2-9-1959

1959-02-09, Bette to Parents

Bette J. Barto

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Subject Terms
Women and the military, Women and war, United States -- Air Force, United States -- Army -- Air Forces, Photographs, Armed Forces -- Correspondence, Correspondence -- Vietnam War -- 1961-1975, Christmas

Summary
This collection contains 139 correspondence from Maj. Bette J. Barto, USAFE to her parents while serving as a nurse during the late 1950s and 1960s. Also included are three photographs, one special orders document, and one marriage license. In several cases, Bette refers to her parents as "Lizzie" and "Hugh Elmer," or simply "Elmer." Three letters from 1961 or 1962 are undated and placed in a separate folder.

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Dear Mom and Daddy,

I'm waiting for Son to pick me up after work. My relief nurse came early and got my report before I was expecting her. Tomorrow night I move back to the surgical ward and then, if I try, I have 2 days off.

I'm pretty certain that I'm getting your picture, Mom. I haven't counted them, but I've gotten one or two every 2 or 3 days since I got here. Some days we get none, other days we get a lot—never a happy medium!

Don't worry about our eating stuff unwashed. We don't eat anything sold to us by the Arabic without cooking it in a chlorox solution. Those of us who live on base have a much easier time than those off base. The off base folks even have to put Chlorox on their drinking water and their kids are hit with colds or pneumonia about half the time because none of the buildings down
town have Central heating systems, so they are all very damp. The have numbers of cases of families coming in sick from Carbon Monoxide poisoning from letting gas heaters burn too much. Of course, in base we have central heating, so this isn't a danger with us.

2 pm next day

Son came and brought me another quart of milk so we came home and celebrated his return to flying status by drinking most of the milk. When any pilot is in the hospital they are removed from flying status until declared fit to fly again by a specially trained doctor – the Flight Surgeon. So Son is back on alert for Thursday night. We are supposed to go in town to dinner there because it's my day off so I hope he doesn't have to fly that evening. Mom, don't worry about Joe or Son or anyone else. They are single but short timers here. Joe hasn't been in less than 100 days. I'm leave in August and besides, I'm older than both of them probably.
I'm waiting eagerly for word about the kids. I got your letter about the makeup & toiletries. Stuff being sent. The only thing we haven't gotten yet is the household goods and that's because that stuff comes by boat - so don't fret - it will come.

I just finished breakfast of bacon (canned), eggs (frozen), not too good; toast (always terrible) and tomato juice & coffee. With the rest of the German milk in it. I used one of the kids' fry pan and had the funnies from the Versace newspaper "The Stars & Stripes". I always save 2 or 3 days' date - we never have the Sunday funnies on Sunday usually Monday. The news is old when we get it, but it's fun to read anyway - that's one way to make me read the paper.

Say hi to Marie & Mary Ann and the Helen. I'll send the kids' camel saddles from Cairo (little ones) as soon as I can catch a flight going in that direction.

Mom, it's about time for your E.P.O. Check up and I want you to ask Dr.
Don't mind copying me a note on a scrap of paper as to how it sounds. For him I don't trust you to spell the words! Also, don't forget you are to ask for a gun exam too. Now don't back down, Mom, because you'll feel better after being checked! Daddy, stop that heavy drinking and get more real rest. There's no sense in deliberately trying to kill yourself.

I got to dress & get back to work for my 3:00 Shift for a week. I hope.

Love,
More Later.
Bette