1960-05-22, 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.

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Dear Mom and Daddy,

I'm on duty (3-1) - have run for 3 miles and have 9 more to go! It's killing you, too. I note I am experiencing a little what I've got to look forward to after July 6th. Ray is somewhere in the middle of the Mediterranean on a British Royal Navy Aircraft Carrier. He left this morning at 1030 in a J-Bird with another Capt. to fly to the island of Malta. There they were to be picked up by the British ship and then set sail for some place on the high seas. Tomorrow, at some undisclosed time, a squadron of our aircraft (F-100's) will pull a mock attack on them. Only their Admiral knows about it before hand. If they detect the arrival of our planes and get there in the air to meet us, they will be told not to shoot. If they don't detect our planes, they are supposed to attack the success or failure of their shooting. It should be fun - after it is all over. They will be brought back by helicopter.
to Malta and come back home Monday night or early Tuesday morning.

You've probably heard the announcement about an aircraft from Keesler being down in East Germany. There were nine people on board – two of whom were our flight surgeons – Dr. McCaskill and his wife. I don't know who else was on the plane. It was on a military flight from here – I don't know the particulars as to why it was forced down in the East Zone. Our base commander left here this morning to begin negotiations to get our people back. He heard they were all dead at first – so I hope the second report is the right one. I was at Landeck with Dr. McCaskill. I've been very busy on duty for the last 2 evenings and only nominally so this evening. Gone is on this floor specializing my only really ill patient – a bleeding duodenal ulcer. They went in on him last night and did a gastro-Jejunostomy to bypass the duodenum so it could rest and perhaps stop bleeding.
as much better after 23 pints of blood, but it still bleeding in both directions. They gave a base wide call for blood and got 53 pints. They couldn't accept a lot who came because it was Saturday and the alcohol content was a little high. One drunk at the Officers club almost fell trying to climb into the ambulance to come to the hospital to donate his blood.

We have had 5-6 days of temp over 110° and even up to 125° on the flight line. It was so bad that the base commander called off all flying and said "everybody go home." Because the crew chiefs that service the aircraft were dropping like flies from heat. Of course the planes are air conditioned in flight, but it's terribly hot getting them ready to go. The temp is back to normal now—only about 90-100° so its lovely beach weather.

We are all very brown already. Ray and I spent 3 hours from 9-12 yesterday morning on the beach and she refused to wear any latter time it didn't feel hot—so guess who
was morning about the heavy old rough parkebus steps on his tender feet and shoulders this morning. He will learn one day, I suppose.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue got me for $4.83 more this year. I figure out the short form — since I had nothing to be exempt for.

Mom, do what you like about the table cloth. I can't remember the green one at home — there's no rush anyway.

I'm sorry Minnie Howell is as much worse but I wouldn't want her to linger on if she is suffering terribly.

Polly over me a letter — I heard from one of Emma's friends that she is definitely going to Denver in July. I hope Polly gets too also.

Here, I have a couple of chores to do before lights out, so I'll better stop for now. I hope you all are well — letters have been slow in coming some days none gets any. I got one from you 2 days ago — the first in 5-6 days.

Love you.

More later.

Bette