1964-09-16, 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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Wednesday Morning
16 Sept. 64 at 0615

Dear you all,

This will be short and the mistakes most apparent, for I have done little practice since Ray gave me the machine. I thought I had better peck out a little hello, or you would be worried about Gent and me. My silence has not been due to any lack of thinking about writing, but I have been up to my elbows, in the most literal sense, in white Latex paint since last Friday evening.

I got the bright idea to paint the bedroom walls white; so I can use some other color besides gold and white and black in there. I knew that white over blue was going to require two coats, but I didn't have any conception of the horror of the first coat. I was fortunate in getting the paint free from one of my good sargeant-friends and got a roller and pan on loan from him too. I figure that since I am improving the house, I might as well get paint from the GI source; they surely get enough of Ray's and my salary and yours and my taxes to afford me two gallons of flat wall paint. Anyway, it took me all Friday evening, much of Saturday, with frequent stops to go wading in the rain with Gent, much of Sunday afternoon, and part of Monday and last night.

The plaster-work on the walls was more like "mud-dobbing" so I couldn't use the roller at all and was unexpectedly thrown back on a three inch brush which was rather slow work. I often wondered why there were brush marks on all the painted surfaces, for it is well known that any contractors who work for Uncle Sam do all work the easiest and cheapest way possible. NOW I know.

Last nite, I only worked about thirty minutes re-painting one 3 foot square area that looked a little pale blue in spite of two coats. This morning,
it looks lovely and all seems worth-while. I thought, at one point, that
I had bitten off more than I could chew and was feeling far too sorry for
comfort. Now, I'm proud and eager for Ray to see my handiwork.

Ray left at 0330 V/14 Thursday morning of last week, and got down there
at 0800, with ample time to get to work at 1000. He has not gotten a place
to stay for sure so was in the Holiday Inn. I haven't any address for him
yet; so haven't written. He hopes to get home this weekend if work permits,
for the kids two doors up the street are having our annual back-yard party
for the neighborhood—Ray and I started it two years ago and everyone had
such a good time they have talked of nothing else all summer. Waiting on
Ray to be here has been the problem.

I attended a formal party for Ray's squadron Saturday night at the
invitation of one of the Captains who works for him. He and his wife came
by for me and paid for my dinner. I was most grateful; for I seldom hear
from them when he is away, since Helen E. is gone. I don't think they
know that Ray will be moving to 19th; so I guess the Wing Commander is
keeping the secret well. He was there at the party too and didn't speak
to me—and he usually does, at great length—so I guess he is pouting over
Ray's transfer, but is too proud to let anyone else know about it. I hope
we get it in writing before too long.

I had better well quit and get my ducks in a row or I will be late
this morning. I had to be there a 0700 yesterday for an In-ranks inspection
of all nurses and physicians and dentists. We looked pretty good considering
that some of the doctors and dentists have been in uniform only a few weeks.
Thank heavens, they didn't try to march the formation anywhere. Last year
they did and it was a riot. I almost got crushed in the rush when they said
squad left and half of the doctors went right! War's he———!

More later, Love,
Bette and Gent