1960-05-14, 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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Dear Mom + Elmer,

I'm on duty but our census is still quite low on my ward - only 17 patients. The medical ward is buzzing though with sick children and many adults with the same infection I just got over. One of our nurses, Jerry O'Grady, is in with it and is seriously ill. They think she has perforated her intestine and is bleeding into her abdomen, as well as having an overwhelming peritonitis. We are afraid she may die. She tried to stay in the quarters like I did, but after 4 days of it, we got her to come into the hospital. I hope I don't ever have to again as I'm sure Amy will keep me to the hospital right quick. This has really frightened us all.

Ray was Aerodrome Office from 0800 yesterday until 0830 this morning and so had to stay around the flight line all day. Last night one of his friends, Ed Cole, and his
date and I got steaks and I made potato bread and we went out to the picnic grounds at the end of the flight line (called Banana Village — though I don’t know why since there isn’t the first banana plant there.) Ray came out in his radio truck and had supper with us — still on duty. The steaks were lovely. Ed had gotten them cut especially, and he must know someone at the commissary better than we do; for we never get meat like that before. After we ate, Ray went back to work and we came home so I won’t see Ray until 3 pm today when we hope to squeeze in 9 holes of golf.

All of my ambulatory patients are gone to Sabraida to see the ruins. The Red Cross took them on a bus! That leaves me with only 10 people on the ward. Too bad they all couldn’t have gone — then I could have gone home too.

I finally got the last box from Hamilton’s and I think I added...
up the total correctly and Mail this morning.
Mom, I need a pair of flat
heels play shoes of some sort.
Panties, namely. Sometimes when
you are near Miller's or Spence's,
see if you see any white flat
Panties like I'd wear. They have
none in our clothing store. I
would wear an 8 1/2 B or a 9 A,
depending on the style.
I also need some Max Factor
poncance make up. I need one box
of #1 and one box of a darker
shade. Ask the sales lady if there is
a shade between #1 and #2. #2
is too dark for the first part
of summer. #1 or that #1-#2 stage
#2 looks too light and
#1 looks too dark.

I also need — see quit here — a
real fine hair net with no rubber
around the outer edge. You know,
the invisible kind I wore when
I just got out of school. My hair
is beginning to be too long to wear anything. I'm trying to let it grow a little—so I can put it up in the back where I've been swimming—but it's hard to keep neat on duty with no hair net. If you find and send a couple (probably you can get them at the 5 & 10)—maybe Miller would have them so you won't have to mail any packages yourself.

Now, don't break your neck to town to get this stuff. I'm not hurting—I don't know which green tablecloth you are talking about. I have a small one here—6 peace, I believe, but I've been using it, quite a lot. I don't think it's stained, but I think it might look used. So I have another green one at home? There's no rush, because she won't be using it for a couple of years anyway. She's moving into a trailer in town—and she has 2 years to go before she and her husband retire and have a real home to take your time.

I got your letter written on the
back to Helena. I gather, by that, that the kids are OK and the other two didn't take Jeff's medicine—I knew Helen is relieved, temporarily. I knew you are getting excited about their coming visit. I hope everything goes well during their stay. Elmer, you should come now, while they're there, so you all will have a nice visit.

Still, it's nearly lunch time. We had a few interruptions while writing. I guess Ray is out playing golf.

How's that. He just called. He has played 9 holes and was starting on the second 9—just called to tell me he got tees from one of our friends, Ed. They will pick me up at 3:30 so I guess I'd better get this and go eat my lunch—then work a bit, so I can get off on time.

Love,
Bette
Mom—I forgot to mention how much Ray enjoys having the letters addressed to both of us. "Field Stream" are all we received.

He loves me too!