

Butch Geetter and the Hot Rock



A POW Love Story

Letters from a Jewish-American B-17 Navigator, shot down over Holland, who spent more than a year as a Prisoner of War in Stalag Luft 1 and the birthright immigrant woman he married.

by Leonard Levy and Sylvia Geetter Levy

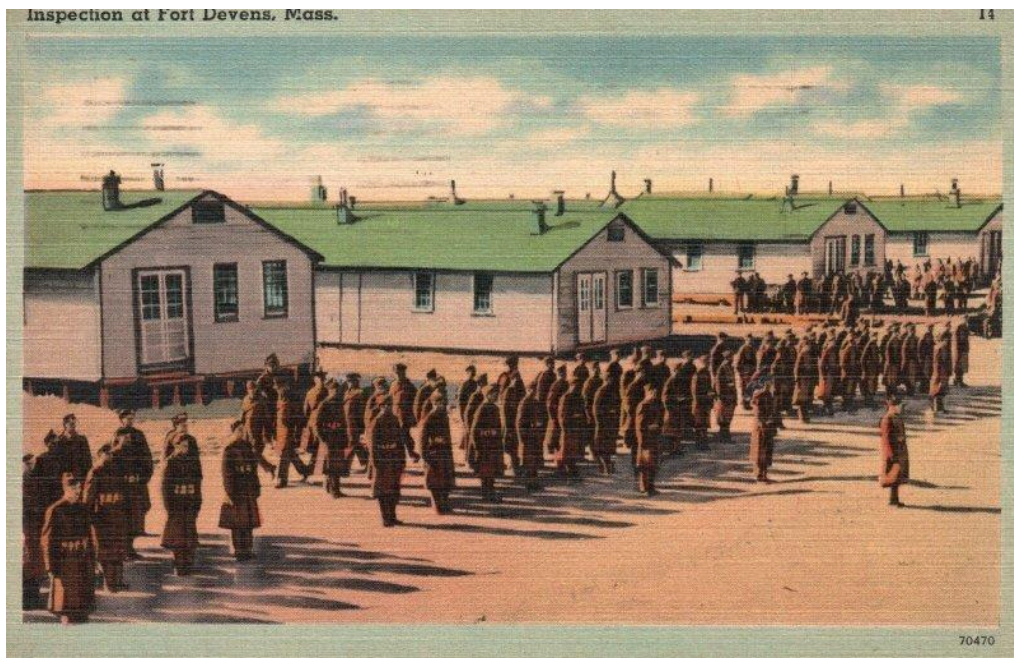
Camp Pickett, Virginia¹
Thursday
[December 10, 1942]

Dearest Syl -

It's just after supper and this is the first time we've had an opportunity to write anything. This is really a tough life. We arrived yesterday at about 1:00. The final thing they issued to us was a raincoat and a toilet set. Next we took our written tests and they lasted three hours. By then it was time for supper - beef stew. After *mess* we had our bedding issued.

(From here on I am writing from Camp Pickett, Virginia.)

After we made our beds we went for a physical. This consisted of a chicken-pox vaccination, an inoculation for typhoid and a short arm inspection. (Time for lights out Butch, so I'll have to finish this crosscountry letter tomorrow.) It is now Sunday afternoon and I think I'm going to have time to finish.



¹ Two pages were written on the smaller Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

I think I'll skip the rest of the story about [Fort] Devens and bring myself up to date. We left camp about 5:30 PM Friday evening And after riding all over the eastern seaboard we arrived here at 9:00 o'clock Saturday night. We ate supper, went to sleep and got up at 6:15 this morning. After breakfast we were classified. After classification came dinner, after dinner a few lectures and now I'm writing to you.

Butch, from what I can gather I'm in training to become a medical technician, what that means I don't know. I do know that I'll be here 11 weeks at the most. Don't think that Virginia is a warm state; it's very cold down here, just as cold as it was in Hartford. Of course we are dressed for it, we wear long woolen underwear, our winter issue of dress clothes and the overcoat.

There are quite a few fellows here from Hartford - just how many, or how many are in the entire camp I am not permitted to say but I can say that this place is much bigger than Camp Devens.

It seems that the information I was given about jerks being sent to the medical corps was all wrong. In fact there are quite a few brilliant minds in my barracks...

It's impossible for me to phone you today as we're confined to our room. How are you, Butch? Did you work for Natie, Saturday? Have you seen my family since I left? When you write my sweet tell me everything that has happened since the time I left you at the station with your eyes full of tears.

I love you Sylvia more today than ever. Perhaps... one of these days I'll be able to write and really express just how much I really love you.

The nearest town of any consequence is some 95 miles from here so once I get settled I'll have time (plenty of it) to write to you - I think. You've no idea how many times in the past few days I've taken a quick glance at your picture and what a good feeling I get after looking at it. By the way, the fellow sitting next to me at the classification this morning worked with you - Donald is his name - he was the fellow in the

restaurant that you remarked about the night we went with Nate, Lil²,
Faye and Lou³.

We are going to be called out of our barracks any minute now
Butch, so I think I'll close now with and I love you very very very much.

Write soon and have them long

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Give my regards to all the family and tell them I'll write just as soon as I
get settled

I Love you
Lenny

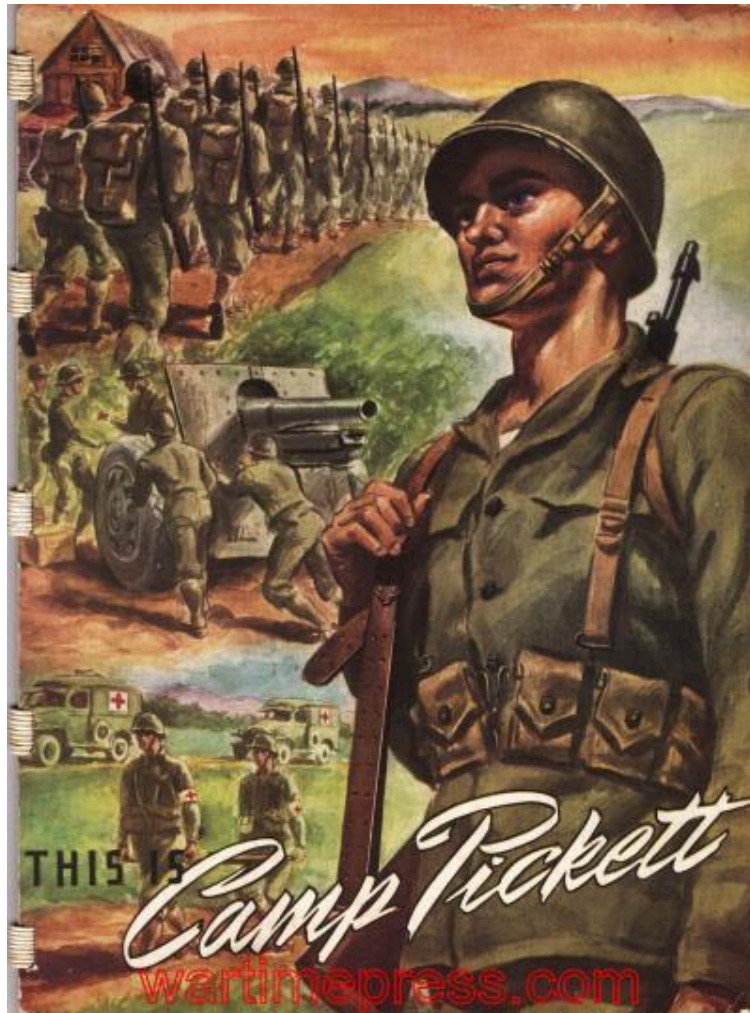
² Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and lived in the North End of Hartford, Connecticut.

³ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman, who was pregnant with their second of two children: Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman was five at the time this was written.

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁴
Monday
[December 14, 1942]

Dearest -

I've just returned from one of the most inspiring and effectively presented speeches I've ever had the privilege to attend. I am not at liberty to tell the subject matter but suffice to say it made us all very glad to be members of the United States Army.



As to our activities or training here it is just like attending a military college. We attend classes all day and I do mean all day. We are

⁴ Two pages were written on the smaller Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

up at 6:00 in the morning, have *mess* and by 7:00 o'clock we are ready for our first class. Classes last until 5:00 with time out for *mess*. After supper we are usually free. By usually I'm thinking of tonight. At 7:00 this evening, we were called out of our barracks and taken for a quick-time March of a few miles. By quick-time, I mean 120 steps to the minute, each step 30 inches long. When we reached our objective, the aforementioned speech was given. The entire march up and back is done in absolute silence.

Believe it or not Butch but I actually like the army particularly this branch. If it were not for the fact that I'm applying for the Air Corps this week I would make every effort to succeed as a medical officer.

Classes started today and I won't have as much spare time as I thought I would. By this I mean that between studying for my next day's class and keeping up with my correspondence, I'll not have the time to see the surrounding country. I'll not be missing much according to the reports I've heard. It's 9:25 Butch. Lights go out at 9:30 - More tomorrow.

Regards to the family and tell them I will write the first chance I get. I love you more every day

Love and more love
Lenny

Kiss yourself a few hundred times for me, huh Sylvia?

Love
Lenny



"KEEP 'EM FLYING"

IS OUR BATTLE CRY!

FIRST CLASS FIGHTING MEN NEEDED

AVIATION CADETS
Young Men, 18 to 26 Years
of Age Inclusive, for Air Crew
Training as Bombardiers,
Navigators and Pilots.

SOLDIERS **Aggressive,**
Alert, Patriotic, Young Men,
18 and 19 Years of Age, Who
Want to Fight for Their
Country, Especially Desired.

APPLY TODAY AT ANY U. S. ARMY RECRUITING STATION

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁵
Tuesday
[December 15, 1942]

My dearest Butch -

I can't begin to describe to you how much I really like the army. Life here, as I mentioned in my letter yesterday, is really just like going to college; the only difference is that we march to and from classes. Our officers are a swell bunch of fellows. The food here so far is really wonderful. For example yesterday for breakfast we had oranges, oatmeal, french toast with bacon and all the coffee we could drink.

Since my first letter I find I'm going to have less time to myself than I thought. At first, we thought we were to have every night free. Now it turns out that we have many surprise hikes and they all take place at night. On top of that, we are supposed to study our day's lesson. We are given quite a list of references to use which are found either in the company Day Room, from where I am writing this letter, or in the Library located at our beautiful Service Club. The Day Room is a large room beautifully equipped with writing desks, radio, ping pong table, and book shelves. We are welcome here any time we are off duty.

Butch sweet, I'm sitting here trying to think up words to tell you just how much I love you and how much I miss you. The only thing I can think of... is something I've said before. That is, just as soon as this is all over we are going to get married. Then Syl, we will be the two happiest people in the world. Right?

This evening I stood my first Dress Retreat. Retreat in case you don't know is the ceremony that takes place every evening when the flag is lowered. Every man in the regiment (about 500 of them) stand at parade rest, while the band plays *To the colors* and then the national anthem. The whole ceremony is done with snap and precision and is really quite a sight to see.

⁵ Two pages were written on the smaller Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.



Earlier this evening I had to pack my locker and believe you me it's quite a job. Not only does every article have its own place but each and every piece of clothing has its own special way of folding, socks right on up to our coat.

I'm going to cut this letter short tonight Butch so that I can catch up on my other correspondence. I haven't written to anybody with the exception of you and my folks.

Kiss yourself a few more times for me my wife to be

I Love you
Lenny

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁶
Wednesday
[December 16, 1942]

Dearest Butch -

Tonight we celebrate our 6th anniversary. What a strange way for two people who love each other the way we do to celebrate, you back home in Hartford and me way out in the wilds of Virginia.



Today winter really hit us, we had snow most of the day, and when it wasn't snowing there was a cold rain. This however doesn't deter the Army from its schedule. If a hike is called for or a drill scheduled on the drill field we go right out and do it.

Butch before I forget, I may not be able to write tomorrow or Friday because tomorrow night we will be confined to quarters to take our second Typhus shot and on Friday evening we will be busy cleaning up the barracks, our clothes and ourselves for Saturday inspection which I

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hear is very strict. Any day now I expect to be put on KP⁷ duty and some night next week I'll get Guard duty which means that I shall have to be up 24 hours at a stretch walking Guard. This is divided up into two hours on duty and 4 hours off, so it really isn't too bad.

So far dear I haven't received mail from anybody. I'm blaming it on the slowness of the mail. I hope there isn't any other reason. As I wrote my folks - with a city so far away and nothing really to do at night, a fellow can get pretty lonesome. Please keep your letters coming frequently, so that I will miss you much more than I do now, which is really quite a lot.

Each night I take your picture out and look at it and almost cry to think I had to leave you and not be able to hold you in my arms.

I've always been told that a soldier's feet always gave him the most trouble. With me however it's different. It's my 'heine' that hurts. Almost everything we do is sitting down. Our lectures or rather classes right now consist of motion pictures and it's no fun going from one picture to another all day and trying to remember everything.

Have you been up to my house lately or have you talked to my mother? I suppose that's a foolish question but when you're away from home, things like that bother you...

I know you were worried as to whether or not you would have all your spare time occupied. How are you doing? Are you working nights, Saturdays, or what? Dish me all the dirt, sweet, so that I can have something to think about between letters.

I got hold of some postcards today and before long I'll send them along to your brothers and sisters. Tell them I haven't forgotten them, it's just a matter of time.

⁷ KP duty means "kitchen police" or "kitchen patrol" work under the kitchen staff assigned to junior U.S. enlisted military personnel. "KP" can be either the work or the personnel assigned to perform such work. In the latter sense it can be used for either military or civilian personnel assigned or hired for duties in the military dining facility excluding cooking

Butch darling you've been bothering your pretty head as to what to send me just stop there isn't a thing I need and if there were I can get it very reasonably at the PX⁸



I can't think of more to say tonight, so with fondest regards to your mother and Sadie⁹, and all my love to you, I'll close for tonight

Love
Lenny

If it feels good to kiss yourself for me, do it again a few times tonight.

Love again
Lenny

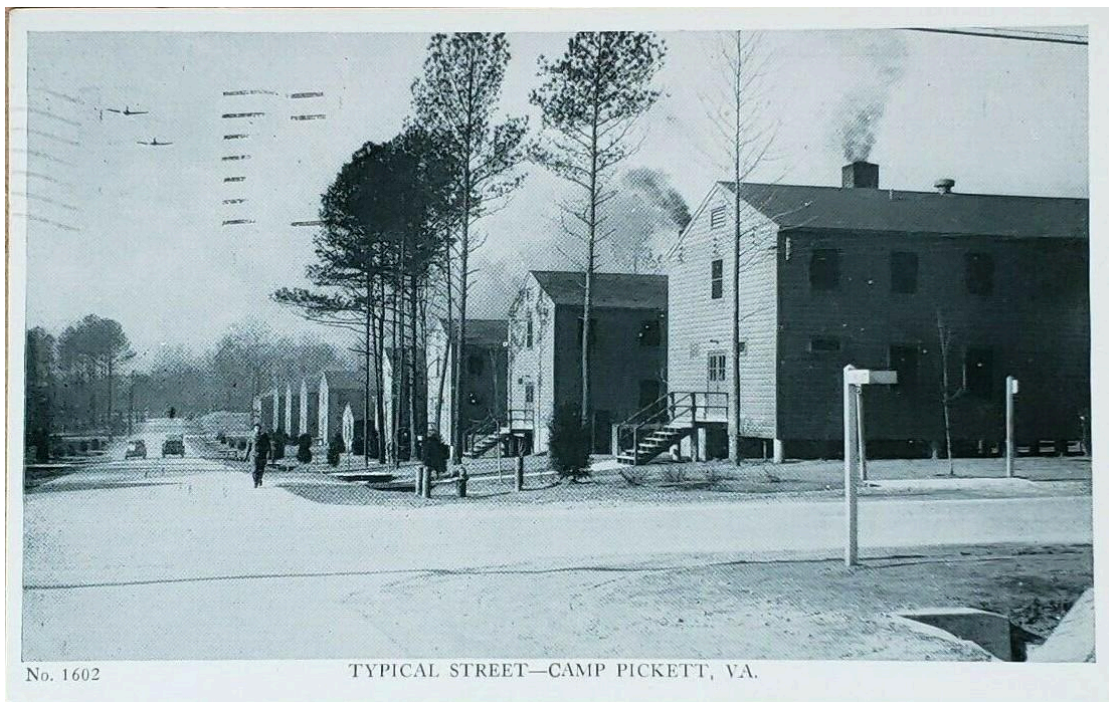
⁸ Postal Exchange

⁹ Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and was unmarried at the time. Both sisters were working full-time and paying rent to their mother Adelle Stolper Geetter for a bedroom in her house at 148 Magnolia St.

Camp Pickett, Virginia¹⁰
Thursday
[December 17, 1942]

Dearest Butch -

If this letter sounds as though I'm disgusted I am. Let me explain; earlier this evening some miserable character expectorated (spit) on the floor. Because of that the entire barracks had to mop the floor and give the barrack a general clean up. On top of that we are confined to our barracks until Monday. This means after Retreat, when we are normally free to do as we please, we must remain in our room. This includes all day Sunday.



Butch, last night I said something about not receiving any mail. I'm sorry I just found out that the mail service here is pretty lousy and at the time I wrote to you... you hadn't even heard from me. The town near here is so small that it is next to impossible to call on the phone - otherwise you would truly have gotten a call. I tried last night and again tonight and couldn't even contact the operator.

¹⁰ Two pages were written on the smaller Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

I'm afraid I talked too soon about the food here; it's starting to get pretty bad I suppose... that we've got to expect the bad with the good. My classes are coming along pretty well... because of the fact that when I was a kid I was a Boy Scout. The marching and first aid that they are teaching us is more like a review to me.

As yet I haven't received my papers from home but just as soon as I do I'm applying for the Air Corps. Pray that I'm accepted, won't you?

Butch, last night I told you I thought we were celebrating our anniversary in a weird way. Tonight it doesn't seem weird to me it seems sad - damn sad. I miss you, Butch. Maybe you can read between the lines and see just how much I do miss you. I'm afraid I never fully realized just how much I did love you until now. I keep seeing you no matter what I'm doing. I think of you constantly and pray each night for a letter from you.

The fellow is collecting this mail now so goodnight my sweet

Love
Lenny

PRECISION TRAINING *MEANS* PRECISION BOMBING!



Camp Pickett, Virginia¹¹
Saturday
[December 19, 1942]

Dearest -

Received your first letter today and without a doubt I was the happiest fellow in the camp. Last night I actually cried (no I wasn't acting) because I was so lonesome for you. I guess the reason I felt so miserable was that on top of missing you... I was suffering the after effects of my second typhus inoculation. It made most of us feel pretty terrible.



I was very happy to hear that you and my mother call each other regularly because I know she must feel rather badly now that my brother has gotten his notice of induction. There is no need for me to ask you to continue doing so, for I know that you are too *smaht*¹² to need advice of that sort from me.

¹¹ Two pages were written on the smaller Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹² Sylvia (Syl) Geetter and Leonard (Lenny) Levy transcribe this word as they pronounce it with a New York accent.

I was happy to hear that you are taking up all those extracurricular activities Butch but please don't overdo it. Take care of yourself for me.

Things here are rapidly adjusting themselves and classes and drills are coming rather easy. Next week we have our first examination by the P and I inspectors and depending on how we make out decides where we are placed. So far, I think I've gotten everything but they do throw things at us rather fast and we've got to stay on the ball to absorb everything.

Butch I want to ask a favor of you; regardless of whether I write everyday or not, please write to me every day. There is really nothing like a letter from the person you love. We are kept so busy that there are times that I will not have the opportunity to write.

Regardless of whether or not I get transferred to the Air Corp or not Butch, I'm afraid it will be a long time before we see each other, so keep your chin up and remember that I love you very very very much.

I haven't written to New Britain¹³ yet so give them my regards and tell them I wish them the best of luck.

There isn't much more to write so until tomorrow goodnight

Love
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

I love you

¹³ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David Maranski Geetter, Albert Leonard Geetter, Thalia Geetter, Harold Paul Geetter and Suzanne Geetter who was born the week before. The older children were aged nine, seven, four, and two years old and they lived in New Britain.

Camp Pickett, Virginia¹⁴
Sunday
[December 20, 1942]

Dearest -

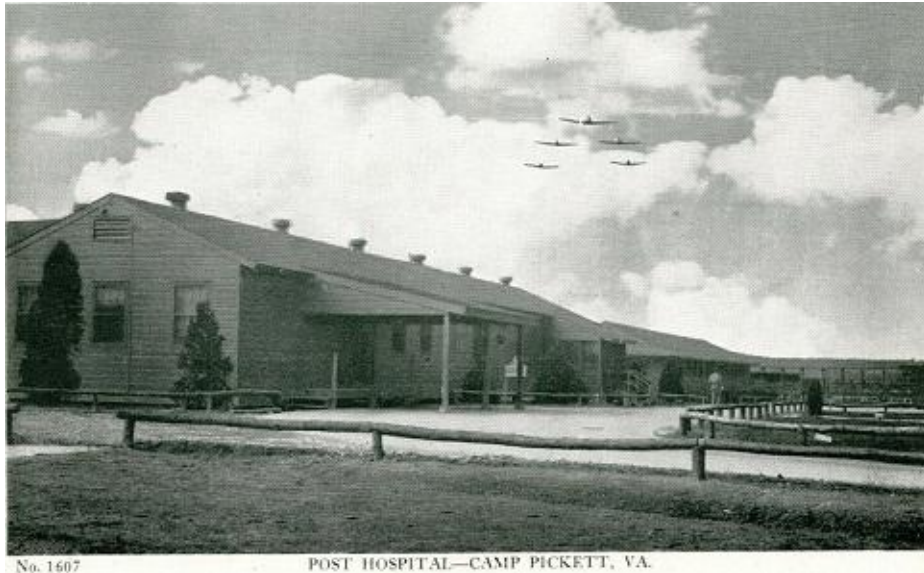
Here it is Sunday morning and we are having a true New England Blizzard down here. This only tends to bring you closer to me because only yesterday I was reading in your letter about the storm you had back home just a week ago. Butch, just another word or two on how grand it feels to hear from one so close as you are to me. Within your letter and holding your picture in front of me, made it... seem as if you were actually there talking to me. Please keep your letters long even if you have to fill them with pure nonsense and please don't skip a day even if I have to. It is really a wonderful feeling when the mail orderly calls out your name and the other fellows whose girlfriends aren't as smart or as beautiful as mine look at me with an envious glint in their eyes.

As I mentioned last night my classes are coming along fairly well. This Saturday I'll know exactly how well, as we are going to have our first inspection. Christmas day which will be an off day for us will no doubt be spent cramming by most of us.



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Last night after I mailed your letter a few of the fellows and myself went into the Service Club it is a beautiful large building equipped with an immense library with all the latest books, a nice large cafeteria where good food is sold very reasonably, a soda fountain and a lounge room where the fellows sit around and play checkers, smoke or just throw the bull... About 9:30 we went back to our barracks, went into the John and sat around and threw the bull some more.



Training to be a hospital technician is a hard job but an interesting one. If at the end of our training. Our marks warrant it, we are sent to a hospital for specialized training in such fields as X-ray technician and the like. As I've mentioned before if my heart weren't set on the air core I could really go for this branch of the service. The day I was classified the officer in charge asked me if I would care to go to Cooks and Bakers school. I refused because in the Army a cook really has a tough life up all hours of the day and night and the headache of feeding about 500 men three times a day...

As far as laundry is concerned, for a dollar and a half a month, the Army will wash 20 articles of clothing each week. That means that I don't have to bother with any washing at all. Wonderful isn't it?

If it isn't too much trouble could you send me a nail clipper and also a nail file? They really stress cleanliness here and somehow somewhere I lost my clippers.

Syl Sweet, there isn't much more I can think of right now so until tomorrow, so long. Butch I do love you very very very very much and miss you almost as much as I love you. I say almost because nothing could be as great as the love I have for You.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Butch, I think I got the wrong address for Faye and Lou¹⁵. Send it to me. I mailed them a card, did they get it?

¹⁵ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman, who was pregnant with their second of two children: Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman was five at the time this was written.

Camp Pickett, Virginia¹⁶
Monday
[December 21, 1942]

Dearest -

Just finished my first Army Detail. Today was my turn to act as table waiter. Although it wasn't hard it was no cinch either. After the men eat, we serve them seconds. We have to wash the tables, set them up for the next meal and then mop the floor. So far KP has skipped me knock on wood.



Butch dearest, you may not believe this but every day I get to like the Army more. The work that I'm doing, or rather training for, is really interesting... When a fellow has been in the Army a short while, his outlook on life changes completely. You get to thinking back about your civilian life and wonder just what gave you the idea that working was a factor in winning this war. Here you fully realize what a tremendous job lies ahead of us and you want to get into the thick of it and help finish it

¹⁶ Three pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

up. We also think back at the fellows who... dodge the draft and the names we call them are unprintable. The truth is Butch, the Army life is a great one from my point of view. Of course there are some fellows who will always bitch, but then you find them in all walks of life. Pardon the discourse but that is just the mood I find myself in tonight.

Sy, after the lecturers and training films that have been given to us you can bet that this is one soldier who will come out of the Army as clean, if not cleaner, than when I went in. I'm talking about sex hygiene now. The last picture we saw today really scared me from ever wanting to have intercourse again with a woman, outside of the girl I marry. The things that can happen are too horrible to even want to take a chance with the girl or any and all children we may have. I love you.

It's been over 24 hours since I received your last letter and I've read it four times and I'm still carrying it with me. I love you Syl, like ping goes with pong and Santa Claus goes with Christmas. I love you and all I ever think of these days are the years we are going to be together after this is all over.

From what I've been hearing over the radio and reading in the paper you folks are having quite a cold spell. Cheer up, last night it dropped to zero here and the furnace in our barracks broke down. One blanket, all the windows open at least three inches and the only heat we had was that which was supplied by our bodies. Does that make you shiver? We did too.

There was no mail for me today and I felt rather sad for a while until I realized that you worked Saturday and didn't have a chance to write. However, next time you speak to my mother, tell her to have my brother drop me a line or two, every day... I've written and asked [him] to do that but it doesn't seem to work.

We had another inoculation today, this time for God knows what. They don't hurt much when you get them but the after effects are really terrific. Now that I'm better I can write and tell you that I was really sick Friday and Saturday. Friday I had a fever and then my arm became swollen. I could just about move it. I'm all right now so don't worry.

(Right now, my sweet, your favorite Beatrice Kay is on the air. Were you listening?)

The enclosed stick of gum is for you dear. I'm not near you to buy it when you want it and it's rather impractical to send a package so I'll do the next best thing and send a piece in every letter. How's that?

More pleasure for office workers...

THEN—
even in 1911, when secretaries wore dresses like this, they found Beech-Nut Gum refreshing and its flavor long-lasting.

...AND NOW—
that same delicious flavor adds enjoyment to whatever you are doing. Buy a package today.

Beech-Nut Gum
The yellow package ... with the red oval

SEPTEMBER, 1942 57

Of course I haven't forgotten our scrapbook and just as soon as I get time to get a haircut I'll have my picture taken. We're not allowed to have cameras yet, but there is a photographer on the post and I'll go real soon. Yesterday we got permission to put a picture on our shelf and now I have all the fellows in the room... looking at your picture. The fellow sleeping next to me recognized you. He used to work in the beauty parlor in Fox's¹⁷. His name is Carl.

Butch, airmail letters don't seem to get here any faster than regular mail so instead of sending an airmail a day send two by regular mail. Ok?

¹⁷ G. Fox & Co. is the largest department store in Hartford, Connecticut.

Not much more, so I guess I'll say goodnight. Remember me to everybody and give them my regards

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



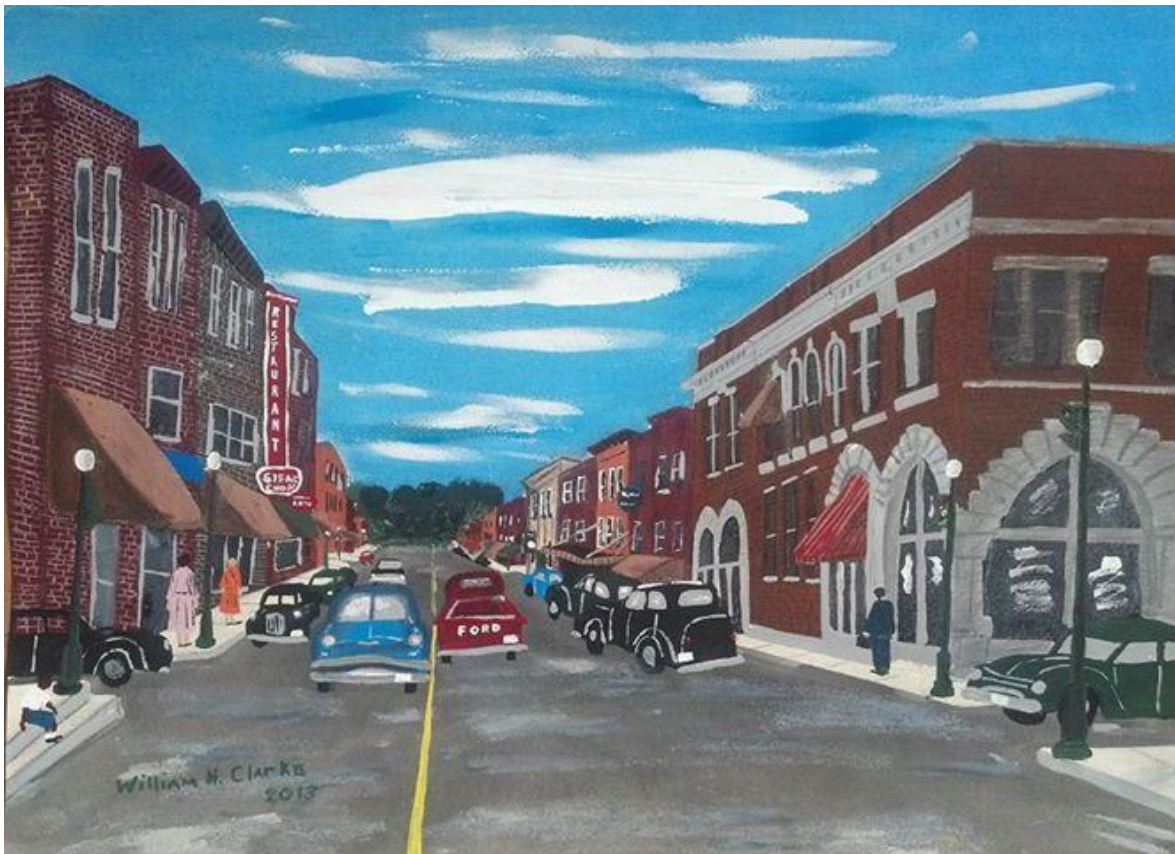
I had this all sealed and signed when I remembered something I wanted to tell you about. Yesterday afternoon, having nothing to do, two fellows and myself went into the town of Blackstone. Going down on the bus I had my first encounter with the famed Southern Jim Crow laws. In the front of the bus they have a large sign posted reading, "Colored to the rear - White to the front."

The town itself is nothing to write about. Sunday when most of us... chance to go there the town is closed up tight. The only things open are the lunch rooms and the town's one theatre. The only souvenir shop was closed much to my disappointment. I did want very much to buy a few and send them to you. We walked down Main Street, the whole three blocks of it and then went to the show. Surprisingly enough, it was a late release. After the show we came back to camp, had something to eat

at the Service Club and then back to our barracks and sleep. That is the way a Sunday is spent at Pickett.

Butch again I want to tell you I love you more and more every day. This separation of ours is really proving the adage "Absence makes the heart grow fonder."

Love
Lenny



Monday In Blackstone- Blackstone Virginia

William H Clarke

Camp Pickett, Virginia¹⁸
Tuesday
[December 22, 1942]

¹⁸ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

Sweetheart -

Just got through with a physical inspection on Peter Parade as its called in the Army. It consists mainly of a short arm inspection. Tonight however they checked us for Athletes foot also. After inspection, we were issued our gas masks. In a week or two we will have classes where we will be required to walk through a field known as a gas area. This is nothing but a large field that has had gas planted there. They do not use a deadly gas Casualty agent as the army calls it but Bromobenzyl cyanide, or tear gas just to get us used to wearing a mask.

This morning first thing they took us on a 5 mile hike. Do you know that I actually like to walk? Honest! When I come home, be prepared to do a lot of walking. After the hike, we attended the usual classes and lectures. Life has finally settled down so that it is mostly routine. Now, because of that, we have a little more time for ourselves, except when they spring inspections on us like they did tonight.

Thanks a million Butch for sending me the snapshots. Our picture looks swell in the frame alongside your picture. All the fellows in the room really tell me I've got a swell looking girl. They don't have to tell me though. Not only are you pretty, but you're the sweetest, nicest, grandest, loveliest and sincerest girl a fellow ever had. I love you Butch, more today than I did yesterday and I'll love you more tomorrow than today. You sum it up best when you say that our married life will be something wonderfully beautiful.

This is really crazy country down here. Yesterday it was bitter cold. Today it warmed up a bit and now it's raining.

Don't worry about the shot I got yesterday. There were absolutely no after effects. By the way, thanks for the clipping. The fellows got a big kick out of it. Send more of them, they add a nice touch to your letters.

By the time you get this letter I imagine you'll be feeling pretty low. If you get very sick dear just give me a thought - maybe that will comfort you some. You used to say that my being close to you helped a lot. Please take good care of yourself for me.



The course we are being taught is quite comprehensive. Not only are we taught First Aid and marching, but also such subjects as Scouting and Patrolling, Defense against mechanized, chemical and air attack. We are also taught military discipline and courtesy. There is a lot more to being a soldier than just saluting. You have to know when not to salute as well as when to.

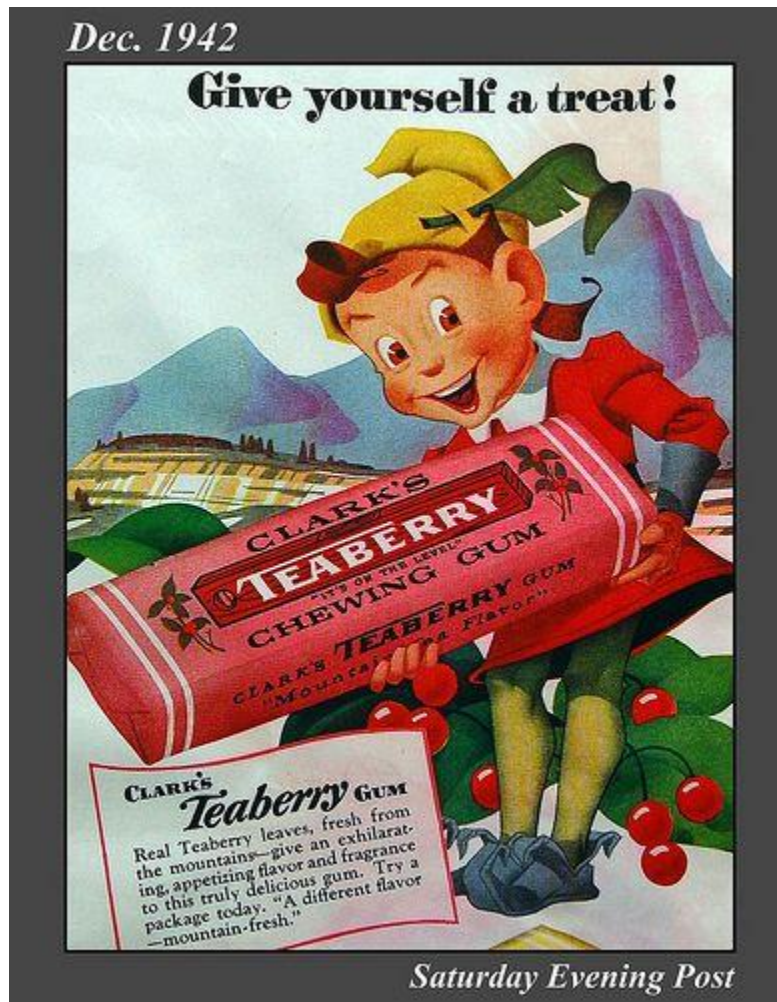
Christmas here is going to be a gala event. The officers are planning a special program of events for us. The Mess Hall and Day Room have both been decorated and they placed a beautiful tree in each. In the afternoon, after an old-fashioned Christmas dinner, on real plates we are to have a party with prizes and gifts for all. My company is playing host to four orphan children that day. a really nice gesture. I think we all chipped in to get them some gifts.

You close your letter with 2 x's. For a good reason or reasons I use 10 because I love you so very much and each x represents a very very small part of my love for you - Good night my sweet until tomorrow -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Enclosed is your daily ration of gum.

Love
Lenny



Camp Pickett, Virginia¹⁹
Wednesday
[December 23, 1942]

Dearest wife-to-be -

Tonight marks our seventh engagement anniversary²⁰ and also the end of my second week in the Army. It seems like two years since I left you on the station that cold and blue day. Butch Dearest, if it weren't for you and the thought of what is to be after all this I think I would be very miserable.

Things here are still going along fine. I'm getting quite a bit out of my classes. Stuff that I will be able to use in later years. (I don't mean KP, folding clothes or making beds either.) Tonight, after *Chow* we were given another shop in the arm. That's just about all they do to us a little lately it seems. Maybe they want to get us all doped up so that we won't realize what we are doing and work us harder.

I've made quite a few friends here already with Fellows I would like to know in civilian life, one of them is Sam Lenhoff, who comes from Pittsfield. From what I hear from the other fellows from his hometown he was quite a well known man there and also quite a wealthy person. He is a fellow of 38 and a divorcee. He has been going with a *shiksa*²¹ the past few years who is crazy in love with him. He shows me her letters to him. She is a very intelligent person, a school teacher. His father writes to him and tells him to marry her but he says he's been burnt once and that was enough. He told me the whole story. If you want to hear it let me know.

The weather here is terrible. The past few days were bitter cold and today it was just like late spring. About 99% of the fellows here have

¹⁹ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

²⁰ Sylvia (Butch) Geetter and Leonard (Lenny) Levy

²¹ *Shiksa* is an often disparaging term for a gentile woman or girl. The word, which is of Yiddish origin, has moved into English usage and some Hebrew usage, mostly in North American Jewish culture. Among Orthodox Jews, the term may be used to describe a Jewish girl or woman who fails to follow Orthodox religious precepts. The equivalent term for a non-Jewish male, used less frequently, is *shegetz*.

colds or sore throats including yours truly. It is not however anything to worry about as they keep a close check on our health.

It's nice to know that you enjoy going to my house even if I'm not there, even going so far as to invite yourself over. Remember the first night I took you home and you had to sit in the car until you got up enough courage? We have come along since that night, haven't we? Someday we are going even farther. That's a promise and as I once told you, I always keep my word. This time it will be a pleasure to do so.

Last night I used my sewing kit for the first time. I lost a button on my field jacket (it's like a windbreaker and the handiest article of clothing issued to us) and also a button on Sam's overcoat.

Today darling, I filed my application for the Air Corps. This Saturday I take my exams so from here on, it's all up to me. Pray for me dear each night for as you know it is something I really want. Besides if I pass, there might be a very very slight chance of me coming home while being transferred. Don't... put any hopes in this. In fact don't even mention it to my folks, just pray.



I've tried for a long time to find the words to really explain just how much I really love you but always wind up with those three tried and true words, I love you very very very much. Someday Syl, I'll be able to show you just how much I love you in more material things than just

letters from a desolate Army camp. My only wish is that someday I'll be able to give you the things that are your due; things that you do not have now. You understand what I'm trying to say, don't you dearest? Just pray that all this is over with soon for the sooner it's over the quicker start we can get in our married life.

Butch dearest, do me a favor and call Ebner²² some night and ask him if he got my letter. I wrote to him about a week ago and as yet I haven't heard from him.

Each night I come down here to the Day Room intending to write a number of letters and every time I write to you and to my family and then lose my ambition. Tonight I have the ambition to continue but my arm is stiffening up from the shot I had earlier so I think I'll close now. Please explain to everybody why I don't write. Goodnight my sweet. By the way, I'm out of gum right now. I'll make up for it tomorrow

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

²² Ebner (Eb) Glooskin was a friend of Sylvia (Syl) Geetter who graduated from Weaver High School with her in 1938 and has been a friend of Lenny's since Lenny and Syl began dating.

Camp Pickett, Virginia²³
Thursday
[December 24, 1942]

Dearest -

Today was really a joke for me. I received two letters from you, one from my mother, one from Norman²⁴, one from Ebner²⁵, one from Annette²⁶, and a package of cookies and stuff from my mother. Included in the letter from my brother was a \$10 bill - I really had an enjoyable day.

It is 8:00 o'clock on Christmas Eve and this place is really dead. There are about seven fellows here in the barracks. The other 50 went into the town of Blackstone, or tombstone as the fellows here call it. We had a fairly good meal tonight and then after we ate we had a party with gifs for quite a few. There was entertainment by some of the fellows and we sang carols and had an all around good time.

I was very happy and glad to hear that you went to your company Christmas party. I want very much for you to go out whenever the chance arrives. In fact I would feel very bad if you were to stay home all the time. Did you have a nice time? Tell me all about it in your next letter, Butch...

There are... lots of things that I'll write to you, about things and myself, that I wouldn't want my mother to know. I'm glad you understand that she worries but keeps it to herself. After Norm goes things will be even tougher on her so please keep the habit you've acquired of calling every day and going over once a week.

²³ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

²⁴ N. Norman Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He enlisted and is awaiting his processing order.

²⁵ Ebner (Eb) Glooskin was a friend of Sylvia (Syl) Geetter who graduated from Weaver High School with her in 1938 and has been a friend of Lenny's since Lenny and Syl began dating.

²⁶ Annette Paltz is Lenny's first cousin.

The typical shot didn't have much after effect this time and thank God there are no more. My throat is about the same but after tomorrow's day of rest I'll be all right.

The officers gave us a real break today; instead of keeping classes all day they let us out at 245. It was very warm here today and the early hour was appreciated, especially after the long March they took us on this morning. We were away from camp almost four hours and when we got back I was dog tired. 50 men from my company have been invited out for dinner and supper this Sunday by the town of Lawrenceville. That is a small town about 25 miles from here. I put in my name and hope that I'm selected as it will actually feel good to get out of camp for a day and eat good home cooking out of real plates. Speaking about cooking, dear, I wish you wouldn't knock yourself too much. You don't even know how well you can cook.

By the time you read this letter I will probably know how I made out on the test for the Air Corps. Oh Butch I do hope I pass - outside of you there is nothing I want more.

I do miss you Syl, so much that I cry some nights when I go to bed. As you say we all just have to be brave and wait until it is all over. Just think of me once in a while during the day and as I do to yours look at my picture and tell me you love me.

The fellows are going around singing Christmas carols right now and it brings a lump in my throat not because the Carols mean anything to me, but because somehow they remind me of home and you and Christmas time and Toyland at G. Fox & Co. Did you miss, Syl?

I think I'll call it a night now and right tomorrow all about the dinner and entertainment we are to have.

I love you Butch - I love you I love you regards to the family

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Camp Pickett, Virginia²⁷
Friday
[December 25, 1942]

Dearest -

I've just come from one of the grandest meals I've ever eaten. Our chef really outdid himself today. We had roast turkey, dressing, giblet gravy, creamy mashed potato, sweet corn, string beans, cranberry sauce, mince pie, fruitcake, candy, coffee and even two kinds of bread. Although I would have enjoyed a steak much more, this was really good.

Not much has happened since I wrote to you last night. After I mailed you a letter I came back to the barracks, talked for a while and went to bed. We got up around 8:00 this morning and spent an hour or so cleaning up for inspection tomorrow. About 10:00, we started a card game which lasted until dinner time. When I finish this I'm going to the MRTC²⁸ Christmas party and tonight there is going to be a dance at the service club.



Today is really a lonely day, Butch. If it weren't for your letters which I reread and your pictures I'd be plenty blue. I suppose however

²⁷ One double-sided page was written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

²⁸ Medical Replacement Training Center

that I've got to stay here and make the best of it so that some day we can be together for the rest of our lives. Speaking of pictures, Syl, I'd very much like to have another picture of you but I really have no place for it. A new ruling came through and we can't have any pictures on our shelves. The first part of this week I'm going into town and have my picture taken.

My throat is rather raw today and I talk with a real bass voice.

I would have liked very much to have called you on the phone today but the PXs are closed on account of the holiday. By the time you get this tho' you may have heard from me because if I go out of camp Sunday, I'll make every attempt to call.

There isn't much to say so I'll close until tomorrow when I hope I'll have very good news to tell you.

Each day my love for you grows greater and greater, and I know for sure that the \$20 (remember?) is as good as in my pocket.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Camp Pickett, Virginia²⁹
Saturday
[December 26, 1942]

Dearest -

From now until Monday afternoon I shall be on *pins and needles*. I took the test from the Air Corps today and it was really tough. There were only eight of us that took it and we will know Monday afternoon how we made out.

Besides your letter I received your card *on* our anniversary. That was quite a cute idea Butch, I liked it very much.

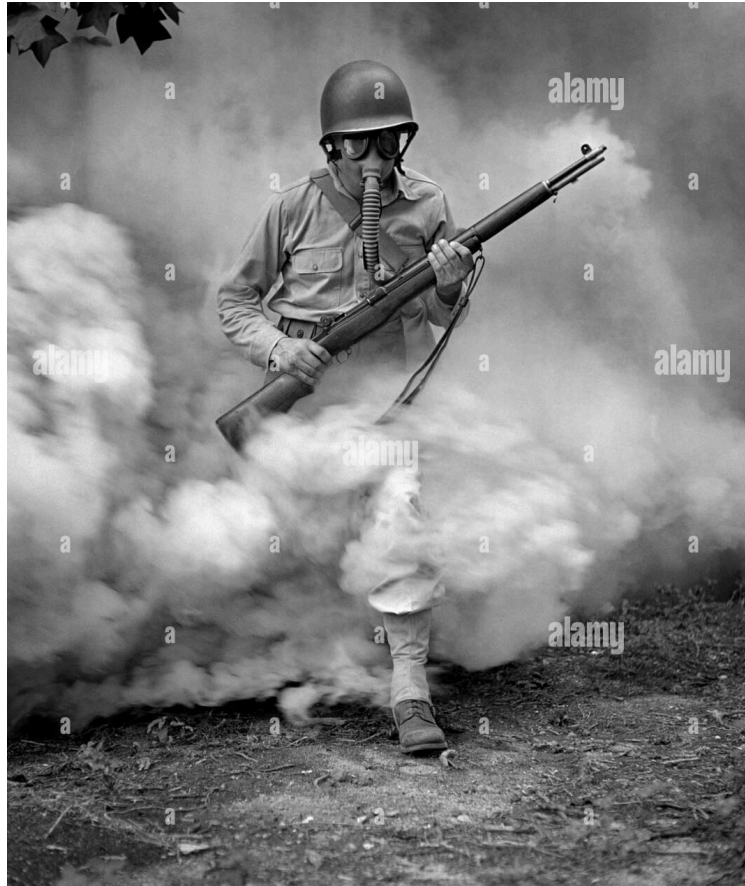
Syl, dear, if my last letter was pretty lousy, blame it on the mood I was in yesterday. I felt pretty low because of my throat and because I missed you so much. Darling, before I left I thought I knew what it was to love you but since I've left I've learned to love you a great deal more. You may not believe this, Butch and you may laugh, but I feel just as if we were married instead of just engaged.

By now you have probably gotten more information about that position Margie³⁰ told you about. I really hope that, if it's something you like, you get it. I know that you're not happy where you are and... an insurance company is a dull place to work with a very small chance for advancement. Good luck to you.

This morning we had our first Display of Equipment - that means that all we own, exclusive of our clothing (toilet articles, tent, blankets, raincoat, etc.) has to be displayed on our bed. Each and every item has its own spot and the examining officers can tell at a glance if something is missing or out of place. The shoes under our bed have to be shined and laced to the top and our clothing is neatly hung on our rack, each hanger two inches from the next and every button buttoned. None of the officers said anything to me - that means everything was all right (I hope.)

²⁹ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

³⁰ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorff is the girlfriend of Lenny's brotherN. Norman Levy.



Because of this inspection and the test this afternoon I didn't attend many classes but one that I did go to informed me very much. We had our first instructions in the use of our gas masks. Everything in the army is done systematically including the putting on and taking off of our masks. There is a reason for all the systems and processes so we don't ask any questions. It is a fairly easy process to put the mask on and in time we'll be able to put it on in the length of time we can hold our breath.

Butch I know you'll do it but just in case some night you feel tired just write a few lines every day. One of the few things that keep us happy here is mail from home. So far dear you've been better than perfect, I've received one and sometimes two letters a day - please keep it up.

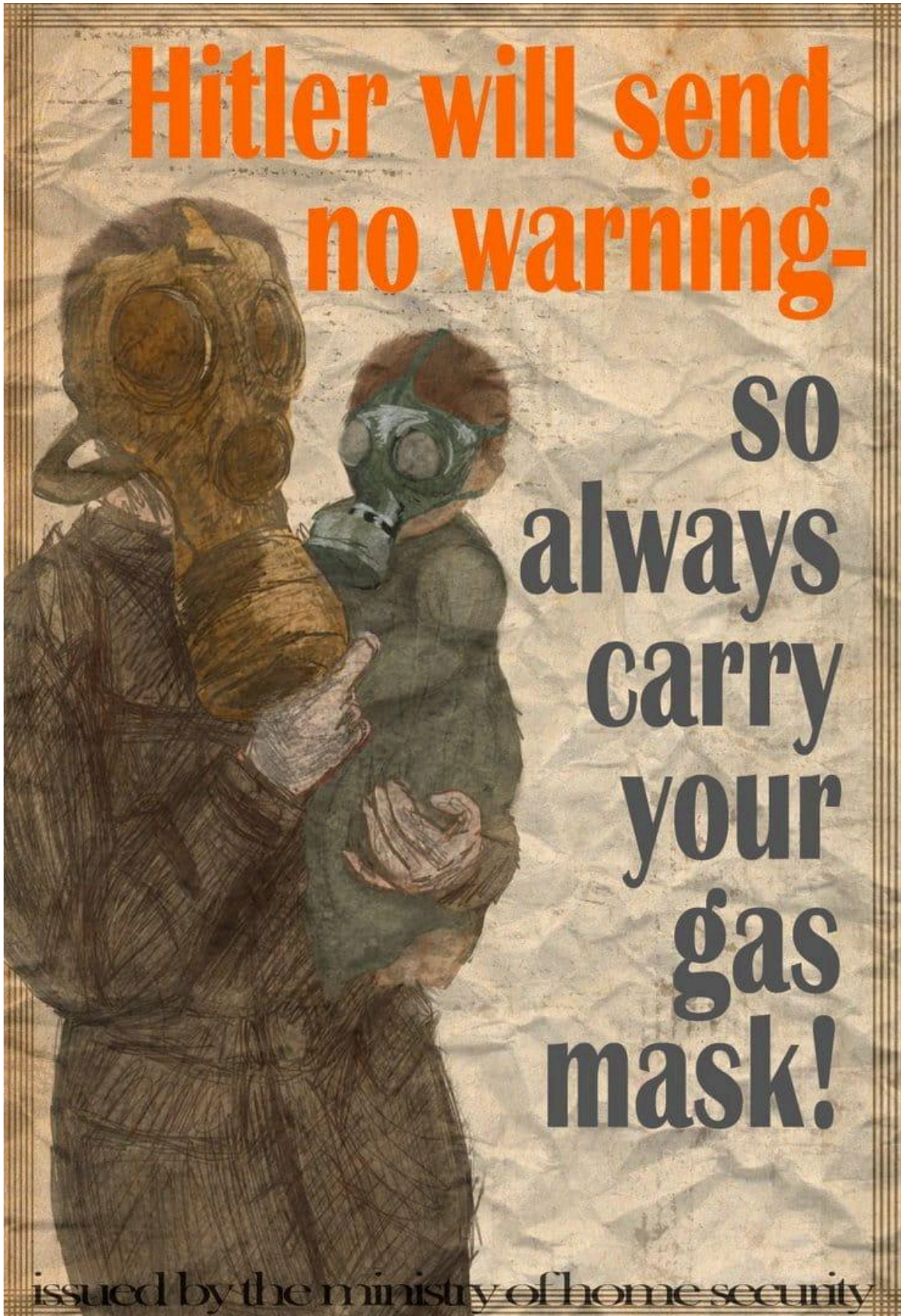
Guard Duty has finally caught up with me. This Wednesday I go on one for 24 hours. On duty two hours and off four. Besides walking our Post, there are 11 general orders that every soldier in the Army has to

memorize. Failure to know them while on Guard means the Guard House. As yet I don't know all of mine but by Wednesday I will.

For me Sylvia not once nor twice, but in every spare minute during the day, and each time you do tell yourself that I love you very very much. I really do, Butch, 1000 times more than I did the day I left. I miss you too dear, without you I'm like a fish out of water. If it weren't for the fact that in every letter you tell me you love me I'd be plenty miserable. I still don't take your love for granted so keep on telling me.

I am sitting on my bed writing this so if it's hard to read blame the position - will write tomorrow

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



**Hitler will send
no warning-**

**so
always
carry
your
gas
mask!**

issued by the ministry of home security

Camp Pickett, Virginia³¹
Sunday
[December 27, 1942]

Dearest -

Here it is another Sunday and another miserable, lonely day was spent. I got up about 10:00, spent about two hours cleaning the mud off my GI³² shoes and then went to dinner. From then until now 7:00 PM - I've been playing cards, my first game since I've been in the Army. I did pretty well for myself but had to quit in order to have time to write to you.

Last night I went to a dance. The soldiers outnumbered the girls by three to one. I couldn't really enjoy myself for two reasons. First of all I kept thinking of you and how if I were home we would have been out together. Secondly the fellows cut in before anyone could take more than four or five steps. I left around 11:00, went to bed and thought of you for the longest time. Oh Butch, I miss you so terribly lately, that it hurts.



One advantage we have down here over you civilians is the fact that we have mail call on Sundays. It didn't do me any good though because I didn't receive any mail and I was a bit disappointed. Although

³¹ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

³² Government Issue

you're doing wonderfully, my mother and brother are a bit lax. Please when next you call tell my mother at least a few lines a day.

I have a great problem on my mind Butch and try as I may I can't find a solution. Consequently I am writing to you in the hope that you may have an answer. I have, in the short time I've been here, accumulated on my person a number of pennies. The problem is how am I going to get them to you so that you can put them in our bank? If you think of a way, let me know.

Quite a few of the fellows here were hit quite hard by colds and coughs. I thank God I am improving every day. Today I feel almost perfect - just a bit of rawness in my throat. We have a very effective way of preventing the spread of colds due to coughs. At night before we go to sleep we erect what are known as *cubicles* on our bed. They are halves of tents strung alongside our beds. This prevents a fellow from coughing into the face of another while sleeping.

Being away from you like this dear I rather miss the moods you used to get into once in a while. It was from these moods that I could tell how much you loved me. You once told me that you never became displeased with anyone unless you cared for them. There were times when you really became displeased with me, weren't there dear? If I ever did or do anything to displease you it's because... I've never loved anyone the way I love you... One thing you can be sure of always is that I love you with all my heart and soul and I'm really just living for the day that we can be together again. My shelf looks rather empty now that I've taken your picture down. I do wish they would reverse the order and permit us to keep a picture there.

Every free day we've had so far has either been a rainy one or it snowed. Today was no exception. All day long it drizzled and now it is pouring. All the fellows are here in the barracks either playing cards or writing letters. We have no tables or chairs so we improvise using our floor lockers or our beds. It isn't the most comfortable thing so if my letters look sloppily written don't blame me.

Tomorrow I'll have either very good or very bad news for you but until then I haven't anymore to write.

I love you very much my sweetheart very much. Every drop of rain that has fallen represents just a small portion of my love for you. Kiss yourself again and again for me and each time tell yourself that I love you.

Goodnight dearest - take care of yourself for me

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Camp Pickett, Virginia³³
Monday
[December 28, 1942]

Dearest -

Today has been one of my luckier days. The big news and the best is that I passed my mental exam for the Air Corps. I have also completed most of my physical and so far I am in good shape. All that is left is the X Rays and I'm quite sure there is nothing wrong with me internally. Incidentally, my mark of 94 was the highest of the six of us that passed. The remainder of the marks averaged from 83 to 89. I guess I'm just a *smaht*³⁴ kid.

I received quite a bit of mail today including three letters and a package from you. The KP special hand lotion will surely come in handy one of these days. Thanks a million for the package Butch, it is very much appreciated. Your first two letters come just as I was leaving to find out how I made out on the test and after reading how much you love me and how much faith in me you have I just know I had to pass. Your letters really give me a boost, Syl, I'm glad to see that you keep them as long as possible.

Before I go any further I would like to say that I'm wrong on our anniversary date. I'm sorry. I left on the 5th week of our engagement and this Wednesday will make three weeks that I'm in the Army.

As for your new job dear, in my opinion you are making a very smart move. Aside from the money angle you will be able... to learn a lot more about office machinery there and also get to know the inner workings of an office more thoroughly than if you remained at the insurance company as a checker. Good luck too dear on your new venture.

To my change of outlook on life let me assure you that it was for the better. If I were to leave here tomorrow the little I have learned will

³³ All three pages written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

³⁴ Sylvia (Syl) Geetter and Leonard (Lenny) Levy pronounce this with a New York accent.

have made me a better man and also a better husband for you and you alone.

Received a letter from Uncle Lou³⁵ today and he thought it very nice of you to be over the house visiting. I told you the family would like you and so far all the letters I've had have said so Butch. They love you just as if you were one of the family already.

I was both sorry and glad to hear that you left the party early. I would have liked very much for you to have had a good time but at the same time from what you have told me about them I didn't think you would enjoy yourself since you gave up drinking.

As to my general health dear I can assure you that I am in perfect health right now. As for my classes there is nothing new to report as I've been so busy with the tests that I haven't gone to many classes lately.

Got a letter from Boomey³⁶ today and he tells me he is doing fine. He soloed last week which makes him a full-fledged flyer now.

We are going to be kept quite busy from now until Saturday preparing for the P and T inspection (Plans and Training.) Our platoon leader wants us to make an excellent showing, consequently he is holding an extra class each night from 6:00 to 7:00, so if my letters are irregular the next few days you'll know the reason.

The fellow Sam³⁷ I told you about does not have a cynical or bitter outlook on marriage, in fact he advocates it if the couple involved love each other as much as we do. Right now he is in the hospital with a severe cold. There are a good many fellows in the hospital but only because they don't want to take any chances here.

Every night after I drop your letter in the box a hundred things pop into my mind that I wanted to tell you and the next night I just don't seem to be able to think of them.

³⁵ Louis (Lou) Wisotsky is the brother of Sarah W. Levy and Lenny's uncle.

³⁶ Lenny's friend from Hartford, Connecticut

³⁷ Samuel (Sam) Ellison is from Hartford and is in a relationship with Eleanor Kohn, a close friend of Sylvia's

Had planned to go into town tonight, get a haircut and have the picture taken. We got tied up with the special class and also something extra. Tomorrow however I will make it a point to do both as I know you people at home must be anxious to see what I look like in a uniform.

I've saved the best news for the last... If we are accepted into the Air Corps we can apply for a furlough provided we are not called for active duty before January 3rd. Good news, isn't it?

As each day goes by I miss you more and love you more... As far as my classes go, time flies but it seems like two years since we kissed goodbye. Just pray as we all do here that this mess will be over very soon.

Good night my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

PS

Enclosed you'll find three sticks of gum to make up for the times I missed. The PX³⁸ was closed up until today.

Your letters by regular mail so far get here just as soon. If they slow down I'll let you know.

Love
Lenny

³⁸ Post Express



No. 1609

BRANCH POST EXCHANGE—CAMP PICKETT, VA.

Camp Pickett, Virginia³⁹
Tuesday
[December 29, 1942]

Dearest -

You may not have known it at the time but the gift you sent me was without doubt the most appropriate thing you could have picked out. Especially the mud brush and the bottle of spot remover. I don't recall ever mentioning it to you before but this camp is just one huge mud hole. It is utterly impossible to keep our shoes clean or the mud stains... our clothing. Thank you very much, dear, for your thoughtfulness.



Last night I forgot to mention my fraternity pin. I offered it to you a long time ago to do with as you please; that offer still... If you want to make a ring of it - I know you do otherwise you wouldn't have mentioned it - go right ahead and do so.

³⁹ One double-sided page written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

The whole afternoon was spent on my physical exam. I finished up today. In four or five days I will be summoned to appear before the Aviation Cadet Board for a final check and either acceptance or rejection. Just keep your fingers crossed.

They are starting to prepare us for our tests this Saturday and classes run as late as 8:00 o'clock PM now. They really leave us very little time to ourselves. I intended to go into town for the oft mentioned haircut and picture but we didn't get back to our barracks until 8:30 this evening.

I want to drop a line to my folks tonight so I'm going to cut this short. I will not be able to write tomorrow, as I'll be on Guard Duty. Will write a really long one on Thursday.

I love you my sweet more and more each day. There can only be one ending to a love like ours: a long and happy marriage.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁴⁰
Saturday
[December 31, 1942]

Dearest -

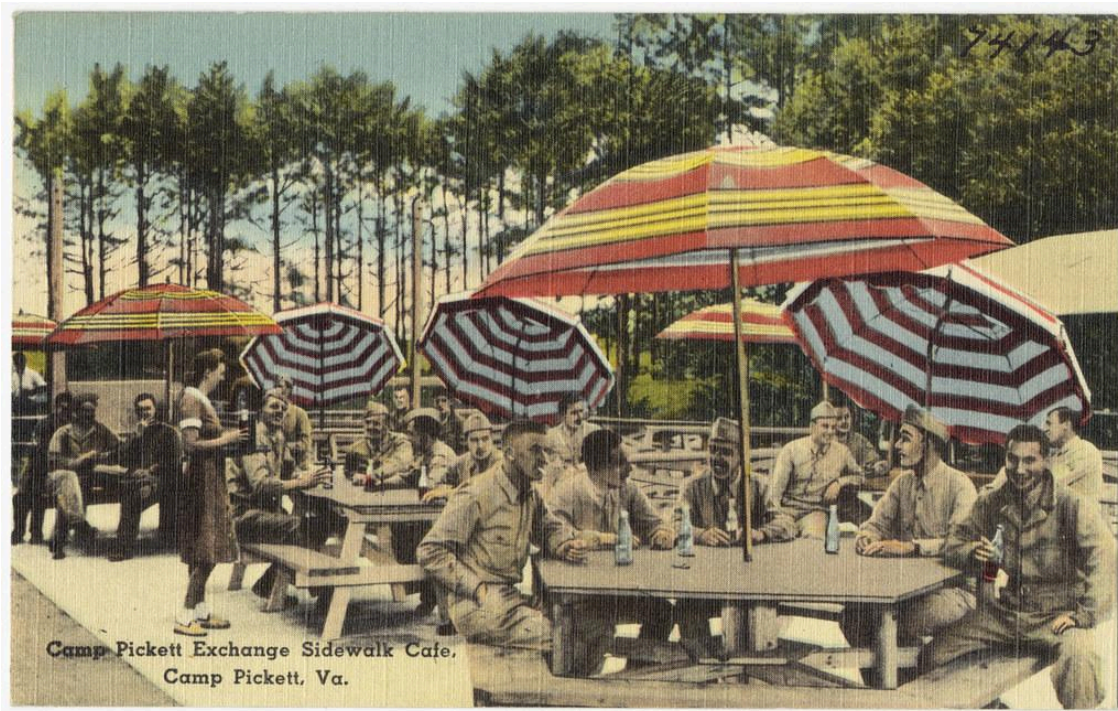
This is one time of the day that I never thought I'd be able to have time to write a letter. It is now 11:00 in the morning. I've just gotten up after being on Guard Duty all night. I will not be relieved until 4:45 but there is no more work. The Guards are confined to the battalion area and as all the classes are outside of the area today, we have nothing to do but lounge around all day. Guard Duty isn't as bad as it sounds. I had to walk my Post and only twice which means that I was out for a total of four hours. We are "on the alert" meaning we cannot undress even to go to bed. I've had my shoes on for 29 hours and they are getting quite heavy.



I realize that by now you have decided one way or the other about your job, so what I have to say will not influence your decision but... I am inclined to think that the position in the *smaller* place would be the

⁴⁰ Four pages written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

smarter move. It isn't a question of money but of experience. I feel that with 4 or 5 months there you would be able to get yourself a better paying job in another place. After all, if we are to be married you'll have to be able to support me in the life I've become accustomed to. Seriously though Butch, whichever way you decide is for the best. It is your life to lead and I feel sure you know what you want.



The weather here has been rather mild the past few days. In fact today the sun is actually shining. I still think that this country got the worst of the deal when they took this state from the Indians. There is more mud in this camp than in the whole of New England. There is still no place like home.

I am becoming quite proficient in the use of my gas mask. Although I don't intend to stay here very long, I am making an attempt to absorb everything they throw my way in the line of knowledge. I've picked up a lot since I started and I do have to say there is an awful lot more to come.

Last night was our engagement anniversary dear - which one... is a matter of dispute, but all the while I was walking my Post I thought of you and how much I loved you... It is surprising how much love one

person can have for another. I thought back to the night I gave you the ring and how happy and proud it made me feel to see you wear it. Dearest, you are everything I ever wanted in the girl I intend to marry. I'll try very very hard to give you everything you need to make you happy. I know you don't ask for much but everything you do want you shall have - I love you so very much.

The review classes they hold for us are almost a pleasure to go to. The instructors ask the dopes all the questions and the answers he gets keeps us in stitches. Some fellows cannot repeat a simple statement two minutes after it is told to them. There is one fellow in our barrack called Superman to which everything under the sun happens. Out of 500 fellows that went on a march the other day, he had to lose his raincoat.

I've just come back from the gas chamber, where we get a dose of tear gas. My eyes are still smarting but otherwise are OK. My gas mask fits me fine so that is the event I ever run into a gas attack I'll have no worries.

Just before dinner I received a letter from you dear. To me it was one of the nicest yet. That the New Year finds us together only echoes my prayers. As our CO said to us today, the sooner we get through our training and do our part in the big job the sooner it will be over with. From here on I'll be in there pitching with everything I've got.

This letter is turning out to be something like the first one I sent to you. Every few paragraphs I am interrupted by something else. Just now I had to attend Guard Mount. That is the time when the new Guard relieves the old. After that we were called out for - pay. Yes, today I received my first Army pay, all of \$23.

After pay we had *mess*, then we had a review class. After class my Corporal and a few of the fellows dragged me into town ostensibly to get a haircut. When we got into town the barbershops were closed. They then dragged me into a beer joint and filled me with beer. From there we went to a grille - for more beer. One of my buddies and I sneaked out and came back to camp - minus my haircut.



Claire Paletz, Annette Paletz and Sarah W. Levy
Lenny's Aunt, first cousin and Mom

Both you and Claire⁴¹ wrote to me about the letter Annette⁴² wrote to me. As yet I haven't received it but just as soon as I do I'll send it out to you.

Did you and Florence go to the USO⁴³ dance? I do hope you did - Because I want you to go out and enjoy yourself and because I know now what it means to have a girl to dance with - especially a pretty one such as you.

It is now 10:00, lights are out so I'm finishing this letter in the latrine. Rather a weird place to be writing a letter, don't you think? It's rather late so I'll not write to my folks tonight so when you get this, call

⁴¹ Claire Paletz is Lenny's maternal aunt.

⁴² Annette Paletz is Lenny's first cousin.

⁴³ USO refers to the United Service Organizations, a nonprofit that provides services to United States service members and families.

my mother and tell her I got the package and that I'll write tomorrow for sure.

Butch I was happy to hear the decision you made in regards to jobs. I think you'll find that in the long run it was a smart move.

It is almost 12:00, Dear. If I can manage to stay awake the next two hours I too will make a prayer - the same one as you. By the time you get this, it will be rather late but Happy New Year anyhow.

There isn't much more I can think of to say, so with my best regards to your family I'll start saying goodbye.

Darling this new year just starting will only serve to increase my love for you and also I hope bring me back to you

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

PS By the way MRTC Means medical replacement training center. That's all!The party they threw was really grand.

I love you
Lenny



New Year's Eve Decoration - Camp Pickett

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁴⁴
Saturday
[January 2, 1943]

Dearest -

Now that the P and I inspection is over for this. I hope to have a little more time to myself to write, etc. We did pretty well in the inspection in fact we were complimented by the examining officer on our project - shelter tent pitching. I was really lucky in getting a question I knew the answer to and I wheeled it right off.



The entire morning yesterday was spent out on a scouting and patrolling maneuver. We were divided up into patrols of 12, given a compass bearing, and told to go out and find the enemy. Naturally we had to keep undercover which meant going through the woods, crawling on our stomachs and at times running at full speed across open fields. At times, we came across supposedly gassed areas where we had to don our masks. For the first time we did well, although if it were a real enemy

⁴⁴ Three pages written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

we would all be dead ducks. We haven't yet learned to really coordinate our bodies for actual [combat.]



The weather here has been excellent the past few days so tonight I changed from the woolen to regular shorts and shirt. What a wonderful feeling! As you say, I'm getting used to Army food. Either that or it is getting good but anyhow I can now sit down and almost enjoy a meal. The first two weeks of the month we got fed better... as the Army buys for a month. It is towards the end of the month when the supplies start running low that the meals get lousier.

Well I finally got a haircut last night, not by a regular barber but by one of the fellows in the barracks, who was a hairdresser in civilian life. It isn't bad and as soon as the letter is done I'm going to try to have my picture taken.

I've made some good friends here but most of them are married and they make me jealous. By the way my Sergeant came back from his furlough and gave us permission to keep a picture on our shelf. Yours is right up there. All of the fellows want to know how I rate such a beautiful girl.

Butch dearest, I want to apologize for referring to my mother and father as such instead of as our Mom and Pop. It really was merely a force of habit, nothing else. It makes me feel good to have you refer to them as Mom and Pop and henceforth I'll do the same. Glad to hear that

you don't smoke as much as before. I'll bet you don't get as dizzy as you used to either.

All the fellows have received packages of candy and such from home so... in our few minutes of spare time, we sit around and *nosh*⁴⁵. I've probably eaten three pounds of candy the past week. Which reminds me, where is the fudge you were going to make and send to me?

Some of the fellows are talking near me and from what they are saying this is one of the largest camps in the country⁴⁶.



It covers 92 square miles and at the present time there are from 100,000 to 125,000 men camped here. or of course they are not all in the medical Core for the camp has quite a few different branches scattered around.

By the time you receive this letter Norman will have left so now Mom and Pop will need cheering up more than ever. Do what you

⁴⁵ **Nosh** is a word of Yiddish origin that means a snack or light meal. It can also be a verb.

⁴⁶ By the end of 1942, more than 1,400 buildings were completed and in use across the post, including approximately 1,000 enlisted barracks and 70 officer's quarters. Twelve chapels, the post hospital complex (later greatly expanded) and six firehouses were built, along with warehouses, headquarters and administrative buildings. To assure an adequate water supply for the post, the Army built and maintained its own water pumping, filtration and sewage treatment plants.

For recreation, there were four movie theaters, a field house with a gym, several enlisted clubs, a main post exchange and several "satellite" PXs. By the war's end, more than 300 additional buildings were constructed, including a female barracks and facilities for two prisoner-of-war camps.

can, please dear. I'll do my part by writing to them just as often as possible.

Yes, strange as it may seem, I do like to go on marches. Before... I did a lot of it, but through my car I became very lazy. The Army merely knocked the laziness out of me.

As yet, I've learned nothing more about the Air Corps, but I expect to be called before the Board the first part of next week.

Thursday after supper was payday. After all my deductions were taken care of I received the magnificent sum of \$28⁴⁷. That amount represents a fortune down here because there is no place to spend money unless you go into Tombstone⁴⁸ and nobody goes there unless it is absolutely necessary.

Tonight marks my third week here and as each day goes by I become more astonished, I never knew it possible for a person's love to grow and keep growing the way my love for you is. Someday dear when I hold you in my arms you'll know without my saying a word, just how much I really love you. Do you still kiss yourself each day for me? I do, for you. Goodnight my sweet. I'll write tomorrow

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁴⁷ Leonard (Lenny) Levy received a base pay of \$50.

⁴⁸ Lenny's nickname for the small rural town of Blackstone, Virginia.

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁴⁹
Monday
[January 4, 1943]

Dearest -

Before I even start this letter I want to explain why I didn't write yesterday. I got up about 8:30, late for breakfast as usual and sat around talking with the fellows. Somehow, Sundays in Camp bring out the melancholy side of a soldier. Nothing had happened from the time I wrote last, so the two... decided against writing. I knew that if I did write it would be very sad and uninteresting so I thought best to wait until today. Did I do right?

At long last 'I dood it.' Yup yesterday I had my picture taken. This picture taken in an Army camp is a rushed affair so if they don't come out so well blame the photographer. The minimum number of prints was four. What I'm going to do with the extra two will be for you and Mom to decide.

The Army caught up to me today and gave me my first extra job. I was placed on the Ration Detail. Of all the rackets in the Army this is one of the best. I reported at the warehouse at 6:45, got on a truck with another Private and a Corporal and went around to a few of the mess halls picking up bread boxes; it wasn't necessary for me to get out of the truck as the KP⁵⁰s brought them out to us. We then went to the Camp Bakery and picked up 250 loaves of bread, and that was the hardest part of the day's work.

We then went back to the mess halls, stopped by each one and yelled, "Bread!" The KPs came out and got their daily bread ration. That concluded the morning's work. I went back to my barracks, had dinner, read your letter I got today and reported back to work.

⁴⁹ Three pages written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

⁵⁰ KP duty means "kitchen police" or "kitchen patrol" work under the kitchen staff assigned to junior U.S. enlisted military personnel. "KP" can be either the work or the personnel assigned to perform such work. In the latter sense it can be used for either military or civilian personnel assigned or hired for duties in the military dining facility excluding cooking.



The same Corporal picked me again and this time we got into an ambulance. We rode around for about an hour until he found a Barber shop that was open and then went in to get a haircut. Meanwhile I fell asleep. Next we picked up some marmalade, canned milk and some peanut butter and went back to the warehouse. This was 3:00, from then until 4:45 I did nothing but sit around and eat tangerines. I was excused from all classes and also missed the physical obstacle course.

When into town Saturday night for the sole purpose of getting a souvenir or two. The only thing the town has to offer is a mess of cheap jewelry at outrageous prices, in fact anything a soldier wants to buy in town is priced sky high. I went into a restaurant and had my first steak dinner since I left home. It must have been cut off some old broken down horse, it was that tough. That plus a few soggy french fries and a cup of coffee cost a dollar and a half. Cigarettes in camp, are 13 cents a pack, in town they are 16 plus a penny for matches.

Butch dearest, this weekend a few of the fellows and myself are going to try for a pass to Richmond; if I go I will call home Sunday. Can you manage to be there during the day? Remember this is not a promise just a hope... I think it would be best for you to sleep over Saturday night, as I might... call in the morning to get back to camp in time Sunday evening. Don't plan too much on the call as we may not even get the pass.

I am beginning to understand why some fellows turn to drinking and gambling in the Army. If a fellow is weak-willed and stationed in an out of the way camp like this, the most natural thing for him to do is go into town for a few drinks or sit down to a game of cards. I thank God that I'm not that weak-willed. I've gone to town three or four times and only once or twice did I stop in for a beer or two. New Year's Eve was an exception, but there is a legitimate excuse there. Speaking of New Year's reminds me of resolutions and resolution makes me ask if it were necessary for one to remind you to tell me you love me in each letter. I'm only kidding, my Sweet... If you love me as I love you, writing I love you would be the easiest thing in the world to do. I love you.

Each letter I write is written in a new and most unusual place. Tonight, the lights were out, so I came downstairs to the *John* to write. There is a big card game going on there so Al (one of my buddies) and I moved into the shower room. He is writing to his wife; he makes me very jealous, always talking about his wife and 5 week old baby and telling me how wonderful married life is. We did the right or smart thing though, didn't we Butch? Sometimes... I begin to wonder - tell me in your next letter that we did do right.

It is almost 11:00 and time for *taps*, so I'll go up and stop thinking of you, instead I'll spend the next seven hours dreaming of you. Butch dearest, you are on my mind constantly, every minute of every hour. I love you, I love you, I love you

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁵¹
Tuesday
[January 5, 1943]

Dearest -

Last night lying in bed I thought of a *smaht* beginning for today's letter. Now that the time has come for me to write I just can't think of it. I received two letters from you today, one was a rather cold one, the other more like you.

By the time you get this you will most probably have seen Mom since Norman⁵² left. How is she holding up? Please write and tell me the truth for I know that she wasn't. Did she go to the station?

You asked just what sort of Technical training we are getting... We won't get any real training as technicians until we are well into our second month... Right now all we get is strictly elementary. We are being taught elementary first aid, the uses of a *litter* or stretcher, military discipline and courtesy, and of course how to march. All soldiers no matter what branch of the service... gets the same Basic Training. It is after the first month or so that the officers can better see what type of work the individual is best suited for... When we first arrived here we were classified as either a Hospital or a Field Technician. The difference being... that we... go to a Hospital for Advanced Training, while in the other they... become stretcher carriers in the battlefields.

If you notice, I write in the vein that I am to continue to stay in the Medical Corps. This is only because I have yet to hear anything final pertaining to the Air Corps. Any day now I should be called up to MRTC⁵³ Headquarters to appear before the Board.

Today we were out on another maneuver, this time we were divided up into squads of four, given a litter and sent into the woods to look for casualties. After locating a patient, observing... the rules of

⁵¹ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

⁵² N. Norman Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He recently enlisted and was sent to his Replacement Base for an extended period of time.

⁵³ Medical Readiness and Training Command is the full name of the Army Training Center for medics.

warfare, we had to carry them to the ambulance located in various parts of the woods. Believe me, a fellow weighing 150 pounds gets awfully heavy after 200 or 300 yards.



This evening instead of having our regular Battalion Retreat the entire 3rd regiment, 4000 soldiers, gathered on the Service Club drill field for a Regimental Retreat. After retreat each battalion passed in review before the brass hats. Our commander, Major Prager, told us afterwards that we took first place... As we are the youngest trainees in the regiment that is quite an achievement. After *mess* we had a class in Pack rolling and also one in making beds the GI (government issue) way. Everything in the Army is done systematically including the way our clothes are hung on the racks.

Last night I went into town with a couple of fellows and we went bowling. We got nothing but the relaxation out of it, for the alleys like everything else in town are lousy.

Butch dearest, ever since you wrote to me about my brother⁵⁴ wanting to open a joint account with Margie⁵⁵, I have been thinking along

⁵⁴ N. Norman (Norm) Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He recently enlisted in the Army and is posted at Camp Devens in Massachusetts.

⁵⁵ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorff is engaged to marry Norman Levy.

the same lines. I have more money with me than I really need. If you like the idea I can easily manage to send some to you each payday. Naturally it wouldn't be a fortune, but it would be something... Don't take up the idea, unless you really like it and think you can manage, on your new salary. By the way, how is your new job? Write and tell me all about it.

Syl, did you ever have the opportunity to do something and not take it and then later on wonder if you did the right thing? Here at Camp I miss you so much that I begin to wonder sometimes whether or not we did the *Smaht* thing in not getting married. The fellows with me who are just recently married tell me such stories that I actually become jealous. What is your opinion now that we have been apart for almost a month?

The fellows threatened to throw me out if I don't stop talking about you but I just can't help myself. All I think of or want to talk about is you. I love you so very much my sweet, more so than some of the fellows here loved themselves.

There isn't much more to say sweetheart, so until tomorrow
goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Don't forget Sunday morning
L.

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁵⁶
Wednesday
[January 6, 1943]

Dearest -

⁵⁶ Two pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

Just finished my laundry for the week, five handkerchiefs and two pairs of stockings. I can readily understand now why you once remarked that you would never wash out a handkerchief. If you are wondering why I had to do the washing, when I give my things to the laundry, I'll explain. The laundry takes from ten days to two weeks to be returned; in the meantime I run out of things, thus the weekly wash...

I spoke too soon about not doing enough marching. My left foot gave out on me today and I've been excused from work or rather classes all day. Instead of going to classes I had to help the Barrack Orderly keep the place clean. Tonight the company went out on a night march so along with a few other fellows on *light duty* I had to take down the Christmas decorations in the Day Room and Mess Hall.



Don't worry about my foot, as it is all right now. I had to keep it taped up at the infirmary and it feels fine.

The letter from Nate and Lil⁵⁷ arrived today and it was swell reading. Natie writes just as he talks - if you know what I mean. Next time you speak to him, tell him thanks and also that I'll answer real soon.

⁵⁷ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and recently enlisted in the Army.

This morning, before I was excused from class, we went out to the Bivouac area and had a drill in defense against air gas and mechanized attack. The class was held in a rather interesting way. We were marching along a roadway when the signal for a certain attack was given.



If it were gas, we had to scatter, putting on our masks as we ran. If it were an air attack we had to run into the woods and take cover, likewise for mechanized attack. Sometimes two were combined which added to the reality. It was after this class that I was excused.

Tomorrow is my day. I go on KP⁵⁸ duty for the first time it is just my luck that the camp decided today to have us eat out of regular dishes instead of from our mess kits. Just some extra work for me to do. Lately all I do is get a Detail or be excused from class; I'm beginning to miss more classes than I attend. This all means extra work and otherwise catching up. I don't mind though because as you know I don't intend to stay here much longer. Any day now I expect to hear from the Air Corps.

⁵⁸ KP duty means "kitchen police" or "kitchen patrol" work under the kitchen staff assigned to junior U.S. enlisted military personnel.

Butch dearest, after I wrote to you about the phone call Sunday I got a letter from home saying that Mom and Pop were going to New York for the weekend. I wrote to my mother and asked her to have you sleep over anyway and I'll call and speak to you. No doubt she has already called and spoken to you about it.

You have no idea how useful the [shoe] shine kit you sent me is. Next to the pen and pencil set it is the most used item I possess. Thanks again.

Sylvia, I know I'm repeating myself but I miss you so very much that it hurts. My love for you has grown so much that the day when we shall be together seems so very far away. Dearest, in your letters give me some sort of courage, being down here makes me need it.

There isn't much more to say tonight so I guess until tomorrow this is goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁵⁹
Thursday
[January 7, 1943]

Dearest -

⁵⁹ One double-sided page was written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

Received your first letter today while on KP⁶⁰ Duty and when I first opened it up I was disappointed in its shortness... until I started to read it. This evening when I finished KP, I found your second letter of the day; it was swell reading.

Last night's letter was written in such a hurry that I forgot to mention our anniversary. I'm sorry dear it wasn't that I don't think of it or you but I wanted the letter to go out last night and there wasn't too much time left.

I finally received the call to appear before the Board this afternoon while working in the kitchen. It was really a tough job. I was called down to the Company Office. The Sergeant told me I was to report tomorrow at MRTC⁶¹ headquarters to appear before the cadet board. He told me how to dress, who to ask for and also wished me luck. All my friends here are pulling for me although a few of them have told me they'll hate to see me leave... Tomorrow is another big day in my life, if possible I'll call you and let you know how I made out. You may even know before you receive this letter.

This week has been a poor one as far as my attending classes is concerned. Tuesday was the only full day for me and Saturday will be the next full one. I get the major points from the fellows, so I'm managing to keep abreast of the classes. The work is starting to get more technical and with it more interesting. They have started to weed out the dumb ones by sending them to a special school. Our *Superman* or *Private Buck*, which suits him to a T, is one of them.

A hasty decision is a poor one so I was glad to read that you hadn't made up your mind... whether or not you liked your new job. From the way you describe it I believe that you will.

Congratulations are in order. I got a real haircut today. No more of this hairless Joe business. Tomorrow I'm going to have my pictures taken - I hope they come out fairly decent because we have to take them

⁶⁰ KP duty means "kitchen police" or "kitchen patrol" work under the kitchen staff assigned to junior U.S. enlisted military personnel.

⁶¹ Medical Readiness and Training Command is the full name of the Army Training Center for medics.

as they came and also because I want you to have a picture of me in my GI uniform. Some of the fellows are expecting cameras, just as soon as they arrive and we take some pictures I'll send them to you for our scrapbook⁶². How is it coming by the way?

This letter is, and will be, a jumbled... affair as I'm rather on edge thinking about tomorrow.

Was pleased to hear that Mom didn't go to the station. By the way I like to have you keep me posted on little things like that as it brings me closer to home and you. Why did you change your manner of referring to my folks from Mom to your mother?

... You'll have to excuse me tonight. I can't think straight so I better say goodnight.

Before I do though I hope that by now your mother is feeling much better - remember me to her.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁶² Sylvia (Syl) Geetter is keeping a scrapbook of matchbooks, postcards, newspaper clippings and souvenirs from the different Posts Leonard (Lenny) Levy is stationed at. The scrapbook was last seen at their third house, 15 Stillman Rd. in Bloomfield, Connecticut



Camp Pickett, Virginia⁶³

Friday

[January 8, 1943]

Dearest -

Both our prayers were answered today. You can probably guess what I mean. As of two o'clock this afternoon I am an Aviation Cadet. Yes, Sweet I went before the Board and they accepted me; I'm the happiest soldier in this man's army. The Sergeant at Headquarters also told me that I could apply for time off, so tomorrow I'm going to see my company commander.



Tomorrow is inspection day which means that I've just finished mopping up the barracks, shining my shoes and cleaning my shoes. They really see that we are kept busy, that way we don't have much time to get homesick.

The work today was fairly easy but more technical than before. This morning we started a new subject, *Anatomy*. When I leave here for the Air Corps there will be no secrets about the human body as far as I'm concerned. We also learned how to pitch or *strike*, in Army talk, a large tent and also had another class in emergency first aid. This afternoon

⁶³ One double-sided page was written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

after I came back from the Board we went out to the Litter Obstacle Course to practice carrying *litters* (stretchers) over obstacles such as barbed wire, six-foot walls, piles of logs, water, ditches and under three foot culverts.



In the army everything is done in a uniform manner and woe unto the few who fail to learn right from wrong. This afternoon while I was away, my company was told that from here on, the course of study would definitely become more difficult and very shortly we would start going to a Hospital for our training.

Saturday in the Army seems to be reserved for inspections and tomorrow is no exception. Of course it isn't as important as last week's but it counts just the same. It is to be more of a cleanliness inspection rather than a test of our knowledge.

I took my picture today and as you'll soon see they are a scream. If it weren't for the fact that I told you about them I'd rip them up. They are nothing like the ones I took in Hartford - I'm quite proud of those.

Seeing as how I'll talk to you Sunday I'll save the rest of the news till then.

Goodnight my sweet -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Don't work so hard - Save some energy for my letters.

I love you 'Butch'

I'm out of gum - please forgive me - will send double order in next letter.

Love
Lenny

This is our war...

Join the WAAC

**WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS
UNITED STATES ARMY**

APPLY AT THE U. S. ARMY RECRUITING AND INDUCTION STATION



Lynchburg, Virginia⁶⁴
Sunday
[January 10, 1943]

Dearest -

Speaking to you over the phone just now gave me one of the greatest thrills of my life. It was something I've wanted to do ever since we arrived in Virginia (I'm still so excited my hand is shaking like a leaf.)



We, Sam⁶⁵ and myself, arrived here last night about 9:30 and went directly to the Armory.

They had a dance for Service men and for the first time I saw *cutting in* by girls.

There were three girls for every fellow.

The more I see of other girls the more I love you. I have yet to meet up with a girl who can compare with you in any way, shape or manner.

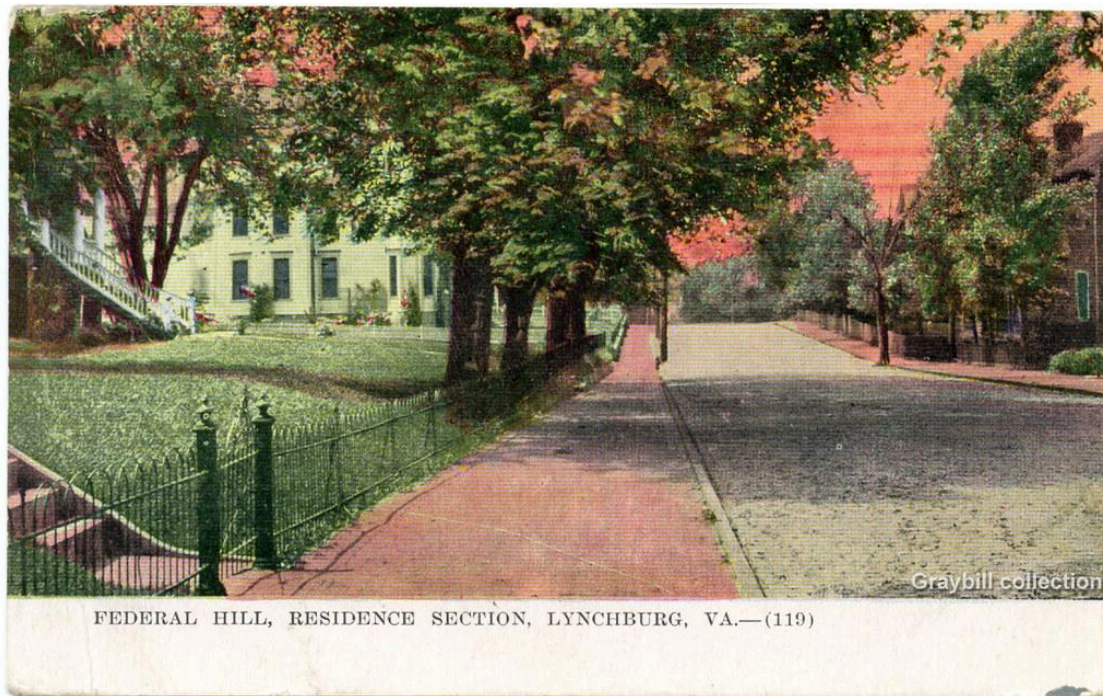
Sam knew a few people at the dance, so we had a swell time. After the dance we came to this hotel to check in but they had no rooms.



⁶⁴ All three pages were written on Virginia Hotel stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a matching envelope.

⁶⁵ Sam Ellison is a friend of Lenny's from Hartford, Connecticut. His girlfriend Eleanor, was a childhood friend of Sylvia (Syl) Geetter.

We walked out to the street and Sam saw a woman he knew, he asked her where we could get a place to sleep and she insisted on us sleeping at her place.



When we reached her home, a real southern mansion, there were 10 other soldiers and three British sailors there. She had room for the bunch in the most comfortable beds I've ever slept in since leaving home. We slept until 10:00 this morning, came here for breakfast and then I placed my call to you.

Lynchburg is a city of 48,000 with only 62 Jewish families. The town is built on seven hills and is really [hard] to get around in.

Although Sam is 14 years my senior, we enjoy each other's company. He has the ability to make friends very easily and therefore I am assured of a good time wherever and whenever I go with him. As you probably know my sole purpose in coming here was to be able to talk with you and honestly Butch it was worth all the money in the world.



When I read your last letter it took some of the happiness out of me. I read between the lines and could see how miserable you felt. When you told me over the phone that you had a new job... it made me completely happy again. I really hope that this time you have something good. If however this one doesn't turn out so well, keep your chin up dear as you say jobs are a dime a dozen and it is no disgrace to quit one job for a better one. Good luck to you in your new job and please... forget all about the WAACs, especially now that I'm assured of at least nine more months of training in this country. Do you realize what that means? A lot of things can happen in that time - the war may end and with it... come something we are both dreaming of.

Tomorrow, as I told you, I'm applying for a furlough. If it is given to me it will in all probability be for 10 days or less. As a rule trainees of less than two months are not granted furloughs but in my case it is different. The training will not do me any good where I'm going and I think my commanding officer will take that into consideration especially when I tell him that once I get to a Field, it will be almost a year before I'll be able to go home.

Life at Pickett is still very interesting and I think that when the time comes for me to leave it will be hard. The training is becoming extremely technical and if I were to stay, I'd almost be a doctor at the end of the course. We have started the subject of *Anatomy* and one needs a strong stomach to see some of the pictures they show to us.

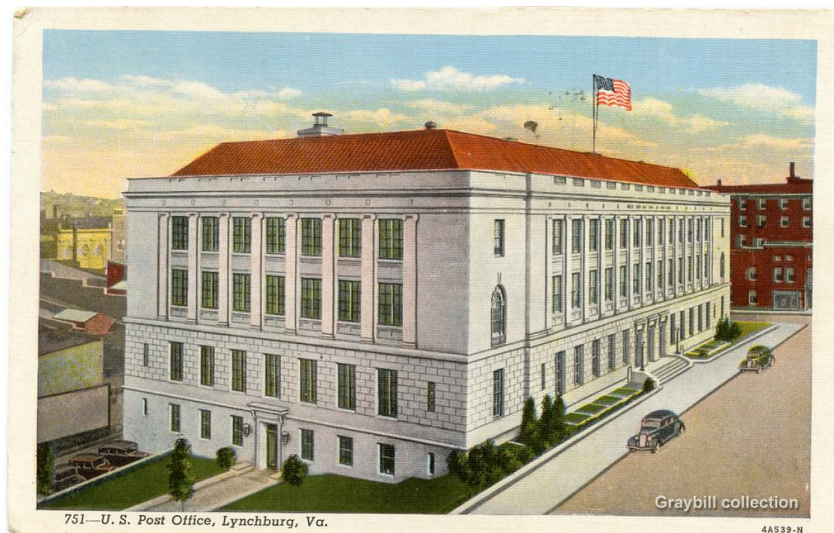
We did fairly well on our inspection yesterday, therefore we were given our weekend passes. Had we done poorly we would have been confined.

I think now we will take a walk around the town and see what it looks like. If I get back to camp early enough I'll write another letter describing the city. After that I'll go looking for my brother. Goodbye my darling and keep your chin up

I love you
XXXXXXXXXXXX
Lenny

I've discovered why I can't tell you in a letter just how much I love you. There aren't any words to say it so I'll have to rely on old faithful -

I love you
X (another one)
Lenny



Camp Pickett, Virginia⁶⁶
Monday
[January 11, 1943]

Dearest -

... Somehow or other by reading between the lines of your last few letters I could tell that you were unhappy. I presumed it was your new job but did not want to say anything for fear that I was wrong. From today's letter I see I was right, but now I think you really have 'the' job for yourself. From the way you describe it you must like it a lot. Who wouldn't like a job where they are practically their own boss?...

A couple of my buddies and I walked all over the camp today looking for our brothers and the bunch of rookies from Devon's but were unable to find them. Someday this week I'll probably get a letter postmarked from this camp and then I'll definitely know where to look. Somehow I just know he will be here.

Butch dearest I'm afraid you misunderstood me when I wrote about being sorry that we didn't get married before I left. Although it may have sounded as if my reason for saying it was because of what the other fellows tell me, but that isn't what I meant. The reason for... writing what I did is, I am now fully realizing how deeply I love you and I know now... that you are the one and only girl for me. Without you in my life it just wouldn't be worth going on. It was for you just as much as for myself that I wanted to get into the Air Corps. I wanted you to be proud of me and to be able to tell your friends that I am something more than a medical soldier. Well dear now you can tell them just that. The official orders came through this morning that I have been transferred to the Air Corps and am no longer attached to the Medical Corps. My Lieutenant made the announcement in class today and all the fellows congratulated me. He himself looked very pleased when he said it which made me feel swell.

Here comes the only sad part of the letter... First, by the time the Air Corps is ready for me, the Airfield here will be completed, the largest

⁶⁶ All four pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

in the country and I will most likely be stationed here. The second... is that I cannot have a furlough for the next seven weeks or until I finish my basic training here. If by that time I am not *called* I can then apply for and probably get a furlough... Meanwhile I have to stay here and attend all classes.

Sylvia dear, don't even think that what I write is just plain words. I've always prided myself on the fact that I always told the truth. When I write and tell you how I talk about you to the fellows, it's the truth. I miss you so terribly and my greatest consolation is talking about you, looking at your picture, and showing you off to the other fellows who envy me a bit. Coming home on the bus yesterday, Sam⁶⁷ and I had a long talk about our girlfriends and when we got through he looked at me and said, "Lenny, I can tell by the way you talk that you love your girl very much. By all means, marry her the first chance you get or you'll regret it." You see, Sweet from the way I talk, the fellows can tell that I'm deeply in love with you.

Syl, I want to say something now that I've put off for the past few letters only because I wanted to be sure I said it in the proper way. When I read your letter in which you told me that someone had called you and asked for a date for New Year's Eve and that instead he was taking the train back. Well something just welled up in my throat from sheer happiness. You see, Dear, I remember how much you once cared for him, and how you had nothing special to do that night. It would have been a very simple matter for you to have gone out. I can't express just how good it made me feel to read what you wrote. This probably isn't a very good explanation of what I'm trying to say, so please try to understand me. What I'm trying to say is that it made me love you just so much more. I knew when I left that you wouldn't go out on a date but to read about it makes me feel wonderful.

Dearest, I expect to call my house again this Sunday at the same time so if you can arrange to be there it would be swell. I'm still not over the thrill of talking to you. I do hope we do it more often and I'll try my

⁶⁷ Sam Ellison is a friend of Lenny's from Hartford, Connecticut. His girlfriend Eleanor Katz was a childhood friend of Sylvia (Syl) Geetter.

best to call every chance I get... By the way I never did get the letter you wrote from Daily's - they probably never sent it out.

Thanks from the boys and myself for the box of delicious nuts. They are good. I take it from your card you are still on your diet. How do you feel? Do you still go to the doctor ? ... Also do you have any trouble with your leg?

Tell me everything - keep your letters as long as the one I got today. It took me quite a while to read it as I was interrupted by classes twice but it was a pleasure to read.

Today we spent an hour and a half in the Theater seeing a picture on the importance of keeping information to ourselves. If I should ever write anything sensitive, such as... the size of the camp here, or the airport, please keep it to yourself. This may sound foolish but you'd be surprised what things like that mean to the enemy.

Tomorrow my Battalion is running a dance. It should be fairly good and not too crowded, as one platoon has been confined, and this evening we had another shot, not in the arm, but in the back. Some of the fellows get violently ill from it so they will not be at the dance. I feel no after effects so I imagine I'll be fit to *cut a rug* or two.

The fellows raise hell nights with the beds. We give each other *short sheets*, a method of making the sheets run only half the length of the bed, so that a fellow can't get fully into his bed. Another trick is to unlock the legs of the bed so that the weight of a person will make it collapse onto the floor. We've already gotten hell for it from the Corporals but that doesn't *faze* us. It has started all over again tonight.

The matchbook cover and bar of soap are things I thought you might want to put into our scrapbook⁶⁸. Guess I've said just about all there is to say for it tonight so from a husband to be to his wife to be good night sweetheart

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁶⁸ Sylvia Geetter kept a scrapbook of souvenirs from Lenny's posts.

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁶⁹
Tuesday
[January 12, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

Just finished reading... your letter for the fifth time and the things I wanted to say on Sunday, and yesterday in my letters, were just like you said. There was so much I wanted to... ask you but the thrill of hearing your voice made me forget everything.

Our second P and I exam comes up this Saturday and we have already started our review classes. This means that from now until Saturday we have just so much less time to ourselves. Most of the subjects I know *cold* so the classes are boring... When the classes in *Anatomy, Physiology, Materia Medica* roll around I'll have to be *on the ball* as I missed most of the lectures while I was busy with the Air Corps tests. Today was a rather easy one. All but one class took place inside. The outside class was an inter-company drill contest.



My barracks placed third but our lieutenant told us we deserved second. He told us he... surprised as he didn't think we were that good at marching. Tomorrow we have a full-pack March scheduled for the entire afternoon. By full-pack I mean carrying a pack weighing close to 40

⁶⁹ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

pounds plus our gas mask, plus our web belt, plus our full water bottle, plus our first aid pack. We will in all probability walk close to 15 miles so everybody here is *hitting the hay* rather early. They postponed our dance because of a lack of transportation for the girls; most of us are happy because that means more rest, and in my case it means I am able to write to you tonight.

In the letter I received from you today, you answered all the questions in my last letter. Can it be telepathy? I'm happy to hear about the disappearance of the rash and also that you do not have to go to the doctor anymore. Does that mean you can eat nuts and cheese again or are you still on the diet?

Eating *chow* is a pleasure now that we don't have to work or eat out of our mess kits. We could never really get the grease out of them and everything had the same taste. Now we have real plates, cups and silverware. The food is a little better lately but once in a while they slip in a lousy meal. This evening was a good example - baked macaroni and cheese, boiled rice and carrots and colored water to drink. On the whole they are pretty good.

We just got notice that the dance has been canceled. It seems as though the ODT has ruled that the Transportation of the girls comes under the heading of Pleasure and not Morale so there will be no more dances at Army camps unless the girls walk here. It's a tough break but this is war... so we can't have everything.

The radio is playing: "I'm getting tired so I can go to bed and dream of you."⁷⁰ That is just what is happening to me so I'll say goodnight in dream of you.

Regards to your mother and Sadie⁷¹ - ask her if she won't drop me a line.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁷⁰ The song *I'll See You in My Dreams*, was written by Gus Kahn and Isham Jones in 1924, which had a notable recording in 1943 by Bing Crosby.

⁷¹ Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and was unmarried at the time.

I'll see you in my dreams

Music by Isham Jones - **Lyrics** by Gus Kahn

I'll see you in my dreams
And I'll hold you in my dreams
Someone took you right out of my arms
Still I feel the thrill of your charms

Lips that once were mine
Tender eyes that shine
They will light my way tonight
I'll see you in my dreams

Oh, someone took you right out of my arms
Still I feel the thrill of your charms

Lips that once were mine
Tender eyes that shine
They will light my way tonight
I'll see you in my dreams

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁷²
Wednesday
[January 13, 1943]

Dearest -

It was just after returning from the hike that I received your letter and it acted as a sort of pick me up. On top of all the things I told you I had to carry on the march, I was made a Company Aid man which meant that I had to carry two medical pouches filled with Medicines and bandages. My job was to walk at the rear of the column and take care of any fellows who dropped out of line because of sore feet or exhaustion. Evidently the Army is making men out of us, as there were very few casualties today and they are among the older men.



We certainly are a bunch of tired soldiers when we got back to camp we covered 12 miles in three and a half hours which meant we stepped right along. Of course we have a break or rest. every hour but it seemed as if we had no sooner sat down, when the order came to resume marching. We were lucky in having a perfect day for marching. Not too

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hot, nor too cold. There hasn't been any rain the past week so the woods were dry with a very noticeable lack of mud.

Because of the march we did not have a class this evening but instead we are going to have double sessions both tomorrow and Friday evenings. So my sweet, if you do not hear from me the next two days you will know the reason.

As yet, I have not heard from Norman⁷³ so your news about him was very much appreciated. Was very glad to hear that he landed in the QM⁷⁴ Corps because from what I hear it is a good branch to be in. Although he's not in Florida I imagine Tennessee is much warmer than Virginia. The camp must be near a large city for him to have been able to call Mom so soon.

Dearest tonight marks my 5th week in the Army and most important of all the 10th, or is it the 11th, anniversary⁷⁵ of our engagement. The passing of the 5 weeks means only one thing to me - that I am 5 weeks nearer to being with you again. Honestly Syl, if this mess were to end tomorrow - I'd be happy not because of the end, but because it would mean we could go on - not the way we left off, but as husband and wife. I love you very very much, my Sweet

This evening after *Chow* I cleaned and polished my shoes and then went downstairs and took a bath. While brushing my teeth I dropped my plate and broke a tooth off of it. Now I'm walking around like Toothless Joe. Tomorrow, I'll go on sick call and make an appointment with the dentist to have it fixed. That is one thing the Army makes sure of - perfect teeth. Quite a number of the fellows have been called out by the dentist to have their teeth taken care of... The Army only pulls, very rarely do they fill a tooth. They would much rather pull the teeth and supply a plate.

⁷³ N. Norman (Norm) Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He recently enlisted in the Army and is posted at the Nashville Selection Center. This is the first news of his landing in the Quarter Master Corps.

⁷⁴ The Quartermaster Corps played a crucial role in World War II by managing the supply and distribution of essential goods, such as food, clothing, equipment and fuel, to troops in various theaters of war. Their effective logistics ensured that soldiers received the necessary supplies to maintain morale and combat readiness throughout the conflict.

⁷⁵ Sylvia Geetter and Leonard Levy celebrate the day of the week they were engaged in Hartford, Conn.

You *would* tell me about the darkness of the streets and how I could kiss you without anyone seeing when I am in a position where I can't take advantage of the fact. When I do come home however, be it day or night, on the street or off - even if it's in front of the Major - we'll kiss my sweet and be proud and happy for it.

I received my slippers today from home and they were just in time. I put them on after the march and nothing ever felt better. They come in real handy around the barracks at night especially when I want to take a... shower. If this life has done nothing else for me it has taught me how to get up in the morning without anyone waking me. I awake just as the bugle sounds Reveille, which is 6:15. Not bad for a fellow who is used to sleeping until one or two in the afternoon isn't it? If we are not up dressed and outside by 6:25 it means extra duty for a week and I'm not taking any chances.

I really try to write a long letter each night but so little happens during the day that it is impossible unless I repeat myself.

Goodnight sweet - give my regards to the family

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

No gum tonight it is in my locker- the lights are out and I can't get at it now. Double ration in my next letter. By the way - all my letters the past week were written in my Lieutenant's room. Notice any difference?

Love
Lenny

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁷⁶
Thursday
[January 14, 1943]

Dearest -

Just came back from review class and there is some time left before *taps* so here is my daily letter. When I think back about how we argued as to how many times a week I was to write I smile because, if and when a day goes by that I don't write, my day seems incomplete. Speaking of letters ever since that one grand long one all the rest have been very short. There must be a reason for it, aren't you feeling well or is there something on your mind, Butch? Remember I'm not there to drag it out of you so please tell me the truth - -and all of it.

This morning I went to the Dispensary on sick call to have my tooth taken care of. They sent me to one of the dental clinics where I registered for work to be done. One of the Lieutenants looked at my teeth and gave me an order to go to the laboratory about 5 miles away.



⁷⁶ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

I started to walk when a truck came by and gave me a lift right to the door. The laboratory didn't have anything for me so they sent me to another clinic. When I got there I waited for about half an hour and then sat in one of the dental chairs. I say one because in each clinic there are at least fourteen chairs and they are kept busy all day. It so happened that the fellow who worked on me was a Jewish boy from New York who took an interest in my teeth and did a remarkable job. That is a remarkable job for the army. He matched the tooth up perfectly and fitted it in just right. The work took up practically all morning but it was time well spent.



Enlisted Dental Technicians' Class⁷⁷

Time has been taken out for an argument about religion and evolution... There are quite a few intelligent fellows here and it is quite interesting and educational to listen and at times join in the discussion.

⁷⁷ Duties of the EM of the Medical Department were varied and technical, ranging from those of ambulance drivers to those of skilled assistants in laboratory, X-ray, dental, and surgical work. Source: <https://www.med-dept.com/articles/ww2-u-s-medical-replacement-training-centers-mrtc/>

As all such arguments do, the topic has now changed over to birth control and this is where I step out.

By now most of your questions have probably been answered. The training for an Aviation Cadet is anywhere from 8 to 11 months now... which may be reduced, as all training periods in the Army are. The course here was at one time 15 weeks in length, then it was cut to 11, and then 8. They found... that the majority of fellows could not absorb the stuff in such a short time, so they brought it back to 11. The last two weeks are mostly review, so they still have to cram it into us in 8 or 9 weeks. I still haven't heard from Norman⁷⁸ yet but do expect a letter any day.

In today's mail was a letter from Boomey⁷⁹ congratulating me. He called home Monday and his folks told him about your phone call. I mean I had mentioned it before but I certainly did appreciate your calling up everybody and telling them the good news. I also received a letter from my Aunt Pauline and in it she asked me why you don't go down to New York some weekend. If you can find your way clear, I'm sure they'd enjoy having you.

Although you don't say much about it I imagine that you like your new job. Do you?

If you think meatless days are bad how would you like to partake in an Axis-day? During Axis Day we have a slice of bread and a cup of water for breakfast, a bowl of rice, a slice of bread and a cup of water for dinner and another good supper. During the day we talked to no one except on official business. We haven't had it yet but we hear plenty about it.

Tomorrow is my day as table waiter⁸⁰ again. Quite a few fellows are attending Clerks school so the details are coming fast and furious.

⁷⁸ N. Norman (Norm) Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He recently enlisted in the Army and is posted at the Nashville Selection Center awaiting his classification.

⁷⁹ Boomey was a friend of Lenny's from Hartford, Conn.

⁸⁰ KP Duty

It is about 11:00 o'clock and time for bed check so I'll have to say
goodnight - there is plenty I could say but it will have to wait until
tomorrow. Regards to all - my love to you

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Camp Pickett, Virginia⁸¹
Friday
[January 15, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

The news in your letter that I received today just about floored me, to say the very least. I've always looked at Norman⁸² as just a kid so naturally it's hard for me to conceive that he even contemplates marriage. Although it hasn't done the same for me... I think that a few weeks in the Army will change his mind. The Army is an unsettled life unless a fellow knows he is going to be training or stationed at a Post for a considerable length of time. As to the article Margie⁸³ read in the... magazine, tell her to read it. I think she'll find that it refers mainly to officers' wives. I've yet to... see an enlisted man's wife in this camp. There are absolutely no provisions for wives other than a few of the officers... and this is quite a large camp. I would like very much to say a few things to my brother but I don't dare until you give me the okay...

I put in a tough day today. Awakened at 6:00 by the CQ (Charge of Quarters) [and assigned KP⁸⁴.] I went over to the kitchen, had breakfast and then served the wolves. [Being] table waiter is no excuse for missing classes, so I went to all of them. At 11:30 this morning, we had a surprise Evacuation drill. For this we had to leave our class, run into the barracks, put on our gas masks, web belt and canteen and fall out in Formation. When the entire company was formed, we had to run to the Bivouac area and disperse, laying flat on our faces for half an hour. After that I went back to the mess hall, served dinner and then more classes. [In the] evening we had another regimental Retreat and

⁸¹ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

⁸² N. Norman (Norm) Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He enlisted in the Army and has been at his Replacement Base for an extended period of time.

⁸³ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf is engaged to marry Norman Levy.

⁸⁴ KP duty means "kitchen police" or "kitchen patrol" work under the kitchen staff assigned to junior U.S. enlisted military personnel. "KP" can be either the work or the personnel assigned to perform such work. In the latter sense it can be used for either military or civilian personnel assigned or hired for duties in the military dining facility excluding cooking

again the 7th (my battalion) walked away with the honors. This is really surprising as we are the youngest trainees in the regiment. Our CO was doubly pleased because, as he put it, it was a swell going away present. He is being transferred to MRTC⁸⁵ headquarters.



After the parade, back to the kitchen for some real work. Each and every Friday, the entire mess hall has to be scrubbed down and all the tables turned over and washed. After that, back to the barracks, make my bed, shine three pairs of shoes and arrange my clothing for PI (inspection) tomorrow.

I feel guilty about not writing to any of the family, please explain to them that there is so little free time that I just about get to write to you and the folks. Possibly this Sunday I'll sit down and catch up with my correspondence.

I was very pleased to read that you are beginning to like your new position, because of the way you describe it. Pretty soft going home at

⁸⁵ Medical Replacement Training Center: Camp Pickett's MRTC was activated 19 June 1942 and closed 31 October 1943. The overall training activities lasted from 20 June 1942 to 30 September 1943. (total number of units > 14 Medical Training Battalions). Acreage 45,867 – troop capacity 2,363 Officers & 41,552 Enlisted Men.

4:30 and being able to have a smoke with Lil⁸⁶ whenever you feel like it. I suppose now I'll have to send you cigarettes as well as gum.

Because of the fact that it is in Tennessee, Norman is laughing at me. To put it in his words he said he would go farther South than me and there he is sure enough. As yet, he hasn't started his training but from the way he described the setup I think he did very well for himself. Did you receive any mail from him? He mentioned the fact that he was writing to you at the same time he was writing to me.

You shouldn't write to me about steak dinners at the house; it makes me homesick and also brings to mind our engagement night. I do wish I were in a position to show my remembrance in a more concrete manner such as the corsage Natie sent Lil, but florists are unheard of in Blackstone and there is truly nothing... worthwhile to send home. All the fellows here have the same complaint.

One of the fellows got his camera today, so all of us are going to take snapshots this Sunday, as soon as they are developed you shall have them, my sweet.

I'm running out of words so the best thing for me to do is say goodnight -

I love you my darling - very very very much

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁸⁶ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian (Lil) R. Geetter and has enlisted in the Army.

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁸⁷
Sunday
[January 17, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

I'm sorry that you had to ask me to tell you that I love you this morning. It is just that I was so excited and happy talking to you, that it just slipped my mind. Please forgive me, it won't happen again, I promise. In order to get into town early enough I got up in time for breakfast today - my first Sunday breakfast at this camp.

Just after I mailed this letter with the soap and match book cover in it, I had my regrets. I know that if it were opened the contents would be removed and there was nothing I could do about it as I couldn't get the letter back. Sorry for not using my head but next time I'll do better.

About your thoughts of coming down here, they are very good except for two reasons; first of all the few, if any, accommodations around here. True enough, the camp has a few guest houses but they are reserved for persons visiting men at the station hospital.



⁸⁷ Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

Tombstone⁸⁸ has a lonely hotel but they make no reservations - first come first served. Secondly we would be unable to see each other except for a few hours a night. It would be close to 7:30 before I could get into town and I have to be in bed and asleep supposedly by 11:00 o'clock each night. Then... there are night hikes scheduled throughout the training, and it would be just my luck to have you come down during one of those weeks... As you say, we would have to go through the agony of being apart again, so all in all dear whether I want to or not I agree with you.

About the book Mom found, I've never seen one but if it is anything like the lectures we get on Personal and Sex Hygiene in Anatomy, I can believe that she would blush. And knowing you as I do, I think you would more than blush. The lectures are given in plain street language using all the filthy slang words in the book, in order to get the subject over to us...

After talking to you and Mom I went out, had a steak dinner and came back to the camp. The fellows in the 6th Battalion were out playing softball - it is a real summer day here, about 80° this afternoon and they challenged us to a game. Ten of us from this barracks played them. We beat them in the last inning 10-8 with me pitching superb ball. Our *non Coms* - Noncommissioned officers, such as Corporals and Sergeants - have challenged us to a game to be played tomorrow after *mess*. I think we can beat them as we have quite a few good players.

I do hope you have decided to take the Nurses Aid course so that I can use some of the medical terms I have learned in my training. We are getting a very comprehensive knowledge of both emergency first aid and also hospital surgery and nursing. If you do take the course, ask me any and all questions that come to your mind - I'll try to answer them.

Talking to you each week brings you so much closer to me that I almost don't mind being away. You had better... start saving for that \$20, because when I get home you are going to lose it for sure. The fellows all envy me for my being able to call home and not only talk to my family but to you also. I'll try my best to call again next week so do your best to be there.

⁸⁸ Lenny's nickname for the town of Blackstone, Virginia

I'm not writing home tonight so remind Mom to send out the things I asked for, if she has not done so already.

No more to say my sweet so with more love than yesterday but less than tomorrow I'll say good night -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx-xxx
Lenny

The extra three x's are because of the greater love I have for you today than ever before.

Lenny

PS The other day in a lecture on the male reproductive system, Capt. Loomis told us of a case in Philadelphia of a virgin giving birth to a child. Don't ask me how, for it would be impossible for me to explain in a letter.

Lenny



Camp Pickett, Virginia⁸⁹
Tuesday
[January 19, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Just finished reading your last three letters for the fifth time. During the day we have time only to read a line or two between classes and it isn't until after Retreat that we can really get down and enjoy a letter from home.

I didn't write to you last night because as I explained to Mom in my very short letter to her, I didn't have the time. Because of the very poor showing our company made on the P and T inspection we have to hold a review class every night lasting at least an hour. The company average was 87.7 which though not bad is not good. Unless we bring it up to at least 90 the classes will continue the entire training period. Because I know Emergency Medical Treatment fairly well I was made an instructor in it. A few of the fellows gathered around me and I tried to get the subject through to them... After five weeks of teaching they still don't know one type of bleeding from another. Last night the period ran from 7:00 until almost 8:30 and then because of the rain... our shoes had to be scrubbed and shined. This took a good hour and I was ready for bed. This evening we were through by 7:00, so I have plenty of time to write.

Dearest, I think you are developing some of the powers of mental telepathy that I always claimed to myself. Lately I've been looking around for a pair of shower slippers but they are much too expensive here. This evening in my letter I was going to ask if you could get me a cheap pair through Natie. In the letter I received today you mentioned the fact that you are sending me out a pair. Thanks a million, Sweet.

From the way you talk and write, you like your present job very much. I am very happy that you do because if I thought you didn't like what you were doing it would make me feel bad. Knowing you as I do I know that a job you disliked would cause you to worry and consequently lose weight, etc.

⁸⁹ All three pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

You tell me that lately you eat quite a lot. Dear, you have nothing on me. Three other fellows and myself have acquired the title of Chow Hounds. We are the first ones into the mess hall and the last ones out. Immediately after eating we come back to the Barracks and look for something to eat. God help the fellow who gets packages of food from home, as we eat it up before he has a chance to look at it. Everyone tells me I'm putting on weight but as you say I'm not getting fat...

Yesterday we had a dress rehearsal at the Landing Net. That is a tower 40 feet high with rope ladders on two sides. It is supposed to simulate the side of a boat. We are required to climb up one side and down the other carrying our full packs. Before doing this just to make it harder we went over the obstacle course.



You have no doubt seen and heard plenty about them. They contain just about every obstacle imaginable from swinging ropes over a wide brook to crawling through a pipe no more than three feet in diameter. The record for the course is two minutes but it must have taken me four and even then I was dead tired.

In one of your previous letters you mentioned that you and Mom were going to New Britain this past Saturday but in Sunday's letter you make no mention of it. Didn't you go or did it just slip your mind when

you were writing? I do hope that they are all well there. If you'll send me their address I'll make time to write to them.

The training here is becoming so interesting that I'll almost be sorry when the time comes for me to leave. As I mentioned before the work is more technical in nature and most of it takes place in the classroom. This morning we started a new subject. It deals with Hospitals, the care of the ward itself and also how to care for the patient. The classes are held in the Ward building where we work with actual equipment but dummy patients. Today we were taught how to catheterize a person. Your brother is what it is, he can probably explain it much better than I. Our anatomy and Physiology classes are up to the study of the Special Senses and now I know how we smell, hear, etc.

Yesterday we learned how to get on and off a truck in a group so that in case we have to move out of here in a hurry we can do it with the minimum of confusion and time.

Dear, I'm going to say goodnight now - not because I want to but because the gang is moving in to force a card game and they insist I play so that they can win back the money I won from them. So dearest with all my love I'll close until tomorrow

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Camp Pickett, Virginia⁹⁰
Thursday
[January 21, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

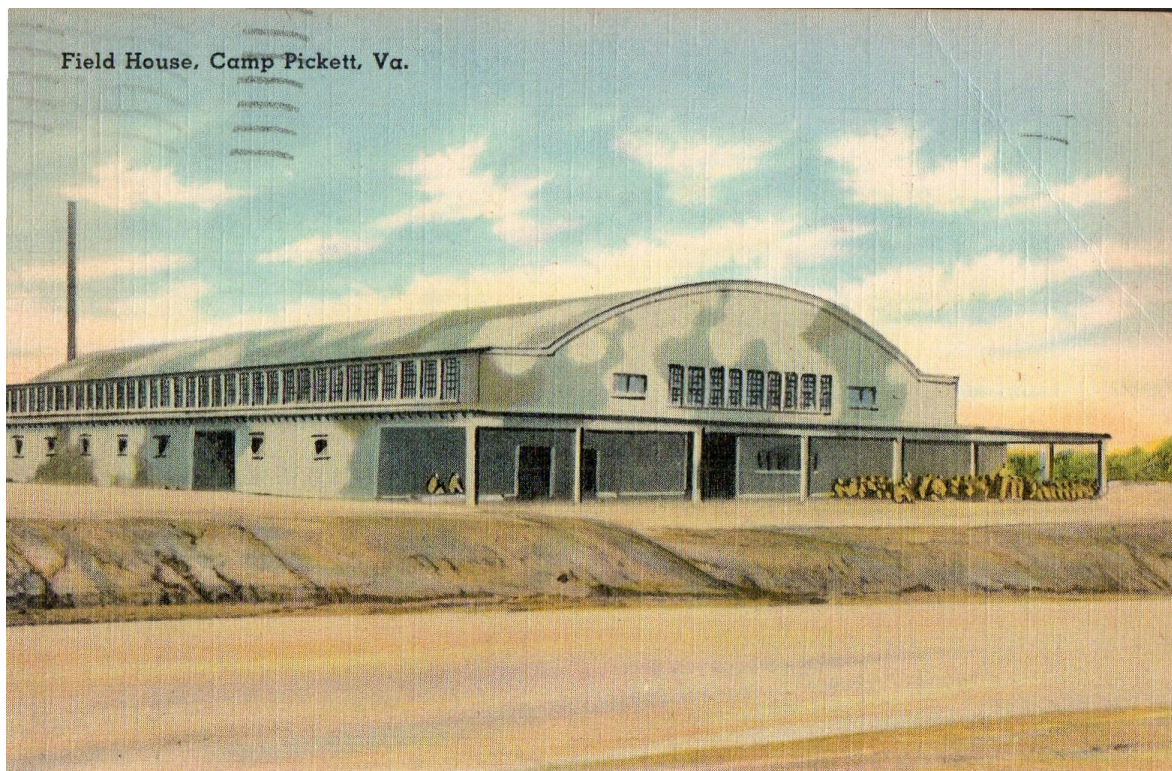
No doubt you are wondering why you didn't receive an email from me yesterday so before I go any further I'll give my reason; it's a legitimate one. Yesterday at noon an order came from the company office requesting all basketball players to report there after dinner. A couple of the fellows and myself went there and were told to report to regimental HQ. There we were interviewed by a Lieutenant and told to report to the recreation building at 6:00 o'clock that evening.



6:00 o'clock came round and we found out that tryouts for the Battalion team were to be held from 6:00 to 8:00 and then the men selected were to play a game in the Field House at 8:30.

When the practice was over the coach picked ten men and I was one of them, much to my surprise as there were some good players there. They loaded us into a truck and off we went to the Field House.

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It is an immense building with three basketball courts under one roof. We changed into our suits and very shortly... the game started. Suffice to say we lost by a big margin. We didn't get back to the barracks until almost 11:00, so you can see that I had no time whatsoever to write.

We were very happy to hear that you bought a new coat. From the description it is just what you wanted and what I like *Gute Gesundt*⁹¹.

Something very funny happened to me this morning. About 9:00, the CQ⁹² came into the class looking for me. When I got to the company office the First Sergeant came out and asked if I were the one that was

⁹¹ Good Health!

⁹² CQ or charge of quarters is a tasked duty in which a United States armed forces service member is to guard the front entrance to the barracks. In which the two service members, one a non-commissioned officer and the other a junior enlisted service member, sit at a desk to monitor incoming and outgoing traffic into the barracks. There are usually additional duties, such as sweeping the entryway, cleaning the entrance restrooms, and checking the barracks laundry room for laundry left overnight.

transferred to the Air Corps. I said yes, thinking (and hoping) that my shipping orders had come. He then told me that there was no need for me to attend classes and asked if I could paint. When I told them I could he showed me a pile of poles and told me to start in. It seems that they are going to be used instead of our tentpoles when we put up our tents at night. Later my Lieutenant came in and explained to me that this was not a form of punishment but just as the Sergeant told me... a means of giving me a rest from classes.

I'm finally sleeping in an upper. The other day they installed six double decker beds on my floor and I was put in one of them. It has advantages and disadvantages. For example, I don't have to sweep or mop the floor but at the same time I have to keep my locker under the lower bed.

So you found yourself a new boyfriend? I'll bet he couldn't win the \$20 I'm going to in the near future. At the same time he'll be good to keep in practice with.

I received your candy yesterday and as you say it is delicious; all of the fellows agree with me. We had quite a time when the mailman handed it to me. As he did so he shook it and it sounded like a bottle. All the fellows crowded around me expecting to see a bottle of liquor they were disappointed.

As yet I haven't heard from Norm⁹³ again so I don't know whether he'll mention his intentions or not. I will not... break my promise to you, honest. Mom tells me he hasn't gotten any of our mail yet. Tell her not to worry, as that is a common occurrence when a fellow first arrives in a new camp.

We've started a new system of cleaning up our barracks. The platoon is divided into five squads, two on the first floor and likewise on the second. Each squad takes care of one side and the one that has the neatest and cleanest side does not have to clean up on Friday for the Saturday inspection. So far, my squad is leading for the week. We have only 12 demerits in our nearest competition has 23. So it looks good.

⁹³ N. Norman Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He recently enlisted in the Army and has been at his Classification Center for an extended period of time.

Sam⁹⁴ asked me to go to Richmond this weekend with him but I think I'll do the same as I did last week.

Because the writing room was left dirty we are not allowed to use it anymore. This is being written in the middle of the floor and there is quite a commotion going on. All the fellows are getting haircuts, cleaning, playing the radio, and making plenty of noise. It's hard to concentrate, so if there are any mistakes, please excuse them.

The weather here goes from one extreme to the other. The past few days have been bitter cold after a very warm weekend. Quite a few of the fellows are coming down with colds again so far I've remained immune.

All the older fellows are being released under the new ruling and are they happy. It really is a shame for them to be here in the first place So it is good to see them going home.

Tomorrow, we have a 13 mile hike scheduled, full pack with 8 of them to be covered in two hours. I'll need plenty of sleep so I'm going right to bed just as soon as I finish.

I still haven't found the words to fully explain how much I care for you dear so in the same old way with a lot more meaning -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

I'm glad that you're proud of the fact that I was in the Air Corps. That is the way I want it Butch - for you to be always proud of me. I'll always do my best to keep it so

L.

I forgot to mention the pictures your new boyfriend found. By all means put them in the scrapbook if you want to. The reason I never said

⁹⁴ Sam Ellison, a friend of Lenny's whose wife is also a friend of Sylvia's from Hartford, Conn.

anything about them was that I didn't think you wanted anything that didn't pertain to the both of us.

By the way, don't believe any stories you hear about Harry James. Every once in a while that rumor crops up. It's only a form of jealousy.

Love

x

Lenny

Camp Pickett, Virginia⁹⁵
Friday
[January 22, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

As you know I received an extraordinarily long letter from Mom today explaining why your letters of late have not been too good (between the lines.) Syl, dear, when I read that letter the weirdest feeling came over me, first because although I had presumed what the trouble was I wasn't... sure, second and most importantly, you had confided in my mother. That was something you would never do before. After reading that letter I knew that somehow, some way, in the very near future we are going to be married. Although Mom didn't put it in those words I'm sure that is what she was trying to tell me. I hope that... the trouble has gone but... I'm afraid that is too much to hope for. Just have faith in my saying, " whatever happens -"

Now for the lighter side of my letter. As I told you yesterday I have been relieved of attending classes; today however I found out that that is only half the story. No more hikes, no more inspections, no more exams; in fact no more anything. It seems that I'm to be transferred very very soon so the Master Sergeant has made me his right hand man... until I leave. This morning when I asked him if I was supposed to go on the hike, he said no and then told me about shipping soon. This evening he informed me about not having to stand inspection but instead to report to him and help out in the office. Instead of going on the hike I did some more painting, finishing up the poles and then some tin cans. It turned warm again today so I worked outdoors. When the sun shines here it is really beautiful.

When the fellows came back from the hike they were so tired that I really pitied them. I helped them make their beds and turned their laundry in for them. Right now most of them are busy cleaning up the barracks for tomorrow, my squad won so we are taking it easy. What a glorious feeling to be able to watch somebody else's work in the Army.

⁹⁵ All three pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

Syl, I have an apology to me. I was so busy the first part of the week that I didn't realize until reading your letter today that Wednesday had come and gone. It's a trifle late dear but Happy Quarter of an Anniversary. If you'll notice I'm agreeing with you as to the number of weeks.

I dropped a line to the boys in the United Tool asking them to write. Received a letter postmarked New Britain today and for a moment I thought it might be a letter from your brother or possibly Esther's. Instead it was the fellow who bought my car the day I was in Lynchburg. He [was] telling me all about the car and thanking me for it. He asked me for Norm⁹⁶'s address as he took a liking to him.

I'm back in the latrine writing so if the handwriting looks different that's the reason...

In reading over the first paragraph I'm afraid that you might get the impression that the only reason I said what I did was because of what Mom wrote, but such is not the case. As you know I've thought a lot lately about us getting married and the more I think about it the better I like the idea. I love you so very much dear that nothing else in the world matters.

Much as I hate to say it, my pennies seem to have disappeared. I will however manage to get stamps somehow and send them to you almost as regularly as the gum. Speaking of gum the Army seems to have... rationed their candy as Juicy Fruit was the only thing they had at the PX. By the way I've asked quite a few of the Fellows about their mail and mine seems to have been the only one opened.

Nothing else to write - my next letter will be written Sunday after I hope I have once again talked to you. Good night dearest

⁹⁶ N. Norman Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He recently enlisted in the Army and has been at his Classification Center for an extended period of time.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Camp Pickett, Virginia⁹⁷
Sunday
[January 24, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Today ended... what I had hoped would be a long succession of phone calls to you... I'm very happy about being transferred and about to start training in something I've had my heart set on for a long time. At the same time, I had hoped that my orders wouldn't come through until after this training was over, so that I might have my furlough... Now it will be at the very least three months before I can even think of one...

You sounded extremely happy today. Does that mean your little trouble at home is settled? I hope so. Or could it possibly be that my extreme happiness is infectious? I am truly the envy of every fellow in the barracks. The orders I received on Saturday state that I, along with 17 other fellows from the entire camp, are to Report in Nashville, Tennessee on Friday the 29th. They also state that we are to receive rations for four meals at the rate of \$0.75 per meal or \$1 each when the meals are taken in a dining car... I presume that I will leave here sometime Thursday. How close I'll be to Norm⁹⁸ I haven't found out yet; I'll ask in the office and let you know.

Syl dearest, they are taking me an additional 500 miles from you and that is the part that hurts. Even that isn't the end. From what I've heard Nashville is only a classification center, from there God only knows where. On the whole... I think I'll be much happier for now, the truth can be told. This is as Walter Winchell once put it the 'Alcatraz of all Army camps.' By that I don't mean that we are treated rough or that the food is bad but the camp is so isolated from the rest of the world... The telephone accommodations are lousy and the nearest city is Lynchburg... Tombstone must have been the birth place of Jesse James for they certainly rob you without the use of a gun.

⁹⁷ All three pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

⁹⁸ N. Norman Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He recently enlisted in the Army and has been at his Classification Center for an extended period of time.

Life for me the past few days and also I imagine until I leave here has been an ideal one. Yesterday, for example, while the entire Battalion stood inspection and had an examination, I stayed in the day room, read magazines and dozed off and on for almost four hours. Then in the afternoon while they all went to the bivouac area to pitch tents, Lenny had a nap in the barracks. This morning... I was up early, had breakfast and took a Cab into town and the railroad station - the only public phones in town are there - and had exceptional luck in placing my call. After talking to you and Mom - the most enjoyable five minutes of the week - we had a cup of coffee and went back to camp. We got here just in time for an enjoyable chicken dinner topped off by the most delicious pumpkin pie I've tasted. Our baker excels in pies and Pumpkin is his specialty. After dinner we held our much postponed ball game with the non-coms. We beat them by the score of 19-10 with yours truly pitching. We now claim the championship of the Battalion but to my regret I'll not be able to lend support... to the honor. After the ball game, one of the fellows took some pictures and he promised to send them to me. When I've had a laugh over them I'll relay them to you and our scrapbook⁹⁹. It should be quite a volume by now or don't you get the time to work on it?

Butch, a thought has just occurred to me: why not continue writing to me every day as in the past and just keep them until you hear from me? I remember when our first mail arrived here some of the fellows received letters 20 or 30 pages long. One of the fellows received a letter today written by all the people he formerly worked with. It was at least 8 feet long written on both sides. He spent the entire afternoon reading it.

Quite a few of the fellows have been notified that they are being considered for specialized training as technicians of various kind. They will upon completion of their training here enter one of four general hospitals in this country where they will study for three months and become full-fledged technicians with a sergeant's rating. Others... have been notified that through a competitive exam they are qualified to go to college... for nine months and then attend OC School for another nine months. Upon completion of the latter they will be Lieutenants in the

⁹⁹ The scrapbook has not survived.

Army Intelligence. It is a wonderful opportunity for both groups and they... are equally as happy as I.

About your problem of carrying a baby in a new and more comfortable position dear. No doubt there have been hundreds or would it be safe to say thousands of people who have tried in vain to solve the same problem. I'm afraid that after all your thinking you'll still have to carry our baby (or babies ?) in the same way that the preceding millions of mothers have.

Sam¹⁰⁰ just came in from Richmond bringing with him corned beef sandwiches and Jewish Rye and also some sour pickles. They were really a treat for us Jewish boys down here as we haven't seen rye bread since we left Hartford. I took time out to eat one but hurried right back to this letter and you.

As yet I haven't received the slippers you sent out nor the package from Ben and Claire¹⁰¹ from New York. No doubt they'll both arrive the first part of next week. at least I hope so

Until tomorrow when I have more to write I'll say good night

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁰⁰ Sam Ellison, a friend of Lenny's whose wife is also a friend of Sylvia's from Hartford, Conn.

¹⁰¹ Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine Geetter and a son, Allan Joel Geetter, who were six and one years old at the time this was written.



POST HEADQUARTERS

CAMP ACKETT, VA.

Camp Pickett, Virginia¹⁰²
Tuesday
[January 26, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Thinking that I could flaunt my newly found medical knowledge... I casually mentioned catheterization in my last letter; as usual you were just one step ahead of me. Was it due to the fact that you have a doctor for a brother¹⁰³ or just part of your *smaht*-ness?

Slowly but surely the time is coming when I shall leave here... I must say that when I have to say so long to some of the fellows here it will make me feel rather sad. It is surprising how close fellows become in seven weeks of living and eating together. We are planning to keep in contact with each other so that after this *mess* is all over we can resume our friendship.

Today started out to be a very busy one for me but ended up just the [opposite...] About 8:00 this morning, I went down to the camp laundry with the supply sergeant to turn in the dirty sheets and pick up clean ones. The place is immense, and we spent two and a half hours checking the sheets, etc. When we got back it was time for *Chow*. After eating I reported back to the office and did nothing - absolutely nothing the entire afternoon. There was a regimental *Retreat* scheduled for the evening and after we all shined ourselves up in our Sunday best and lined up, it started to pour. The parade was called off and we got soaked...

There was a Courts Martial scheduled in our company day rooms today and I helped set up the court. While doing so the guard brought in the two fellows who were tried... I would have liked to listen in to the trial but such things are absolutely secret all but the verdict which is made public as soon as it goes through the proper channels.

¹⁰² Both pages were written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

¹⁰³ Sylvia's oldest brother, Isidore (Issie) Geetter left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enroll in the Navy, and has just been commissioned as a Commander.

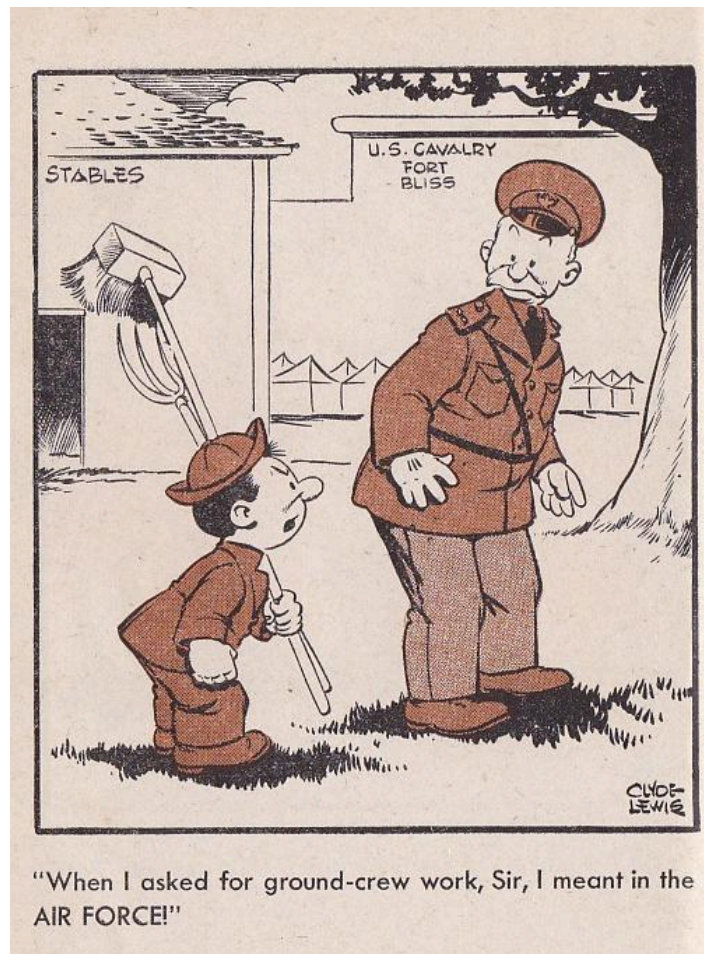


This evening while the rest of the fellows were at a review class I took a trip into Tombstone for the sole purpose of getting a small zipper-bag to carry my personal articles in (the one I bought in Hartford just fell apart.) I went into every store in town looking for one at a fairly decent price. As I've mentioned before it is a crime the way they *rob the soldiers* here. I finally bought one, paying \$2.75 for a bag that I wouldn't look at back home. Thank God I don't have to do any more of my shopping there.

Naturally I've been asking some questions about Nashville; so far all the answers have been favorable. They tell me the town itself is beautiful and best of all there is quite a [large] Jewish community there. If I'm to be there for any length of time I shall make every endeavor to become acquainted with some Jewish fellows because believe it or not, I miss my own kind¹⁰⁴. I've never felt that way before, I guess that is what growing old does to a fellow. The one fellow in camp that has heard of

¹⁰⁴ Sylvia Geetter and Leonard Levy were both raised by immigrant parents in Hartford, Connecticut, which had a very large Jewish population - by some estimates the fifth largest Jewish population in the country. By 1930, during the height of a phase of European immigration to the United States, Hartford as a whole had a population of roughly 160,000 people of multiple nationalities and ethnicities. Roughly 27,000 people out of the masses were of the Jewish faith, however the exact number is extremely difficult to pinpoint - from <https://scholarscollaborative.org/Hartford/ethnic/jewish-community-i/>.

Camp Forest says that it is near Nashville so I... might get to see Norm¹⁰⁵. Sincerely hope so anyway.



The *Private Buck* cartoons appeal to me because as you know I hope to win my wing, as a Bombardier. When the fellows ask me why I don't want to be a Pilot, I tell them it is just like being a cab driver. He does all the work while the fellow in the back seat has all the fun. I want to be the one to pull the stick that drops the bombs on Berlin, Tokyo Or Rome. That is where the real thrill lies.

By the way dear do you have any objections to having an aviation enthusiast for a husband? As you possibly can tell by now I plan to make aviation my work after the war. It is the coming thing. Everything from humans to freight will be transported by air after the war and an Army Air Corps man will have the jump on the rest of the crowd.

¹⁰⁵ 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.

One more letter Butch then a new address. You certainly have a traveling boyfriend, not by choice though. Since meeting you I have had more good luck than bad. That is due to the fact that we love each other so very much. Believe me dearest I shall do everything possible to make you proud of me.

Goodnight my dearest

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Camp Pickett, Virginia¹⁰⁶
Wednesday
[January 27, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

My last letter to you from here is being written at a rather appropriate time. Tonight, my dear, is our 13th engagement anniversary. Strange as it seems, the past four years have proven the number 13 to be a lucky one for me. Today... is my last day here and... today my final shipping orders came through. I leave this mud hole tomorrow at 2:30 and I can assure you that I won't be sorry. The weather here today was perfectly miserable. It rained and hailed all day and everything was just covered with ice. Luckily for me there was nothing to do but hang around the office; this afternoon I slept for almost two hours and not a word was said.

Received a letter from Norm¹⁰⁷ today. Unknown to Mom, he is in the hospital. From what he says there is no need to worry. Due to the change in climate and a shot in the arm he ran a temperature of 101°. His Sergeant made him go on Sick Call and they sent him to the hospital. In the Army it is harder to get out of there than in.

Butch dearest, it has been 13 weeks since that wonderful night when we became engaged. A lot of water has flown under the bridge since then. The Army got me, they made me a Private in the *Medicos* and now I'm starting out on something new. In all that time and through all those happenings, my love has grown so great for you Butch, that if I thought it at all practical I'd ask you to marry me just as soon as arrangements could be made. By practical I mean if we could know definitely just where I am to be stationed, for how long, and how I'll make out in the Air Corps. You see dearest, next to wanting to marry you and make you the happiest girl in the world, what I want most is to succeed as a Bombardier or Pilot (wherever they place me.)

¹⁰⁶ One page letter was written on Camp Pickett, Virginia stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is an eagle clutching an arrow and a feather.

¹⁰⁷ 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.

I'll say goodnight now dear and promise to write just as soon as I get to Nashville.

I love you
XXXXXXXXXXXX (xxx)
Lenny

The extra three x's are to make them add up to the number of wishes

L.

You MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE Army Specialized Training Program

THE NEEDS

AND

- * CHEMISTS
- * MATHEMATICIANS
- * METEOROLOGISTS
- * PHOTOGRAPHIC SPECIALISTS
- * PHYSICISTS

ENGINEERS—Civil, electrical, mechanical, metallurgical and military engineering specialists for the Army, Air Force, Central Postal and Service Forces. The Army Specialized Training Program is providing a steady flow of these specialists. Those with foreign college work will find useful new concepts their country can learn as well.

DOCTORS—In the Americas, in England, Ireland, Algeria, wherever you find our troops we find our Medical Department. There doctors, and commanders are needed, but are rare, available. Rightly, soldiers will be taken from the ranks to more professional training at recognized hospitals and medical schools under the Army Specialized Training Program.

PERSONNEL, PSYCHOLOGISTS—These are the specialists who lead and control armies. By our testing ground, here they are needed in the Adjutant General's Department to assist in all the important acts of getting the word going into the armed rank.

FOREIGN AREA AND LANGUAGE EXPERTS—Equipped with a thorough understanding of complex languages, customs and language is a specialty which requires full study before assignment in the Second Force, Signal Corps, and the Provost Marshal General's Department. This man, he which does our being trained against men require over which our Armed men must be aware.

THE PROGRAM

You are eligible IF...

- UNDER 22 YEARS OLD
- YOU SCORED 115 OR MORE ON THE Army General Classification Test
- YOU HAVE HAD A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION OR ITS EQUIVALENT.

"Once if you have had more than two years of college (which is not necessary) or you have included more than one year of university or college education in your curriculum, you may be exempted from the first three requirements of at least four students foreign language."

You are not eligible IF...

- Your Army General Classification Test score was less than 115.
- You are outside the continental limits of the United States.
- Your unit is ordered for overseas duty.
- You are destined for immediate shipment as an overseas replacement.
- You have already qualified for Aviation Cadet Training.
- You are a selected officer candidate.
- You are a volunteer officer candidate, unless you sign a waiver of your right to request relief from active duty.
- You are an accepted officer candidate unless you have expressed a preference for the Army Specialized Training Program after acceptance for an Officer Candidate School.

In addition who may be eligible under the ATP will be so informed through their commanding officers.

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Chattanooga, Tennessee¹⁰⁸
Thursday 9:00 PM
[January 28, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Stopping over here for our Pullman to come in. By here I mean Roanoke VA. This may be south, but there is plenty of snow on the ground. So far everything is fine. What lies ahead can only be a guess and a hope so cross your fingers again.

{Message continued here.}

Next stop is Chattanooga, we'll write from there if time permits

I Love you
Lenny

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁰⁹
Friday
[January 29, 1943]

Dearest -

Arrived here safely at 4:00 PM. Cannot write much now - will write a long letter, telling all about the trip and stopover tomorrow. We are not allowed to receive mail for a few days so hold your letters. I shall be in Quarantine for a while, afterwards I'll be able to see Norm unless I am shipped.

I Love you
x
Lenny

¹⁰⁸ An undated postcard postmarked 1/29/1943 with Thursday, 9 PM written on the top of the card

¹⁰⁹ An undated postcard postmarked 1/30/1943

Nashville, Tennessee¹¹⁰

Monday

[January 30, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

At last a full fledged Aviation Cadet! The day has been so hectically busy that we haven't noticed the passage of time. I'll start however from the time we left Blackstone and work up to today.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST



Two people sleep when one goes Pullman

Dick Hill's lighted Pullman speeds swiftly through the night.

Snow whispers at the windows, taps at the vestibule, swirls and eddies in the glow of the lights—already mounts in feathery drifts over a hushed landscape.

In the warm cheer of the Lounge car, Dick Hill puts out his cigarette. He closes his book, says good

night to the couple across the aisle, strolls slowly through the train to his berth. Toilet kit and dressing gown in hand, he enters the spacious dressing room—scrubs up for the night with piping-hot water and plenty of clean, white towels.

He says good night to the smiling porter and goes to his berth—hangs up his clothes, fastens his curtains, turns in between crisp-clean sheets in a bed as soft as his own at home.

A last, lingering look at the rush of snow past the window—a flick of the switch on the reading light, a satisfying pat on the two fluffy pillows—then the last, slumbery little struggle before warm, dreamless sleep. Dick Hill dies Pullman travel. Tomorrow morning he'll be where he expects to be.

But he's not the only one who's sleeping because of that snug, cozy Pullman berth.

A hundred miles away, Dick Hill's wife puts away her knitting, shuts light in the kitchen, opens the front door and looks out.

The snow is deeper, fiercer—falling faster, from a sky that looks black and angry. A cat inches its way along the street, pouncing white furrone with its claws.

Dick Hill's wife smiles a little—puts out the porch light, looks the door, tightens upstairs. She looks in on the children, undresses and goes to bed. Two minutes later, she's fast asleep—with the same dreamy little smile playing around her lips.

Dick's snug and safe in a Pullman—all's well!



For comfort, safety and dependability - GO PULLMAN

We boarded the train At approximately 4:30 PM and riding a day coach we reached Roanoke, Virginia at 8:30. There we had a stopover of three hours until our Pullman¹¹¹ came in. Before I forget - I had my first meal in a diner during the trip from Blackstone to Roanoke; it was very good - butter and extra coffee too! We walked down the Main Street of

¹¹⁰ All three pages were written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

¹¹¹ By far the most important war materials that Pullman produced were the passenger, troop transport, and freight cars that moved troops, civilian war workers, and war materials in Allied countries around the world.

Roanoke. I thought it a very quiet place and wound up at the USO¹¹². There they gave us sandwiches, coffee, milk etc., then we sat around reading until our train came in. When we got aboard I was soon to realize another childhood ambition. I slept in a Pullman car and with the Levy Luck drew an upper. In peacetime a lower is considered the best ride, when soldiers use them they put two big men in a lower and only one in an upper - most of the time. The train however was crowded and we had only 10 berths for the 18 of us. The first 16 paired up leaving the fellow in charge and myself with a berth a piece. We *hit the hay* about 12:00, and the next thing I knew, there was a hand shaking me and a voice saying, “ We are feeding military men first, it's 7:15, time to get up.”

I got up, washed, dressed and went into the dining car and had a delicious breakfast consisting of fruit juice, cereal, bacon and eggs, toast and coffee. During the meal we stopped at a station and found out we were in Bristol Tenn. We arrived in Chattanooga two hours later to find that the train we were scheduled to take wouldn't be in until 1:30. Lee, the fellow in charge, made arrangements for us to board the express streamliner, due in at 11:30, instead. So we went out and had an early dinner, Turkey with all the fixings. When the train came in I was amazed it was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen on tracks - All chromium and luxuriously furnished. The one bad feature of the trip came here. There were no seats for us in the coaches, so we sat in the Club Car all the way. They had a bar there but we were not allowed to drink. We just sat there, four to a table taking in the scenery, most of the time with a few games of cards thrown in. We pulled into Nashville at 4:00 and went out to have supper. After eating we went back to the station, had an MP call the camp and have them send a truck out for us. The truck came, took us to a camp and here I am. All we did last night was *draw* our bedding and sit in the barracks getting acquainted. There are fellows here from all over the country and from every branch of the service, so you can see that the competition is going to be tough.

This morning after breakfast we were processed. by that I mean we were issued another insurance policy and then taken to have our clothing checked. The Air Corps insists that their men are properly

¹¹² By April 1942, the number of **USO** clubs and lounges expanded at a rate of one per day and hit a high of 3,035 locations in March 1944.

clothed and have the right size clothes. For example, I was given a new overcoat, four new summer uniforms, two sets of olive drabs, two new hats, a pair of low cut oxford shoes and also new sets of underwear, towels, handkerchiefs, stockings both wool and cotton, and our insignias. This process took until 12:00, which meant time for dinner. It was here that I got the greatest surprise of my Army life. We had a full course steak dinner; it was tender too! The entire afternoon was spent in moving to our permanent barracks and arranging our clothing. By permanent, I mean from three weeks to three months. We had a late supper and now here I am writing to you.

This is really the life - we are no longer addressed as 'hey soldier' but as 'Mister,' even by the Officers. The food is much better, the fellows are of a higher intelligence than in the regular army and the work, although hard, will be mental instead of physical. The living quarters here are not as good as we had back in [Camp] Pickett but we don't expect to stay here long enough to let it bother us. We are in quarantine for the next two weeks which means that we are not allowed out of the area, nor in the PX, nor make long distance calls. In fact we can't do anything but stay in our barracks until the quarantine is lifted. Don't let the word scare you, there is no sickness here - the ban is to prevent any from breaking out.

Dearest, I have so much to say to you but it will have to wait 'till tomorrow as I have only one more sheet of paper and I must drop a line to Mom and Pop. I expect that tomorrow I'll be able to get some so I'll continue then.

Butch, I'm 600 miles further from you but it has only increased my love for you - Goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

PS You can write to me at the address on the envelope - that will be it while I'm here

L.

EATING AT CADET MESS



- ① U.S. ARMY AIR FORCES CADETS ARE AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST FED FIGHTING MEN!
- ② CADETS, ARE GENTLEMEN AND FUTURE OFFICERS, AND ARE EXPECTED TO ACT ACCORDINGLY!



MARCH TO MESS IN FORMATIONS!

NO STRAGGLERS! CADETS LATE FOR MESS FORMATIONS, WITHOUT WRITTEN EXCUSE, WILL BE DISCIPLINED. SQUADRONS MUST REPORT AT PROPER MESS HALL DOOR, AT PROPER, SCHEDULED TIMES!



CLASS "A" UNIFORM MUST BE WORN!

CADETS WILL NOT GO TO MESS IN FATIGUE OR CALESTHETIC CLOTHES. CLASS "A" UNIFORMS, WITH GARRISON CAPS WILL BE WORN. OVERCOATS AND RAINCOATS WILL BE NEATLY HUNG WHILE EATING.



CARRY DISHES IN BOTH HANDS!

SAVE TIME! MANY CADETS MUST BE FED IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. TAKE PLATES AND CUPS AS NEEDED—HOLD AS SHOWN ABOVE—MOVE DOWN ALONG "HOT TABLE" QUICKLY!



ACT AS GENTLEMEN— NO LOUD NOISES!

PROPER TABLE MANNERS ARE OBVIOUS; CADETS WILL NOT SHOUT, TALK LOUDLY, CALL ACROSS ROOMS, WHISTLE OR SING IN MESS HALLS!



REMOVE ALL WASTE FROM TABLE!

PICK UP ALL PLATES AND CUPS, GLASSES, SILVERWARE, NAPKINS, CRUMBS, LEFTOVERS; LEAVE YOUR PLACE NEAT AND CLEAN!



SCRAPE PLATES AND SILVERWARE CLEAN!

DISHES MUST BE WASHED AND MADE READY IMMEDIATELY FOR CONTINUOUS FEEDING. CADETS WILL COOPERATE WITH K.P.'S!

**YOU'VE MADE
THE TEAM MISTER... PLAY BALL**

Nashville, Tennessee¹¹³

Sunday

[January 31, 1943]

Dearest -

Luckily I was able to borrow these few sheets of paper otherwise there would be no letter today. All the PX¹¹⁴s are closed but even so we are not able to go there to buy anything while in quarantine. Sooner or later we'll be able to buy the things we need but until then I'll either have to borrow or go without. If you get the chance please send me a carton of cigarettes - I probably won't be able to buy any for at least a week and a half. I asked Mom to send me some writing paper. Speaking of cigarettes, it looks like I'll be giving them up slowly, but surely. There is no smoking except in the barracks or latrine. Even later, when we are allowed to go into Nashville, we are not permitted to smoke in public, "Mister, you're an Aviation Cadet now, so act like a gentleman," is all we hear now.

It is 4:30 now and we've done absolutely nothing but eat and lie around in our barracks, except for the past hour when we listened to a speech... we all heard when we came into the Army. The meals here are really something to write home about. Breakfast this morning consisted of cereal, all the pancakes we could eat, syrup, butter, bread and jam, milk or coffee. For dinner... we had soup, baked ham, string beans, corn, white bread and butter, cake and coffee. The food is served cafeteria style so that there is no grabbing or going without.

Our classification process starts tomorrow and it lasts for almost two weeks. It is during this time that they will decide what I am best suited for in the Air Corps. If at all possible, we are given our choice but in no case are



¹¹³ Both pages were written on plain paper and mailed in a plain envelope.

¹¹⁴ Post Express

we placed, where we are not fitted. It is possible to *wash out* here before even starting to train. In that case we do not go back to where we came from but remain in the Air Force as an enlisted man. As I wrote in my last letter from [Camp] Pickett, keep your fingers crossed.

No doubt, you are wondering what AACFF¹¹⁵ stands for. If you haven't already figured it out here it is: Army Air Force Classification Center. The I-1 stands for squadron I group 1. The squadron and group tells what section of the camp we're in and the section what part of the squadron. I'm in barracks #2, but you are not supposed to know that.

Tennessee is only 100 miles south of Virginia and about 500 west of there, consequently the weather here is very similar to what I just left. So you see that no matter what I do I can't get to the sunny South!

The barracks here are of the temporary type, housing 32 men each. The heating system consists of two stoves one at each end of the room. My bed is directly in front of one; when I sleep, one side is warm and the other cold. I've made myself at home here and already your picture has attracted much attention. One of the fellows taking a quick glance called me a two timer, thinking I had pictures of two different girls. Upon a closer look, he apologized...

(This is another letter of many interruptions. So far I've gone to supper and attended a Two and a half hour class filling out forms.)

I spoke briefly yesterday about my uniforms and the changes they made. I really look like a soldier now. I now have all my collar insignias and what's more they issued me a Garrison hat in the regular Army. The hat is not GI. My clothes fit me perfectly except for the length of the pants and they will be taken care of by the Army.

Butch dearest, there is so much I want to tell you but I really haven't the time. There is no latrine to write in here, as we have to be in bed at *lights out* which comes at 10:30. It is now 10:15, or 22:15 as the Army Air Corps tells time and I still have to sort and pack my laundry.

¹¹⁵ As found in his return address

As a former soldier once wrote to his sweetheart - 'I send oceans of love with a kiss on every wave' -

Goodnight dearest - Take care of yourself for me

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

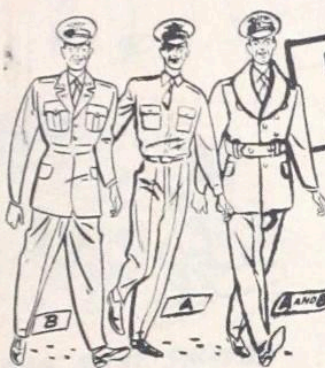
Tell mom I'll write to her tomorrow -
If I can borrow some stationary.

L.

LOOK THE PART...



OF AN AVIATION CADET AND A FUTURE OFFICER ... TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR UNIFORM.



PROPER DRESS UNIFORM

CLASS "A" ON POST
SERVICE CAP, SHIRT,
TIE, PANTS, OVERCOAT,
CLASS "B" OFF POST
AND CHURCH SAME
AS ABOVE ADDING
SERVICE COAT.



PROPER FATIGUE UNIFORM

UNIFORM FOR
FATIGUE DUTY:
COVERALLS WORN
WITH GARRISON
HAT; KEEP IT
CLEAN AND ALL
BUTTONED UP!



PROPER ATHLETIC UNIFORM

CLEAN SWEAT SHIRT
STRIPED PANTS AND
REGULATION GYM
SHOES, WORN FOR
CALESTHETICS AND
FREE PLAY PERIODS.
NO HAT WORN.

BE SURE...



CLEAN SHAVE!



HAIRCUT!



SHINE UP!



BUTTON UP!

WEAR RAINCOATS BUTTONED
TO AND FROM LATRINES. ALL
BUTTONS ON UNIFORMS
WILL BE BUTTONED.



CLEAN UP!

RESPONSIBILITY OF CADETS
TO KEEP ALL UNIFORMS
SPOTLESS AND CORRECTLY
PRESSED.



NO MIXING!

WEAR O.D.'S WITH O.D.'S,
KHAKI WITH KHAKIS. UNDER
SERVICE COAT KHAKI SHIRTS
MAY BE WORN.

Nashville, Tennessee¹¹⁶

Monday

[February 1, 1943]

Dearest -

If anyone had told me weeks ago that any branch of the Army would be so easy or the food so good I would have laughed in his face... All we do here is eat and sleep. Of course there are some exceptions but they are so few and far between that they don't mean anything. If I don't put on weight here I never will.



I've thought that after all the clothing we had issued to us the other day I would be set for the rest of my Army life but no, this morning they marched us back up to the processing building where we were given a full set of athletic clothing from shorts and basketball shoes to blue slacks with gold trimming. The only catch being that for this stuff there is a charge. The cost is not quite \$10 in civilian life; it would run to well over \$15.

¹¹⁶ All three pages were written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

At about 3:00 this afternoon we were told that we would go to the PX¹¹⁷ and buy what we need. They marched us to the main one and we walked around buying the things we needed. The big disappointment was no cigarettes or candy. It seems that here they have a separate place for tobacco and candy and they were closed for inventory... The design on the stationery is a replica of the Insignia we wear on our collar here. I have an extra one and also a US pin. Just as soon as I can get to the post office I'll mail them to you so that you can wear them. They are not GI so it is perfectly all right to wear... Speaking of mailing things to you dear, I have saved all the letters written to me. Shall I send them to you, get rid of them or what? After this boring quarantine is lifted I'll have plenty of time to browse around in the PX where they have some nice souvenirs. I'll manage to send you a few. There are no cameras allowed on this Post, so you'll have to wait till I'm in Pre-flight before you can see what I look like in my cadet uniform.

Because there is nothing happening here and also because I don't know what questions you have there is nothing to write so less I get boring i'll say goodnight now

Because you're you Butch

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹¹⁷ Post Express

EAT WELL BUT DON'T WASTE FOOD

"Food will win the War"
True in 1918—True Today!



U. S. SOLDIERS ARE THE BEST FED IN THE WORLD—better fed than soldiers of any other nation—better fed than the majority of our friends and relatives back home. He is fed better in quality as well as in quantity. This is as it should be.



GOSH! I LEFT MY
RATION BOOK
AT HOME!

SORRY--BUT
YOU MUST
HAVE IT
MAM!

SPEC (48)

U. S. SOLDIERS GET FOOD THAT THE FOLKS BACK HOME ARE BEING RATIONED ON—and our folks don't mind, if they know you are being well fed, in training here for the vigorous training ahead and eventual combat. Your army food builds sound minds and bodies.



YET SO MUCH FOOD IS WASTED BY THOUGHTLESS SOLDIERS IN MESS HALLS EVERY DAY—take what you can eat, eat what you take. Don't pass the blame on to the KP's. Insist on the size portion you want. The next time you go to mess, keep these points in mind.

INSIST ON THE SIZE PORTION YOU WANT



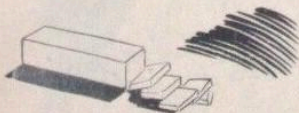
SMALL PORTION
of some or all food:
whatever you can eat.



MEDIUM PORTION
of some or all food:
some can be small, too.



LARGE PORTION
of some or all food:
whatever you can eat.



TAKE ONE PAT OF BUTTER!

Come back for seconds if you want more. Butter is one of the items folks back home can't get all they want of.



MEAT PORTIONS ARE DECEIVING

Meat portions look like less to eat than they really are. Don't take more than you can eat. You can always come back for more.



SALADS ARE HEALTHFUL—but if you don't like salads, don't take any. Too many soldiers take salad and throw it out. Tell your Tactical Officer what salads you like.



EAT FRUITS AND DESSERTS

If you don't like the puddings, don't take any. Fruit is to be eaten in mess halls, not in areas strewn with orange peels around.

Nashville, Tennessee¹¹⁸

Tuesday

[February 2, 1943]

Dearest -

Another day of hanging around with nothing to do... There was only one formation today. They read the Articles of War to us again, that makes the third time I've heard them. Army regulations state that every soldier must hear them at least once every six months and within six days of arriving at a new post. There are 105 of them so you can imagine what a long drawn out period it was.

Tomorrow we take our first Psychology Test¹¹⁹. It lasts from seven in the morning until 4:45 in the afternoon with only an hour off for lunch. This is only the start; from now on they'll come thick and fast. The fellows were all gathered around my bunk until just now working out various math problems in preparation for tomorrow. It certainly brought back memories of seven and eight years ago when I should have learned all that stuff. From what I hear they ask everything from swing music right through finding the area of a hexagon. The tests are not given to find out how much we know but rather to see how great a capacity for learning we have.

We finally got to a tobacco store this evening and darn near bought the place out of cigarettes and candy. I managed to buy some gum for you but it'll have to be rationed as God only knows when I will get to go there again.

The mail is starting to come in so I expect a letter from you possibly tomorrow but surely by Thursday. I do hope that I'm not disappointed. The only reason my first letters were not sent airmail or special delivery as I promised was simply because I couldn't buy a stamp. Speaking of stamps, just as soon as I get into town I'll be able to

¹¹⁸ All three pages were written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

¹¹⁹ During World War II, psychologists in the Army Air Forces developed examinations to test the aptitude of aviation cadets as pilots, navigators, or bombardiers and to provide specialized training at predetermined AAF Bases.

get some war stamps and send them on to you. By now you should be well on your way to the second bond.

As I mentioned before, they call us Mister here and we get quite a kick out of it as most of us are used to being called everything but that during our previous Army life. The standard joke here is to say, "so you want to fly Mister?" just as soon as someone starts to bitch. It draws a laugh every time.

I'm beginning a collection of souvenirs of Nashville¹²⁰, the first item is the camp newspaper; it is too large to send through the mail in an envelope so I'll hold it a while until I get a good number of things and then send them all together.

We have two types of hats here, the regulation garrison cap with the Cadet insignia on it and the overseas hat which we wear when we go to chow. The latter has been nicknamed the Chow Hat and just now one of the fellows started to pass out some candy and somebody yelled out, "Put on your chow hats, we are eating again."

One of the fellows here comes from Nashville where his wife is now... He can't... see her so he says he is going to practice up on intercourse by remote control.

Tried my best to make this a long and interesting letter but this one way correspondence is rather hard, as you no doubt have found out.

Butch, the last few days have seen my love for you reach into the heights of greatness. If only I had been able to see you before I came out here things would, I think be different

Goodnight my sweet

¹²⁰ Sylvia Geetter kept the letters from Lenny Levy and souvenirs from his Posts. The letters survived but the Scrapbook did not.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



REMEMBER—Spies Wear No Identifying Badges and "Public Conveyance Generals" Generally Rate No Stars for Conveying Information to the Enemy....!

CONCEIT - FAITH - ENTHUSIASM - IGNORANCE

are the four prime causes of indiscretion and of careless talk and thoughtless letters. These are the cause for so much information being given away to the enemy all over the country! Don't be a show-off! Don't try to impress girls and others with your knowledge. Don't trust anyone. Play safe! SHUT UP!

WARNING: Foundation by Death or by Imprisonment for not more than 30 years is the penalty—see Section by A. S. 300-4 Sec. (2) Pen 304(d), Sec. 2, Title 1, Act June 15, 1947 160 Stat. 210; 50 U.S.C. 33 M. L. 1925, sec. 2183.



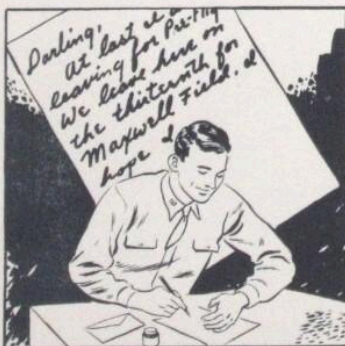
DONT PAY ATTENTION TO RUMORS!
"Latrine-O-Grams" are seldom if ever accurate, and are the cause for much harmful talk.



DON'T REPEAT RUMORS!
Repeating unfounded rumors are worse than hearing them. Don't be a "wise-guy." Keep it to yourself.



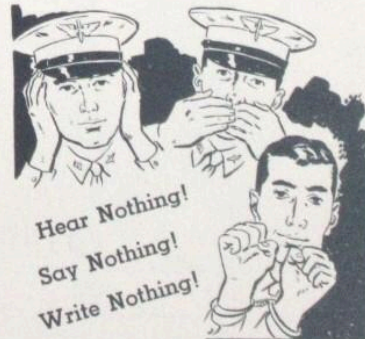
KEEP FACTS TO YOURSELF!
Confidential military data, such as shipping orders, rosters, training programs are to be locked away.



DONT WRITE MILITARY INFORMATION to your friends and families! When on shipping orders keep facts, dates, destinations strictly to yourself!



WHEN TRAVELING—SHUT UP!
Don't be a show-off, don't blabber. On trains—don't write postcards with purpose of trip and destination data that can be easily picked up.



BE SMART! TAKE NO CHANCES!
Clamp down on yourself and clamp
down on your buddies! Keep your con-
science clear. That unknown SPY is just
a little smarter than you!

Nashville, Tennessee¹²¹
Wednesday
[February 3, 1943]

Dearest -

After taking and passing the qualifying test to get here I thought I had seen the ultimate in tests... In comparison to the test, or tests, we took today it ranked... about the same as a first grade test would against a college entrance exam. This is not only my opinion but that of everyone here who took the tests. We still have three more hours of tests and then a physical lasting a day and a half. As one fellow put it, there is nothing to be ashamed of if you flunk out, but it is something to be mighty proud of if you pass. Very few¹²² flunk out here so I'm not worrying - yet.

The weather here is about the same as that picket - lousy. One day it's cold, the next it's warm and today it rained all day. So far nobody has come down with a cold and we've got our fingers crossed because if nobody gets sick the quarantine will be lifted shortly.

Tonight Butch, marks our 14th anniversary¹²³ and also two months of army life for me. It's been two *long* months because of the sole fact that I've been away from you. As I've said before and no doubt I'll say it many more times, I never thought I'd ever miss anyone the way I miss you. Each night between us is only an infinitesimal part of my love for you, Syl. Someday I hope to be able to prove every word I've said in this and every other letter. Maybe it is because I've had so much time on my hands lately but for the past week you've been on my mind constantly. Before I go any further dear, I love you.

Among the things the Army has done for me is to help me overcome my shyness. I now have the ability to speak up and express my

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¹²² From August 1942 until June 1943, those entering the United States Army were given tests like this one. It was a revision of the Minimum Literacy Test given previously. Those who failed took a group test of mental ability called the Visual Classification Test. Those failing it took two individual tests, the Concrete Directions Test and the Block Counting Test. If a man failed these, he was rejected. An examination called the Qualification Test replaced the Army Information Sheet in June 1943, and there were no limits on the number of illiterate men inducted.

¹²³ Sylvia Geetter and Leonard Levy celebrate the day of the week they were engaged.

opinions and also to make friends very easily. I am also acquiring a drawl. It is a combination of Western twang and a southern draw with a leaning towards the latter.

Again I've tried to make this a long interesting letter but I just can't do it. So until tomorrow when I surely expect a letter I'll say good night

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

By the way, try the new Address,
the mail may get to me sooner.

L.

ARMY INFORMATION SHEET - I

1. Write your name here. _____
2. Where is your home? _____
3. How old are you? _____

4. Copy this sentence: It rains a lot in winter.

Write it here: _____

Write the answer to each question in the blank space:

5. Can any man swim 1,000 miles in a day? Answer: _____
6. Which is larger, a horse or a cat? Answer: _____
7. Do five and five make ten? Answer: _____

Read this and then write the answers to the questions below.
Take your time. Get your answers from what it says below.

Signs on roads are very useful. Signs give us directions and tell us the distance from one place to other places. They warn us of speed limits, of curves, of railroad crossings, and other highway dangers. Some signs are "slow" signs - like "Cross Road," "Slow-Curve" and "School Zone." Other signs are "Stop" signs, which tell us to bring the car to a complete stop. National highways are marked with these different kinds of signs.

8. Do signs give directions? _____
9. What tells us the distance from one place to another place? _____

10. What is one thing signs warn us of? _____
11. What kind of signs tell us to bring the car to a complete stop? _____

12. Which important roads are marked with these signs? _____

Nashville, Tennessee¹²⁴

Friday

[February 5, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Tonight marks a week that I've been here, a week of waiting, first patiently, now impatiently, for a word from you and Mom. I understand that both of you have no doubt written and the mail is probably delayed but you can imagine how I feel, mail call after mail call, when my name isn't called out. Life in the Army camp is pretty lonesome when there is no news from home and that is why I feel in such a low mood tonight. The past few nights I've actually prayed that the next day would bring a letter from you.

We are almost through classification, having completed our Psychological¹²⁵... Tests and part of the Physical [Test.]

Tomorrow morning I go for the rest of the physical and then comes the waiting around to find out how we made out. The second part of the Psychological was



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¹²⁵ From August 1942 until June 1943, those entering the United States Army were given tests like this one. It was a revision of the Minimum Literacy Test given previously. It has twelve fill-in-the blank questions, the last five of which relate to information in a paragraph of text. Those who passed the test could be inducted. Those who failed took a group test of mental ability called the Visual Classification Test. Those failing it took two individual tests, the Concrete Directions Test and the Block Counting Test. If a man failed these, he was rejected. An examination called the Qualification Test replaced the Army Information Sheet in June 1943, and there were no limits on the number of illiterate men inducted.

very interesting. It consisted of seven tests not written but rather the operation of various machines and devices designed to test our reflexes and coordination. You have no doubt heard of these tests, they consist of putting pegs in holes, matching up lights, turning switches to put out lights, holding a rod without touching the sides etc.

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M. J. VAN WAGENEN

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FORM 7 GROUP EXAMINATION ALPHA GROUP NO. _____

Name _____ Rank _____ Age _____

Company _____ Regiment _____ Arm _____ Division _____

In what country or state born? _____ Years in U. S.? _____ Race _____

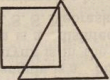
Occupation _____ Weekly Wages _____

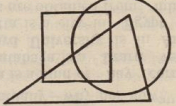
Schooling: Grades, 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8: High or Prep. School, Year 1. 2. 3. 4: College, Year 1. 2. 3. 4.

TEST 1

1. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

2. ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨

3. 

4. 

5. ○ ○ ○ Yes No

6. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

7. A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P

8. ○ ○ ○ MILITARY GUN CAMP

9. 34-79-56-87-68-25-82-47-27-31-64-93-71-41-52-99

10.

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11.

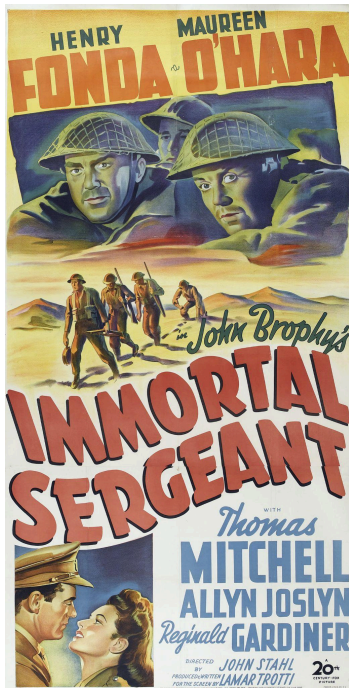
7F	4	3	5A	8	2	6	9B	3
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12. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Division of Psychology, Medical Department U. S. A.
Authorized by the Surgeon General, Feb. 8, 1918, Edition, July 9, 1918, 200,000

This morning, I was interviewed by a psychiatrist, who really delved into my life, past and present. During the conversation you were mentioned when he asked me if I were going steady. He asked me why we hadn't married before my coming into the service. His expression when I explained why not seemed to say that we had done the right thing. We talked for almost a half hour and at the close of the interview he wished

me luck. I then went for a blood test, blood typing and a urinalysis. Tomorrow comes the tough part - three hours with a Doctor, or Doctors, giving the most thorough physical exam a person ever went through.



I had planned to write my letter last night but at the last minute they announced that we would be able to go to the Post Theatre. Having been confined to the four walls of our barracks for almost a week it was a welcome diversion and most of us went.

The picture we saw was *The Immortal Sergeant* with Henry Fonda and Maureen O'hara. Although it wasn't the best picture I've ever seen, it wasn't bad either.

We didn't get back till after 10:00 o'clock so it was too late to write to you. You do understand - don't you?

A funny thing happened at mail call today - the mail orderly called out my name and handed me a letter. It was addressed to Pvt. Leonard Levy and had been transferred here from Camp Pickett. Being excited at having finally gotten a letter, I opened it without looking at the return address. Reading the contents made absolutely no sense... I looked first at the bottom of the letter - it was signed by Byron, then looking at the envelope, I saw that it was from a Corporal Byron Levy somewhere on the West Coast sent... to his kid brother, who had the same name as mine and was stationed at Pickett. The total result - still no letter.

Butch dearest, it is probably going to be a long time before I can get home to see you, so please... continue to tell me how much you love me. I realize that this is a weird request but I'm so damn lonesome for you that it hurts here. By here I mean my heart, Syl. I love you so much that if I had the last three months to live over, things would be different. I think you know what I mean without going into details. The next four months are going to be trying ones. If I pass... I'll need plenty of encouragement and it's from you that I'll be looking for it.

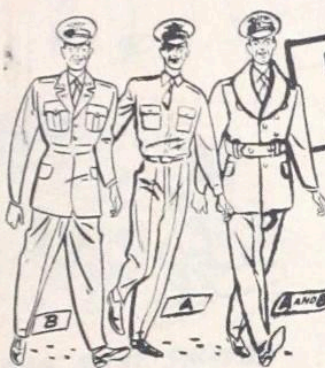
Goodnight my dear - don't ever think for one moment that I could ever stop loving you. On the contrary, my love for you continues to grow and grow. Until tomorrow when I will be able to tell you again

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

LOOK THE PART...



OF AN AVIATION CADET AND A FUTURE OFFICER ... TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR UNIFORM.



PROPER DRESS UNIFORM

CLASS "A" ON POST
SERVICE CAP, SHIRT,
TIE, PANTS, OVERCOAT,
CLASS "B" OFF POST
AND CHURCH SAME
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WEAR O.D.'S WITH O.D.'S,
KHAKI WITH KHAKIS. UNDER
SERVICE COAT KHAKI SHIRTS
MAY BE WORN.

Nashville, Tennessee¹²⁶
Saturday
[February 6, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

I've received a lot of letters from you in the past two months but none of them made me as happy as the two I got today. First of all they were the first news I've heard from you in almost two weeks and secondly they were just what I needed to cheer me up.

As I told you last night, I took my physical today. Everything went along fine with the exception of my visual acuity test. The eye doctor gave me a grade of 20/30 in both eyes. As you know the Air Corps demands 20/20, or perfect [vision.] The major who checked my papers decided to give me another chance, so he gave me a recheck slip for Monday morning. I fully believe that I can do better, so from now until then I intend to do nothing but rest my eyes in preparation. One thing I must say - the doctors give us every break. Their job is not to *wash out* as many as possible but... to *get in* as many as possible. Don't feel too badly dear as I'm not the only one and besides I feel confident that I'll pass my recheck.

Your letter, the long one stunned me for a moment. Thinking you had forgotten all about the WAACs, I too had done the same. Now you tell me how close you came to joining. Please don't ever do something like that again, without at least first telling me.

I've mentioned in previous letters that the fellows I've met here are all soldiers with quite a bit of experience. A few of them have come in contact with the WAACs. Some of the stories they tell are not so nice. Then again there is always the possibility of your being shipped across. That chance is not so remote, you know - if you've been reading about them. They are stationed wherever there are troops. You say that things have quieted down at home, I certainly hope so, Butch.

¹²⁶ All three pages written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor



Mom also wrote to me about your new coat and suit. Why don't you take some pictures and send them to me? I sure would like to have some more pictures of you. Besides, the fellows here say they are getting tired of seeing the same three pictures of you, they want change. Speaking of pictures, this Wednesday the Quarantine is being lifted, this means that Thursday I'll be able to go to town - maybe if I do and there is a place open where I can take a picture, I most certainly will.

You'll be glad to hear that I wrote a letter to both Faye¹²⁷ and Babe¹²⁸ today. We were off all afternoon so instead of sleeping I caught up on my correspondence.

To prove that... life is really agreeing with me, I can say that in the one week I've been here, I've gained six pounds. Speaking of this life dear, I intend to make a success of it only because you want me to. I know that is a rather broad statement to make but if it is within my power i'll pass every test with flying colors. If hoping and praying, and your love for me, can help there is no doubt [that] I'll pass. At least dear, you can be sure that I'll be in there trying right up to the end. You can believe me, Butch, because I've never lied to you yet and don't ever intend to start.

Today I along with seven others were chosen as a member of the Color Guard for retreat. There isn't much honor attached to the job but it means I won't draw any other details such as KP¹²⁹ or guard [duty]. If a Cadet draws a detail on an *Open Post* night, he is just out of luck. I'll have no such worries. This morning my barracks won the weekly inspection for cleanliness. For a reward we will be first in line at the Mess Hall for two consecutive days. Just think of 5 or 600 cadets standing in line and you'll know how great a privilege that is and also how keen the competition is.

I was very sorry to hear about Charlie's brother. I hope by now they've heard better news from him. Please keep me posted and also send me Tootsie's address so that I can drop them a line. Speaking of Tootsie reminds me of tea and tea reminds me to say that you'd like it here - they serve tea almost every day. They haven't given us any steak lately but the meals are... consistently good. We had Roast Pork for dinner and Baked Ham with grilled pineapple for supper. They make so much that they almost beg us to have seconds. The only bad feature of

¹²⁷ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: five year-old Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman and Holly Weidman, who was born January..

¹²⁸ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David Maranski Geetter, Albert Leonard Geetter, Thalia Geetter Price, Harold Paul Geetter and Suzanne Geetter Kashdan. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

¹²⁹ KP duty, or "kitchen police," refers to various kitchen and dining hall tasks assigned to junior enlisted military personnel, including washing dishes, food preparation, and cleaning. It is often seen as a way to maintain order and hygiene in military dining facilities.

this place is that we have to get up for breakfast on Sunday. Of course we can always go back to bed after eating but it's the thought of getting up early that hurts.

If writing with a pencil permits you to write longer letters by all means, continue to do so. It's a pleasure to get long letters here as we have the time to sit down and really enjoy them. The rushing from one class to another is a thing of the past - now for a while.

We have already been instructed on how to pop two and sound off. The former means to come to attention; the latter means to say, "Sir, Aviation Cadet Levy L (No middle initial) 31251913 (my Army serial number) Hartford, Conn. Sir." That all has to be said in one breath without a smile while standing at ' pop to.'

Butch dearest, just in case you've forgotten since last night - your boyfriend loves you as no other fellow has ever loved a girl. Goodnight my sweet.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

CADETS MUST KNOW.

THESE BASIC FUNDAMENTALS OF MILITARY DISCIPLINE!

MEMORIZE:

- MILITARY DISCIPLINE IS INTELLIGENT, WILLING AND CHEERFUL OBEDIENCE TO THE WILL OF THE LEADER!

NICE FLYING - LT. JONES!
YOU CARRIED OUT YOUR ORDERS TO THE LETTER. WE'VE GOT THEM ON THE RUN.

Mc MYRON STRAUSS



DISCIPLINE ESTABLISHES A STATE OF MIND

- WHICH PRODUCES PROPER ACTION AND PROMPT COOPERATION UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES REGARDLESS OF OBSTACLES.



CALESTHENICS AND DRILLS THAT REQUIRE ACCURACY

AND THAT REQUIRE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL COORDINATION, PRECISION AND SMARTNESS ASSIST IN ATTAINING DISCIPLINE.



A SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL PRIDE AND RESPONSIBILITY

IS ESSENTIAL TO GOOD DISCIPLINE. CADETS MUST REALIZE THAT ALL THEIR ACTS ARE REFLECTED ON THE UNIT TO WHICH THEY BELONG.



ACCEPTANCE OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEADER

- DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE INDIVIDUAL CADET SURRENDERS ALL FREEDOM OF ACTION OR THAT HE HAS NO INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY. THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF DISCIPLINE CALLS FOR ACTIVE, INTELLIGENT COOPERATION FROM THE SUBORDINATE.



A FEELING OF UNITY AND DISCIPLINE MUST BE ACHIEVED

- IF THE GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS IS TO FUNCTION AS A UNIT INSTEAD OF A MOB. ONLY WELL DISCIPLINED TROOPS EXERCISING COOPERATIVE AND COORDINATED EFFORT CAN WIN. START LEARNING DISCIPLINE - NOW!



YOU'VE GOT YOUR ORDERS, JONES. THE SUCCESS OF THIS MISSION AND THE LIVES OF YOUR MEN DEPEND ON YOUR PROPERLY CARRYING OUT THESE ORDERS....!

Nashville, Tennessee¹³⁰
Sunday
[February 7, 1943]

Dearest -

Here I am after a hard day of doing nothing, writing to you - the most pleasant part of any day. Outside of getting up for *Chow* and ten minutes of drill in preparation for the *Retreat* parade I've been sitting here on my bed writing letters; this is my sixth letter of the day and there are more to come.

Syl, I received both packages today. The stationary is swell and I don't have to tell you how much the cigarettes are appreciated. You mentioned the slippers in your last letter but as yet I haven't received them. Were they sent out before or after the other packages?

You asked about the berths in a Pullman¹³¹. They are as wide or wider than the beds the army supplies and although it is a little crowded two can manage to sleep in one. There are two clothes hangers in every berth and also a small hammock for shoes and stuff. Each berth has its own light and also a mirror. They make a comfortable bed... I slept through until the Porter woke me.

This Thursday is to be our first *Open Post* night. I intend calling Mom and Pop about 8:00, can you manage to be there also? It will make me doubly happy to be able to talk to you and besides I may have some news about my classification... You will try won't you?

What are you going to do about shoe rationing? You surely can't live on only three pairs of shoes a year. Shall I send you a pair of my GIs? All we have to do is turn in a pair of worn ones and get a brand new pair. Right now I have five pairs under my bed plus a pair of slippers!

¹³⁰ written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

¹³¹ Troop sleeper cars designed for transporting soldiers during World War II, were built by the Pullman Company. These cars were equipped with stacked bunks and could accommodate 29 servicemen, providing essential overnight accommodations for military personnel.

Once upon a time during my stay at Camp Pickett I asked you to send me a batch of the fudge you bragged to me about... Some of the ingredients must be on the rationed list so don't bother with it, dear...

In both of your letters, you only lightly mentioned your job. Do you still like it? Do you enjoy the work? Does your boss ever mention that incident at the Christmas party? Did you have to wash out the wool socks? Tell me all about it, Butch, that's the kind of news I want to hear.

There was another theater detail tonight and most of the fellows went. There are twelve of us left in the barracks, six writing letters and six playing cards. The radio is turned on but softly which makes for a nice quiet evening... The time here is one hour behind that at home which makes it confusing when a certain radio program comes on. I know it to be on at a certain time... but I have to take off an hour to be right.

Butch dearest I'm going to say goodnight now because I want to get a good night's sleep in preparation for tomorrow's recheck.

Take it from one who knows dear - I love you so very much -
goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

NO. 11 OF A SERIES OF BASIC MILITARY TRAINING GUIDES
-PLANS AND TRAINING OFFICE-NAAC, NASHVILLE, TENN.

CADET MORALE IS HIGHEST!

The title "Aviation Cadet" is a proud one. Live up to it. Wear your cadet uniform with pride. This post outfits you, classifies you, trains you, keys you up ready for Pre-Flight training. Your eagerness is further bolstered here by many additional helps to your morale. Some are listed here. Use them! Make the most of them!

★ WEAR YOUR UNIFORM, PARTICULARLY YOUR SERVICE CAP, WITH PRIDE SHOWN AT RIGHT IS THE CORRECT WAY TO WEAR YOUR CAP! ★



CHAPELS AND CHAPLAINS AT YOUR SERVICE AT ALL TIMES. USE THEM!

Read your bulletin boards for denominations, services and hours. Meet your chaplain. As lead the church services.



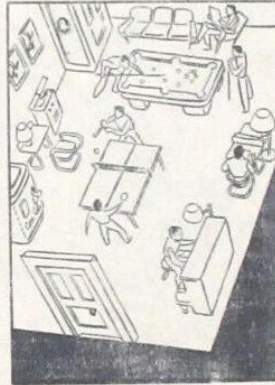
POST LIBRARY HAS OVER 7500 BOOKS, 35 DIFFERENT MAGAZINES AND A LIBRARIAN-

New books and magazines are arriving daily. A very personable librarian is at hand to help on your reading wants.



POST THEATRES BRING NEW PICTURES and EXCITING FREE USO SHOWS AND BANDS-

Newest films are shown first at the theatres here. Programs changed often. Prices are low. Also free variety and radio shows.



SQUADRON DAY ROOMS ALL FIXED UP AND ARE CONSTANTLY BEING IMPROVED-

Magazines, books, ping pong, pool, other games, writing desks, radios, jukeboxes, soda-cola machines, phone booths, lounge chairs and more to come!



SHOW YOUR PRIDE

IN YOURSELF—by your soldierly bearing

IN YOUR BARRACK—by your neatness

IN YOUR SQUADRON—by your military alertness

IN YOUR SECTION—by your enthusiasm

IN THE CADET CORPS—by preparing your mind and your body for the vigorous flying training ahead



9 stores, 4 barber shops, 4 restaurants, 2 tailors, 3 cleaning establishments, photo studio, 4 soda fountains, all conveniently located around the post.



NEW CADET LOUNGE WHERE CADETS CAN ENTERTAIN

Just across from gate No. 1, a new comfortable cadet lounge with soda fountain, where friends, relatives, family can be entertained.

YOU'VE MADE THE TEAM, MISTER. PLAY BALL!

Nashville, Tennessee¹³²

Monday

[February 9, 1943]

Dearest -

This is going to be a very short letter for a very good reason. I went for the recheck on my eyes today and during the process they put drops in them. My pupils are still dilated and I can't see clearly. I'm holding the paper at arms length writing this and I certainly look funny. My eyes will be like this until Wednesday so if I don't write tomorrow you'll know why.

I didn't get another recheck; slip on my eyes; that is a very good sign.

Please forgive me dear but it is impossible to write. call mom and explain to her why I'm not writing to her for a few days.

I love you

xxxxxxxxxxx

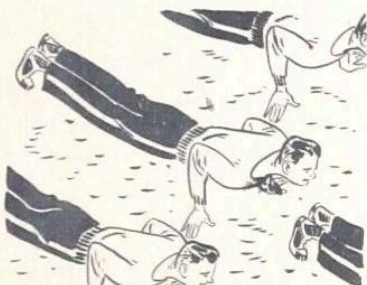
Lenny

¹³² written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

KEEP FIT! KEEP HEALTHY! KEEP CLEAN!



MC WILLIAM MEYERIECKS



IMPORTANCE OF DAILY CALESTHENTICS!

A MOST IMPORTANT PART OF CADET TRAINING IS DAILY, REGULATED CALESTHENTICS. THIS DEVELOPS ALERTNESS, COORDINATION, STAMINA, SPEEDY REACTION AND GOOD HEALTH!



SHOWER DAILY: USE WASH CLOTH - SOAP!

DRY YOUR HAIR AND BODY. BUNDLE UP WALKING FROM LATRINE TO BARRACKS. USE FOOT BATHS EACH TIME-THIS HELPS PREVENTS ATHLETES FOOT-WASH HANDS AFTER LATRINE USE!



DON'T SPIT OR COUGH IN PUBLIC!

THIS PRACTICE SPREADS GERMS, AND MAY SPREAD DISEASE. USE PAPER HANKERCHIEFS WHEN YOU HAVE A COLD. BURN THESE AFTER USE. COVER YOUR SNEEZES!



SLEEP IN FRESH AIR - KEEP WELL COVERED!

SLEEP WITH PLENTY OF FRESH AIR! AVOID SLEEPING IN DRAFTS. USE THE TWO BLANKETS AND COMFORTER ISSUED, AS NEEDED. AIR BEDDING AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK!



PERSONAL CLEANLINESS - PRIDE IN APPEARANCE!

KEEP YOUR HAIR CUT, NAILS WELL GROOMED, CLEAN SHAVEN. WEAR FRESH CHANGES OF UNDERWEAR AND SOCKS DAILY. BRUSH YOUR TEETH AT LEAST TWICE A DAY!



WEAR WARM CLOTHING - WEAR CLEAN CLOTHING!

FALL OUT FOR FORMATIONS IN PROPER DRESS. WEAR RAINCOATS OR OVERCOATS AS NEEDED. KEEP FEET DRY - CHANGE SHOES AND SOCKS IMMEDIATELY WHEN NEEDED!

IF YOU FEEL ILL - GO TO
SICK CALL!

DELAY IN DOING THIS MAY
CAUSE OTHERS TO BECOME ILL!



THE MEALS PLANNED FOR YOU REPRESENT A BALANCED DIET.

EAT THE FOOD SERVED!

EAT ONLY AT PLACES APPROVED BY ARMY AUTHORITIES!

Nashville, Tennessee¹³³
Wednesday
[February 10, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

At last I got around to reading my mail of the past two days. Those drops were no joke, I went around as helpless and individual as you ever saw; for three meals I didn't even know what I was eating until the food was in my mouth! The pupils are back to normal now and everything is fine...

Your boyfriend is in the movies. Monday as we were marching to the flag for retreat there was a cameraman taking pictures of us. I'm not sure but they may be shown to the public. They are at least going to show them to us so that we may compare our marching with that of the cadets at West Point... We are required to parade with the same precision as they.

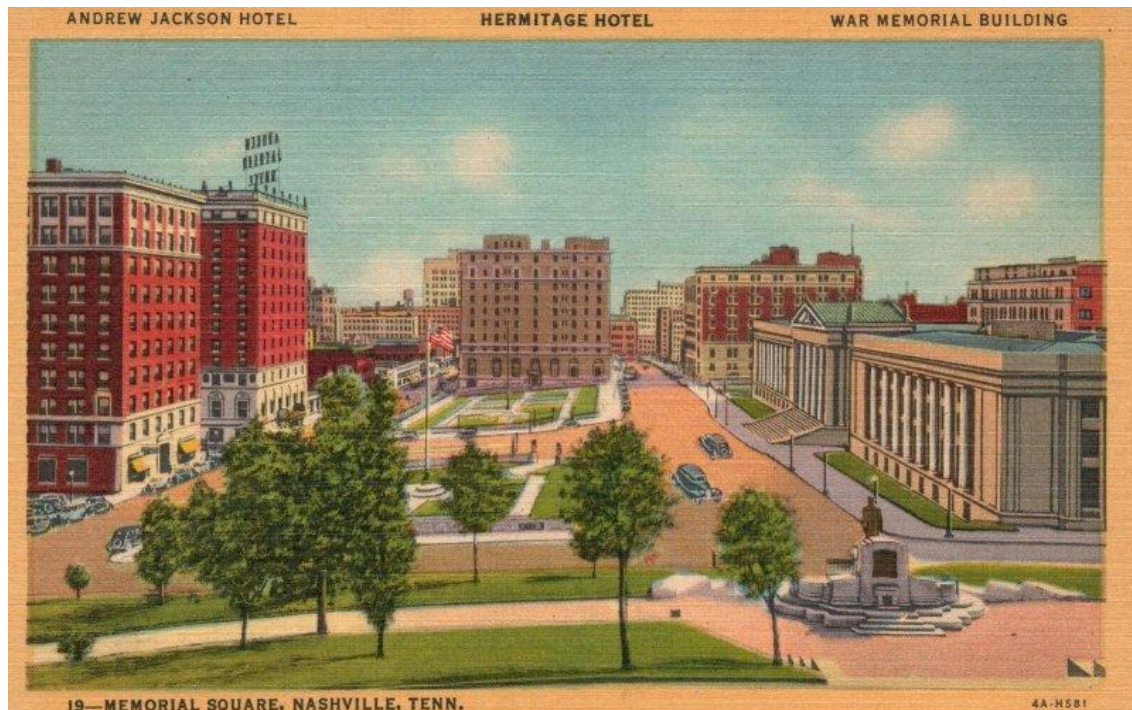
They sprang a complete surprise on us yesterday by lifting the Quarantine then instead of Today as previously announced Tuesday was or is an *Open Post* night, so they issued passes to any cadet who wanted to go to town. Needless to say almost everyone took advantage of the privilege. There was a dance held at the YWCA in our honor last night and the first 250 cadets who applied were given tickets. The members of the Color Guard were given first preference so... I had no trouble in getting either the pass or ticket. As an added privilege those of us who went to the dance were given an extra hour of leave, In other words we were allowed to stay out till 12 instead of 11:00.

We, Bob Levinson (more about him later) and myself got into town about 5:30 which gave us three hours to see Nashville, the Athens of the South¹³⁴, and eat before going to the dance. The first thing we did was go into a Barber shop where I got my first real haircut since leaving home.

¹³³ All five sheets were written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

¹³⁴ Nashville, Tennessee, is known as the "Athens of the South" primarily due to its strong commitment to higher education, with numerous colleges and universities in the area. This nickname also reflects the city's cultural and historical ties to classical learning and architecture, exemplified by the full-scale replica of the Parthenon located in Centennial Park.

coming out of the barbers we decided we would like a drink before eating and there we ran into a very funny experience.



We walked into the Drum Room of the Hotel Andrew Jackson, sat down at a table and waited for service. A waiter finally came over to us and asked for our order. We both ordered a Scotch and soda, he looked at us and asked if we had our own Scotch. We... told him we didn't and he explained that the bars in Tennessee only sold the *setups*, The customers had to bring their own liquor. He then offered to go out and buy us a bottle. We decided against it... as we only wanted one drink before eating. We settled on a bottle of beer... and had a good laugh while drinking it.



After the beer we looked around for a good place to eat. We found a place called the Cross Keys, went in and ordered - guess what? That's right, a good thick steak plus a jumbo shrimp salad. The meal was delicious and the service was superb. Our waiter, Preacher by name, took a liking to us and kept our plates filled until we could eat no more. The hot rolls they serve... are marvelous and he kept bringing them to us by the basket full plus all the butter and coffee we wanted.

It was 7:00 o'clock when we finished eating so we thought we would both make a phone call, he to his girlfriend and me to you.

When I got the operator she told me there would be a two hour delay in all calls going through New York.

This meant it would be two o'clock Hartford time before I could place a call to you; I thought that that would be too late so I decided to wait until tomorrow as I had planned.

Bob had the same trouble and he... decided the same way. Still having over an hour before the dance, we started to look for souvenirs. While walking around Bob met a girl he knew. She told us that all the stores closed at six and we were only wasting our time. He then asked her for a date and she accepted.

Bob asked if she could get a friend for me. Before she could answer I told her not to bother as I thought I would rather take pot luck at the dance.

They walked me to the YWCA, I said good night and walked into a room full of girls! The

Nashville Girls really turn out for a Service dance. In Lynchburg, there were more girls than fellows. I walked around for half an hour orienting myself, checking my hat and getting a name tag pinned onto me. Walking into the gym where the dancing was going on I met some fellows from camp and started to talk with them. While talking a girl came over and asked me for a dance! As a guest and also a cadet I was duty bound to



accept. I did so with some misgiving but much to my surprise the girl could dance. She followed me almost perfectly...



About 10:00, I found myself dancing with her again. As it was very warm, we decided to have a Coke. Not being able to find any in the building I got permission to go out to the drug store on the corner. While sitting and talking I found out that she works in an insurance office, The National Life. She claimed that it was one of the largest in the country and at the same time had no office in Hartford. I said this was impossible and that started an argument. We called a truce when I said I would write to you for further information on the subject. Have you ever heard of the company¹³⁵ and do they have a branch in town?

¹³⁵ The motto of National Life & Accident was "We Shield Millions". The radio station call letters "WSM," seen on the microphones of the *Grand Ole Opry*, reflected the motto of National Life; the insurance company owned the radio station and the *Opry* until the 1980s. In August 1943



We then got to talking about bands. She is a Harry James fan so we had what to talk about the rest of the evening. The dance ended at 11:00 and we were all herded out of the building and down to the bus station. I got back to camp at 11:45, not being used to such late hours I was tired.

No sooner got into bed than it was 5:30 am time to get up. Now that our tests are over... we have to attend lectures on basic military training. This is all very boring to us PS (previous service) men, as we have [heard] the lectures and seen the training films. This morning the Lieutenant called, and six of us were to give a demonstration for the benefit of the men just in... civilian life, on what *not* to do during *close order drill*, or marching. So you see, my sweet, once again my acting (?) ability has come to the fore. This afternoon we had a lecture on gas masks and also three pictures on the same subject. I know about the pictures only by hearsay. About five minutes after the lecture started five of us fell sound asleep and woke up only when the lights went on. Walking out of the theater we found it to be raining. We had no raincoats and by the time we got back to our barracks we were soaked. The one good feature of the rain is that it cancels all the outside *drills* and Calisthenics. Right now it is really pouring and the sound on the roof reminds me of your allergy to it and makes me wish more than ever that we too could be together.

The axe is starting to fall here. By that I mean they are starting to post bulletins on how the men made out on the tests and how they have been classified. Included in the lists are the names of the Fellows who have been disqualified. By tomorrow I should know how I made out. It will be either good or bad there is no other way. From what I've heard I stand a chance of being qualified as a Navigator, if I qualify at all.

About Bob, he is a fellow my age and like me became engaged just before coming into the Army. When it came time for him to give his girlfriend a ring he was in a tough predicament. His good friend's father is vice president of Tiffany's In New York. Naturally, a girl of her position must have an expensive ring. Suffice to say, he is still paying for it and will continue to do so for quite a long time to come. Right now he is waiting for me to finish this letter so that we can have a game of Gin Rummy. I told him he'd have to wait as I'm in a writing mood tonight.

Now comes a subject that has been on my mind for quite a while Syl. I first want to say something and then ask a very important question. I know that the time isn't right for this question but at the same time if I get the answer I want to hear it will give me so much more incentive for my work. Here it is in a nutshell dear... if and when I graduate from the Air Corps... and receive my wings, will you marry me then, instead of waiting for the end of the war as we had planned? No doubt you have thought along these same lines... so this should not come as too much of a surprise. Please Butch, give me an answer as soon as you can.

I think your rain mood is contagious. I'm beginning to feel the [same] way... when it rains. I love you so much dear and miss you so terribly; each day I love you more and miss you more. I'm convinced now that there can be no bounds to my love for you. It has been fourteen long weeks since that night when I put the ring on your finger dear and for each of the seconds that have gone by since then, I have a picture of you, in my mind, of how happy you were that evening. Someday we shall both be that happy again - goodnight my sweet

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Crowds waiting in line to see W. S. M's "Grand Ole Opry" which originates every Saturday night at Ryman Auditorium — Nashville, Tenn.

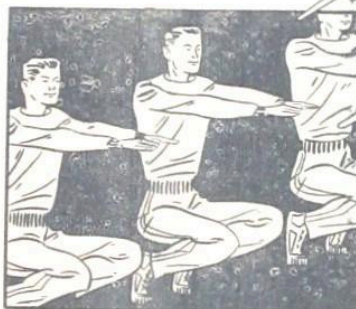
PHYSICAL TRAINING IS CONDITIONING YOU TO FLY...

AVIATION CADETS, WHO WANT THEIR WINGS AND COMMISSIONS, WILL MAKE THE MOST OF THE DAILY CALESTHENTICS AND GAME PROGRAMS. IT IS CONDITIONING THAT IS TOO VALUABLE TO TRIFLE WITH....!



REGULARITY!

THE REGULATED DAILY PROGRAMS ARE CAREFULLY WORKED OUT TO PRODUCE THE BEST RESULTS. CADETS MISSING THE REGULARITY OF THIS TRAINING DO THEMSELVES HARM.



GRADUATED!

THE CALESTHENTICS PROGRAM IS SCIENTIFICALLY GRADUATED SO AS TO TAKE CADETS GRADUALLY FROM CIVILIAN LIFE "SOFTNESS" TO REQUIRED FITNESS FOR PRE-FLIGHT.



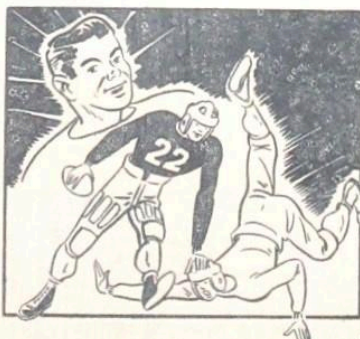
TEAMWORK!

CADETS LEARN TEAMWORK AND DISCIPLINE AT CALESTHENTIC DRILLS. BOTH SO ESSENTIAL TO AIR CREW COMBAT. DAILY PARTICIPATION DEVELOPS THIS TEAM SPIRIT.



CROSS COUNTRY!

CROSS COUNTRY OVER THE NEW "ALACAN ROAD" IS A VALUABLE CONDITIONER, GETS YOU READY FOR YOUR CROSS COUNTRY FLYING.



STAR TRAINERS! DON'T KID YOURSELF!

THE TRAINING PROGRAM IS UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF TRAINED PHYSICAL DIRECTORS.... MANY ARE FORMER COLLEGE STARS AND COACHES.



YOU'RE THE ONE WHO LOSES IF YOU BREAK REGULATIONS AND "GOOF OFF" ON PHYSICAL TRAINING. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEEDS IT TO FLY. TO DEVELOP YOUR COORDINATION.

Nashville, Tennessee¹³⁶
Thursday
[February 11, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

In just about five hours I plan to be speaking to you and to say that I can hardly wait is putting it mildly. This is another red letter day in my life. Not only am I going to speak to you but this morning I had my interview, during which I was told that I am being recommended for Navigator training. The officer to whom I spoke told me that as far as the mental tests were concerned I passed for all three types of training¹³⁷ but due to my right eye, I cannot be classified for anything but Navigator¹³⁸. This is not what I really wanted at first but upon thinking it over I'm rather happy at the way things turned out. The one reason for... not considering it before was the fact that I don't think I had enough *Math* or brains to pass the tests. Navigation requires a bit of paperwork and rapid calculations.



¹³⁶ All five sheets were written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

¹³⁷ Pilot, Navigator and Bombardier

¹³⁸ The demand for navigators required a constant expansion of the training program through 1943 and by VJ-Day, more than 50,000 had graduated. The elimination rate was about 20%. Upon completion of training, navigators usually were sent to operational training units to become part of a flying crew being readied for combat assignment.

Friday

Yes dear, the time I had planned to use in speaking to you has come and gone without any answer. I sat in the phone booth from 7:00 until 8:30 and then gave it up as a lost cause when the operator told me there would be a delay of... another hour. Because I wanted to talk with you so much, and also because of the news I had, I was very disappointed in not getting the call through. The rest of the evening was spent drowning my sorrows over two bottles of beer. About 10:00, we got back on the bus and rode to camp.

Today is my turn as Barracks Orderly. This means that this morning I had to get up early to make the stoves, so that the place would be warm when the time came for the rest of the fellows to *hit the deck*. Was it cold? Brrrrr! I have to remain in the barracks all day watching the fires and keeping the place clean. It is a very soft job and it gives me time to write to you in the morning instead of having to wait until evening. It is a good thing I do have the chance as we will be busy all of tonight; we are going to have a GI party. This isn't as nice as a sound. It means scrubbing down the barracks with GI soap and scrub brushes and also some old fashioned elbow grease. We are to be inspected by Colonel Wurst, the Commanding Officer tomorrow so the place has to *shine*.

Yesterday afternoon we had our first taste of the tough Callistenics, we are to get at Pre-flight school. The Physical Training instructor came to our area and put us through one full hour of strenuous exercise. We were all pretty tired when he said dismissed. During the entire hour we were not allowed to talk, and we had to stand at attention except while exercising. This stuff will do us good¹³⁹ once we get hardened again after the soft life we have been leading .

The fellows are getting their shipping notices already, and the rumors are starting to fly thick and fast as to where they are going. Speaking of shipping, I did find out where the Navigation schools are

¹³⁹ The calisthenics prescribed were the result of a special study with regard to the requirements of an air navigator. The exercises were devised by physical directors and physicians who observed men 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 embodying these conditions were used.

located. They are in Louisiana, Texas and California. It looks like every time the Army moves me, they take me farther away from you.

Something should be done about this - can't you speak to someone about it? One of the good parts of training to be a Navigator is that the course is only 21 weeks in length instead of nine months for a Pilot.

Butch dearest, there was only one *mail call* yesterday and the only mail I got was your valentine. The wording of it made me feel a little sad. I hope you're not feeling as low as the sentiment of the word.

It's been a lot of fun being in bed early on an *Open Post* night and listening to the stories the fellows came back to camp with. Each and every one had a different story of how he picked up a beautiful girl and the time he had with her...



Nashville is a Defense contractor and the streets are filled with girls wearing slacks and fellows wearing badges just like at home. They all seem to work for the Vultee Aircraft Company. [Like] Hartford, the stores here close early, 5:30, so it is hard for us to get into town early enough to buy anything. Next week... I won't be on *color guard* so I might possibly get out sooner and have some time to look around for little things to buy.

In my last letter I completely forgot to thank you for the slippers and candy. The slippers are swell, Just what most of the fellows hear wear,the candy is almost gone.

Give yourself an extra kiss for me Syl because I love you so very much -so long until tomorrow

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny





BEHAVIOR ON OPEN POST...

FOR ALL AVIATION CADETS: OPEN POST IS A PRIVILEGE AVAILABLE TO CADETS WHO ARE THROUGH QUARANTINE, AND HAVE COMPLETED ALL TESTS. CADETS ARE EXPECTED TO ACT AS GENTLEMEN AND FUTURE OFFICERS!



CLEAN, NEAT, SHAVEN

LOOK THE PART, AS WELL AS ACT THE PART OF A CADET AND A FUTURE OFFICER. OPEN POST IS FROM 1630 TO 2300. MEN WHO RETURN LATE FORFEIT THEIR PASSES!



SALUTE ALL OFFICERS

MILITARY CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES WILL BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO, OFF THE POST AS WELL AS ON. CADETS WILL BEHAVE IN A MANNER TO BRING CREDIT TO THE SERVICE!



DON'T GET DRUNK

CADETS DRUNK IN TOWN OR RETURNING TO THE POST WILL BE PICKED UP BY THE MILITARY POLICE, CONFINED TO GUARDHOUSE, AND FACE THE FACULTY BOARD FOR REVERSION!



NO THUMBING OF RIDES

ARMY REGULATIONS FORBID CADETS TO SOLICIT OR THUMB FOR RIDES. CADETS WILL LEAVE TOWN IN SUFFICIENT TIME TO REACH THE POST BY BUS BEFORE 2300. NO EXCUSES!



NO SMOKING ON STREETS

NO LOITERING, NO WHISTLING AT GIRLS. CADETS WILL WALK AT STRICT MILITARY ATTENTION, WILL KEEP ALL UNIFORMS NEAT, AND IN ORDERLY MANNER. BUTTONS BUTTONED. HAT AT PROPER ANGLE!



GENTLEMENLY BEHAVIOR

CADETS WILL BEHAVE AS GENTLEMEN AT ALL TIMES, IN ALL PLACES. CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS, DIGNITY, MODESTY, CHEERFULNESS, LOW TONE OF VOICE, ARE REQUIRED OF ALL CADETS!

YOU'VE MADE THE TEAM MISTER... PLAY BALL

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁴⁰

Saturday

[February 13, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

You can uncross your fingers. The official notice of my appointment for the training of a navigator was posted on the bulletin board today. This just gives further proof that the 13th of the month is a lucky day for me. How soon I'll leave here I can't say; it may be next week or it may be next month. Some of the fellows who were classified earlier in the week, are shipping out Monday. One thing for certain when I do ship it will be to a warmer clime. All the Pre-flight schools are in the South or on the Pacific coast. Pre-flight consists of nine weeks of intensive training and then a transfer to Advanced school. The [Pre-flight] schools are located in various colleges all over the country. One of them is located in Yale - soon it'll be time to cross your fingers again Syl dearest. I'm very happy tonight... because this is another long step towards the achievement of my goal, and because you now have some justification for being proud of me. There have been a surprisingly large amount of Disqualifications, or *washouts* as they're called here, more so than usual. It's really heartbreaking to see the faces on the fellows as they read the Bulletin Board and see their name under the heading disqualification. It must be your love and faith in me that spared me that fate. I love you very much my wife-to-be - soon I hope I'll be able to drop off the 'to-be.'

Yesterday we had another period of Calisthenics - it wasn't quite as hard as the first day but it was bitter cold - so much so that I wore my woolen glove. This morning we had a lecture and demonstration on Physical Training; it was fairly interesting so we didn't fall asleep. There were no lectures or classes scheduled for this afternoon and as it was snowing we did what is known in the army as Bunk Detail - in civilian terms... we slept all afternoon. I got up only to attend the retreat formation and go to Chow. I came back to the barracks, made myself comfortable and sat down to write this letter. Again most of the Fellows went to the show so it is fairly quiet in here.

¹⁴⁰ All five sheets were written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

There was in today's mail a card from Anne¹⁴¹ announcing the birth of Robert Victor Ginsburg. I sent her a letter of congratulations in care of Molly as I didn't think she would be home yet and besides I didn't know her address.

As yet I haven't heard from either Babe¹⁴² or Faye¹⁴³ but realizing how busy both of them must be, I don't expect a letter so soon. Mom however sent me Esther's address so I'll drop her a line this evening. Tell Lou that if he gets the chance he can answer the letter I sent to Faye and him.

I expect to be in Nashville again this Tuesday and we'll make another attempt to place a call. I can't promise anything but I sure will try.

Goodnight butch - remember that because you're you -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

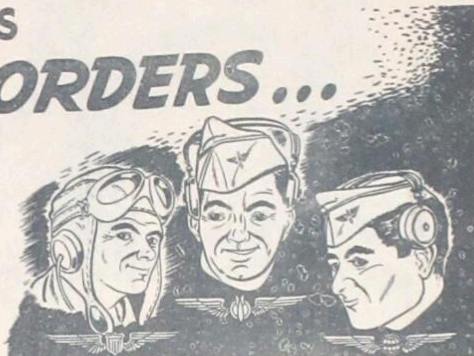
¹⁴¹ Bubie Levy's sister Anne Ginsburg and Lenny's Aunt Anne, whose first child was recently born.

¹⁴² Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David Maranski Geetter, Albert Leonard Geetter, Thalia Geetter Price, Harold Paul Geetter and Suzanne Geetter Kashdan. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

¹⁴³ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty) Weidman who was five at the time this was written and Holly Weidman, who was two weeks old..

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CADETS ON TRAVEL ORDERS...

YOU ARE NOW READY FOR YOUR NEXT PHASE OF AIR CREW TRAINING. REMEMBER, STAY ON THE BALL! IT IS A SIMPLE MATTER FOR YOUR COMMANDING OFFICER TO GET YOU PULLED OFF ORDERS, AND REVERTED TO STATUS OF PRIVATE.



IDENTIFY ALL LUGGAGE INSIDE AND OUT...

WITH TAG ON OUTSIDE AND SHEET OF PAPER INSIDE, GIVING FULL NAME, SERIAL NUMBER, SQUADRON NUMBER. KEEP BARRACKS BAGS SEPARATED!



PACK SMALL BAG TO TAKE WITH YOU...

WITH TOOTH BRUSH AND PASTE, SHAVING EQUIPMENT, CHANGE OF SHIRTS, UNDERWEAR, HANDKERCHIEFS, SOCKS AND BOOKS, MAGAZINES TO READ. PLAN TO LOOK NEAT ON ARRIVAL.



CHECK IN ALL EQUIPMENT ON MOVING DAY...

ALL BLANKETS, SHEETS, PILLOW CASES, MATTRESS COVERS, MATTRESSES, BEDS AND BOOKS ISSUED TO YOU MUST BE TURNED IN! BE SURE TO GET CREDITED.

DON'T... DO THIS ON THE TRAIN!

DON'T GAB!

DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS; DISCUSS YOUR TRIP, DESTINATION OR TRAINING WITH ANYONE!



DON'T DRINK OR HAVE ANY INTOXICATING LIQUOR IN YOUR POSSESSION AT ANY TIME!



DON'T DEFACE OR DESTROY TRAIN PROPERTY. REMAIN IN SEATS AND CAR ASSIGNED TO YOU! KEEP AISLES CLEAN!



DON'T WRITE POST CARDS EN-ROUTE. GIVING TRAIN MOVEMENT, DESTINATION OR DATE. DON'T LEAVE TRAIN AT ANY TIME. DON'T SMOKE IN BERTHS!



DON'T LEAN OUT WINDOWS! DON'T THROW ANYTHING OUT WINDOWS. DON'T RIDE ON PLATFORMS. DO NOT TAMPER WITH TRAIN EQUIPMENT!

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁴⁴
Sunday
[February 14, 1943]

Dearest Butch -

Just came from the usual grand Sunday dinner which today even included fresh strawberries as a topping for our generous portions of ice cream. I'm in an awfully lazy mood but decided to write to you rather than take a nap. I'll have time enough to sleep now, I've been appointed permanent Barracks Orderly, which means that I don't have to attend those boring lectures anymore. The only class I have to go to is one hour of calisthenics, the rest of the day is my own.

The enclosed clipping is something I thought you might be interested in. I have not yet seen the building, in fact I don't even know where it is located. The two arm patches or insignias no doubt need an explanation. The Blue Star on the white background stands for Headquarters of Service Of Supply¹⁴⁵.



Had I remained in the medical core and been stationed either at Camp Pickett or some other SOS Camp, I would be entitled to wear it.



The other patch though not as pretty is the one I'm more proud of. It is worn five inches from the edge of our sleeve and tells the world that I'm an Army Aviation Cadet. It is held on with gold thread in Criss Cross stitches and really looks swell. It is an extra one but strictly Army issue so if you like you can wear it on your sleeve. I have some more stuff for you dear and

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¹⁴⁵ The Services of Supply or "SOS" branch of the Army of the USA was created on 28 February 1942 by Executive Order Number 9082. Services of Supply became one of the three autonomous components of the Army of the United States on 9 March 1942. It was renamed the Army Service Forces on 12 March 1943, as it was felt that the term "supply" did not accurately describe its broad range of activities.

one of these days I'll make up a package to send to you.

So you'd better look out not only did I get a letter from Margie¹⁴⁶ this week - but today there was a Valentine from her in the mail. Both the latter and Valentine typified Margie - if you know what I mean.

butch dearest are you having trouble again at home or are you just unhappy or maybe it's something else? Of late your letters have been extremely cold; They've left me with the feeling all is not what it should be. please write and tell me the truth my sweet. Remember we once promised never to keep anything from one another - I've been keeping up my end of the bargain, Don't you let yours down.

It's been bitter cold here since yesterday morning which means I have quite a job on my hands keeping the room warm. I have to keep both stoves going at capacity and what I don't know about fires would fill a book. Soon I hope to be in a climate where fires are only something you read about.

The few fellows that are shipping out tomorrow are the only ones that are busy. The rest of us just sit around all day on a Sunday with nothing to do. You've seen pictures of a country General Store with all the customers gathered around the pot bellied stove - that is just the life we lead here when we're not sleeping. The only thing missing is the cracker barrel - but the boxes of candy and cookies make up for its lack.

There was a letter from Ebner¹⁴⁷ in today's mail. From what he writes he's pretty much fed up on civilian life... in my last letter I recommended the Air Corps to him. He would certainly go for this type of life in a big way - the sleeping part I mean. He doesn't expect to be a civilian much longer, his deferment is up the first of next month, and if I know Ebner he doesn't like the idea very much. Heard from Boomey¹⁴⁸ the other day - he is doing very well for himself. He is now in Basic Training which means he hasn't far to go for his coveted wings. We are

¹⁴⁶ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's younger brotherN. Norman Levy, who has just enlisted in the Army.

¹⁴⁷ Ebner (Eb) Glooskin was a friend of Sylvia (Syl) Geetter who graduated from Weaver High School with her in 1938 and has been a friend of Lenny's since Lenny and Syl began dating.

¹⁴⁸ Boomey was a friend of Lenny's from Hartford, Conn.

thinking of being able to fly together someday for it is a privilege of an officer in the Air Corps to pick his crew. The idea has possibilities because of the two types of training we are taking. He is learning to be a pilot in the Air Transport Command, a job that requires a Navigator in every plane. the only thing to do is just wait until we both wear our wings and then put our requests through the proper channels.

That's about all for today my sweet - so until tomorrow when I hope I can write a longer letter just remember

I love you
Lenny

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Nashville, Tennessee¹⁴⁹

Monday

[February 15, 1943]

Dearest -

It's been quite a while since I've felt so close to you and it's due in a large part to the gloriously long letter I got from you today. Butch, you've no idea how great it was to get so newsy a letter from you, after the cold ones you've been mailing. I fully realize that my letters the past few weeks have been no literary masterpieces, but surely life in Hartford, your job etc. is much... easier to write about than a life surrounded by the four walls of a clapboard barrack.

Before I go any further I'll answer your questions. *Retreat*, as you know, is the name given to the ceremony of lowering the flag each night. A Color Guard consists of 100 men, at least it does here at Nashville, who stand... attention by the flagpole while the bugles play and the flag is lowered. It is much more impressive than the ceremony I described that took place at Camp Pickett. *Open Post* is the name given to the two nights (Tuesday and Thursday) that we are allowed to leave the post or camp and go into town. I've already had two of them, as you know, and tomorrow I expect a third. You misunderstood me Syl, when I spoke of tea. I didn't mention that Tootsie reminded me of it, but the fact that you were drinking tea reminded me of the tea they serve here. GI shoes definitely do not come with open toes - only one inch soles and high tops.

I can just imagine the cracks Natie¹⁵⁰ and Issie¹⁵¹ are making about the name Faye and Lou¹⁵² chose for the baby... I think it is a nice name, but knowing Natie [has] a subtle way of showing wit, he must be a riot.

¹⁴⁹ All five sheets were written on Nashville Army Air Center stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the Navigation Wings with propellor

¹⁵⁰ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and recently enlisted in the Air Corps.

¹⁵¹ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David Maranski Geetter, Albert Leonard Geetter, Thalia Geetter Price, Harold Paul Geetter and Suzanne Geetter Kashdan. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written. Issie recently accepted a commission in the US Navy.

¹⁵² Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman, who was five at the time this was written. Holly Weidman was born on January 25.

We in the Army are not much interested in the new ruling our 48 hour week. We are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and when one of us pulls a Guard Detail that... strikes home... Being in the Army I can appreciate what *equipment* means to a fighting man. Without it the best Army in the world would be useless. Take Russia as an example, without the equipment we've sent her she could never have stood up against the Germans, let alone defeat her as she surely is now.

We are going through a bitter cold spell right now and it doesn't make my job as the Barracks Orderly any easier. The temperature was down to about 10° this morning and both the fires were almost out when they threw me out of the bed at 5:00 to get them roaring and make the barrack reasonably warm. It was nigh unto 9:00 before the steam stopped coming from our mouths while standing on top of the furnace. Right now it is snowing outside so I guess I'll have the same trouble tomorrow. At 9:30 I went out for another session of calisthenics which really made me feel good, after we got started... I thought... there was nothing to do... until 2:30 when a truck stopped in front of the door and [deposited] 30 new wooden 4-poster beds to replace the metal cots we were using. The Army is going to turn the beds over to the scrap drive and that suits us fine. They were just like sleeping in a hammock. The new beds are painted an olive drab and certainly improve the appearance of the room.

Tomorrow, I am going to make an effort to have my picture taken with my cadet cap on. If I have time during the day I'll go over to the camp photographer, otherwise tomorrow night I'll surely have it taken in town. One of the fellows snapped my picture the other day, as soon as he gets it developed I'll send it to you. I wrote to the fellows at Camp Pickett for the pictures we took there but as yet they haven't arrived...

With your grand letter I received a Valentine from a most unexpected source - no doubt you know all about it - signed in bold handwriting, Betty May. It was very sweet of her and I'm only sorry that I'm not accomplished enough as a letter writer to send her a note and tell her how much I appreciate the thought. I will however, write to her in care of you, but meanwhile say thanx to her for me.

There are fellows from Texas sleeping on either side of me and between, their accents, anecdotes and the tap dancing of one of them, the entire barracks is kept amused. Thanks to Mitch, one of them, I got up early this morning. He swears he spent... 10 minutes shaking me and then I got up only when he promised to take care of one of the fires. He comes from the Quarter Master Corps and through him I was able to pass on to Norm¹⁵³ a few valuable tips.

It's time to fire up for the evening and I too would like to *sound off* by saying I love you, my dearest, very very very much - goodnight my sweet until tomorrow

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁵³ 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.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT

-IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF CADET TRAINING. EACH MAN IS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL EQUIPMENT ISSUED HIM, AS WELL AS FOR LIGHTS, STOVES, BARRACKS, LATRINE AND DAY ROOM AREA TO WHICH HE IS ASSIGNED.



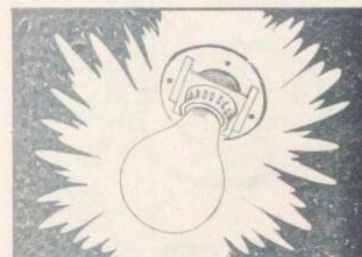
• SOAP, WATER & MUSCLE!

WINDOWS, FLOORS, SHELVES, LEDGES - WILL BE THOROUGHLY SCRUBBED AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK. THIS IS A NECESSARY HEALTH MEASURE AS WELL AS AN ARMY REGULATION.



• AIR OUT ALL BEDDING!

AIR AND SUN ALL BEDDING TWICE A WEEK. MATTRESSES, PILLOWS, BLANKETS, COMFORTERS WILL BE THOROUGHLY SHAKEN AND BEATEN TO REMOVE ALL DUST AND DIRT.



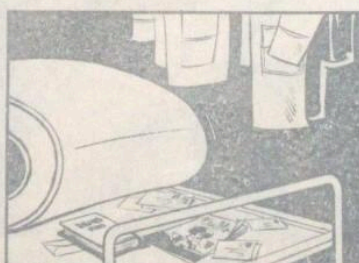
• LIGHTS KEPT IN ORDER!

BURNED OUT BULBS WILL BE IMMEDIATELY REPLACED; DEFECTIVE SWITCHES REPORTED. PLUG-IN CORDS FOR RADIOS WILL BE REMOVED WHEN NOT IN USE TO PREVENT FIRES.



• CARE OF STOVES!

GARBAGE, PAPERS AND REFUSE WILL NOT BE PLACED IN STOVES. ASHES WILL BE REMOVED, AS NEEDED. DEFECTS AND DAMAGES TO STOVES WILL BE REPORTED AT ONCE.



• NEAT, ORDERLINESS!

UNAUTHORIZED ARTICLES WILL NOT BE PLACED UNDER MATTRESSES AND PILLOWS, OR IN POCKETS OF CLOTHING HANGING ON RACKS. SHOES AND BAGS IN PROPER PLACES.



• CLEAN THOROUGHLY!

BARRACKS AND EQUIPMENT WILL BE KEPT IN PERFECT ORDER AND READY FOR INSPECTION EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK. LATRINES AND DAY ROOMS ORDERLY AT ALL TIMES.

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁵⁴
Wednesday
[February 17, 1943]

Dearest -

Just 15 weeks ago today I was as happy as any person could ever hope to be, or at least thought so until last night when I talked to you on the phone. When your "Yes" reached me in Nashville it was as if an electrical contact had been made within me. A tingling sensation ran up and down my spine and then reached out to my finger-tips for fully half an hour after saying goodbye. I just shook Butch dearest. Now I am the happiest man in the world and you've made me so; I promise that you won't be sorry and also that you'll be proud of me for now I have an added incentive to become a successful navigator. just pray my darling that the next five months fly -



After leaving the phone I went to the hotel to meet Bob and another fellow as we had arranged to eat together.

When they walked into the lobby I could see that they were both rather low in spirit, but said nothing.

Bob suggested a drink before eating and being in a jubilant mood I agreed. It was over our second beer that the sad news came.

Just before leaving camp for town, both had been notified that they had *washed*. This naturally put a damper on the evening of fun we had planned... I got them to see that the end of the world wasn't at hand and we started out to look

for a place to eat. We decided on the Commodore Room at the Andrew Jackson Hotel. On the way, Foundsie bought a bottle to drown his

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sorrows in and I helped to pay for it because I had some private celebrating to do. We spent a pleasant, for me anyway, three hours... watching the Cadets and their dates dancing. Watching them I couldn't help but think how much an evening of dancing or just being with you means to me. Butch dearest, I love you so terribly much and the day of graduation seems so far away. If I thought it at all plausible I'd ask you to come down here but not knowing when I'm going to ship it would be foolish. We'll just have to wait and make the best of it.

Evidently the PT (Physical Training) instructors have heard about the six pounds I've put on as the calisthenics are getting tougher every day... They dumped a load of coal in front of the barracks, and as Orderly I had to shovel it into the coal bin. I just finished before sitting down to write this and I'm still as stiff as a board. An officer happened to be standing near me while I was shoveling so that I couldn't *dog* it.

My duties as Orderly have been eased somewhat due to the mildness of the weather. It's remarkable how quickly the temperature changes here. For a change, the boys are complaining about the heat of the fires instead of vice versa.

The radio is playing *One Dozen Roses* and it brings back more vividly that day 15 weeks ago. God how I wish we were back in each other's arms again!

We just had *mail call* and all there was for me was a letter from Mom - two days without a letter from you. It seems that the post office is... sabotaging our love. You got no mail from me and I got none from you. I swear that I write six out of every seven days so if you don't hear from me please don't stop writing. You have no idea what a letter from you means to me, loving you so much.

ONE DOZEN ROSES
Dick Jurgens

Give me one dozen roses
Put my heart in beside them
And send them to the one I love
She'll be glad to receive them
And I know she'll believe them
That's something we've been talking of
There may be orange blossoms later
Kind of think that there will
'Cause she's done something to me
And my heart won't keep still
Give me one dozen roses
Put my heart in beside them
And send them to the one I love.



Realizing that you want a picture of me as a Cadet, I tried to locate a place last night on my way to meet the boys. The only place I found was one of those four-for-a-dime joints. Surely you wouldn't want one of those so I'll try again tomorrow when I'm in town again. There is a photographer on the post but I just don't seem to get the time during the day to get over there and they close at 7:00.

The boys have just come in from Calisthenics and the place is a mad house. Instead of pillow fights we have comforter fights. A comforter is nothing more than a khaki colored quilt that we keep tightly rolled at the foot of our bunk. There are always two or three going on and right now is no exception. They have a new racket here - they wait until four or five of us are asleep, then wake us up to ask if we have to go to the *John*. It's not so funny when you're really enjoying your sleep.

There goes first call for *Chow*, dear so I'll say goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Did you know that according to Army slang, that an icicle is a drip that was caught in the draft!

L.

One Dozen Roses

By Jim Reeves

There may be orange blossoms later
I think that there will
She's done something to me
And my heart won't keep still

Give me one dozen roses
Put my heart in beside them
Send them to the one I love

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁵⁵

Friday

[February 19, 1943]

Dearest -

Talking to you is like getting a shot in the arm (not the Army type.) Just hearing your voice makes me feel wonderful. Until I spoke to you yesterday I was really down in the dumps. The mood was due partly to the lack of mail from anyone and partly for no good reason at all. There were two letters from Mom today but still none from you. One of the letters contained the \$10 so that plus the \$40 they paid me yesterday makes me a rich man again. I wasn't exactly broke but pretty badly bent.

So, you thought you could make me jealous with the steak supper you people had last night? To put you at ease I had a steak last night that looked like the side of a cow and tasty too. Realizing that you are right about the few drinks becoming a habit, I drank nothing stronger than Coca-Cola last night and intend to stay on the wagon from now on.

Last night we again walked all over town looking for a photographer but to no avail; everything closes up tight at 6:00 in this town... We decided to go to the USO dance at the YMCA, and again we had a very pleasant time. The girls were mostly from Vanderbilt which is in Nashville and... very pleasant. I must say Nashville has very pretty girls but none... can compare with you and I mean that. We were... given an extra hour *Leave* because of the dance and that gave us time to stay until the end.

My duties as Barracks Orderly consist of absolutely nothing today. Tomorrow there is going to be an inspection by the CO which means that the stoves have to be polished. They can't be hot to do so... therefore I don't have to fire them. I had my calisthenics this morning and outside of going for *Chow* I haven't left my bunk. I am the only one in the room at present and it really is peaceful...

Getting paid is usually a good sign that we are going to be shipped soon. Sure enough there appeared on the bulletin board a list of

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navigators headed by a special order number. That is a definite sign that within a week we will be on our own way. To where, I can't say, even if I did know I wouldn't be able to tell you, as it is strictly forbidden. I'm going to ask you to keep writing to me here. The mail will be forwarded and I won't have so long to wait for your letters.

The weather here in direct contrast with what you are having and what we had earlier in the week is beautiful. Today is just like a late spring day at home. We are able to walk around in short sleeves and still be comfortable. Shall I send some of the sun home to you?

Bob¹⁵⁶ is slowly getting over his disappointment. He is allowed *Open Post* every night, I guess that helps a lot. Unless his request for another interview goes through, he will be shipped to Mississippi as a private in the Air Force. That will be quite a come down for him; he was a sergeant in the infantry before coming here. They will in all probability send him to a Technical school and make a mechanic out of him.

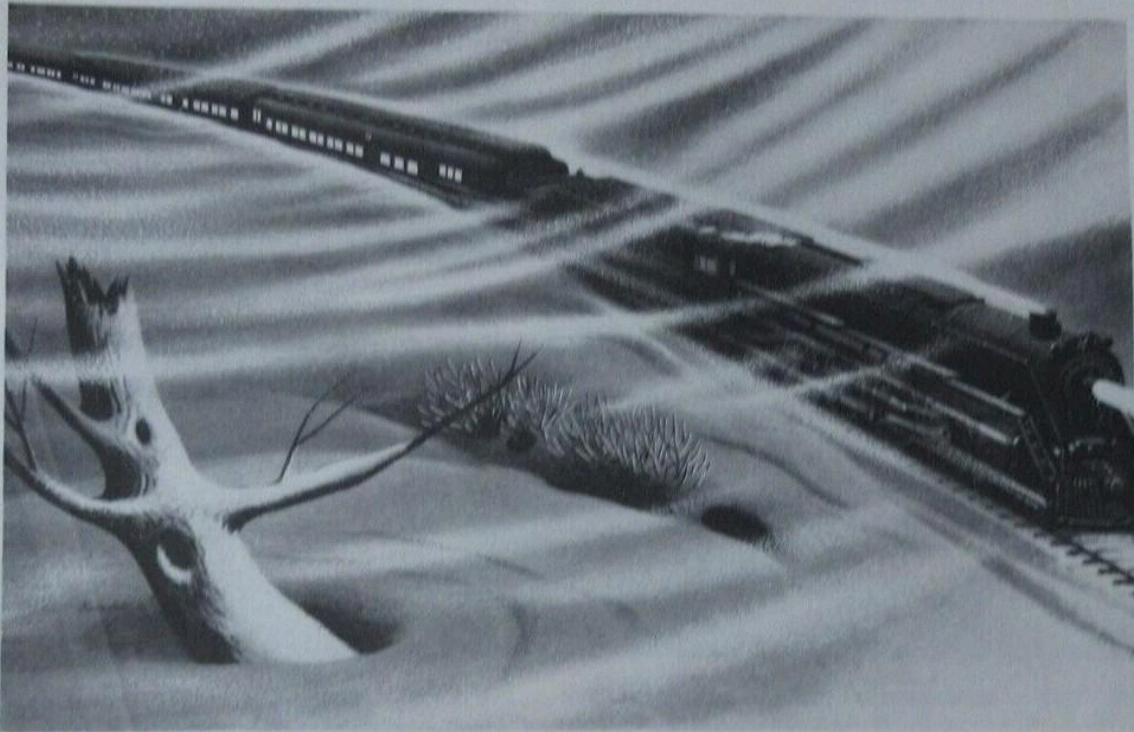
My original idea was to continue the letter I had started yesterday but upon reading it over decided it was written during the height of my mood and therefore made for very poor reading. I assure you that I feel much better today for having talked to you again and you needn't worry.

There was a nice letter from Aunt Claire in the mail yesterday and she told me about the card you sent Anne, who thought it very nice. She also said your picture made quite a hit with the people who knew me, that were at the party given in honor of Robert Victor - that's quite a handle for so small a boy. By the way, what are we going to name our first one?

Butch dearest, it's getting close to *Chow* time and therefore time to say goodnight, but before I do, I want to repeat what I've said so many times before. I love you Syl, so very much and your answer to my all important question made me so happy and proud that nothing can stop me from making you the happiest and proudest girl that lives -

¹⁵⁶ Robert (Bob) Greenberg is also trying to become an Officer Trainee in the Air Corps. His wife Charlotte is a close friend of Sylvia's.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny



Two people sleep when one goes Pullman

DICK HILL's lighted Pullman speeds swiftly through the night.

Snow whispers at the windows, tugs at the vestibules, swirls and eddies in the glow of the lights—silently mounts in feathery drifts over a hushed landscape.

In the warm cheer of the Lounge car, Dick Hill puts out his cigarette. He closes his book, says good

night to the couple across the aisle, strolls slowly through the train to his berth. Toilet kit and dressing gown in hand, he enters the spacious dressing room—scrubs up for the night with piping-hot water and plenty of clean, white towels.

He says good night to the smiling porter and goes to his berth—hangs up his clothes, fastens his curtains, turns in between crisp-clean sheets in a bed as soft as his own at home.

A last, lingering look at the rush of snow past the window—a flick of the switch on the reading lights, a satisfying punch at the two fluffy pillows—then the last, shivery little snuggle before warm, dreamless sleep. Dick Hill likes Pullman travel. Tomorrow morning he'll be where he expects to be.

But he's not the only one who's sleeping because of that snug, cozy Pullman berth.

* * *



A hundred miles away, Dick Hill's wife puts away her knitting, shuts Spot in the kitchen, opens the front door and looks out.

The snow is deeper, here—falling faster, from a sky that looks black and angry. A car inches its way along the street, plowing white furrows with its wheels.

Dick Hill's wife smiles a little—puts out the porch light, locks the door, tiptoes upstairs. She looks in on the children, undresses and goes to bed. Ten minutes later, she's fast asleep—with the same drowsy little smile playing around her lips.

Dick's snug and safe in a Pullman—all's well!

For comfort, safety and dependability - **GO PULLMAN**

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁵⁷

Saturday

[February 20, 1943]

Dearest -

It's Saturday night and in direct contrast to the many happy times, we had one of those long drawn out nights with not a thing to do. The above fact is one of the very few bad features of this camp. When there is no *Open Post* you either go to the Post Theater or you sit in the barracks and try to pass the time away playing cards, reading or listening to the radio...

The commercials here consist mainly of advertising medicines - not for human consumption but for that sick cow or hog or else they tell you how to make the livestock healthy and fat...

At the present time the program [is sponsored by] Dr. Laguerre's livestock powder.

The few Lucky Fellows who have families in town are out for the weekend, The rest are either at the show or here writing letters.



The post-master must have read one of my letters to you because this morning there were two more letters from you which brings them... almost up to date.

I also had a letter from Norm¹⁵⁸ and now that he has recuperated from that miserable trip from Camp Forest to Fort Jackson, I guess he is set. At least he sounds happy in the letter. He mentions something about going to some sort of school. It doesn't sound like the usual clerks school that the Army runs and so he may have struck something good. He also asked me if I thought he had a chance in the Air Corps and I am puzzled as to how to answer him. I'd hate to give him the wrong advice... As you know, he doesn't have a very good heart. Though he might pass the first physical, they would be sure to find it out here during the Schneider

¹⁵⁷ 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

¹⁵⁸ N. Norman Levy is the younger son of Arthur and Sarah Levy. He recently enlisted in the Army.

[Test], which is... the test given the heart¹⁵⁹... He didn't do too badly on his IQ Test, getting a 118... I think the best thing for him would be to stay where he is, but... I don't want to be the one to give him the wrong advice. Do you think I should... tell him what [to] expect once he is accepted or should I do as he asks and make a decision for him?

We Navigators are sure that we are shipping some time this coming week because this afternoon we were called into the Squadron Office to sign the payroll again. That means that before we leave they will give us a partial payment covering about three weeks of our life as a cadet. I signed for \$45, but by the time deductions are taken care of I'll no doubt be lucky to get \$20. Naturally, we are quite happy because the sooner we leave here, the sooner we start our training and thus the sooner we'll get our wings and then - oh happy day of days - we will be husband and wife.

There was another inspection this morning and just because there was an award made to the winner we didn't win. Every other week we [take] the honors but the winner of today's inspection had been promised an extra *Open Post* night - the competition was really tough and we were a poor third.

Syl, I've just picked up my pen after daydreaming here on my bunk for half an hour about the wonderful times we had together, especially on our trip to New York, but you don't know just how happy your love has made me. I'm the luckiest fellow in the world to have a girl as nice or as beautiful as you. To sum up just how I feel I have to use a phrase that I've repeated time after time, you are everything that I've ever wanted in a girl.

You're mentioning that you liked Uncle Lou¹⁶⁰, because he, of all my relatives, is the one that I most admire and whose opinions and bits of advice I most respect and try to carry out. It was through him... that I was straightened out on a certain few facts for which I shall always be

¹⁵⁹ The Schneider Exam was intended to provide a measure of circulatory efficiency. It basically involved a medical technician taking applicant blood pressure and pulse readings three times—laying down, standing up, and after light exercise. The exercise consisted of stepping up and down on a stool 10 times.

¹⁶⁰ Louis (Lou) Wisotsky is the brother of Sarah W. Levy and Lenny's uncle.

grateful. He is a wonderful person and if I can be anywhere near the kind that he is I'll have no fears as to your being proud of me.

Goodnight my sweet and because this letter may reach you on our day of the week¹⁶¹, give yourself a couple of good kisses for me -

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁶¹ Lenny Levy and Sylvia Geetter celebrate the day of the week - Wednesday - they were engaged to marry.

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁶²

Sunday

[February 21, 1943]

Dearest -

What started out to be just a dreary day had quite a good finish. We were up at 5:30 for *reveille*, had breakfast at 6:00 o'clock and then went back to bed. I didn't so much as turn over until 11:00 o'clock when the boys woke me to ask if I had to go to the *john*. I got out of bed, washed up, and went to our usual good Sunday dinner. Back from *Chow* and we decided to go to the show. When we arrived... we found that there would be none until evening due to... a Delay in transportation of the films from Atlanta. Rather disgusted we went back to the barracks, sat around and talked some, then we all decided to practice some bunk fatigue (Army talk for sleeping.)



We were up at 4:00, washed up and after debating a while decided to go to the show without having supper. It was 5:30 when we got into the show and it wasn't long before the show started. The picture was *Star Spangled Rhythm* and as you said it was very good. You can well imagine the roar that went up from a 1000 cadet voices when Veera Serena went into

her dance! After the show another fellow and I went into the camp restaurant and ate - three hamburgers, two do-nuts, a piece of apple pie, a cup of coffee and a pint of milk, a piece - Yup! We were hungry. We don't have the bus trouble here that you are experiencing, as the theater is just a short walk from the barracks and then again the weather is very mild.

¹⁶² 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

Syl, I have gotten all my letters together and wrapped them up together with a couple of things for you. If you care to, put the letters away for the future, if not burn them. The insignias¹⁶³ are the same as what I wear on my blouse.

The boys are starting to speculate as to where we are going to ship to. The *latrine rumors* are flying thick and fast and... we've been all over the country. Of course no one knows exactly where we will land and we won't know until we get there.

There was another letter from you today so you can see that the mail is improving at least on this end. I do hope that you are getting my mail as regularly.

Just before starting this letter I read an article on the training a Navigator gets¹⁶⁴. It is really going to be strenuous work. Among other things, I am to be a star gazer. Yes, a Navigator has to be able to travel by the stars. During the course of training I will fly over 15,000 miles telling the pilot where to go and how fast to go there; Woe unto me if we do not arrive over a certain area within two minutes of the ETA (Estimated Time of Arrival.)

I can well imagine the excitement that girl in your office went through and someday, in the not too distant future, I hope to be able to ask you... to [attend] my graduation but for a more important occasion than to see my wings pinned on.

There isn't much more to say so I guess I'll say goodnight. I love you very much my dear and I'm getting to miss you more and more each day - pray that it won't be so very much more before we see each other again.

Good night my darling

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁶³ Lenny enclosed his embroidered arm insignia from Nashville

¹⁶⁴ The demand for navigators required a constant expansion of the training program. Through 1943 and the end of the war, more than 50,000 had graduated. The elimination, or *wash* rate was approximately 20 percent.



*This announcement is made with the approval
of the Joint Army and Navy Personnel Board.*

AVIATION CADET TRAINING

**TO BECOME BOMBARDIERS, NAVIGATORS, and PILOTS
IN THE ARMY AIR FORCES**

is available to qualified men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six, inclusive. The Air Corps Enlisted Reserve affords an opportunity to young men of seventeen years and less than eighteen years of age to qualify for future training as Aviation Cadets.

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U. S. ARMY  **AIR FORCES**

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁶⁵

Monday

[February 22, 1943]

Dearest wife-to-be -

Today may have been the anniversary of George Washington's birthday and a legal holiday back home but not in the Army. The schedule here went on as usual and, if anything, the Calisthenics were tougher than they have been...

Dearest, before I go any farther, I want to explain why I asked if everything at home was all right. For a while Syl, your letters were so sure and matter of fact that it frightened me. Lately, they have been much better and after reading today's letter I feel much better. I really don't mind your writing in pencil, especially if it permits you to write such lengthy and nice letters as the one I received today.

Life down here gets easier and easier as the time grows nearer for us to leave here. Outside of taking calisthenics... I didn't move out of the barracks except to eat. After the calisthenics... I was so tired that I laid down on my back for a good hour just getting my breath back and resting my muscles.

After I had gained sufficient strength I went over and took a good, hot shower followed by an invigorating cold one, then shampooed my hair and gave myself a good shave. It all made me feel like a new person and was well worth all the trouble.

Since arriving here I have acquired a new habit... using aftershave lotion and powder after shaving. It makes me feel so refreshed that I'm sorry it took me so long to get into the habit. What do you think of it?

Right now, Irving Berlin is singing his famous song," Oh I hate to get up in the morning" on the radio during the Lux presentation of *This*

¹⁶⁵ 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

is the Army¹⁶⁶ and believe you me there was never a truer song ever



written.

For some strange reason it is tougher to get up mornings in the Army than it is in civilian life. It takes two of the fellows to get me out of bed each morning. Once out of bed it isn't bad - for I know that it won't be long before I can get back in again!

Latrine rumors are still flying today: they had us leaving for Santa Ana CA this coming Friday. Either way I hope it's true for... I've always had the dream of seeing this wonderful country of ours and now it's coming true but not in a very pleasant way. Someday... when we're Mr. and Mrs. we will take a trip together and be happy doing it. Not even Virginia could dampen my ardor for traveling and that was really a hole!

Tomorrow will no doubt be our last *Open Post* at this camp. Just before leaving here we are restricted to the *area* so that in the event the shipping orders are changed they can get a hold of us without too much trouble.

Butch dearest, I miss you in a thousand different ways too numerous to mention but suffice to say that long ago my missing you so, has proved conclusively that you are the one girl in the world for me. Not that I didn't know it before I left.

Just yesterday I was going to ask if you had heard from Franny - strange that you should mention her in today's letter. I wonder if she and Phil realized just how lucky they are that he is stationed so close to home. Some fellows get all the breaks. Remember me to her and tell her thanx for the well wishes.

Nothing more to say so until tomorrow - goodnight my darling

¹⁶⁶ The Lux Radio Theatre. February 22, 1943. "This Is The Army". Sponsored by: Lux, Vimms. The program has a cast of over 200 soldiers. Irving Berlin delivers a message to the head of Army Emergency Relief, in Washinton, D. C. Major General Irving Phillipson replies from Washington.

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Link to audio file of radio broadcast:

<https://www.oldtimeradiodownloads.com/drama/lux/lux-radio-theater-43-02-22-384-this-is-the-army>

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁶⁷
Wednesday
[February 24, 1943]

Dearest -

Tonight being an *Open Post* there was no time for a letter. Am writing this from the Y[MCA,] where there is to be a dance. Received a letter today that will describe the duties of a Navigator fully tomorrow. I tried to call earlier but all the circuits were busy. I am leaving here this weekend, but cannot say exactly where, as it is a military secret!

Miss you and love you more each day - five months isn't so very long -

Love
x
Lenny

¹⁶⁷ An undated postcard postmarked 2/24/1943

Nashville, Tennessee¹⁶⁸
Wednesday
[February 24, 1943]

Dearest -

My last *Open Post* in this camp was not too happy... I tried and tried to place a call through to you but as I mentioned in the card, circuits were busy and it would have been too late. After making the card, I went into the dance which was not up to par. The crowd was 75% Cadets and as if that were not enough, I acquired a severe headache from the foul air. However, it was better than walking the streets or sitting in some Grille drinking, so we stayed there. Speaking of drinking, I sure am glad to have it never got a hold on me. Some of the fellows decided to celebrate our shipping by going on a terrific binge. To make a long story short two of them didn't show up until this morning, a very black mark on their service records, as it means they were AWOL¹⁶⁹. And the rest can just about hold up their heads. As for me the headache is gone and I feel swell. Since talking to you last week, I haven't had so much as a beer. Don't miss it and don't intend to have any until there is cause for real celebration.

The training and duties of a Navigator are numerous and complicated. I'll do my best to explain it as best as I can. I get a little mixed up because I don't know them all myself. The prime duty is to get a Bomber over its target exactly at the predetermined time. A navigator must be able to tell a plane's position at any time, day or night. By the use of various instruments he has to be able to forecast the weather and when the occasion arises be able to handle one of the guns on the plane. From all this you can see that I will be taught *Math*, Meteorology, gunnery, radio and four different ways to plot the course of a plane and how to keep it on the course. The four ways are called methods of navigation: Pilotage, Celestial, Dead Reckoning and Radio.

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¹⁶⁹ AbsentWithOut Leave



Pilotage is flying from one point to another through the use of visible landmarks, [which is] useless at night. Celestial [Navigation,] the most important of all, is taught so that we can determine the position of the plane day or night, rain or shine, through the use of the heavenly bodies. Radio [Navigation] means being *on the beam*. The *beam* [is] a signal sent out from a radio station and heard by the navigator only when he is flying in the correct direction. Dead reckoning is blind flying, or flying by the use of instruments only. To quote a paragraph of a folder they issued to us when we first arrived, “the Navigator must have a high level of intelligence. He must enjoy solving complex problems by mental rather than physical activity. He must be able to use precise scientific instruments accurately and rapidly.” From the above can you understand how they made me a navigator? No, neither can I...

There isn't a person who can tell you what the various *insignias* stand for, because there are so many new ones coming into you that it is impossible to keep up with them. Some tell what part of the country a

soldier is from, or rather which part he is stationed in, others tell what division he is attached to and still others mean what Service or arm he belongs to. Perhaps I better explain the difference between an arm and a service of the Army. An arm is a branch of the army actually engaged in combat, for instance the Air Corps, the infantry, etc. A service is a branch that serves the combat troops such as the Medical Corps, quartermaster Corps, Finance, etc.

This letter is written on our 16th anniversary, [and] will be my last from Nashville. Although I am not permitted to say just when we are leaving here, my belongings will be packed by noon tomorrow and the stationery will be with them. All signs point to a long trip as our bags are shipped the day before we leave.

The two suit episode only serves to emphasize my opinion of Margie. By the way, tell her I will answer her letter from my next station.

The news of the Pratt was certainly startling. I really can't understand either one of them. They certainly seem like nice people, yet they do the weirdest things. Jack will no doubt be drafted very shortly. Then what will Pratt do?

Little by little you are mastering the Culinary Arts. Before you know it you'll be able to prepare a full course meal. Seriously though Syl, I'm proud of you, you need not worry about being able to feed me when we're together for good, for after all I have a *smaht* girl.

Butch my sweet, they're going to send me even farther away from you. Just remember that the greater the distance between us the greater my love is for you.

Until the next stab on my travellogue, dearest just remember

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny