1960-09-27, 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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27 Sept. 60.
Tuesday afternoon
4 P.M.

Dear Mom and Daddy,

I got your newspaper and letter, Daddy. Thanks a lot and I'm glad you feel good enough to hunt & little and go visit.

Mom, I received the Merry Widow and the beautiful blue p.j.'s. They both fit like a dream. I'll enclose a check. Thank you for the better. Now, I'll need only one thing else. I would like to have my white gown and the negligee and the white satin Stock. They are all in my cedar chest. The gown & negligee are both wrapped (Aparantly) so that blue tissue paper and the shoes are in white. I think.

Ray will be coming about 2 weeks from now; hope I heard from him yesterday and everything is finally falling into place. This has no anticipation. I still hate it. He is still trying to get by.

The letter of the day today is to writing 18 days after he arrives, before getting married, but may not
be able to avoid it. We are now investigating the possibility of marriage beyond the 3 mile limit over the Mediterranean. We think the International Law of the High Seas might apply in this case. Like being married by a sea captain, we may be able to get an airplane to fly us 3 miles out with the Chaplain and one witness and be married over the Med. This way, Libyan law would not apply. I'll let you know if it can be done. I went to the Chaplain today. He thought it was a wonderful idea, but we must be certain it's legal.

I bought my wedding dress in downtown Tripoli Saturday. It is a white, Italian-knit dress, street length, very beautiful. It is perfect for a wedding and still it will be a good dress for years. I'll try to draw a diagram:

[Diagram of a white dress with long sleeves and a belt around the waist]
I will wear a white feathered hat (little tiny thing that hug the crown of my head) its borrowed from Jerry, the girl I go to town with to shop and have my hair done. She bought it from Paris. I plan to wear black suede high heels, white gloves (white). This is for the downtown ceremony if we have to have it. If we marry in the plans. We will be in uniform and if we have a #3 ceremony on base we will wear uniforms. Complicated isn’t it? But if we get married with this much that having it won’t be likely we’ll ever forget it, this is for sure anyway.

I haven’t mailed Helen’s stuff yet. I have like to start doing it’s my own washing & ironing this last week. My Mother would like help my linens and spot clothes left feel stuff. If you know how I lot ironing. I washed & day Saturday and its clean with a wringer machine and only a kitchen sink to rinse the clothes in. I even did all my white rugs and my white bedspread. I love to iron all my white linen. Gosh!
No word yet on when date I'll be coming home. I am having some trouble with being assigned to Seymour. They are trying to send me to a base in Missouri. I have already applied for a diversion to Seymour and I sent Ray a telegram to see if he could see Col. Aiken at the Pentagon. This makes our getting married now all the more necessary. I just can't face another 2 1/2 month separation after I come home, while I get transferred. So keep your fingers crossed that we can get it changed before they cut my orders for Missouri.

I feel close for now and get a few things done. I'm cooking ham and eggs, pan, and applesauce. One of a friend, Orella, has moved to the states too, so she's kinda lonely too. She isn't sure she wants to get married or she stayed here to decide. I'm glad there's no question in my mind about Ray. My only one is "How soon?"

I miss you! Tell Mary Ann I will write. I hope her Christmas doll already. It's a beauty.

Love, Bette.