turn brought liberation and…"

Leonard Levy, in his June 6, 1945 letter

Events[192]

May 1, 1945 – The Russians enter Stalag Luft 1
May 8, 1945 - VE Day[193]
May 12-13, 1945 – Stalag Luft 1 is Evacuated by 8th Air Force B-17s
May 12-13, 1945 – Arrival in Camp Luck Strike, LeHavre, France
May 29-30 - On leave in Paris

The German guards of Stalag Luft I fled from the approaching Red Army on the night of 30 April to 1 May 1945. Originally, they wanted to force the prisoners of war to leave the camp with them. But even under threat of armed force, Senior Allied Officer Colonel Zemke (USAAF) refused this order and so the prisoners of war virtually liberated themselves.

Former POW pilot Richard "Dick" Terrell wrote in a diary he kept at the time, "Jerry pulled out tonight. Americans manned the towers at 01:10." On May 1, 1945, the Kriegies at Stalag Luft I awoke to no captors.

Zemke assumed control of the camp, setting up an MP force, his "Field Force," in the camp to help establish some order. Scouts were sent from the camp to intercept the Russian forces, which they did five miles from the gates. Still they wondered, what would be their fate. The Russians appeared at the camp the next day. A special, single edition of a new newspaper, *The Barth Hard Times* reported "Russky Come!" Terrell reported in his diary, "Have had 4 RedX parcels issued, eating like rascals."

StalagLuft1.de

[192] Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy did not contain any May entry in his Log Book.

[193] Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) is observed on May 8, commemorating the formal acceptance of Germany's unconditional surrender in 1945, which marked the end of World War II in Europe. It is celebrated annually in various countries, particularly in Europe

On 1 May 1945 contact parties were sent out to make contact with Russian advance troops. After 2 or 3 days of having Russian commanders of scouting parties visit the camp, the Russian commander of the area was finally reached, and arrangements were made to provide food for the PWs.

Stalag Luft 1 History[194]

[194] https://www.b24.net/powStalag1.htm

Freedom, Part 2
May 2, 1945

"Then came May Day, and with it the Russians. They in turn brought liberation and…"

Leonard Levy, in his June 6, 1945 letter

The next day, May 2nd, more Russians arrived and Zemke lost control of the situation. Terrell reported, "Russians seem to be running things. Krieges [sic] going wild - lots of them taking off - lots of discontent…" For men who had been held behind barbed wire in some cases for years, there was no holding them back. Pilot James Baynham recalled, "Of course we went out. We couldn't wait to get a taste of freedom." Despite Zemke's orders to stay put, the Russians commanded that the barbed wire be torn down. The city of Barth became complete chaos. Russian troops paraded through the streets with the ex-Kriegies, drinking, collecting souvenirs, and cowing the few locals left in Barth. The next day, the Russian commander declared martial law in the town. Several Americans were reported killed in the chaos and confusion that reigned.

Zemke ordered the liberated American POWs to stay put, fearing further losses in the chaotic last days of the war. With the exception of around 700 POWs who could no longer be held back and took to foot to make their way independently back to Allied lines, most of the POWs were still in Stalag Luft I to celebrate VE-Day on May 8th.

Senior British Officer of the camp, Group Captain Weir reported for *The Barth Hard Times*, "With the redemption of a continent, our exile is ended. Our barb-bound community will soon be a memory."

StalagLuft1.de

BARTH HARD TIMES

Vol 1 No. 1 LAST 1 SATURDAY MAY 5th 1945 PRICE 1 D- BAR.

Editor: F/L E. B. HARPER Assist: Tel Lt H. GOODMAN Publisher: Tel Lt D. MacDONALD Printing: F/Lt J. B. WHITE

RUSSKY COME!

As seen by LOWELL BENNET, I.N.S. War Correspondent

RELIEVED!

Colonel Zemke intended to write this appreciation of the relief of Stalag Luft 1, but unfortunately necessary duties have made this impossible. He has, in his own words, "taken a powder" to make final arrangements with the relieving Soviet forces.

It is therefore my privilege to introduce this Memorial Edition of the BARTH HARD TIMES.

During the successes, reverses and stagnant periods encountered during this struggle, our newspaper has faithfully recorded the German war communiques and expanded upon them in capable editorials.

With the redemption of a continent, our exile is ended. Our barb-bound community will soon be a memory. So, on behalf of Colonel Hubert Zemke and myself, to all our fellow-kriegies: GOOD LUCK!

G. G. C. T. Wain.

WHAT D'YE KNOW- JOE!!

BRAITHWAITE FINDS UNCLE JOE

Contacts Russian Infantryman at Crossroads Five miles South of Stalag One.

Major Braithwaite and Sgt Korson, our Stalag scouts, raced out to a crossroads 5 miles south of Barth with the order, "find Uncle Joe". This was 8 p.m., May 1.

They searched southward, defying a rumored Russian curfew which was about as brief and emphatic as their own order: "EVERYONE stay put; anyone seen moving will be shot on sight."

Meanwhile, Wing Commander Blackburn's telephone crew were ringing numbers in Stralsund, hoping a Russian would answer the phone and we could break the big news of our presence. "Try the mayor," they asked the girl (who was still working Barth's phone exchange). "Not a chance," said she. "Barth's mayor poisoned himself and Stralsund's mayor has sprouted wings."

Scouts Braithwaite and Korson pushed on 3 miles. The scenery: thousands of people everywhere, sitting down, waiting.

LIFE AND DEATH OF A GERMAN TOWN

TENSE MOMENTS WHILE ALLIES TAKE CONTROL

An air of tension hung over the camp for many days. The presence of the English and American armies on the Elbe and the Russian encirclement of Berlin made everyone feel that the end must be near. The commencement of a new Russian drive across the lower Oder toward the Baltic ports finally increased the tension to an almost unbearable pitch. Panic reigned in the Vorlager. No German had any more interest in guarding the prisoners, but only in saving his own life. Confidential reports were hurriedly burnt — and copies of "Mein Kampf" went to swell the flames.

Conference with the Kommandant

Finally, late in the afternoon, the Senior British and American officers were called to a conference with the German camp Kommandant Colonel Warnstedt. They were told that orders had been received to move the whole camp westward. Colonel Zemke stated he was not willing to move at all, and asked in that case what the German attitude would be. The Commandant replied that he would not tolerate bloodshed in the camp; if we did not intend to move, he and his men would evacuate themselves and leave us in sole possession of the camp. When the Germans left it would be up to us to take over the camp peacefully and assume full control.

At approximately 1 A.M. on April 30 Major Steinhauer informed Group Captain Weir and Colonel Zemke that the Germans had evacuated the camp, leaving it in our charge. When the camp woke up in the morning it was to find itself no longer under armed guard and comparatively free.

Where are the Russians?

Our next problem was to establish contact with the Russian forces. It was decided to send out something in the nature of a recco patrol. An American Major, a British Officer speaking German, and an American Officer speaking Russian, set out with the German in the auto which was equipped with an American flag on one fender and a white flag on the other, to investigate the real situation in Barth and then proceed to the main Stralsund—Rostock road, some 15 kilometers south of the camp, to wait there for any signs of Russian spearheads or of the proximity of the front line. The first patrol returned in the early evening. Still no sign or news of the Russian Army, but they were coming!

Russian Contact (con. from Page 1)

Every house draped with red flags (who said the Germans weren't chameleons?). Suddenly, there was Uncle Joe — — or one of his ambassadors: a chunky little Dead End guy who loomed up and flashed a variety of lethal weapons and a cacophony of Slavic language.

"Engliski", shouted the scouts.

"Never mind the words", said Joe's man, "this isn't Dulag" or something like that in Russian. And, without ceremony they went to the nearest Russian officer. It was 1st Lt. Alec Nick Karmyzoff, infantryman from Tula (you oughta see that written in Russian!) He'd fought his way from Stalingrad — three years across Russia, Poland and Germany — to the relief of Stalag Luft I.

Toasts are Drunk.

Karmyzoff came in the main gate. Commanding Officers Zemke and Weir received him. Schnapps seared kriegie throats — glasses smashed Hitler's picture, the barracks jiggled with cheering and back-pounding. Toasts were drunk: " To the destruction of Germany — she will never rise again! And to our solid and enduring friendship." Karmyzoff went to the Russian barracks (our co-kriegies) — told them about himself, their army and the new life that was beginning. Thus the first contact. Karmyzoff bedded down on the floor — "Rather the floor than a German bed," said he. BBC announced Hitler dead; kriegies heard the "Hit Parade" from home; the excitement was exhausting. — But what an experience!

QUAKING BARTH BURGHERS BOW BEFORE REDS

As Russian tanks rumbled Northwards on the cobblestone roads from Stralsund, as Russian cavalry and guerilla troops tore hell bent for the Baltic, as the spluttering German radio flashed a staccato of place names that had gone under in the Red rip tide, Barth became an open city and an open grave. The few Americans who had been in town on camp chores from Stalag I knew that the life of Barth was a living death. We had seen the streets peopled by children and octogenerians, we had noticed that all males were either lame, halt, or blind; we had stared into empty shop windows, and we had seen the soldiers of the master race straggle back from the fronts dazed, whipped, harbingers of the ruin that stalked the streets of German towns. By April 30, this year of grace, the good burghers of Barth turned their faces to the wall and stopped hoping.

LET 'EM EAT CAKE

Life had not been good. In the bakery shop where the camp brot was made hung a sign; cake is not sold to Iews or Poles. It failed to explain that cake was not sold to the supermen either. There was no cake. But there were good things to eat in the larders of Barth, baking powder requisitioned from Holland, Nestles milk commandeered from Denmark, wines looted from the cellars of France, spaghetti and noodles hijacked from Italy, Worcestershire sauce which had trickled through mysteriously from England, olive oil drained from Greece, in short, all types of blood from the turnip of Europe. If Mussolini considered the Mediterranean his sea, Hitler considered the world his oyster and was trying to serve it up to the Reich on the half shell.

A House of Cards

As the first explosions from the flak school reverberated under the sullen Baltic sky, the new order toppled on Barth like a house of cards. Red flags and white sheets began to appear in the windows of the ginger bread houses. Flight was futile and the old stood querously on their door steps, wringing gnarled hands and weeping. Pictures of Hitler were torn down and scattered like confetti. Two German children came wailing into the bakery shop. They had heard American airmen ate little boys and mother said the day of reckoning was at hand.

Barth, like the whole of Deutschland-über-alles Germany, was on its knees in terror. But mayhem did not materialize. Wine, not blood, flowed through the streets. We got drunk.

POWWOW

EDITOR: Raymond Parker CO-EDITORS: Donald Austin, Eugene Gallagher

WAR ENDS

Barth, May 8, 1945....Today is "Victory in Europe" day. After five years and eight months of fighting the battle of Free Mankind, the United Nations have crushed and utterly defeated the Forces of Darkness represented by Naziism. Germany accepted Unconditional Surrender last night, and although official Allied announcements were delayed until today, the United Nations went wild with joy.

Truman and Churchill will broadcast this afternoon, and the King of England will speak this evening. In a congratulatory message to Eisenhower, the King said, "Many months ago you led the Allied Expeditionary Force across the English Channel, carrying with you the hopes and prayers of many peoples. All the world now knows that this force has accomplished its mission with a finality never achieved before..."

Czech Radio broadcast this morning that the Germans in Prague and the whole of Bohemia have surrendered unconditionally. The liberation of Norway was announced by members of the Norwegian Home Front. The Danish Parliament will hold its first session in over five years tomorrow.

The formal proclamation of V-E day did not come as a surprise, for the world knew the end was imminent as it watched the heads of the Nazi Hydra being lopped off, one by one. German Armies in Italy, Northern Germany, Denmark and Holland had surrendered unconditionally, and reports from the last resistance centers of Czechoslovakia and Norway pointed to a final collapse.

The race to surrender began with the mysterious death of Adolf Hitler and the fall of Berlin. Goebbels, Goering, and other Party men met obscure, violent deaths or disappeared completely.

Admiral Doenitz became ersatz Fuhrer and established Headquarters in Copenhagen because Germany was no longer in German hands. But he couldn't pick up the pieces as fast as they fell, so he called in his U-Boats and told his Generals, who were doing it anyway, to surrender their Armies.

Meanwhile, it was open season on New Order satellites. Back in Italy, the Conqueror of Ethiopia, Il Duce, was lying beside his mistress for the last time -- on a stone slab in a Milan mortuary. Petain came to France to stand trial for High Treason. Laval squirmed in Spain, refusing to return to the France he betrayed. Quisling nervously warned Norwegians that his was the only legal government and promised to resist all attacks.

The momentous news which thrilled the outside world was taken in stride by Stalag Luft I, for Naziism's death throes were almost anti-climatic to the frenzied excitement of liberation by our Russian Brothers-in-Arms. Crowds were dancing in the streets of London and Paris, and America was mad with excitement, but life had picked up its pulse-beat for us again on April 30th when our seedy, disillusioned Volksturm guards fled for their lives toward the Allied lines.

But now, with other free men, we turn our thoughts toward the World that is to be, and to the San Francisco Conference from which its outline will emerge. We are thinking as well of the War against Japan, for that nation now stands alone, its Asiatic Fascism doomed to fall before the concerted might arrayed on the side of Freedom. Victory in Europe has released vast forces for this task.

We at Stalag Luft I are ready to play our part in the events foreshadowed by this day, ready to paddle out of Barth's stagnant backwater into the main stream. We came to Europe and learned to appreciate America. We fought and learned why we were fighting. In retrospect, we are proud of our share in bringing about this glorious occasion. Our planes brought the War home to the enemy. We were the Vanguard of Victory.

Evacuation of Stalag Luft 1
May 11-14, 1945

Barth Airdrome[195] taken over by the Allies

Following the arrival of the Russians on the 2nd May 1945, the liberated prisoners set about clearing the airfield in preparation for their repatriation. May 12-14, 1945 approximately 9,000 prisoners of war at Stalag Luft I were flown out of Barth, Germany and back into Allied control. Royal Air Force POWs were flown back to England and the American POWs were flown to Camp Lucky Strike in Le Harve, France, where they were processed and waited for a liberty ship to return to the states. The American POWs were fittingly evacuated by 8th Air Force B-17s on 12-13 May 1945.

"The Russians wanted the prisoners transported by land to Odessa, a port on the Black Sea, then by ship to the United Kingdom and then on to the United States, but the idea was rejected and further negotiations followed. Much to the disappointment of almost 9,000 liberated POWs, it took almost two weeks to repatriate the prisoners by air.

On May 11th, the Allies secured permission to use an airport adjacent to the camp for the

[195] The Luftwaffe Base was between the Barth Concentration Camp and Stalag Luft 1. Public image from *Operation Revival: Rescue from Stalag Luft* I at www.nationalww2museum.org

evacuation on the 12th and 13th, within a specific time block of hours. A corridor for travel over Russian occupied territory was set up and by then all the POWs had their meager belongings together. The evacuation plan was to first take the hospital cases and the sick, next the British Troops who for the most part had been in captivity longer than any other prisoners, dating back to 1940. The prisoners were marched in barracks groups to the airport to avoid clogging the highway and loading area.

The first plane to arrive on the 12th was a B-17 with Gen. William Gross on board, who was the Commander of the 1st. Air Division of the Eight Force. A C-46 followed with Officers of Gen. Eisenhower's Staff. Two more B-17s arrived with communication equipment and personnel to establish links with the Eighth Force. Later in the afternoon 30 - 40 more B-17s arrived. The floors of B-17s were equipped with wood decking material to provide a level floor, thereby able to accommodate 25 -30 POWs with a few packed into the radio compartment.

Early on the morning of the 13th the sick and wounded were evacuated in six C-46s. Dozens of additional C-46s and C-47s joined the B-17s in the evacuation process. The aircraft crept slowly as the men jumped in and piled up in most cases. They were anxious to be on their way home. They had no idea how many groups participated in the evacuation. On the morning of the third day, the 14th, the remaining men were all flown out aboard B-17s. The last prisoner aboard was Col. Zemke and according to Col. Zemke's records 8487 prisoners had been evacuated."

Charles Reed Holden
South Compound - Stalag Luft I

Camp Lucky Strike

Normandy, France

May 14-31, 1945

As the war in Europe came to a close, staging camps previously used for replacements coming into the European theater did an about-face. In the summer of 1945, Camp Lucky Strike in St. Valery, France, 45 miles from the port of Le Havre, became a massive tent city for American troops preparing to embark on the voyage home. Demobilization in Western Europe was carried out primarily through Camp Lucky Strike and nine other camps, eight in France and one in Belgium. These holding areas took their code names from brands of popular cigarettes, hence they became known as the "cigarette camps." Camp Lucky Strike was the largest cigarette camp, with a capacity of 58,000 troops awaiting transportation back to the United States. Camp Lucky Strike was designated "RAMP Camp No. 1" and was the chief assembly point for newly-liberated American prisoners of war, or RAMPs [Recovered American Military Personnel.]

The airstrip on which Lucky Strike was built served as the main thoroughfare in the camp, with tent cities arranged in areas designated alphabetically A-D. Each region had its own infrastructure with churches, PX-shops, souvenir depots ("booty tents" where one registered their war trophies), barbers, and auditoriums. RAMPs spent time lounging around Lucky Strike, drinking coffee at the American Red Cross Java Junction or reuniting with old friends or crew members from whom they had been separated. While RAMPs were used to waiting and some entertainment was provided with movies shown nightly in

some of the larger tents, many slipped through the gate and escaped the camp, as they had desired to do while prisoners.

In wartime, as POWs were freed, the War Department ruled that any American held prisoner for more than 60 days would be returned to the United States rather than returned to their units. This became a bigger challenge when the war ended and 93,000 RAMPs began to assemble. Most of the American POWs in Europe had already been assembled (by the Germans) at Stalag VIIA in Moosburg near Munich. Some were trucked part of the way to Strasbourg and then flown in C-47s to Camp Lucky Strike. Around 7,000 former "Guests of the Third Reich" from Stalag Luft I were flown to LeHavre in B-17s as part of Operation Revival. After making their way to Lucky Strike, the RAMPs began to be "processed."

Showers and delousing happened immediately upon arrival, followed by the issuing of new equipment. Many RAMPs were wearing the same torn rags they had lived in for months. New uniforms took the place of the hodge-podge of styles cobbled together by the former prisoners of war. This alone gave many RAMPs peace of mind and restored a little bit of their humanity.

Then the RAMPs were given medical examinations: x-rays, blood and urine tests, and inoculations. Many RAMPs required hospitalization due to respiratory infections or malnourishment. A 350-bed hospital run by the 77th Field Hospital expanded to a 1500-bed capacity augmented by the 306th General Hospital. RAMPs in need of convalescence (some arrived via hospital train) were assigned to Block "C" of Lucky Strike.

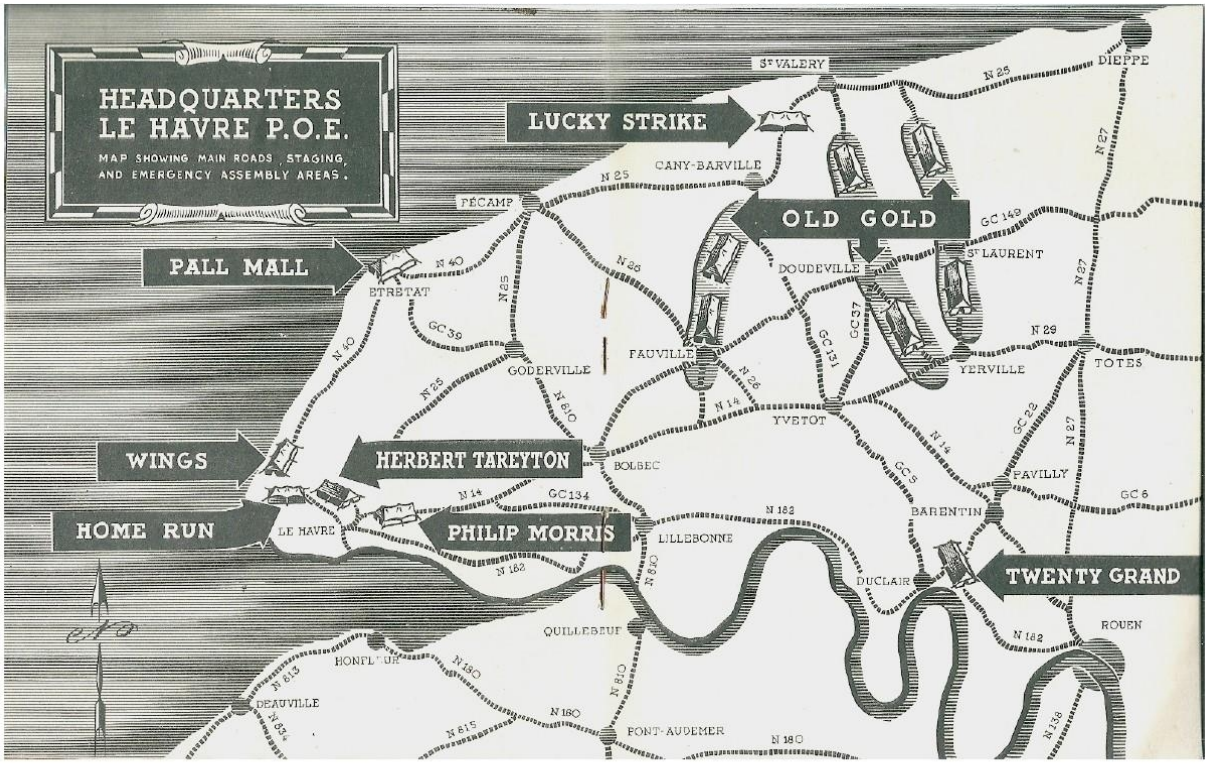
Once RAMPs (and the other troops) in Lucky Strike received departure orders, they were trucked to staging areas at the port. Personnel rosters were compiled, medical checks were conducted, baggage was inspected and shipped ("Troops embarking may carry no more than 25 lbs. In excess of issued equipment.") Finally, they were ready to board ships for the 18-day voyage home to the East Coast of the United States.

ww.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/camp-lucky-strike

American Military Hobo

Normandy, France and elsewhere…

May 17-30, 1945



© WW2 US Medical Research Centre

While RAMPs [Recovered American Military Personnel] like Lenny Levy were used to waiting, many slipped through the gate of Camp Luck Strike and escaped the camp, as they already had done at Stalag Luft 1. The prime destination for these unsanctioned leaves (as well as sanctioned ones) was Paris, about 100 miles from Lucky Strike. American military hobos were plentiful on the stretch of road from LeHavre to the City of Lights.

ww.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/camp-lucky-strike

Lenny Levy's Signed[196] Souvenir Money from Luxembourg

[196] The signatures on the front side appear to be mostly GIs; visible names include Lt. Col. A. F. Briggs - his CO from the 388th, Nathan Lichtenholtz and Jonas I. Lipman from Pre-flight, two Stalag Luft 1 campmates Jack Moskowitz and Saul Zelman, fairly legible images of signatures from Sydney Boulanger, Raymond H. Benjamin, Beau Brooks, Thomas J. Feely, Bill Garfield, Eddie Holtz, Kenneth Livingston, Phillip Loring, Phil Newkirk,Arthur H. Rehan, Arline Simmons and Forest Spiegel. The signatures on the reverse side are more faded than the front.

Camp Lucky Strike

Normandy, France

May 17, 1945

May 17, 1945

Dearest wife -

Another day has almost passed with nothing visibly done to get me home to you. Just about all they have for us to do here is eat and sleep with not too much of the former because of the diet we are on; they are trying to build us up again.

The name Sunny France is a truly appropriate one - and in the three days I've been at the camp I've acquired an enviable coat of tan. The days are quite warm, but the evenings are rather cool. Thanks to the sleeping bag I was issued, I manage to keep comfortable at night.

As near as I can figure it, my darling, I should be leaving here in a week for La Havre and a boat for the States and you. After docking, I'll be given a sixty day leave which I plan to spend with you and you alone. I do miss you and love you so very much, Butch.

When the sixty days run out, I must report to Fort Devens[197] for a physical check up. If physically all right I'll be sent to an Army base near home I think, for three months of light duty - you will be there with me my sweet. From there on I don't know what cooks, but I have hope of being released.

Syl darling, as yet I don't have those pearls I promised to come back with. I do have a few souvenirs of my stay at 'Barth on the Baltic' - not too much; just enough to remind me of the hard times spent as a Krieger. As you probably know by now, the Rock[198] was not with Chris[199] and myself at Barth. He was wounded the day we were shot down and we haven't seen him since.

---

[197] In 1940, at the onset of World War II, Fort Devens (Ayers, Mass.) was designated a reception center for all men in New England who would serve one year as draftees. A massive $25 million building project was begun, including more than 1200 wooden buildings and an airfield.

[198] Lt. Raymond (Rock) Newmark was the Bombardier of *Shack Rabbits*. He was a POW at Stalag Luft 3.

[199] Lt. Chris Christiani was the Pilot of *Shack Rabbits*. He was a POW at Stalag Luft 1 with Lenny.

Judging from your letters, he hasn't written to you. Wonder what has happened to him?

Butch darling, in yesterday's letter I told you to make all the plans for that sixty days of heaven in store for us - I meant it. Don't worry about the money end of it as we'll have plenty of that.

Am saving my horror story until I see you, also the experiences I've had these past seventeen months. Not being much of a *writer*, I feel that I can *tell* them much better. One thing I will say - all that you've read or heard about the Nazis is true. I've seen it with my own eyes.

Time for Chow again my darling so with all my love to you I'll close now.

Regards to everybody at home. Tell Betty-May that her favorite (?) uncle is coming soon. (Am I still the favorite?)

Good night my darling and remember that always and all ways I love you very much.

Good night my darling,

I love you
Lenny

Camp Lucky Strike

Normandy, France

May 30, 1945

30 may 1945

Dearest wife

Blame it on Paris - Paris in the Spring - for not having heard from me in almost a week. Getting fed up with this place and its inactivity; three of us just took off and went there to see if twenty million Frenchmen are wrong or not - they aren't! Paris my darling is all anyone has ever said about it, and then some. The sights are truly magnificent and the women breathtaking. It all made me homesick and so damn lonely for you Butch that I wasn't very good company for the other two. My biggest regret was that you weren't on my arm as I paraded down the Champs d'Elysees.

We took in everything, from the Louvre down to the dingiest bar in Pigalle. The Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Place de L'opera, Concorde, Trinite Church, along with Napoleon's tomb and the Louvre were all included in our itinerary. I have a few pictures and some other stuff as souvenirs that *Paree* is famous for.

Things have finally started to move here. I've been issued some officers' clothing and should be on a boat in a week or ten days. Seems if the Army just won't let us be together on our wedding anniversary. Golly Butch - I'd give my arm to be with you right now - but never fear sweet - our time is coming, sixty glorious days and nights of it.

My first stop after leaving the boat will be Fort Devens[200]; I shouldn't be there more than three days, and from there home. I shall call you at least once a day from there. We have been separated into various sections according to the state from which we came. Directly across for me sleeps none other than Leo Mascolo, we shall, no doubt, be together from here on. The USO[201] and ARC[202] are really doing a bang up job for us R.A.M.P.'s[203] I've already seen some damn good shows and tomorrow Alec Templeton is going to play for us. The ARC always has plenty of coffee, egg nog, etc. and they never run out!

Butch darling, the two weeks spent here have been harder and longer to spend than the past year and a half all told, only because I know that I am so near to seeing you and holding you in my arms once again. I love you so very much my darling - soon, very soon you shall [have] physical proof of my great love for you.

Take good care of yourself my darling and remember always that I love you.

Good night my darling,

I love you
Lenny

Regards to all at home
L

[200] In 1940, at the onset of World War II, Fort Devens (Ayers, Mass.) was designated a reception center for all men in New England who would serve one year as draftees. A massive $25 million building project was begun, including more than 1200 wooden buildings and an airfield.

[201] The United Service Organizations Inc. (USO) 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.

[202] American Red Cross

[203] Recovered Allied Military Personnel

France – Letter 2

June 4, 1945

4 June 1945

Dearest wife -

Time is one thing I have plenty of but they manage to keep me running around just enough so that I don't get the opportunity to write as often as I would like. By now - I should have signed enough papers and 'sweated out' enough lines to get me on the boat, this should happen soon! As near as I can figure, I will be on the next shipment to leave here - this means that within a week I should be homeward bound.

Life here would be extremely miserable except for two things, one being that I am so close to you and have my darling, the other is that Fécamp [Abbey], the home of the original Benedictine, is within easy commuting distance . Benedictine is the liquor made in a monastery and known all over the world. A few of the boys make a daily run into town and we hold a party almost every night. It can't be taken straight, so we bribe a mess hall officer each day for some fruit juice.

One other thing that makes life livable is the amount of Red Cross tents on the base; if they weren't here we'd go hungry due to the 'diet' the Army has us on, because we are ex-PWs our stomachs cannot take too much good food so we get what is known as a bland diet - plenty of eggs, chicken, lean meat and eggnog. You'd go big for that last item. Butch.

Incidentally sweet, the three things that made my trip to Paris so enjoyable were (1) sleeping in a spring bed with clean sheets, (2) eating in a dining room with a table-cloth on the table and waitresses serving us, and (3) being treated like an officer again. Everything in Paris has been taken over by the Army and North R.A.M.P.'s.[204] Everything was free to us. We were given a hotel room, free mess and all the good entertainment we wanted. More about the shows when I see you. Speaking of entertainment, last night they held a dance here - forty girls and four thousand fellows. I read the world almanac for an hour and came back to my tent and went to sleep. That remark I made in my first letter about sunny France is not true - out of the twenty days I've been here, it has rained on all but one; this is due, no doubt, to the fact that we are on the Channel and get that English weather.

Butch darling, in one of my last letters to you before I was shot down I asked you to send me a wedding band - naturally I never received it (not being around when it came.) Please, my sweetheart, have one waiting for me when I get home. I'm so terribly happy to be married to you that I want people to know at a glance that I am married to you. I love you so very much my darling that this waiting here is driving me crazy. Hanging around here as a free man is almost as bad as being behind barbed wire only because I know that soon we will be together again for keeps.

Butch darling, this will have to do until tomorrow only because I can't collect my thoughts anymore. Give my love and regards to all at home but save my special love for yourself my darling for I do love you so much.

Good night my darling,

I love you
Lenny

[204] Recovered Allied Military Personnel

France – Letter 3

June 6, 1945

6 June 1945

Dearest wife

Not a thing of any importance has happened since my last letter to you. As a result I'm still hanging around waiting for the order putting us aboard a ship for home. We've been given promises by Generals that we'll leave here by mid-month, so it can't be much longer. My optimistic prediction that we would be together for our anniversary was too much so, but by all that's right, we should celebrate my birthday the way it should be, in each other's arms. I do love you so very much my darling.

Last night it dawned on me that any and all letters I wrote to you since the first of the year were in all probability never sent out of Germany; therefore quite a few pertinent facts mentioned in these letters were never received by you. Going back to the first of the year I'll try to list a few of the more important happenings.

Shortly after the first of the year my sinus attacks became acute and I was sent to a hospital[205] sixty miles north of Berlin. Proving the adage "It's a small world"; I met Mickey Lassman there. He is married to Bea Kroopnick. You should know her, as she is a friend of Lil's[206] (so Mickey told me.) He too was a P.O.W., captured somewhere in France. Like many others, he was eagerly awaiting news from home to hear whether he was the father of a boy or girl. (Your letter telling me about it came in March, and try as I could, I couldn't get the good news to him.)

Coming back to camp, after a month of treatment I found that all the boys of Jewish faith had been segregated into one barrack so I had to leave Chris and move in with what turned out to be a bunch of swell fellows. We've already made plans for a reunion in New York sometime during our leave. It promises to be quite an affair.

March was uneventful unless the fact that we almost starved means anything. They were indeed dark days - moldy bread, watery turnip soup and undrinkable coffee being our complete diet. Finally during the last weeks of the

---

[205] About 100 kilometres north of Berlin is a small town called Lychen. In the early twentieth century, the city was a health resort with a health center called the Heilanstalt **Hohenlychen**. In 1935, SS officer and doctor Karl Gebhardt became head of the clinic and transformed the clinic from a treatment center for tuberculosis patients to an orthopedic clinic. In 1939, Hohenlychen was converted into a military hospital, still headed up by Gebhardt.

[206] Lillian (Lil) R. Geetter is married to Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter

month, thousands of Red Cross parcels arrived and our morale went up. Disaster, however, struck early in the morning of April 4th - our mess hall burned completely down. Luckily, very little food was lost. Now we had to cook in our room in addition to sleeping and living there. Because of my cooking knowledge, I was made room cook - a job I held until the very end. We made the most of a bad situation and at times thanks to parcels from home manage to have some fairly good meals.

Things rode on fairly smoothly throughout April, and then came May Day, and with it the Russians. They in turn brought liberation and here I am, my sweet, eagerly awaiting seeing you again.

Last night a few of us held a premature reunion party. The refreshments were liquid only - two bottles of Champagne and sixty miniature battles of Benedictine. Your husband was a sick man by eleven o'clock! The only mixer we had was a case of lemon juice powder that we talked a mess officer out of. It was sour but served the purpose. Yesterday I sweated out the line to the P.X. and managed to get a few more souvenirs mostly for you my darling. Hope you like them when you see them. France being known for its things for women, I'm at a loss as to what to get for my many male relations. There just isn't anything worthwhile buying.

Once again Butch, I've run out of words not only of what to say, but of how to tell you just how much I miss you and love you. Can you be content with 'I love you' until the day I'm home and can hold you in my arms and kiss you and --- ? Truly Syl, it will take the entire sixty days for me to say and do all that I want to say and do to, and with, you.

Good night my darling,

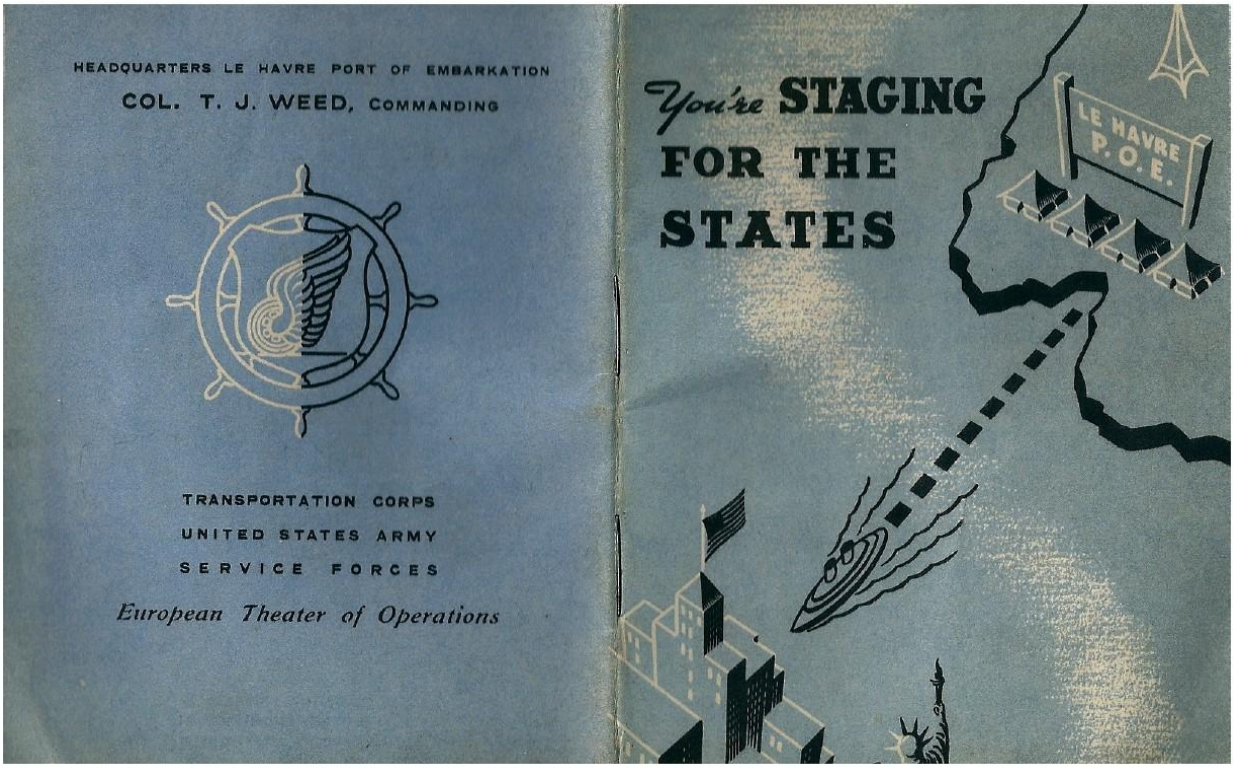
I love you
Lenny

Good news my sweet, the Army says I won't have to go to the Pacific.

Love you
Lenny

Lt. Leonard Levy - Navigator - [was last seen in] Le Havre, France - 10 June 1945.

Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani,
Missing Crew Report, March 6, 1944



Lt. Levy, Nazi Captive, Saved Life of Pilot Now Home

June 22, 1945 (undated)

Lt. Levy, Nazi Captive, Saved Life of Pilot Now Home

Second Lt. Leonard Levy, an Army Air Force navigator, was taken prisoner by the Germans Mar. 6 last year. And ever since that date his wife, Mrs. Sylvia Geeter Levy, 148 Magnolia St., has been following the war news closely for word of her husband and his air force comrades in German prison camps.

Lt. Levy

According to word received today by Mrs. Levy, she now knows that her husband saved the life of 2nd Lt. Raymond Newmark, pilot, of Brooklyn when their plane was shot down by a group of Messerschmitt pursuit planes near the Dutch border. Lieutenant Newmark is one of the 463 wounded U. S. Army men just returned from Germany by diplomatic exchange. Newmark declared in an interview with a New York newspaper that he owed his life to Levy. "He adjusted my parachute and tapped me on the shoulder and I jumped."

Lieutenant Levy was heard from Apr. 14 last year when he spoke with a group of American prisoners of war on a German propaganda broadcast which was picked up here by short wave radio. He declared he was in good health and urged his wife to be brave. He later wrote that he met three Hartford boys in the prison camp: George Goldstein, Leo Mascola and Samuel Laffman.

He later wrote to his wife, "American Red Cross packages bearing the labels of the Hartford Chapter are the best morale boosters in the world as far as any Hartford prisoners of war are concerned."

Lieutenant Levy, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Levy, 108 Colebrook St., entered the Army in November, 1942. He has been overseas since December, 1943. He is a graduate of Weaver High School and was employed by the United Tool and Dye Company before he was called to the service. His brother, Pvt. Norman Levy, is stationed in Indiana.

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[207] 2nd Lt. Raymond (Rock) Newmark was the Bombardier of the Shack Rabbits. 2nd Lt. Augustus (Chris) Christiani was the pilot. Lt. Levy later said he was "reaching in front of Lt. Christiani helping him prepare to evacuate the plane and was hit by a bullet in the bicep."

diplomatic exchange. Newmark declared in an interview with a New York newspaper that he owed his life to Levy. " He adjusted my parachute and tapped me on the shoulder and I jumped."

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Lenny's Return - Hartford Courant

June 22, 1945

Neighbors Hold Joyous Reunion

A newspaper clipping about the homecoming of Lenny (left) and Leon (right), with Leon's sister in the middle, June 22, 1945

Leonard "Lenny" Levy was born on July 3, 1918, to Arthur Michael Levy and Sarah Wisotsky in Hartford, Connecticut. Lenny had one brother, Norman Levy. Lenny attended Weaver High School in Hartford.

After completing his training, Lenny worked for United Tool & Die Corporation, an aerospace metals manufacturer. Lenny worked there until he enlisted in the United States Air Force on November 24, 1942. He was given identification number "T-61298" and began basic navigator training in Selman Fields, Louisiana.

It was here that one day he unexpectedly ran into his neighbor, Leon Anthony Mascolo, at the post office. Leon was also training to be a navigator. Lenny and Leon were also in the same class at Weaver High School. From the beginning to the end of their service, their paths would cross several times.

Lenny married Sylvia Geetter, from Hartford, on June 12, 1943.

After completing his training, Lenny was assigned to the 561st Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group, which was based at RAF Knettishall in England. From here, Lenny flew several missions against Germany.

During Lenny's last mission, he managed to leave the plane in time. Lenny was captured soon after, at 16:30, in Neuringe and then taken to Dulag Luft and Stalag Luft 1, where he served the rest of the war. Here he also encountered Leon Anthony Mascolo, who was shot down three days after Lenny.

After the liberation Lenny, together with Leon Anthony Mascolo, returned to America. When Lenny's wife received the message that her husband had arrived in America she was sitting on Mrs. Mascolo's porch.

Dutch site

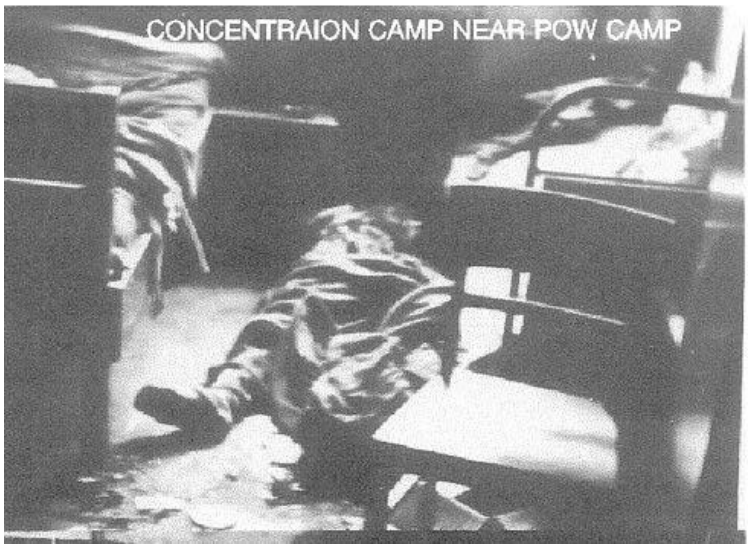
Sylvia (Butch) Geetter Levy and Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy

July 1945, undated

'The destruction of Germany's great war industries was accomplished almost entirely from the air. No one can stand among their ruins without a feeling of awe for the devastating power of such attacks. The courage and skill of our pilots and their crews in these operations is legendary. They deserve the highest tribute of our people'

The Honorable Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, 1945

Official Report[208] on Barth Concentration Camp
by 2nd Lt. Leonard Levy AC



Barth[209], Germany Concentration Camp

300 prisoners were liberated on May 1, 1945 by advancing Russians. Most of these were starved and seriously ill, the remnants of an over-packed concentration camp, which a few days ago held about 4000 men. Too weak to walk, they had been left behind when the other prisoners were evacuated by sea several days before the arrival of the Russian army. It is believed that these prisoners were drowned - the most convenient means of execution.

The Barth Concentration Camp[210] was intended for a smaller number but as the German army retreated, thousands of concentration camp survivors were brought to Barth. The camp is surrounded by electrically charged barbed wire.

The buildings were three story brick structures built very sturdy, and prisoners were allowed no communication with the outside.

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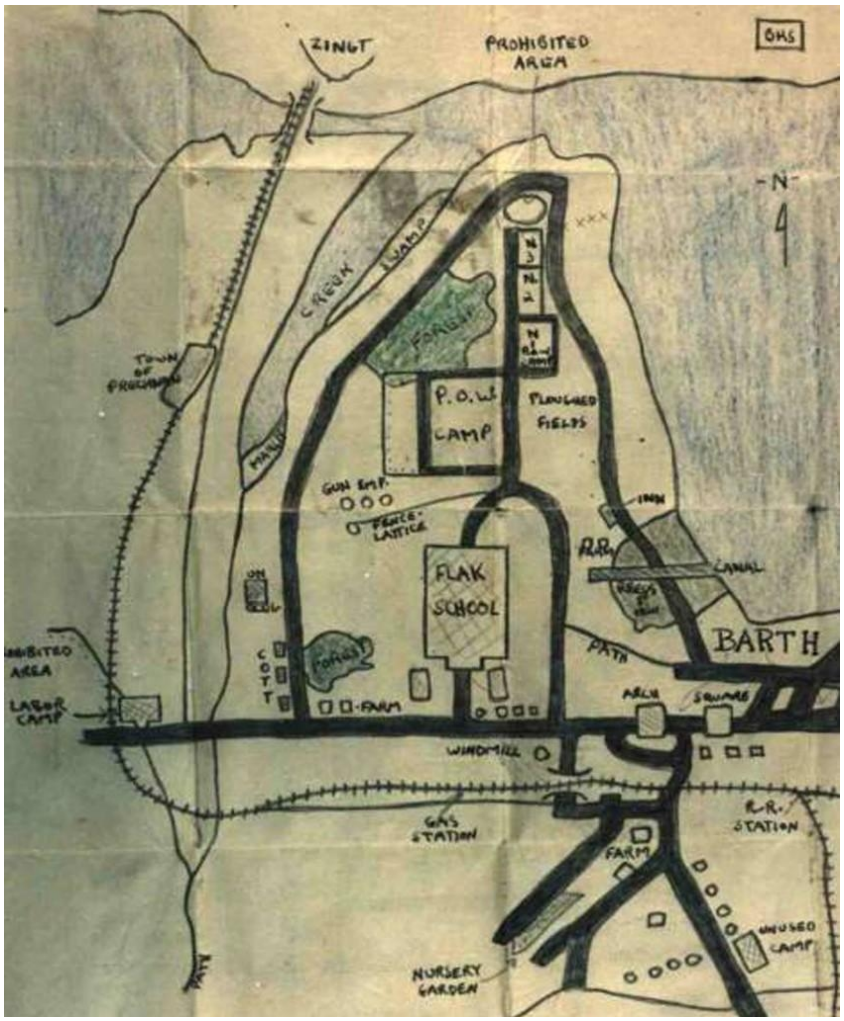
[208] Written in pencil by Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy as a free man.

[209] Barth was the only Nazi municipality with both a POW camp and a Concentration Camp. It also had a Luftwaffe Air Training Base with anti-aircraft (flak) posts, a military garrison and an active armaments and aircraft industry.

[210] Concentration camp Barth, officially KZ-Außenlager Barth, was a sub-camp of concentration camp Ravensbrück and was in use from November 1943 to spring 1945. It housed prisoners who performed forced labour in the nearby Heinkel-Flugzeugwerke factory. A total of 7,000 people were imprisoned here, an unknown number of whom died as a result of the poor working and living conditions.



Barth Map[211] 1945

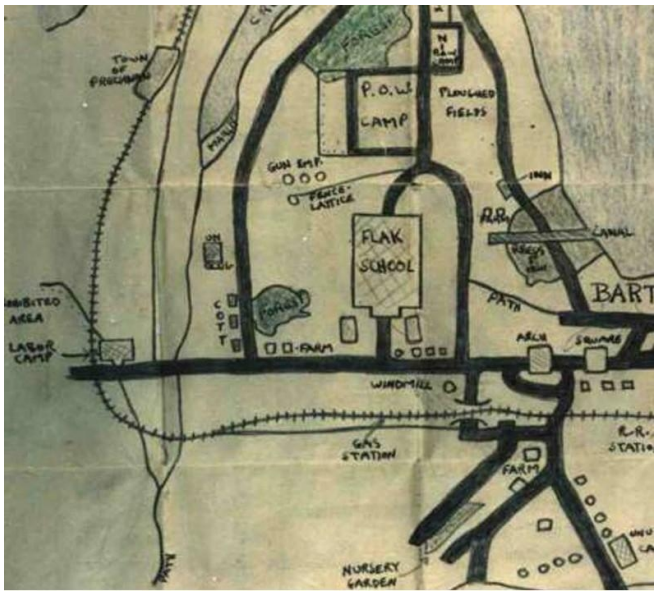
Stalag Luft 1 is labeled *POW Camp* and N1[212], N2 and N3 at top

Concentration Camp is Labeled Labor Camp at Left

Twenty eight three decker beds were jammed into small cells. Each straw-covered bed accommodated 2-3 men. Toilet facilities were not made available after the failure of the water supply and the floors were covered with human waste and vomit. The men were forced to eat, sleep and live in deplorable conditions. Many were unable to get out of their vermin ridden beds.

[211] Public Image from *Stalag Luft 1 Online* at http://www.merkki.com/

[212] Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy was formerly imprisoned in the North 1 compound



Barth Map[213] 1945

Luftwaffe Air Training Center[214] is labeled *Flak School* in center

Inspecting Russian officers shook their heads as they looked at the horrible filth of the prisoners' living quarters. They remarked that they had seen much worse in Russia and Poland where millions have died in concentration camps.

Most of the prisoners had been evacuated from other concentration camps to the east and west of Barth, Germany. Nationalities consisted of Czech, Russian, Polish, Greek, Hungarian, French and Italian, mostly of the Jewish faith.

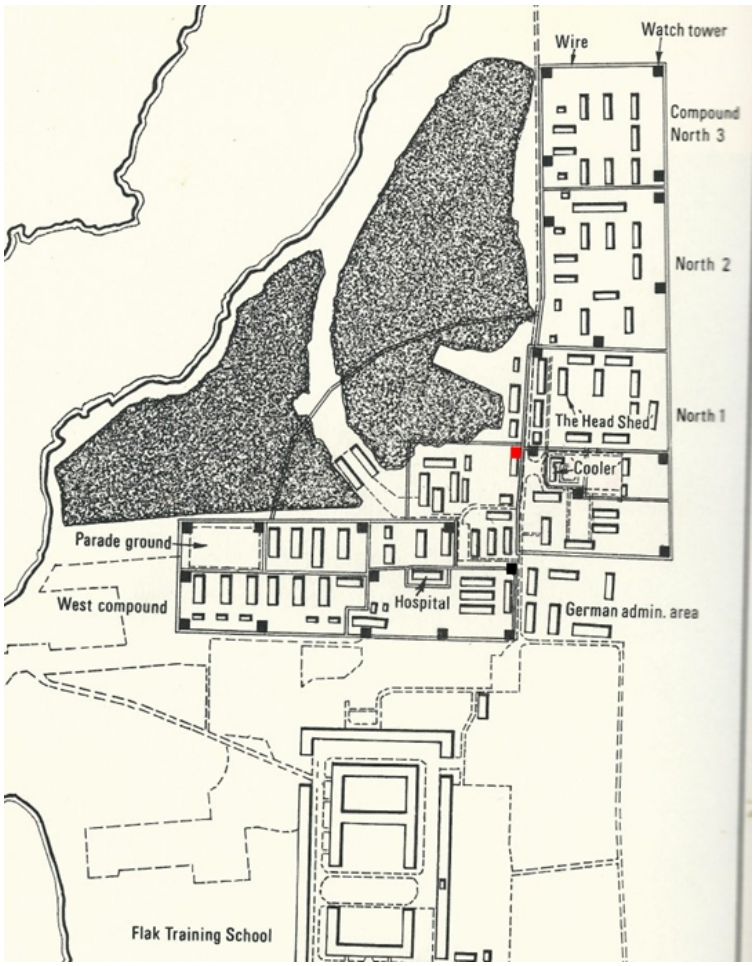
Only a few were strong enough to be interviewed. Most cases were sunken eyed skeletons covered with ulcers, filth and vermin. British and American medical officers[215] from the POW camp were rushed to remove the

[213] Public Image from *Stalag Luft 1 Online* at http://www.merkki.com/

[214] The Luftwaffe Base, Garrison, and Munitions were all under the control of the freed POWs of Stalag Luft, when the Russians arrived on May 2, 1945.

[215] Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy was the First Aid Officer at Stalag Luft 1; he would have been one of the first on the scene once the POW found the Concentration Camp survivors.

men to a captured[216] Luftwaffe Hospital a block away from the concentration camp.



Barth Map - Stalag Luft 1

Luftwaffe Air Training Center[217] is labeled *Flak Training School* at bottom
Stalag Luft 1 is labeled *West Compound* and North1[218], North 2 and North3

A Czech Jewish doctor from Prague said that of the 300 that were evacuated from the Poulet camp near Stetten weeks ago all had died en route

[216] Again, the Hospital had also been captured by the POWs of Stalag Luft 1. It is clearly labeled on the map that follows.

[217] The Luftwaffe Base, Garrison, and Munitions were all under the control of the freed POWs of Stalag Luft, when the Russians arrived on May 2, 1945.

[218] Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy was formerly imprisoned in the North 1 compound

or after arrival at Barth. He had been in a number of concentration camps since 1941 the worst being Belsen-Bergen near Brunswick. Thousands of prisoners, he stated, had died of starvation, disease, ill treatment or had been killed by the Germans in a gas chamber and cremated at the camp.

At Barth, as in other concentration camps, the doctor said that prisoners were awakened at 4:30 AM, given one loaf of bread for an 8-man breakfast and sent out to work in German factories[219], railroads and fields until 6:00 PM. They were given no food during the day and on their return to camp were given a small bowl of soup. Only the strongest were able to survive.

Only workers received a food ration. If a man was unable to work due to illness, he received no food from the Germans. Beatings were a common occurrence in most of the camps… the doctor stated. If a man fell while he was working, his comrades were beaten off if they tried to assist him. Each man was sent out to work not knowing if he would live out the day.

When the prisoners went to work they were shackled and guarded from conversation with anyone but armed guards. Their clothing consisted of thin striped gray suits, ill fitted and made of cheap cotton. They wore the same garment in winter and summer. The prisoners were rushed out for roll calls and those straggling were beaten in the head with clubs, causing the deaths of many. The men were shot indiscriminately at the slightest provocation.

Interviews

A 16 year old Polish Jew, 6 years in a German prison camp. Helpless and listless and only able to stare when questioned. Does not know where his family is. Another 15 year old Polish Jew spent eight months at the Barth camp prior to which he had been in the Stetten camp. He was in the same deplorable condition. Only 24 out of the 2000 Greek Jews who were evacuated from the Stetten camp are still alive. On the way to Barth, hundreds were beaten and left dying on the road. One man had lived in NYC for 14 years. He returned to Greece in 1933 and served in the Greek army fighting against the Italians for six months before being taken prisoner by the Germans. His father, wife, five children, two brothers and a sister were all taken to concentration camps he has never heard from them.

[219] The prisoners of Barth Concentration Camp were forced to work at aircraft factories of the Heinkel company. Ernst Heinkel was a German aircraft designer, manufacturer, and Nazi Party member. He designed the world's first turbojet-powered aircraft, the Heinkel He 178.

One German Jew who spoke English had been in German concentration camps for six years. He is 40 years old and looks 60. Since 1939 he has been at many camps where beatings and beastiality were prevalent. He was so starved that all the doctors can permit him now is a half glass of milk every hour. After receiving medical care, some of the prisoners wander aimlessly into Barth looking more dead than alive. Could not seem to realize that they had been freed. Unto the Allied soldiers in town, they bowed in humble subservience.

German women were forced to assist in the care of prisoners. They were horrified at the condition of the prisoners and although they lived in the immediate vicinity claimed to have no knowledge of prevailing conditions.

KZ Barth Concentration Camp Memorial

This memorial was inaugurated in 1966 to commemorate the incredible suffering of the inmates of the concentration camp. They were forced to work as slaves for the aircraft manufacturing company of 'Ernst Heinkel' from 1943 to 1945. They were beaten, starved and 180 of them died and were buried here due to this inhumane treatment. There are four relief plates by the sculpture Jo Jastram which illustrate scenes of everyday life in the concentration camp. From here an educational path leads you through the area of the former concentration camp.

DOK Barth[220]

Förderverein Dokumentations- und Begegnungsstätte Barth e.V.

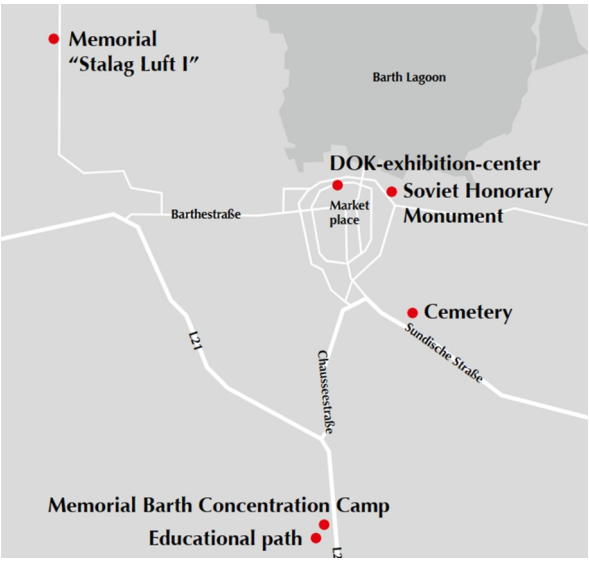
[220] Public Image from DOK Barth (Förderverein Dokumentations- und Begegnungsstätte Barth e.V.)

Memorial[221] stone for the prisoners of war (POW) camp *Stalag Luft I*

This plaque is dedicated by the citizens of Barth and the Royal Air Force Ex-Prisoners of War Association on 28 September 1996 to commemorate all those held prisoner at Stalag Luft I, sited here from July 1940 to May 1945: members of the British Commonwealth and United States of American Air Forces and their Allies from the occupied countries and the Soviet Union.

NOTHING HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN

DK Barth[222]
Förderverein Dokumentations- und Begegnungsstätte Barth e.V.



[221] Public Image from DOK Barth (Förderverein Dokumentations- und Begegnungsstätte Barth e.V.)

[222] https://dok-barth.de/language/en/nichts-ist-vergessen-und-niemand-english/