1959-10-25, Better 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. Baro, 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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Sunday Afternoon
25 October 59

Dear Mom and Dad,

Excuse the pencil. I’m in Rayo’s room—he’s using his fountain pen to complete his last theme in English class. He just got in from mine holes in golf and today I’m tired. My left wrist is very weak—old basketball injury showing up—so I have to wear it bandaged with ace bandage when we play. I am really enjoying trying to play. He tied another couple for 3rd place in a Scotch-four some last Sunday. That’s pretty good for a new duffer like me.

We have a really good week at work this week because all our chief
I've finally gotten Polly off on a fairly good evening with a friend of Ray's, and Is has gone to her room to take a nap before going to work. Ray is at school, next to his last class, and I thought I had better finish this before he gets home. I didn't have anything to cook tonight, so I made some fried ham sandwiches and cut up a bunch of fresh vegetables that Polly and Is managed to get at the commissary the other day. We had that for supper. Ray was too tired to eat anything else anyway, I guess. He was busy all day today rebuilding the quonset hut where his office is on the flight line. We had the first Tornado I have ever seen Saturday.
afternoon about 2 pm. Polly, Ray and I were sitting out at
the little club having a very late breakfast, because it had
rained so hard that morning that we couldn't play golf. We
were sitting by the windows that face on the Mediterranean and
someone noticed that there were big tubes of water being pulled
up thousands of feet into the air—about 5-6 miles off shore,
everyone commented how pretty the phenomena was, except Ray
who said he hoped they stayed out there because that was a
small tornado and would surely do some damage if it should
suddenly turn inland and cross the base. Sure enough, one
did and tore down the middle of the flight line—flattening
one building completely—luckily, since it was Saturday
afternoon, only one lone boy was in it and it fractured his
skull (he is now being specialgerd on my floor). It removed
Ray's building about 6-8 feet off its concrete base and tore
the insides completely up—covering the records and all in a
thick covering of mud. Our little AeroClub plane was missed
by about 25-30 feet. It didn't hit any airforce planes and
didn't do too much other damage on base, except blow out
some windows and blown down what few trees we had—besides
the damn palm trees— they can stand anything. We spent the
better part of Saturday pm. helping Ray scrape the salvagable records out of the floor, then we came on home and went to the club and had dinner and went dancing. We found out later that about 25 Arabs further inland were killed - those directly in the path of the thing in their flimsy little woven huts. Ray has been here the better part of three years and he has never seen or heard of a tornado before, so don't start worrying.

Well, it is the 26 of October, not long now before the end of this year. It really has gone much faster than I had anticipated. I still don't know whether I will be given my leave at the time I have requested it. Ray was sure of his at one point; now he says he too may have to sweat it out. Naturally we want them at the same time, but as long as we don't mention this, maybe our chances are better. People over here frown on anybody being very happy!

Excuse the typewriter, I have it here on my desk working on my ward manual, and it was easier to use it than it was to move it. Needless to say, I still can't type.

I haven't heard from you in several days; can't fuss since I have been slow in writing this week. I tried several times but have been working either on the manual or a lecture I have to give on Thursday on the Stryker. More later, love Bette