1959-12-22, 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.

Keywords
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Tuesday Noon
22 December 59

Dear Mom and Daddy,

Don't think I've dropped in a hole. I've just been on duty until I thought I'd drop over. The Queen of Libya had her armed operation and we have occupied her and the king under American guard and are still doing guard service to deep post operation. If Ike Eisenhower knew what we are doing, I'd have another heart attack. I can't believe he knows what's going on here or he'd say "leave it to the Libyans and come on home." I'm sure he's here waiting for Maj. Merrick to call me whether I'm to be given permission to work or to be given leave. I was supposed to be off, but instead, I'm to relieve the 11-7 nurse for one night only, but it serves to knock me off. I've promised the kids their Christmas and New Year's time off. I asked everyone else to want New Year's off. So we were to have today and Thursday Christmas off. Now I only get Thursday Christmas unless the three that too.
There's been very little time off duty for letter writing this week because I've moved to another room. Ray got me some paint and we painted the floors in the room & bathroom. It's just across the hall from my old room, but it's an odd room so it feels a little more unfamiliar. Well space and no arranged better. Ray helped me with flowers and move all the heavy furniture and all my junk. It's a gem around the house - thinks I can't do anything pertaining to hard work - so I guess we'll get used to having help. He spent when I got to the scrubbing stage & cleaning put drawers and dusting a place a little things - he grabbed a beer and heard for the television set in the day room. He put up our Christmas tree Sunday afternoon and decorated it Sunday night. He was very helpful - put it in a bucket of sand & rocks - string the lights and then suddenly he got this famed expression on his face and he confessed that he just couldn't stand to put on the bells and tinsel and ice coccles so I made him sit a watch and I had a marvelous time doing it all by myself - and I was wondering here I was going to make him do it my way! So it works
out just right.

She's flying today—shooting at our newest type I believe. He was really excited about it because lots of the officials in his outfit haven't been able to hit it. So he was eager to try it today. I can hardly wait to hear his report myself. He should be here by 2-2:30. Then we're going to paint the place of his new room. He's been waiting for a Col. to move so he could have this room with a private bath. The Colonels left yesterday so we hope to get this done and him moved in by Christmas too. It's in the same B-0-2 so it's not too far down the hall from the old room. I told him there is one way to make us clean house.

I got a card from Chely yesterday. She may be at your house by now? If so, tell her she should thank the powers that be each day that she left when she did. This place is really changing fast. Major Nichols practically had to ask our new Colonels permission to go to the bathroom. Ridiculous, but true.

Tell Chely I think it's fun and her fellow are breaking their engagement. I don't know if for sure, but Liz is not wearing her ring and she said she's going to the Air Force instead of going to school.
Mom, I sent you a radio. Then a silver tray with coasters to match with a "C" on each. Jeff, Joe and Jill will be matching in little leather trousers (gray with red & green trim) & white blouses. Their gifts should be there by now of the boat went out on time. Your gift was on its way at the same time. Daddy was expedited because I got it late. So he may get his first. It's not much for either of you—its so hard to buy over here, so don't you get me anything, I don't need anything. When I get home, I'll pick up a few things to mail them back.

I need a new pair of sturdy shoes—so I hate these Red Cross shoes. They sell here. I can last till January. I got the hose & thank God I was down to seams & that's disastrous. Need the ticket & I'll pay.

Well it's noon and my tummy is leaky, so I'll hunt a sandwich to eat, dead with a cold. The rainy season is here and we can't go off base much of the time. We are below sea level & these awful roads fill up to car window level in no time. If my curvilinear nerves had to climb out her car window & swim the other day on the way to walk Jolly it.

See you for now—wish I could see you. For Christmas—its my first away from home.