

Butch Geetter and the Hot Rock



A POW Love Story

Part 2: Flying in the Air Corps (1943-44)

by Sylvia Geetter Levy and Lt. Leonard Levy

Edited by Alan Neal Levy

Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana¹
Saturday
[February 27, 1943]

Dearest [Butch] -

Here I am writing to you from my third camp. This is by far the nicest looking of them all. We all had the premonition that we were to be shipped here but when the official notice came five hours out of Nashville we were all a bit disappointed...

The trip down here was uneventful but knowing that you would like to hear about it I'll describe as much of it as I can remember. We boarded the train at 3:15 yesterday afternoon. We felt pretty good when we saw the train as it was made of eight Pullman cars² and two drivers. Thinking this meant a long trip, our hopes were renewed.

At 5:00 o'clock we went into the diner and had a very good meal in which the main dish was roast beef. 9:30 came and with it came our Porter to make up our berths... I drew a lower berth and had to sleep with Mitch, the fellow from Texas. As you thought, it is very difficult for two to sleep in one berth. There is absolutely no room to move around... unless you want to disturb your bed companion. Mitch and I sat in bed talking and smoking until 11:00 when we hit Birmingham, Alabama. We watched the lights of the city as we went by, then shut off our bed lights and went to sleep.

At 7:00 in the morning the Porter woke us. We got out of bed, washed, dressed and sat around until 8:00 when we arrived in Jackson Mississippi.

Here the train stopped and we were told to get off... and eat in the town. We lined up on the platform in groups according to the car we were in and each marched to a different restaurant. The group I was in went to... a real joint, but the food was really good.

¹ All five sheets were written on United States Army Air Corps stationery with an illustrated letterhead and mailed in a plain envelope. The logo is the five-pointed star with Navigation Wings

² **Pullman** constructed the first troop sleeper cars in 1943 to help ease the burden on the standard Pullman fleet. To increase the troop movement capacity of the railroads, the U.S. Office of Defense Transportation contracted with Pullman-Standard Car Company to build 2,400 troop sleepers.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST July 10, 1941



“Okay, guys – this is it !”

Assembly in 20 minutes. Pull kit and so forth. Their next letters home will be Y-mail; their address an APO. That's what travel orders mean.

To Pullman, those orders mean that sleeping cars must be waiting when the boys are ready to roll. 20 cars here—40 there—100 somewhere else. Every night, special trains of Pullmans move an average of almost 30,000 troops.

That takes a lot of cars. It leaves only part of the Pullman fleet to handle regular passenger travel that is far heavier than in peacetime, when the whole fleet was available. So no wonder trains are crowded and accommodations sometimes scarce.

But most passengers understand the situation. And the fact that boys in uniform come first with them, as they do with Pullman, is not the only reason for the tolerance with which they take whatever space is open. It's also that wartime travelers seem to look on Pullman in a different light. A Pullman trip, to them, is no longer simply the gay adventure in good living that it was before the war. Now, Pullman privacy and comfort are a means to an end instead of an end in themselves.

They help a harassed man relax after a troubled day. They give him a few restful hours—undisturbed—in which to think things over. Then, when bed-time comes, they invite the deep, refreshing sleep from which a wartime traveler wakes with the new energy and vigor he needs to do the kind of job that Uncle Sam expects of him.

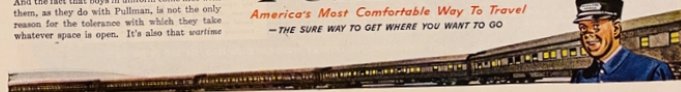
These things, though they may not themselves win battles, are important to those whom war keeps on the go. So please:

Cancel promptly, when plans change, and make the Pullman bed reserved for you available to someone else.

Travel light and give yourself and fellow passengers the room that excess luggage would take up.

Ask your Ticket Agent on which days trains may be least crowded on the route you want to take. Try to go on one of those days if you can.

PULLMAN
America's Most Comfortable Way To Travel
—THE SURE WAY TO GET WHERE YOU WANT TO GO



We were served ham and eggs, grits (a food... [that] looks and tastes like Cream of Wheat) toast, coffee, and doughnuts. Everything was all right until we heard the price, 75 cents per cadet... This time we had to pay for our meals, and someday the Army will reimburse us. Jackson is a fairly nice city and the capital of the state...

We were back on the train by 9:00 and rode straight to Monroe through the most poverty stricken towns I've ever seen. The towns in Mississippi are *Tobacco Road*³ come to life in Technicolor... The homes look like a good wind would blow them down. They have no paint on them, no electricity, no plumbing and no cellars.

³ *Tobacco Road* is a 1941 American comedy drama film directed by John Ford and starring Charley Grapewin, Marjorie Rambeau, Gene Tierney and William Tracy.

Crossing the Mississippi River we were in Louisiana and there I saw the most level ground ever. The land just stretches out for miles without the slightest hill... The roads are just as straight as a dice table, no curves or anything. The ground... is swampy and... about 2:30 we caught our first look at Selman Field, our home for the next few months. The place was a sight for sore eyes because the barracks were painted white instead of the usual army olive drab, they were small and best of all there was no smoke, indicating that the heating system did not use soft coal as the majority of Army camps do.



Later we found to my surprise that they use natural gas piped from Texas for heating and cooking purposes. The first thing we did after leaving the train was go to *Chow*. After eating my first meal here, all I can say is that there must be a catch somewhere. No Army *chow* can be this good. We had baked ham, four vegetables plus potatoes, real rye bread, butter, jam, milk, iced tea, water, and real apple pie. The only bad feature here is the water. It is so soft that when you shower you never feel that the soap is completely washed off, you can imagine how it tastes.

After *Chow* we were taken to our barracks and it was there that I got my real surprise. The barracks are divided into two suites of four rooms, each room containing only two beds. I picked one of the boys from my barracks in Nashville, Nat Lichtenholtz, as a roommate, and we

got the best room in the barracks. Besides the usual two... cots we have a very modern writing table... upon which this letter is being written. (Just think, no more latrine or shower letters!) Each room has its own light and gas heater - no more freezing in the morning or tending fires. The barracks are fairly new, therefore they are easy to clean and keep clean.

Believe it or not but we've already started our training. After getting situated in our room we were called out in *formation* and marched to a classroom where we met our Tactical Officer Lt⁴. Sparks who gave us six forms that have to be filled out tonight. He gave us some more information about the training here and sprung another surprise on us. Not only are we to be trained as Navigators, but also as Bombardiers. A new Army regulation just came through the other day stating that all Navigators are also to be Bombardiers and vice versa. Isn't that wonderful?

As new men... we have to undergo another two weeks *quarantine* before we can leave the post on an *Open Post* pass. There is only one a week but it runs from 2:00 Saturday afternoon until 2:30 Sunday morning and from 8:30 that morning until sometime Sunday night. That's all one pass. From what the older men on the Field tell us, even if there were *Open Posts* during the week, we wouldn't go, as there is so much studying to do. During the course of our training here we will acquire 48 textbooks plus numerous pamphlets. From this you can see that I'll have my hands and my mind full for the next nine weeks... of Pre-flight training. When the nine weeks are up we either remain here for Advanced training or go to another Field.

The weather here is extremely mild right now. It is 9:45 and one can walk around in shirt sleeves without feeling cold.

Another wonderful part of this camp is that we will never have KP. They have civilian help in the kitchen. We don't even have to pick up our used dishes from the table when we're through eating. Pinch me Butch, I think I'm dreaming all this - it all sounds too good to be true.

⁴ Lieutenant

Your last few letters were swell dear. They were so full of news and you seemed so happy that they really made me feel wonderful. By the way - just after I mailed my last letter to you I received a letter from Boomey⁵ containing some bad news. He washed out of pilot training due to the fact that his eyes started to go bad on him. He couldn't judge distances accurately enough and consequently couldn't land a plane properly. Now, to put it in his words, the tables are turned and instead of him being *my* upperclassman I will be *his*. The chances are very good that he will be at this Field in three or four weeks, as he has asked to be reclassified as a Navigator and this is where most of the Navigators are sent. From the talk I've heard, this is the best place I could have been sent to, as it is the oldest school of its type with the best teachers and equipment. All I have to do now is 'keep on the ball'!

Butch dearest, tonight I'm at least 1600 miles from you and yet somehow I feel very very close to you. It is probably because I love you so very very much and also because in five months we are to be together - you had better start saving your pennies. I may not get a furlough and you'll have to come down here; that would give us an added excuse for having the small wedding we have talked about.

Incidentally Butch, you don't ever have to think of repaying Mom and Pop for the little kindnesses that they show or give you; it is just their way of showing that they approve of [you as] my wife. You see... they love you as a daughter already - all your fears of them not liking you - remember - were certainly [misplaced.] I assure you that they like you for yourself and not simply because you are my girlfriend.

Goodnight my sweet

I Love you
xxxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁵ Adolf (Boomey) Siegel is a 1938 classmate of Sylvia Geetter Levy's from Weaver High School, one of three high schools in Hartford, Connecticut. Lenny Levy graduated from Weaver in 1936.

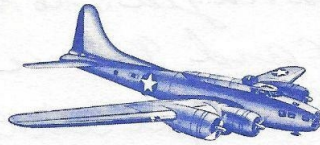
PS Upon seeing the length of this letter, Nat warned me to be sure and tell you not to expect letters of this length after the first three weeks - in fact he said to tell you not to expect more than one or two letters a week after the first month as there will be absolutely no time to write and from what I hear he is right - however I'll do my best and please keep writing to me every day.

Love
Lenny

The address⁶ stands for Air Force Preflight School (Bombardier-Navigator). The 43- 12 I think stands for the fact that we are the 12th class of the year 1943.

Love,
Lenny

⁶ Lenny is describing his new address at Selman Field



ARMY AIR BASE
GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA

Sunday

Dearest wife -

Arrived here about three hours ago, and after getting a place to sleep, bedding to sleep in and some food, I sent you the telegram which you have no doubt received by now. The trip here was very uneventful - we left at nine that morning and got into St. Louis at twelve the next day (I was all set to give you the surprise of your life had we gotten there sooner) We stayed there about three hours and then went on our way. Outside of the food and the usual card games I have nothing to say about the trip. To say that the food was lousy would be mild - and it cost us a dollar

Grand Island, Nebraska⁷

Sunday
[November 28, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Arrived here about three hours ago and after getting a place to sleep, bedding to sleep in, and some food, I sent you the telegram... The trip here was very uneventful; we left at nine that morning and got into St Louis at twelve, the next day. (I was all set to give you the surprise of your life had we gotten there sooner.) We stayed there [for] about three hours and then went on our way. Outside of the food and the usual card games, I have nothing to say about the trip... I managed to stay away from the card games until this morning, then got into a poker game and won close to fifty dollars. Just as soon as I hear when we are to get paid, I'll probably send you a money order. Oh yes! - our sleeping accommodations were very good - one man to a berth, with Rock⁸, another fellow, and myself having a private drawing room to ourselves, with me in the lower berth not bad, eh?

Sweetheart, I miss you terribly coming down here. I lie in bed just thinking of you, taking time out only to look at your pictures, which I had put up just as soon as we boarded the train. But you left me just as I wanted you to - just a little tears, but not too much. Just remember, all this isn't going to take long - just a few 'minutes' - and then I'll be back home with you.

I can't write anything about this place because I haven't seen any of it. We have a Formation at seven-thirty, and after that I plan on taking a walk around to see what's what - providing it stops snowing.

Don't send any letters here - we won't be here over a week -

And so my sweet, goodnight until tomorrow -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

⁷ Written on embossed stationery with Army Air Baser, Grand Island Nebraska letterhead in a plain envelope.

⁸ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

Friday - November 26 [1943]

Darling ~

Here I am on my way home. I can't begin to tell you how happy I am that you got a Pullman⁹ ticket for me. I guess we will be pulling into Monroe¹⁰ soon - It's five o'clock now.



Speaking of Monroe it certainly does bring to mind the happiness we had there. Despite the roaches, ants and the sickening heat we experienced there, it was heaven for me. I do love you so much my darling - everything will have something that I... associate with you, and.. it will only bring the pleasantest of memories.

Last night, going home to Francis¹¹'s, was about as unhappy a ride as it could be. I guess we were both a couple of real sisters. By the time we got to bed, I was so exhausted that I was thankful to be able to fall right to sleep. I did wake up however once during the night to find myself dangerously close to Francis. As mentioned to you today, it sure will be hard for me to get used to sleeping without you, darn it.

⁹ The Pullman Company constructed a total of 2400 troop sleepers for the Defense Plant Corporation between 1943-1945. These were put into service mixed with regular passenger equipment and in solid sets on troop trains until the final soldiers returned.

¹⁰ Monroe. Louisiana has been home for Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Levy since they married here on June 12, 1943. If she, as she states, is pulling into Monroe, she must have started her journey at a station near her former apartment, where she and Lenny had their tearful parting.

¹¹ Francis is Chris Christiani's wife. Chris is the Pilot of Lenny's crew. She, Eleanor Ellison and Sylvia were living with their husbands, in separate apartments in Monroe, Louisiana. Chris Christiani and Lenny were in the same crew, while Sam Ellison was in a different crew.

Awoke this morning about nine o'clock, my head ached just a bit, but it wore off and I'm feeling fine now - thank goodness. As I thought - and I'm not being critical - (I'm smiling here) Francis didn't have her things packed, so she had that to do this morning. I went over to Eleanor¹²'s and I had breakfast with her and Sam. When Sam left to go to the field¹³ - you know what he did, hon? He kissed me - it didn't take long - honest, it didn't.

We, Eleanor and I, had plenty of time left so we went into town. I got the picture Hon, You were right about my getting it - such a *smatt* husband. Oh yes - there was my final and last *tear*, to be made through Kress [Department store]! As usual, I couldn't go through it without buying something - stationery is one of my purchases. Eleanor bought a pair of play shoes like mine. I told Eleanor that now that I was leaving, she may be able to keep that... budget of hers - without my influence on her. Eleanor came on the train with me.¹⁴ I hated to say goodbye to Eleanor - she has been a very good friend. She bought me a pack of Chesterfield's, four boxes of matches - the reason for all the matches is because she said I never have any on me. Francis came along at the last minute - everything was taken care of. So off we went and now I'm on my way back to Hartford¹⁵.

I am now in bed - The earliest I have gone to bed in a long time. I wonder whether you are in bed now, too - in your own Pullman. Just think we are both doing the same thing tonight. Oh, how I wish we could be traveling together, not each going to separate destinations. Well, honey when this is over we will take a trip together and in every sense of the word, it will be a pleasure trip. Oh my darling I do love you so. I miss you so much already.

Guess what I had for supper? Turkey and cranberry sauce - jealous? The turkey was good, but I don't want to talk about the cranberry sauce - it was terrible. We are riding backwards and I hate that sensation. I guess I'd never be able to fly in an airplane.

Sweetheart, I am very tired now. If you were here I would get in my favorite position and snuggle up so very close. Well darling I can't do it now but soon we will be together again and I will be able to kiss you good night. However, in my heart I have my prayer and wherever you are... I'll say good night. If it were at all possible at this very

¹² Eleanor (Kohn) Ellison married Sam Ellison, a friend of Lenny's who also trained with him at Alexandria Army and Air Force Base, and would soon join him at the same Air Base in England.

¹³ Selman Field, Monroe Louisiana is where Lenny and Sam have been finishing their Flight Training. Sam is arriving for his morning training, while Lenny and his crew are on alert and awaiting transportation to a new base, which they expect will be a disembarkment point to a base in England to bomb German targets.

¹⁴ for one stop.

¹⁵ Hartford, Connecticut is her hometown, where she will reside with her mother, Adelle Stolper Geetter and sister Sadie Geetter at 148 Magnolia St.

moment - I would tell you how much I love you. I do love you so very much my darling and I'll say goodnight just like we used to. Here's a kiss, goodnight darling.

Saturday, November 27

Good morning darling ~

Here it is 7:50 and I am all dressed and waiting to get into St Louis. I had a big breakfast but somehow I'm still hungry. It is very stuffy on the train now. Looking out of the window makes me wish I could have just one whiff of that air. We are in Missouri and we are traveling along the Mississippi. It seems strange to see all the trees barren of their leaves after seeing them still on the trees in Alexandria.

Darling, something funny happened to me last night. Last night I awoke and heard someone trying to pull my curtain apart... the thoughts that ran through my mind... I didn't know what to do. I put the light up and remembered I had a nice long hat pin on my hat and figured that it can be a good bit of protection if properly applied. So I took my trusty hat pin off of my new hat and pulled open the curtain. There was a soldier - rank I couldn't tell, so I closed the curtain and he went away. I went to Francis's berth and told her the story. I got up enough courage (five minutes time - I'm a brave one) and I decided to go to the ladies room to see if I could see who he was in case he was still around. Sure enough along he comes followed by a Porter¹⁶ who had a ladder in his hand and guess what? He got on the upper berth over mine. Golly, you can imagine my relief. No doubt he must have been trying to get into his berth when I heard him. So back to sleep I went, but you can be sure I had the hat pin right in reach.

Honey, I expect the train to pull into St. Louis Station, so I'll continue this later, sweet.

Hello, here I am on the train all set for my ride straight to Springfield, [Massachusetts.] So far darling, everything has been working out fine and the trip has been very comfortable. Francis had trouble in making her connection from here on. She has to get off in Cleveland and the conductor says we should get there about nine tonight.

Darling, I wonder how you are. I hope your trip has been comfortable. If I know you - I bet you slept in the lower berth last night. I hope you left at the time scheduled yesterday because waiting around certainly can get to be very annoying.

¹⁶ One bunk in each Pullman car was dedicated to a porter who rode along with the troops and helped ensure their comfort. Every day, each bunk received fresh sheets and pillowcases in the grand Pullman tradition. The middle and lower bunks converted to daytime seating and each car included four wash basins and two restrooms. Each bunk set included a weapons rack and a place for foot lockers.

We arrived in Missouri and I can see the steel plants and in the distance the city is just covered with heavy smoke. I guess that I'll sit back a while and look at the scenery - whatever there is of it. Darling, I know that my thoughts will all be about you - I do love you so.

I am now in my berth - all nice and comfortable for the night. It is now 9:30 and Francis just got off at our last stop, Cleveland. She changes trains there.

It has been a very uneventful afternoon - I read practically all of the time. It looks like it is pretty cold outside - at least I hope so - it sure will feel good - that's what I get for being a northerner I guess.

Well, tomorrow night at this time I should be home. I will go to see your folk as soon as I can, I know they all are anxious to see me, and get all the latest news.

Well my darling, I guess there's not much more to say now. As soon as I finish writing for tonight I am going to try to get some sleep. So my darling goodnight and remember let me tell you I love you so very much. Goodnight, sweet.

Sunday November 28

Good morning darling ~

I am definitely on my last lap of the trip. I had a very good night's sleep and I feel fine this morning. The conductor told me that we are a half an hour late so that will get me into Springfield about ten o'clock. That will make it... so I leave Springfield about 10:30. Darling, this morning I woke up and looked out of my window and guess what I saw - snow! It sure looked good to me and the hills are beautiful. I realize now how beautiful the north is - I really appreciate it now.

I had my breakfast and I am all set. I had sunny side eggs this morning and darling they weren't broken. I wonder how they do that.

It looks like it is mighty cold outside. I wonder how the weather is where you are. No doubt it is plenty cold. Well darling, I'll end this letter when I get home. So until then, I love you darling.

I am now in Hartford. The exact place in Hartford is the railroad station. I am waiting for my brother Moe to pick me up. All of my luggage is here and I certainly do feel relieved.

The trip from Springfield to Hartford was one of anxiety. I guess after making such a long trip, when you reach the home stretch it seems as though you'll never get there. I guess

for the first time in my life I had a spell of homesickness and when we did pull into Hartford, it did look so good. I kept looking for familiar sights on the way from Springfield and I did see so many.

Well darling, here I am at the station. For the heck of it I looked for one familiar face and I know nobody here.

My sweet I guess this letter is a rough idea of what has happened since I left Alexandria. I hope at times it doesn't get boring. In spots, truthfully if I didn't write this and pretend I was talking to you as though you were right along with me, it would have been a dreadfully lonely and boring trip. and my darling, each time I wrote that I love you, I wish you knew how many times my heart was saying it. Closing this letter once again, let me tell you that I love you and that no matter where you go I'll be thinking of you.

Until tomorrow ~

Always yours,

Love,

Sylvia

XXX



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"Tomorrow night — Fort Knox !"

"We're a little late tonight, folks!
Just time to remind you that this broadcast has come to you from Great Lakes Naval Training Station, outside Chicago. Tomorrow we'll be with the boys at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Till then, this is Harry Von Zell saying—Good Night!"

Then a tired troupe of entertainers hurries to the Pullman car that's been "home" to them for weeks.

Like scores of other radio, screen and stage stars who are giving time and talent so generously to brighten training camp routine, these folks travel almost constantly. So do huge numbers of civilians engaged in war activities. And thousands of service men on leave.

In spite of this record-breaking traffic, Pullman's usual high standards could be maintained if all sleeping cars were in regular passenger service. But they aren't. Many have an even more essential war job. Made up into special troop trains, they move an average of almost 30,000 men in uniform a night.

So, with more people seeking space in fewer cars, "going Pullman" is not what it used to be.

Fortunately, most wartime passengers don't seem to mind. Hard-pressed by long hours and heavy responsibilities, they prize simple rest and relaxation far above the extra services of peacetime Pullman travel. To them, a good day's work tomorrow depends on a good night's sleep tonight.

And that's so important to so many people that when you plan to "go Pullman," please:

Ask yourself: "Is my trip necessary?" If it is, then . . .

Ask your Ticket Agent on which days trains may be least crowded on the route you want to take. Try to go on one of those days if you can.

Travel light and give yourself and fellow passengers the room that excess baggage would take.

Cancel promptly, if your plans change, and make the Pullman bed reserved for you available to someone else.

PULLMAN

—The sure way to get where you want to go



Grand Island, Nebraska¹⁷

Monday
[November 29, 1943]

Dearest wife -

This has been a long day, but not a busy one. I had a roll call to make at seven-thirty, class (that never took place) at ten, and another roll call at one this afternoon. In between times, I wrote a letter to Mom and Pop and later Rock¹⁸ and I went out on the line and gave the new planes the once over. They are of the latest style with quite a few important changes and all for the better.



Grand Island Army Air Base

Grand Island, Nebraska

I took a look around the base today and it isn't half bad. The Officers Club and Mess are both really good. In fact, when they run out of the regular meal that is being served, they serve steak. I mean steak! I've had two suppers here, and they've both been steak. The combat crew headquarters, where we are due to be processed eventually, is really something to write about. The lounge is known as the Esquire Room, and

¹⁷ Written on embossed stationery with Army Air Baser, Grand Island Nebraska letterhead in a plain envelope.

¹⁸ Raymond (Rock) **Robert Newmark** is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

it gets its name... from the greatly enlarged pictures of the better known Varga girls that are on the walls at one end of the room. There is a snack bar that serves almost anything. The country around here is really desolate looking - it is flat, sandy land with nary a tree in sight. As yet, I haven't seen the town but they tell me that it is about the same size as Alex¹⁹, and about the same type of town.

I'm writing this in the barracks and the boys are throwing cracks at each other left and right, so if this is rather incoherent you'll understand why.

One thing that I get a big kick out of here is seeing the fellows who have been 'alerted' walking around armed to the neck. Just before leaving here, all members of combat crews are issued guns and jungle knives, and they walk around with the guns on one hip and the knife on the other.

Butch darling, I'm like a chicken without a head here. Come five o'clock and I get a strange feeling, sort of like the one *Lassie* must have felt. It's unnatural to be unable to see you every day. What I'm trying to say, my sweet, is that I miss you very much and what's more I love you very, very much. And so my sweet until tomorrow I'll say

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

¹⁹ Alexandria, Louisiana

[Monday] - November 29, 1943

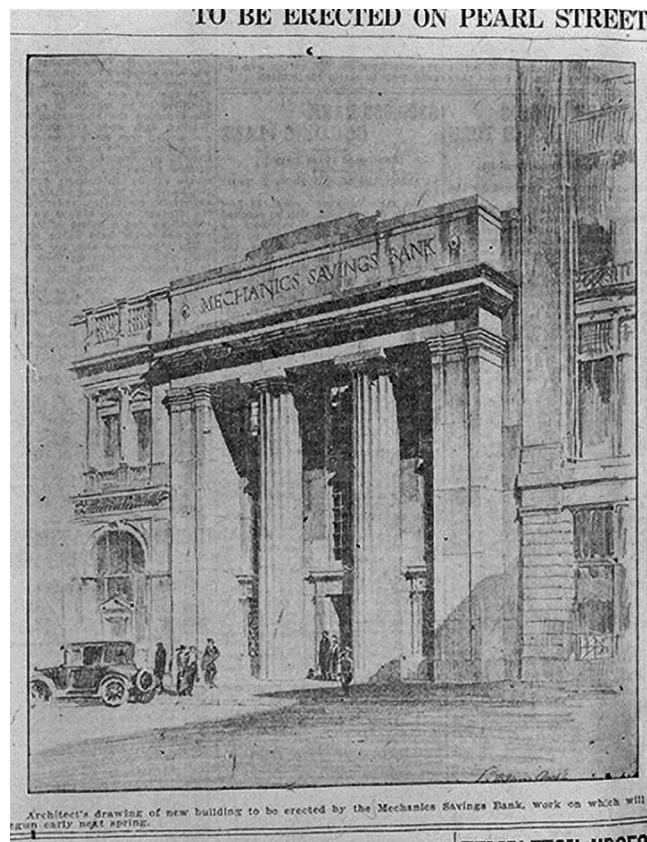
Darling ~

This isn't going to be a newsy letter as I am going to write another letter to you later on. I am enclosing a form which I obtained at the Mechanics Savings Bank. I went there today and showed them my *Power Of Attorney*. In order to have the *Power Of Attorney* of your bank account I have to give them my copy to keep in their files. I don't want to do that because if I need them elsewhere, I'd be stuck without one.

This form gives me the *Power Of Attorney* just in the Mechanics Bank... Please fill in all the blanks, and sign it where it says LS. When notary public is written on the bottom, have your Commanding Officer sign it. So darling please fill this out and return it immediately.

I'll write a long letter to you later and until then - I hope all is well - and I love you darling -

Love,
Sylvia



Monday nite - November 29 [1943]

Darling ~

What a busy girl I have been since I came home... When I came home my mother²⁰, Sadie²¹ and Betty May²² were home. I really didn't feel as though I had left home for two months - it felt more like two days. My sister looks well and my mother about the same. Betty May gave me a real kiss and she stuck close to me the whole time.

My packages came from the *Railway Express*²³ so I was relieved to find them there. I showed Betty May my doll, and she thinks it is *the* thing. However when Lorraine came over later... it caused a fight, and I had to take it away from them - aren't I the mean aunt, darling?

Later on Faye, Lou²⁴, Holly, Nate²⁵, Ben, Gladys²⁶, Allan, and Lorraine were here. It was quite a roomful and of course plenty of commotion. I decided not to go see Lillian then, because it being Sunday, I was sure she already had more company than she could handle, so I decided to save my visit until today. By the way hon, Natie gave me a cigar for you in celebration of your new nephew... As I thought, Lou sure takes a *ribbing* from Nate.

I called your mother as soon as I got home and told her I'd be there that evening. I also spoke to Margie²⁷ and she was going to be at your house that evening. When the sisters

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²⁰ Adelle Stolper Geetter lived at 148 Magnolia St. in the North End of Hartford, Connecticut.

²¹ Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and was unmarried at the time.

²² Elizabeth (Betty May) Weidman is Sylvia's seven year old niece.

²³ Railway Express Agency, founded as the American Railway Express Agency and later renamed the American Railway Express Inc., was a national package delivery service that operated in the United States from 1918 to 1975.

²⁴ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty) May and Holly Suzanne, who were six and one at the time this was written.

²⁵ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born two months ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

²⁶ Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

²⁷ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

and brothers left - it was really good to see them - I went to your house. Mom looks well and that goes for Dad too, except that he is getting a real tummy, like a particular son of his. Mom told me that Lou's baby is a very sweet little girl. By the way dear, I just learned that Lou's wife is a year younger than I am - she's 22 years old. Not bad having such a young aunt. Is it darling?

Now I come to what may be a surprise and... what I think won't be a surprise. Nevertheless, it is to be a secret. Do you remember what I said is the reason why I think Margie is so *upset* - as your mother put it in her last letter to me? Well, I was right, she is pregnant. Margie says the doctor says it will come in July. Now, I guess you are wondering why it is kept a secret. It isn't a secret here at home - goodness, everybody knows about it. But for some reason, your mother told me not to tell you about it. Maybe she thinks it will worry you, but hon, I can see no reason for keeping any secrets from you... I am telling it to you, so please don't let on to Mom that you know about it. I know how you feel about it because I feel the same way. It is a shame that it had to happen; perhaps if they were more careful, it could have been prevented. Of course, at times, no matter what protection you may use, it just doesn't help and I'm pretty sure from what Margie tells me they weren't very careful. There's no sense talking about the "could-have-beens" - it has happened.

Margie feels terrible about it and... realizing what her problems will be now, I can't help but feel very sorry for her. Norm doesn't have the money, and Margie hasn't a decent place to bring up a baby. You know how congested the apartment is at her house. She has no intentions of living with your mother and from what your mother said last night, she really is looking for a small apartment for [her] dad and herself. Margie says that she is going to try to find a larger apartment for her father, so that when the baby comes there will be plenty of room. I can assure you darling she is not the happiest person in the world and regardless of the fact that it might have been prevented, it is still a shame for her and Norman. When you... think how people have had children and raised them to be fine people... they will have to make the best of it, and believe in that old philosophy that what happens, happens for the best. I'm sure it will all work out all right. It just takes a lot of will, to just make the best of it and from all appearances, I think Margie is doing a fine job, and I mean that, dear. So, my sweet, you are going to be an uncle - sooner than you expected. Perhaps you will be home... that would certainly be nice, hun...

Mom thought I looked very well and she is just crazy about the picture. She likes the way you look but she doesn't think the picture is a very nice one of me. I told her you gained weight and it made her feel so happy. I told her that if I look well it is only because I was so happy when we were in Alexandria, it just had to have some effect on me. I was so happy darling, and I do love you so much.

I left your house about 10:00 and I had so much to do, but just didn't get to it - by that I mean unpack. Your mother gave me your policies, which she spoke to you about that have matured and you are to receive \$75. From the letter they sent her, they have sent the claim papers to you, but I have no idea when and where they will catch up to you, so I decided to think of something I can do the next day - which is of course today. So later on in my letter, I'll tell you what I have done.

This morning at about 6:30, I received your night letter by phone and I was so happy to hear from you. Just to know you arrived and everything was fine was all I wanted to hear. I am looking forward to a letter from you. my darling, so very much. I do hope I get one soon.

This morning I went to the bank in regards to making your account a joint one. I presented my *Power Of Attorney* and consequently it only meant the bank had to keep it in their files all the time. I don't want to give it to them, as I may need the few copies I have, and so they gave me these forms for a *Power Of Attorney* for your bank account for their bank, and if you will fill it out when I send it to you and return it immediately, it will help straighten matters out.

Then, I went to the American Red Cross, to see if they could tell me just what Power your *Power Of Attorney* gives me. I really didn't understand all of it dear. They told me I could get free legal advice from Lawyer Kotchen from twelve to one at the Municipal Building, so I decided it wouldn't hurt. So I went and I'm glad I did. He explained it all very clearly to me and also advised me in regards to your policy. He's to write to them and ask if I could send them a *certified copy* of my *Power Of Attorney*, which he will make out for me, so that I may keep my copies.. They will send me all of the necessary papers to be signed. You see dear, I don't want to part with my copies of the *Power Of Attorney* and the lawyer says it is a very good idea.

Darling, in regards to your *bonds*, your will does not cover them, nor does the power of attorney give me any power on making me your heir... I hope I don't seem like I want those bonds to go to anybody but you, but being my husband I can see no reason why I can't talk to you about such matters sensibly. Now, if you want me to be the other name on your bonds and not your mother, you will have to write to her and tell her you want them changed. It is something I won't tell her to do, and it is *your* responsibility to tell her. However, that is only if you want them changed - that's up to you and I would appreciate your telling me what you intend to do, whether you want to change them or not.

Well I guess that ends all the legal matters.

I went to the hospital today and saw Lil. I couldn't see the baby but the mom looked fine. From all reports the baby looks like Nate - I guess that's always the way - to have the boy look like his daddy.

Tonight I went to the *Bushnell* with Sadie to hear a lecture by Charles Collinworth Junior, the war correspondent in the war in Africa, from which he has just returned. Admission was by tickets processed from buying war bonds and Sadie got a one thousand dollar bond for her boss so that entitled her to two tickets right up in the front, too. I was amazed at what a young person he is - he is only 26 years old. Although he looks young his intelligence is far above 26. He was very interesting and it was an evening well spent as I believe I learned a few things.

Now I guess it is about time I went to bed. Life is so different now without you... I will never get used to it but I'll make the best of it until you are home again.

So, my darling, I'll say goodnight to you, with every prayer that this finds you well. Goodnight my darling and remember that I love you so very much.

Always yours,

Love,

Sylvia

XXX



November 30 [1943] - Tuesday night ~

Darling ~

At last I got around to unpacking my suitcases. It was quite a job - it took me all morning up until 3:30. Well, now that it is done I certainly feel much better.

By the way, dear, your trunk arrived but you forgot to give me the key for it. Mom called me and told me it came, and asked me if I had the key. So, darling, you will have to send me the key as soon as possible.



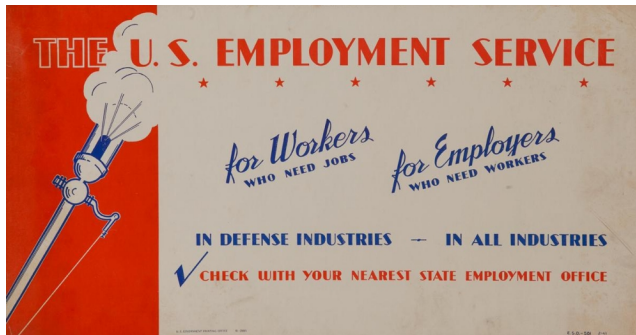
Strand Theatre (1476 seats) - 1017 Main St. (1914 - 1974)

I met Margie in town tonight at quarter to five. We had supper in the Jade [Restaurant], and then we went to the *Strand* to see Betty Davis and Miriam Hopkins in *Old Acquaintance*. It was very funny and different from the average run of pictures. It felt strange to sit through a double feature - thank goodness the seats weren't like the ones in the Post Theater - my aching *twizzy*! I never would have lasted!

After the show, we went into *Leggett's*²⁸ for a drink. Looking [around,] I... noticed how [different] the clientele in Hartford is today. Talking with Margie²⁹ I can see that she and Norm³⁰ have a big headache on their shoulders now that they are going to have a baby. I can't help but feel sorry for Margie. I honestly hope that everything turns out as it should - for the best.

Darling, I wonder how soon it will be before I hear from you. I am so anxious to

know how you are, and also to hear the latest news. I do hope all is well, and that I'll be hearing from you soon.



Tomorrow, I intend to go to the *US Employment Service*. I am not going to look for any other kind of work, but office work. So after I go, I'll tell you what happened and if I am a girl with a job once again... I wonder how I'll feel getting up to go to work again. These past six months

certainly have made a lazy thing out of me - of course it doesn't take much. Nevertheless, I'll be glad to get back to work.

Darling, while I was straightening out my closet I came across the box of your letters that I saved. Of course, I picked some out and I had such a good time reading them. Some of those letters seem so far back - especially the ones in which you speak of trying to get into the Air Corps. Those letters mean so much to me, that I'll always keep them.

I guess I will go to bed now. I realize that not once in this letter did I tell you I love you, and it's not that I wasn't saying it to myself a million times, but you know how it is once you get onto telling something. So, sweet, please forgive me, because I do love you so, and miss you every minute of the day. Please take good care of yourself - and once again - I love you, darling, and wherever you are - goodnight dear.

Love,

Sylvia
XXX

²⁸ Leggett's Drug Store had a soda counter.

²⁹ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy. She is pregnant with twin boys Richard and Steven Levy.

³⁰ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had just enlisted in the Army.



*I'm Proud... my husband
wants me to do my part*

**SEE YOUR U. S. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION**

Grand Island, Nebraska³¹

Wednesday
[December 1, 1943]

Dearest wife -

This place is getting to be more and more like a country club every day. Instead of having a formation at 7:30 in the morning, they set it back to 8:45, so that we wouldn't have to get up so early. As this is only a Processing base they have no real work for us to do - a lecture now and then on security etc., but nothing to tax the brain. The hardest work I've done all day is lose out in a strenuous game of Monopoly which, by the way, is the rage out here.

Tonight will be our first night off the post, and there is quite a bit of red tape to go through to get a pass. First, we had to take a *short arms* inspections and then... we had to purchase and [carry] a prophylactic kit. It seems that one in every four fellows on the base gets... a venereal disease, and they are trying to stamp it out. Chris³² and I are getting a big kick out of it... as neither one of us feels the urge so badly... to go to all that trouble.



Last night the entire group attended a lecture, the subject of which is a strict military secret. After the lecture, our crew adjourned to the PX³³ where we had a miniature beer party and I stayed up until the late hour of 12:00. If it weren't for things like that and the Esquire Room, I believe I'd go nuts just hanging around. Another week of this life and I'll start gaining more weight.

³¹ Written on plain stationery in a plain envelope.

³² Augustus (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

³³ PX stands for post exchange. All Bases had their own PX. Grand Island As Lenny is in transit

As to what is going to happen to us... your guess is as good as the next. They seem to have forgotten about the section in which our crew has been placed, and the rumors are running wild. The wildest of them all have us going on a Bond drive covering the 48 states; while still another has us going from here to Scott Field located in Illinois and from there to a POE³⁴ without being processed here.

There [are] a few cases of crabs (body lice) in our barracks. (Rock³⁵ being one of the victims) and the rest of us are living in constant dread of getting them. Outside of this, very little excitement has happened and not getting any mail from you, makes it very hard for me to write much of a letter. The chances are that I may be here for another week or so... if I don't get your letters here they will be forwarded to me and eventually I'll get them. I expect the first one to be a really long one telling me all that's happened since you drove away from the gate Thursday night.

No matter how many letters I write I'll never be able to tell you just how much I love you my darling, nor how much I miss you. I know it isn't enough to just say that you are in my thoughts every moment of the day, but believe me it's the truth. I realize that if it hadn't been for you I wouldn't be where I am today - an officer in the Air Corps and if I haven't already done so I thank you, my sweetheart I love you.

Although I haven't said so before I hope you found everything, and everybody, fine at home - what does the family think of your doll? And have you convinced them of your prowess as a cook? Until tomorrow - my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Use the address on the envelope.

Love

L.

³⁴ POE in a military context stands for "Point of Embarkation," which is the location where personnel begin their journey to a destination. This is what was happening: Lenny's crew was given Knettishall, England as their destination Base where other B-17s were already conducting bombing raids in the European Theatre of Operation.

³⁵ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

Grand Island, Nebraska³⁶

Thursday
[December 2, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Another day and still nothing has happened, and what is worse nothing in sight. [Some] of the crews have been assigned ships and still others have been alerted but we are still the forgotten few. With the exception of a previously played game of monopoly this morning, I have done exactly nothing. To top it all off last night's, for some unknown reason. Because of this, the crew took themselves to the show where we had a good laugh at Red Skelton³⁷ and then went home to sleep.



Chris³⁸ received a letter from Fran³⁹ this morning so I know that you were all right up until the time she left you. (Why I told you not to write is beyond me.)

³⁶ Written on plain stationery in a plain envelope.

³⁷ A movie with Red Skelton in it

³⁸ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

³⁹ Chris Christiani's wife

Honest sweetheart, I can't think of anything more to write about. Please believe me when I say I'm sorry - I feel that you'll understand if I cut this letter short.

Before I close though I want to tell you something that I've said before, I think - something that I'll never tire of telling you. My only regret is that I can't hold you in my arms and feel your lips on mine when I tell you over and over that I love you. Not only that my darling but I miss you terribly.

Please, please excuse the shortness, my sweet.

Regards to everybody

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
*Your husband
Lenny

* Something new has been added

December 2 [1943] - Thursday

Darling ~

Before I get on with this letter I have an apology to make. I asked you for the key to your foot locker and I found out tonight that I have it. I should have looked through my key case before I asked you for it.

It certainly was good to receive two letters from you today and the picture cards. I've been waiting for a letter from you all week and those two letters made me very happy. From the pictures on the souvenir pictures you sent me, Grand Island⁴⁰ looks like a very nice town. Did you get into town and have a look around? I am sorry to hear that your trip was so boring, didn't the poker game help? Darling, even though you won fifty dollars, please don't make a habit of gambling - it is so easy to get into it, but getting out of it is an entirely different story.

It was too bad that we couldn't be in St Louis at the same time, Saturday. As you said, it would have been a surprise... a real surprise. Well, I'm glad to hear that you are well and so far all is going along smoothly. I bet it is exciting... to move on to some place [and] you don't know... exactly where. Well, wherever it is... I hope it will be the best.

Today, I went shopping for Natie⁴¹. I brought back what they received for the baby that they didn't need and bought other things for him. I also went to the ration board to get Philip Henry (that's his name) his first ration book. By the way, Lil will get out of the hospital this Sunday. It so happened, her nurse couldn't come until this coming Monday and, having room in the hospital, they let her stay there.



This afternoon I went to Tootsies and Robbie is as cute as ever. He spilled some Rinso on the floor and Tootsie scolded him and told him to look at what he had done. So he was so ashamed he closed his eyes and wouldn't open them to look at what he had done. It was so cute to see him do that, darling. I couldn't stop laughing.

Went to [your] Mom's for supper. Margie was there too. Mom expected Norm⁴² to call and she wanted me there to

⁴⁰ Grand Island Army Air Base in Grand Island, Nebraska.

⁴¹ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

⁴² Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had just enlisted in the Army.

say hello. Well, he did call and the poor kid has another cold. It seems that he has been getting them one after the other. Other than that, he is fine and he asked all about you.

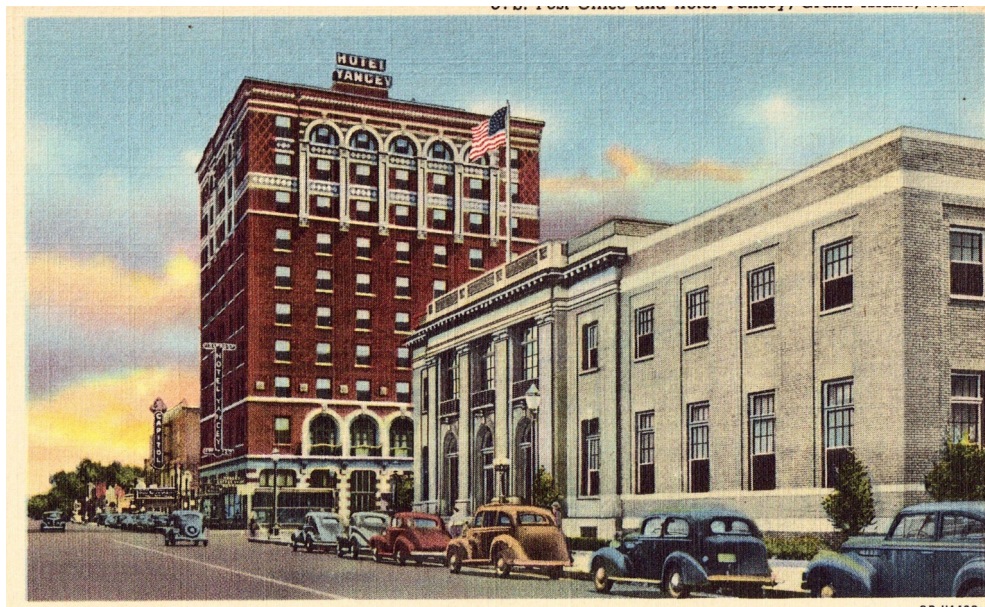
Darling, guess what we had for supper? I guess you hit it right - fish. It was good and I enjoyed it.

Today I went into the restaurant⁴³ to see Dad. Bill was in the back of the store talking to the man, and he didn't recognize me. He told the man that there's a good looking girl, and he was going to have a little fun. Was he embarrassed to find out it was his niece. Well, I always did like young uncles.

I tried on the pants you sent home in your foot locker. I had a lot of trouble figuring out how they worked but I finally did it. They feel so soft and they sure are warm - I don't know how you could feel cold in those, darling.

It is so much better to see the lights on throughout the city. Everything looks so much more alive. However, it won't feel like home again until you are here with me - I do love you so much darling. Well, whenever it [is] that you come home again, I know it will make me the happiest person in the world... As each day passes, I know it is one day closer to that day. So goodnight my darling and take good care of yourself. I love you.

Love,
Sylvia



⁴³ Arthur Levy operated a restaurant on Trumbull St. in Downtown Hartford, Connecticut.

HOTEL YANCEY, GRAND ISLAND, NEB.



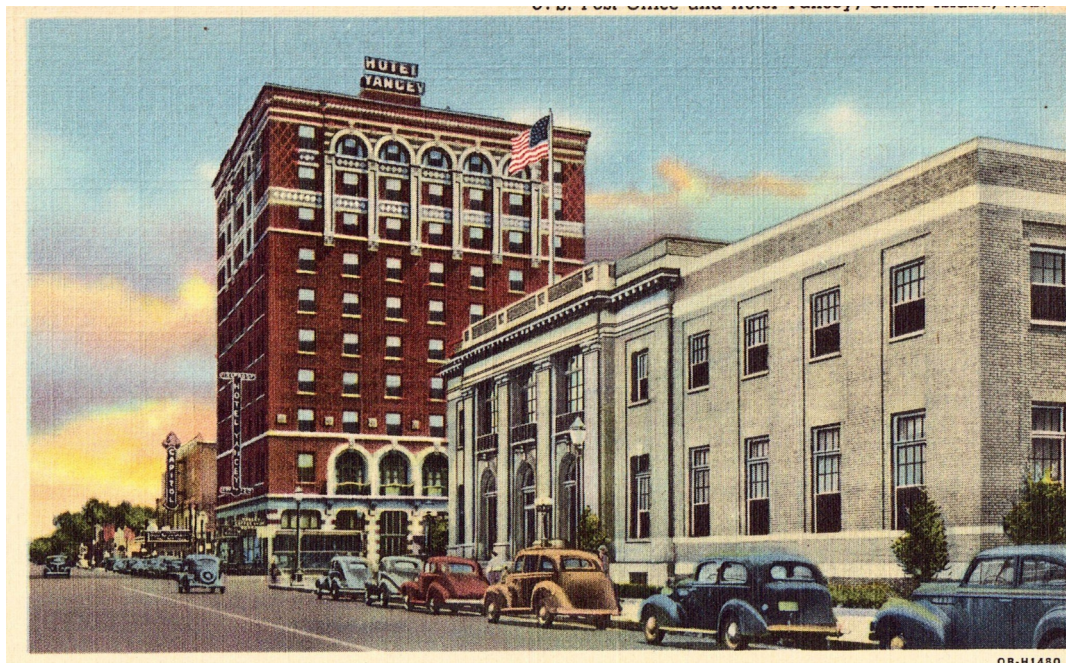
CardCow.com 99900

Grand Island, Nebraska⁴⁴

Friday
[December 3, 1943]

Dearest wife -

I've seen Grand Island, and that's about all I can say for it. Remember how dead Hartford was before the war? Well this city is even deadier.



We got into town about eight-thirty. There wasn't a soul on the streets. We walked around for about an hour looking for some excitement and wound up where we started - the Hotel Yancey, where Chris,⁴⁵ Rock⁴⁶ and I took a room for the night. In the lobby we met the fellows from crew #19, and we decided to go to the one hot spot of the town. We called the cab and off we went to the *Log Cabin*; we got there and found a

⁴⁴ Written on engraved stationery with an imprint of *Army Air Force Base, Grand Island, Nebraska* in a plain envelope.

⁴⁵ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁴⁶ Raymond (Rock) **Robert Newmark** is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

shack, nothing more, so off we went back to the hotel, where we sat around in the room talking until twelve, when the boys went back to the base and we went to sleep. That was our trip to the city.

Nothing new has developed here for our crew. We are still hanging around waiting for something to happen. Chris, Rock and I cornered the Major yesterday and asked him what was in store for us. He wouldn't tell us, naturally, but did say that we were getting *the best deal* of all. What he meant by that, we don't know, nor can we find out anything more. All we can do is sit and wait. Meanwhile, we are getting a very good rest, taking a nap whenever we so feel...

Some of the crews are leaving tomorrow; and still others in a few days; that will leave us here alone.

The money is for you Syl, use as much of it as you need for yourself. If there is any left you can put it in the bank. Next month you should receive the first check; if after a week or two you don't get it, let me know and I'll take care of it. If you... need more, let me know... and I'll see that you get it.

I'm waiting on *pins and needles* for your first letter - there are so many things I want to know; all about your trip, how everybody is at home, about your prospects of a job, in fact everything. So if you've left any of these questions unanswered, make sure that your next letter takes care of it.



The Flying Fortress - Boeing B-17 G⁴⁷

If you see David and Albert... tell them that the plane I'm to be in will be the new *Fortress* with the improvised chin turret. Outside of one other plane, the B-29, this is the most deadly bomber in the air. By the way, one of the rumors has us going to a B-29 field - If this comes true, it will be the answer to all our dreams. It is by far the safest and best ship to be in. It is so big that they use the 17s for fighter escort!

Had I... known that I was to be here so long... I surely would have had you come out here. Chris and I are both kicking ourselves for not having any foresight. I remarked to the Major that I would like to wire you to come out here, but he said it would be foolish as he thinks we might leave here the first part of the week.

I'm acquiring a few souvenirs for you and also something I think you'll appreciate very much, a whole box of gum, and just as soon

⁴⁷ The Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress is an American four-engined heavy bomber aircraft developed in the 1930s for the United States Army Air Corps. A fast and high-flying bomber, the B-17 dropped more bombs than any other aircraft during World War II, used primarily in the European Theater of Operations. It is the third-most produced bomber in history, behind the American four-engined Consolidated B-24 Liberator and the German multirole, twin-engined Junkers

as I get a hold of some wrapping paper, I'll mail them to you. Our scrapbook must be getting pretty thick - don't ever stop putting things into it sweetheart. Someday we all have a lot of fun looking through it in our own home.⁴⁸

Like all letters, this one too must come to an end and this is it. Before I say goodnight though, I want to tell you again that I miss you and love you very, very much. 'S funny, but I never get tired of saying or writing that.

Goodnight darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Talking to you Saturday was like being in heaven for five

⁴⁸ This does in fact occur, but the scrapbook later is lost.

December 5 [1943] - Sunday

Darling ~

After today, I realized I have missed my preferred vocation - that of being a maid. After cleaning the house here, Natie⁴⁹ called me and asked me to please come over and help him clean up [his] house as Lil was coming home this afternoon, and the house was a mess. So, I've been there until now, and it is now a quarter to six. Lil looks fine and the baby, as tiny as he is, is the image of Natie. He looks so much like Natie that I was expecting him to say something typical of Natie's dry humor. It's amazing how a little thing less than six pounds can take over an entire household. It's definite that he's the king now.

Darling, I can't tell you how very happy I was to talk with you. Yesterday afternoon, I went to the show with Margie⁵⁰ and Butch and I told them I wanted to go directly home as I had a premonition you would call. My darling, I only wish I could have been with you - I do miss you so very much. I'm glad that you are well and so far, although not much seems to be happening, everything is going along fine. I love you very much dear, and please try to keep me as informed as you can.

Your letters were read by me at least six times. I bet I could tell you what each letter says by heart. By the way hon, what *does* the army do to cure the boys of body lice? How is Rock⁵¹ - I really feel sorry for him. Give my regards to him and Chris⁵². Tell Rock I want him to start gaining weight in case he hasn't started to yet. You tell me that Monopoly is the rage in Nebraska. How that brings me back to the days I worked in the toy department⁵³. Every time a customer asked me how it was played, I made up rules of my own. At least I know it is a game where you buy and sell real estate - am I right, hon?

I met Margie downtown yesterday and we ran into Frances⁵⁴ on our way to the show. She looked the same and told] me... Boomey⁵⁵ is going to go for some more schooling, somewhere. It was all very indefinite - perhaps you know more what it is - do you? We went

⁴⁹ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

⁵⁰ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

⁵¹ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

⁵² Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁵³ Sylvia worked at G. Fox & Co. the department store in Hartford, Connecticut

⁵⁴ Frances is a friend of Sylvia, who is engaged to Booney Siegel.

⁵⁵ Adolf (Boomey) Siegel is a friend of Sylvia's. They both graduated from Weaver High School in 1938.

to the *Allyn*⁵⁶ and saw *True To Life* with Dick Powell And Mary Martin. It was a comedy and I enjoyed it.



In regards to my job, I called yesterday morning and he told me to report to work

Monday morning. I then called the Crystal Research Laboratories in regard to the job I wrote to you about and told them I didn't think I was suited to the job they wanted to hire me for and I thanked the man for letting me think it over. He was very nice and thanked me for being so honest about it.

Tonight [your] Mom and Dad are going to Jesse's house. This is the first time they have been there since Jesse and Buster were married. I think she is having most of the aunts and uncles over there tonight.

Sweetheart I will be at your mom's house Tuesday night and I do hope you will be able to call. I wish it were possible for us to talk more than five minutes – five minutes is such a short time.

Well at least we can always write, so that's something. Until tomorrow, when I will write you again - I love you darling and take care of yourself

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

P.S. That something new you added to your last letter made me laugh - it was a cute way of putting it - my schmotte husband. I do love you so

⁵⁶ The Allyn Theatre was a performing arts venue which showed feature films at 207 Asylum Ave. in downtown Hartford.

Grand Island, Nebraska⁵⁷

Monday
[December 6, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Talking to you Saturday was like being in heaven for five minutes. I had no idea that I could ever miss anybody the way I do you. There is just a constant growing in my heart; everything I see or do brings back a memory of something we did together, or something you said. Without frills, my darling, I love you.



After talking to you I went out to the *Log Cabin* where I felt so good for having talked to you, I had a few drinks, a couple of dances and called it a night. Yesterday we hung around waiting for some news about what is going to happen to us, therefore no letter yesterday; at night Chris⁵⁸, Rock⁵⁹ and I went to a public dance where, because we're officers

⁵⁷ Written on plain stationery in an envelope from Hotel Yancey.

⁵⁸ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁵⁹ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

and because there are so few crews here, we had a fairly good time. The combat crews run this town - nothing is too good for us. We stayed in town last night,⁶⁰ Chris and I, in one room, and Rock by himself.

One thing I've learned about the city of Grand Island is that it is a very curious town with perhaps a reason behind it all. The place is that nine-tenths German and they know more about what goes on than even the cadet wives did back in Monroe. Not only that, but they flaunt their knowledge and then try to find out more. (I met a girl at a dance who claimed to be a blood relative of Rudolph Hess.) We've naturally been told to keep our mouths shut, but give some fellows a few drinks and they have no secrets. The girl mentioned above knew my army life from the time I started school back in Monroe; she told me where I'd been and how long I'd been there. I tried to find out from her what is going to happen to us but she either didn't know or wouldn't talk.

What I'm going to write now my darling, I'd much rather tell you over the phone tomorrow, but I don't dare; I'm even afraid to write it, but it's such good news that I'm going to have to hint at it. There is a very strong rumor making the rounds that we are to be stationed in this country for at least four months. Do you remember a fellow from Hartford who used to take you out, [who] joined the Navy? We are to do the same type of work that he did. I'm telling you this only because it is such a good rumor, but as always don't put too much stock in it - you know army rumors by now.

So you landed a job on your own terms? I'm impatiently awaiting your letters to find out what they were. How does it feel to be working in the same place as Nate? There are so many things I want to know. I hope your letters answer all my questions.

Life has settled down into a groove that is more like a rut. We've become so bored that we play Monopoly for money just to help time go by. Right now there is a crap game going on here, and the fellows are playing not for the thrill of gambling, but because they're simply bored. My will is still strong enough to keep away from it, but I'm slowly weakening.

⁶⁰ Probably at the Hotel Yancey.

That, Butch, is all the news I can think of, now to go back to something old but always a pleasure to write about. That is the subject of my love for you - something that nobody has more of than me... You know by now sweetheart that I cannot write fancy phrases or make with... flowering talk, so I am afraid that you'll have to be content with I love you; but with all my heart.

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Regards to all
L.

December 6 [1943] - Monday

Darling ~

Once again I'm a working girl⁶¹. I am ashamed to admit it but darling I am dead tired. It wouldn't be fair to say whether I like my job or not because it is so new and I can't say. I met Natie⁶² in front of his house, and we walked to work. It is a long walk⁶³ to Capitol Ave, but it is better than having to stand on a crowded bus. I got there on time - we have to be there at 8:15. The man to whom I was to report is in New York, so I sat there until someone finally took care of me. I had forms to fill out in the employment office and I was

told not to tell the other girls I was receiving sixty cents an hour.... I told him that I wouldn't work for less, so that settled the matter.



I get a \$24 exemption on my salary and over that I am taxed for the income tax. That \$24 is allowed to married girls whose husbands are in the Army and his rank is not [above] a First Lieutenant. So, darling, as soon as they make you a First Lieutenant, I get just a \$12 deduction. I don't know just why they figure it that way - perhaps you can tell me.

I guess you are wondering what kind of a job I have - well I do bookkeeping. It is different from what I have always done, but the experience I had in the Hartford Accident [Insurance Co.] figuring premiums and using the calculating machine certainly is a great help to me now. See now that I won't have much time to throw spitballs as everybody has enough to do - there is no fooling at all.

I do bookkeeping on all accounts receivable. I have all the accounts in the Ms - that is, all names that start with M. I don't work in the same building as Nate, but I ate lunch with him today. I sit next to a window and I caught myself looking out of it and daydreaming. Nice way to start isn't it, dear? How short of help they are, four girls left my department Saturday, to get married. It's too bad I couldn't meet them and give them an *old timer's* point of view on

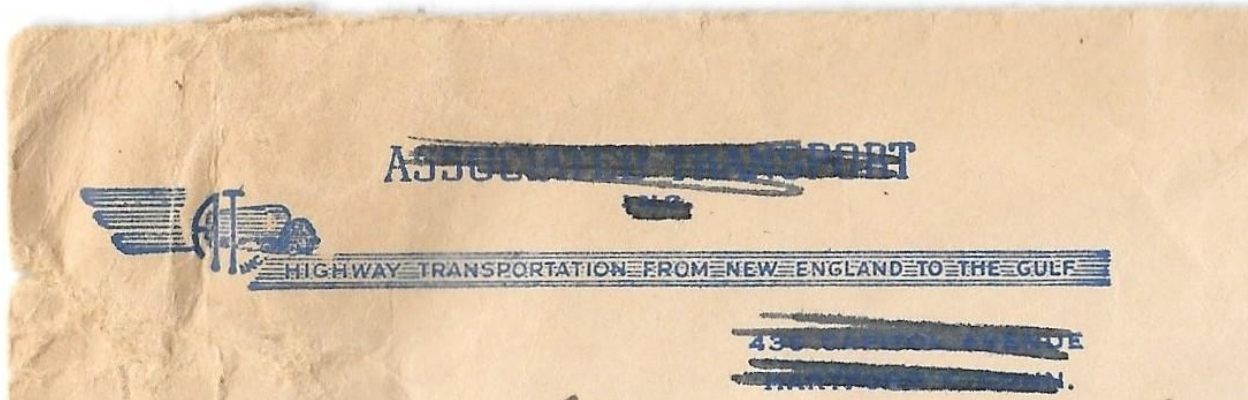


⁶¹ Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

⁶² Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

⁶³ About 1.5 miles.

marriage. When I got through talking with them, they would be sure that being married to the right person [surpasses] any happiness in the world.



A notice came around this afternoon giving the girls permission to smoke at their desks while working, because the company cannot afford the time wasted when the girls go to the ladies room to smoke. Oh yes. one more thing about my job - I had my hours all mixed up. I work from 8:15 to 5:00 o'clock and have $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour for lunch from 11:45 to 12:30; and we work until 11:45 on Saturday. So far, the girls seem to be very nice but everybody is kept so busy, that there is no time for social visits like I was accustomed to in the Retail Credit Co⁶⁴.. Well at least I will get my wish, my mind will be kept busy.

Honey, I received [the] money order in your letter today. There is nothing I need and, as I said, I'm going to put it into the bank. Now that I'm working, I'll be able to meet all of my expenses. Now darling don't forget - if you have any money left when you are paid, send it home and let me put it away - I'm sure we will need every cent we can save for the future, and I know that you want to be able to start out right, when that future becomes the present.

The news of your having the new model B-17 is very good. I hope that the rumors of you flying the B-29 come true. At least such good news compensates, to an extent, for your hanging around. I wish I could be with you to pass the time away... I am certainly thinking of you and praying that everything turns out for the best.

You remember in one of your first letters you kidded me about not *getting the urge*. I forgot to tell you this and it just came to mind. When I went to Lawyer Kotchen to explain my will, as I wrote before, he took me home. Well, we got into a conversation on war marriages, and he asked me to forgive him if he asked a personal question. He asked me if I

⁶⁴ Sylvia also worked at the Retail Credit Company. By the 1940s, **Retail Credit Co.** was one of the nation's largest credit bureaus, holding files on millions of American citizens. It now operates as one of the "Big Three" credit bureau, Equifax.

ever got the *desire* for relationships, since your leave. When I asked him why he asked that question, he said that in his *cases*, he has found... that married women desire relationships... when their husbands leave and it consequently leads to trouble in the courts. Truthfully, his asking me this made me very embarrassed...

It is improbable that I'd ever have... desire for any other man, but my husband. I'm sure he wanted to discuss it further, but I guess he realized he had approached the wrong person... The girls he had in mind were those that wanted to try some new experiments, or else those that were afraid of becoming *old maids*, if they didn't hurry up... I believe the majority of army wives, married for one reason, and that is purely for love. I know I did, and nothing or nobody will ever change my mind. I do love you so very much, darling.

In your letter, you mentioned your trip to the *Log Cabin*. It must be like the one past Meriden - although I have never been in it.

Yes hon, I am keeping up my scrapbook. I can't tell you how much pleasure I derive from putting things in it. Each thing is a memory, and they are memories filled with such happiness. If I'm not putting something in it, I am looking through it. Hon, I'm afraid I'll wear it out. Please send me all the souvenirs, and any item you think will be of interest and you want to save.

Darling as far as the chewing gum is concerned - a whole box too - I must say that it is something. Thank you for thinking of it and I can double assure you - I certainly appreciate your thoughtfulness. Why I'm going to chew my head off - what a swell time I'll have!

How do you like how my new pen writes? No sweet; it's not as good as yours. In fact, it is nowhere near as nice, but it is all I need - it doesn't leak all over my hand. I bought it in *Gustave Fischer's*⁶⁵ and it was three dollars. It writes very well and it is guaranteed - and the way I lose pens - this one is good enough. Hon, how does your pen write? It looks like it writes very well. I hope so, because you have to use a pen [so often.] I am keeping my eyes open for a pencil to match it, and... as soon as I do... I'm going to get it for you.

Honey, Main Street⁶⁶ is so crowded. I went to the jewelers (Mr. Kurland) tonight after work to have him fix my diamond. Before I get off the subject - I was talking about the crowds - oh yes, it is so crowded. Why it's just like New York - honest, hon. I hate to do any shopping now - it is almost impossible. Now to get back to my ring. You remember what I told you the jeweler in Alexandria said about fixing the diamond on the side so that it would be tight - they said I needed a new setting. Well, Mr. Kurland is going to tighten it,

⁶⁵ Connecticut's oldest office supplies company — **Gustave Fischer**, founded in 1899 had a store in Downtown Hartford.

⁶⁶ Downtown Hartford

and he says the setting is perfectly all right, and it can be easily done. So I will get it tomorrow night. I will feel much better when I wear it now, because I was worried about losing the stone.

Oh, my hand hurts! I've been doing so much writing today, and working the [adding] machine has made my lazy hands ache at the wrists. These past six months have made me into a real sissy. Well, it won't take long, and I'll be able to take it again. So, I better get to bed now and rest. I'm looking forward to tomorrow night. I hope you will be able to call, and I'll be able to speak with you again. I hope you are well darling, and here's my kiss goodnight X and I love you sweetheart.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Main St. Downtown Hartford

Grand Island, Nebraska⁶⁷

Wednesday
[December 8, 1943]

Dearest wife -

All day long, I've been waiting for tonight, so that I could talk to you and then the five minutes just flew by, and half the things I wanted to say went unsaid.

As I told you over the phone, today was a very busy day for us; we finally went through 'processing.' Now we're ready to leave here. The Army is making sure that we leave this country with enough equipment. Despite all the stuff I got at the Sub Depot in Alex⁶⁸, I still needed more and they gave it to me here. Of course, they took some of my original issue away, so I don't have too much, but packing is still going to be a problem. The *equipment* issued to us has no clue as to where we are going, and we are still in the dark as to our destination.

Last night after the call, Chris⁶⁹ and Rock⁷⁰ and I went to town - it turned out that our enlisted men were waiting for us with plenty of liquor for one last fling. I'm sorry to report that your husband came back to camp slightly worse for wear! (It won't happen again, but I just couldn't back out.) They wanted us to come out again tonight, but I turned it down because of a number of reasons - one of them being that I didn't want to get the habit.

I can't quite explain what happened last night. I felt fine until I started to talk on the phone, and then I got extremely nervous. On top of that, when you told me that Dad had a bad cold and he didn't come to the phone, after I told mom that the call was goodbye - well, you can imagine how I felt. I guess the fact that I knew then, that I was to leave very soon had a lot to do with my feelings. My darling, I'm very anxious

⁶⁷ Written on Alexandria Army Air Base stationery.

⁶⁸ Alexandria Army Air Base, Alexandria, Louisiana

⁶⁹ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁷⁰ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

to go and get it over with but I'm going to miss you terribly if what I'm going through now is any inkling of what is to come.

About the *Power Of Attorney* and the *will*, my darling, I think you have been misinformed. If I'm correct in thinking the way I do, this *will* supersede anything I've ever done before, in the way of naming a beneficiary. You had better check on it again, but that is what they told me when I asked about it today. The *Power Of Attorney* also covers anything that might possibly come up - I don't understand why anybody should tell you differently. The form that you sent me merely gives you control of my bank account, while the [*Powers Of Attorney*] you have, plus the five extra ones I've [sent] you, cover everything including the bank account...

Sometime tomorrow, I'm sending out a package of clothing and stuff that I was told not to take along. Some of the stuff, namely the box of gum and the souvenirs are for you; tell Mom to put the clothing away as I may need it someday - the pants will come in handy when I'm working in our garden, and the jacket goes with the heavy pants - if it fits, wear it!

As for the situation (and it is a situation) That Norm⁷¹ and Margie⁷² got themselves into about all I can say is *TS*. That's a rather crude way of saying it, but they have nobody but themselves to blame. I'm sure that, had they taken the pains that we did, it could have been prevented. I can't understand why Mom makes no mention of it, but be assured that I won't let on to her that I know. It will be up to you to keep me informed as to developments. Only after reading your letter, did I realize how happy I was in not leaving you in the same way. It is only natural for me to want a child, and I want one very much, but I want to be there when it's born and I know that you feel the same way about it.

I am ashamed of myself for not writing Sunday and then going to the dance that night, but there just wasn't anything to write about. Until today we did absolutely nothing and I couldn't write about

⁷¹ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy has enlisted in the Army.

⁷² Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

that. If you were here I'd hang my head until you said that you forgave the *baby*... I will wait anxiously for your letter saying you do forgive me.

Sweetheart, I meant just what I said when I asked you not to worry. It will do neither one of us any good and besides I have a strong feeling that it won't be too long before I am home with you.

While speaking to you tonight, I told you three times that I love you but I wanted to say it three hundred times, because my darling I do, more than life itself. Believe me when I say that there is nothing in the world strong enough to keep us apart. Someday my darling, I'll come home to you and we'll begin to really enjoy our love for each other. There'll be no cloud hanging over us, and we'll bring into reality all the dreams we've dreamed these past six months - the happiest months that anyone ever spent.

Before I start to cry I'd better say goodnight -

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Regards to all the family -
say goodbye for me

Love
L.

By the way how do you like
the way my new pen write?

Love
L

I had to get it in an
extra time or two tonight

L.

Grand Island, Nebraska

Thursday
[December 9, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Another day has gone by and we are still here, and if the snow continues we'll be here indefinitely. Today had a special meaning for me - it is just one year since I first left you standing on the platform with your eyes filled to the brim.

It's been a long year my sweetheart and a good one. It's seen a lot of things happen to *you, me, and us*; and we've been married three days less than six months. I'm an officer in the Air Corp⁷³ and we've been together longer than I thought the Army would permit. Last year this time, I had no idea I'd still be in the States tonight.

Today saw us back in the old routine of doing nothing and mightily thankful we were for it... as it was perfectly miserable outdoors... It was snowing when we came in for supper and for all I know, it still is.

Do you remember how I used to say that the Co-pilot was weird?... He was at the dance with us the other night and ever since then, he has been talking about the wonderful girl he met... and how he would like to marry her. Asked how old she was, he said seventeen! For four days, we've heard nothing... except *his girl* and how he would rather *stay here* with her... than *go to combat*, if only her mother would give consent to the marriage. Well today we met her - and I had all I could do to control myself from laughing in his face. As Rock put it, I've seen better faces on clocks and better hands on a 5-cent beer. She is nothing more than a silly kid - 10 years younger than he - just *nuts* I call him.

The army changed its mind again about foot-lockers. Oh, it's a good thing I told you not to bother sending it out to me. They did, however, say it was all right to pack our navigation supplies in a cardboard box so your *Schmatt* husband got one slightly smaller than a

⁷³ The United States Air Force became a separate military service on September 18, 1947, with the implementation of the National Security Act of 1947. Prior to that, military aviation was part of the Army and Navy.

locker, and now I have got too much room. I'm all packed, just waiting for the word to go.

I realize it's too soon to judge your new job, but it does sound rather good. It is a little different from your other jobs, and] you'll gain a new kind of experience. I can't enlighten you on the exemption you wrote about, as I've never heard about it before. The only reason I can think of is that any *rank* over a *first*, pays enough so... the wife shouldn't have any hardship.

Darling, if this letter is rather short tonight, it's because my cold has gone to my head, and my eyes are watering and my nose is running. Just as soon as I finish this, I'm going to have the chef fix me a hot glass of tea and then I'm going to bed with plenty of blankets. If only I had you to snuggle up too tonight - boy do I miss that!

Not once in almost four pages, have I told you that I love you, my darling, but I do, really I do. I guess the reason I feel so low these past few days is because I'm beginning to appreciate just how much I love you and how lonely I can be, in the largest crowds, when you're not around. Until tomorrow my darling, I love you goodnight

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Regards to all

L.

This letter is coming free because I've been told it travels faster, That way let me know.

Love
Lenny

Grand Island, Nebraska

Friday
[December 10, 1943]

Dearest wife -

It's beginning to look like my goodbye was a bit premature. True enough we went through processing but again they seem to have forgotten about us. As a rule, the day following processing is the time a crew is put on the *alert* but we have heard no more since. The Esquire Room is becoming a second home to us - in fact we are beginning to look like the fixtures of the place.

Dr Levy, that's me, cured a cold last night with a dose of medicine, a capsule of something or other, and plenty of heat. After mailing your letter I took some medicine that Lieutenant Kisk, our flight surgeon prescribed, fired up the stove, and got into bed. I piled plenty of blankets over me and before I knew it I was drenched with perspiration. This morning, when I got up, I felt fine - no runny nose and no sore throat.

In last night's letter, I told you about the Co-pilot⁷⁴ and his latest romance. He naturally thinks her the one girl in a million, and the purest of pure. Well from two different services, we've heard that she is nothing but a tramp. None of us know... how to tell him about it, without causing ill feelings, but at the same time, he is the laughingstock of the entire post. His only salvation is that we leave here before they have time to get married.

Rock⁷⁵ is now the happiest man on the base; when I went through processing I claimed that my wristwatch was missing and after signing a half-dozen forms and seeing a few officers, they finally issued me another watch for the sum of fourteen dollars and change. Chris⁷⁶, the Co-pilot

⁷⁴ Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington is the Co-pilot of Lenny's crew

⁷⁵ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

⁷⁶ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

and the Radio Man⁷⁷ were also issued watches and they... spend all their time comparing the times they have. I say times because no two of them agree within a minute, and yelling 'Hack' at each other, mimicking the squadron Navigator when he gives us a Time Tick.

Time is really beginning to hang heavy on our hands now. Even Monopoly holds no interest for us. If only you, my darling were here with me, then the days and nights would be so damn short. Why couldn't we have foreseen the way things were to happen? In the past two weeks we would have seen more of each other than we had in months. I suppose that's the way things were meant to be, so I guess there is no use crying about it - but I do miss you so much my darling. I lie in bed nights just thinking of you and the times we had and then I start making plans for the years that are ahead of us. My darling if only half my plans come true, we will be the happiest couple ever. Just keep your fingers crossed, your hopes high, and listen to nothing but good news until the day I can hold you in my arms again. I love you my sweetheart - any one can have a wife but there are very few fellows who are as lucky as I in having a wife and a sweetheart all in one.

Up until tomorrow my darling

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx
Lenny

Regards to all

L.

⁷⁷ William Burtle Mayne is the Radio Operator of Lenny's crew

December 11, 1943
Saturday nite ~

Darling ~

As I wrote the above address, I realized that tomorrow is December 12 and it will be our six-month anniversary. Isn't time going by so quickly? It seems just like yesterday, we were married. I do hope that the time for you to be home again will pass as quickly. It was such heaven when we were together and I miss you so.

I received your letter today - the one you wrote to me Wednesday night and I enjoyed it immensely. I must admit I cried when I read it. The main reason for the tears was that I could just hear you saying what you wrote and darling it just hit home.

I'm not angry for your not writing that Sunday night. If there wasn't anything to write, well hun, they're just wasn't anything to write, and of course I forgive my baby. Now you can pick up your head.



Oh, was it cold today! I awoke about two this morning because I heard the window shade blowing. I got up to close the window and I couldn't see a thing - the snow was blowing all over and the wind was so strong I thought we were having another hurricane. This morning when I got up to go to work I looked and expecting to see a deep snowfall, I was surprised to see practically no snow on the ground. We had just a little snow but the impression I had during the night was the wind

blowing and the snow through the air. It just didn't fall on the ground. The wind has been terrific all day and there were a good many hats blown all over Main Street today.

I haven't written to you since we called as I planned to write one big long letter tonight and give all of the latest news to date.

Honey, I think of you so much, wondering how you are, where you are, and just how things are coming along. Golly, how I wish I were a fellow right now and I could be with you. Honey, I love you so much.

I received a postcard from Eleanor⁷⁸ yesterday; it was from New Orleans⁷⁹. She's there for a week, as Sam has gone somewhere for a week. She said it is something to see and she misses me. I know for a fact that I miss her. I guess we are two peas of the same pod.

Honey, I wanted a job that would keep my mind occupied and I sure got my wish. It is one job where there is no time to do any fooling and by five o'clock I am tired. It's interesting work... I am learning bookkeeping which is good experience. We have more work than we have time for, and my boss asked us to work until seven on Monday and Tuesday nights. Most of the girls work overtime every night, but I hope I won't have to.

... My ring is causing a general course of conversation in the office - everybody remarks on how beautiful it is and what a rock it is! ... I am so proud of it darling and I think it is the most beautiful ring I have ever seen - it has such a beautiful luster. I like to imagine that the reason why it sparkles is because it is just radiating our love. One of the girls in my office said that her attention was called to it because it threw a ray of light in her eyes. I guess it picked up the sunlight - it is just like a mirror, then and it throws off all the colors of the rainbow.

I met Jackie Siegel's girlfriend on the bus the other day and she told me that Jackie is coming home on furlough... in a few weeks and if he comes home she intends to get married... It can't be definite, because the furlough is still an *if*. I bet when Boomey⁸⁰ hears about his kid brother beating him to the punch, he might feel jealous. When he was home on sick leave, it would have been an ideal time for him to get married... She told me that when she came back from visiting Boomey... she wasn't sure she was in love with Boomey, but he was about the best fellow... to be engaged to, but as far as marriage was concerned she wasn't sure of that.

Honey, I hope you don't feel badly because Dad didn't come to the phone to say goodbye. He really wasn't very sick darling, he just had a cold and you know how colds affect him. He went to bed early and he told Mom to wake him up if he fell asleep when you called... When you did call, he was fast asleep. I guess Mom thought she'd rather let him sleep. He did want to say goodbye but Mom was worried about him and she wanted him to get some rest. He's fine now and his cold is all gone.

⁷⁸ Eleanor (Kohn) Ellison married Sam Ellison, a friend of Lenny's who also trained with him at Alexandria Army and Air Force Base, and would soon join him at the same Air Base in England.

⁷⁹ Sam has been reassigned to another base near New Orleans.

⁸⁰ Adolf (Boomey) Siegel is a friend of Sylvia's. They both graduated from Weaver High School in 1938.

Mom went to New York for the weekend and expects to be back Monday night. She left at nine o'clock this morning. I guess she is going to see Lou⁸¹'s wife's baby. In case you don't know this, Lou's wife was in and apt. in Brooklyn and he's living there now.

Ruth Schachter called me last week and I wasn't home at the time so I called her Thursday night. Walt is in Africa. She told me the unusual way he found out that he had a son. He left four days before she had her baby and... she gave birth two weeks before time. She sent a cable through the American Red Cross and he never received it. While she was in the hospital, she wrote to Walt's best friend, who was in Sicily and announced her son's arrival. This is the coincidence - Walt was flying and he had a stop in Sicily, so he went to see his friend. They haven't seen each other in over a year. They were reading, when the mail arrived, and his friend got the letter... that Ruthie had written to him. So, by his being there just at that particular time he found out that his son was born. Isn't that a coincidence, hon?

As far as Margie⁸² is concerned, she is fine. Of course she and Norm⁸³ have a real problem on their hands and it is a shame they couldn't have waited. I guess the reason Mom didn't want to tell you, like most of the things she doesn't tell you, is because she's afraid you will worry. You know how Mom worries about things, and I guess she feels that you will. However, one good thing about it is that the government pays for all her doctor and hospital bills, and for a year's doctors care for the baby. This is furnished for the wives of the four lower brackets of the army. So hon, That is a real break because that does cost quite a good deal of money.

Today I met Margie and Rosalyn, she's a girl I met at work downtown. We went to the Capital⁸⁴ [Theatre] and saw *Government Girl* with Olivia DeHaviland and Sonny Tufts. He's the fellow that was Paulette Goddard's boyfriend in that picture *So Proudly We Hail*, remember? It was good but I expected it to be better. After we got out of the movies, Margie and I went shopping for Hanukkah gifts for the folks and, as the stores were open until nine tonight, we had the



⁸¹ Louis (Lou) Levy is Lenny's uncle.

⁸² Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

⁸³ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy is trying to enlist in the Army.

⁸⁴ The Poli's Capitol Theatre was opened on August 28, 1920 with George M. Cohan heading a vaudeville bill which also included Eddie Foy & his family. Built on the site of the Coliseum Theatre and later 1903 built Poli Theatre, it was designed by Thomas W. Lamb. It was equipped with an organ. It was later known as the Fox-Poli Theatre before finally becoming the Loew's Poli Theatre. Located at 591 Main Street, this was perhaps the most elegant

time. We got Dad a snazzy sport shirt to wear on Sunday - a gray and yellow plaid - and we got Mom some nice perfume and lipstick. I got my mom a telephone table - ever since I can remember my mom's been wishing for something to put the telephone on - Now she will have it. I know that is something she really wants.

Darling, you ask me not to worry about you, hon; I won't worry but I want you to know that I'll be thinking of you constantly and I'll be praying that you are well and home soon. That is something I couldn't help but do and I don't think you would call that worrying. I'll take faith in the fact that everything that *has* happened to us... has been for the best, and whatever is to happen will [also] be for the best. As you say, let's keep feeling that it won't be long before you are home again and we can go on being the very happy Mr. and Mrs. we were when we were together. I love you darling - oh how I love you.

Hon, everybody likes the brown hat that you said looks like a Pot Lid. I guess I look like the tomboy I am.

I want to finish my rug and get something new to work on for our home. I'm forever looking at pictures in magazines on home furnishings. I keep imagining what our home is going to be like. It is so strange how a person can change. I never took any interest in such things but now it fascinates me. I'd like our home not to be just ordinary but very different and yet beautiful.

Honey, I received a letter from the insurance company in regards to the policy that has come due and there is a \$75 payment in it. They are going to send an agent here and I am going to show my *Power Of Attorney* and receive the payment. In regards to the copies of the *Power Of Attorney* you are sending me, I am glad you have taken the trouble to do that. I am sure it will be sufficient for all matters that might arise... In regards to the will, I don't know what to say. Lawyer Kotchen told me that as far as war bonds are concerned, in order to change the beneficiary... a will... does not cover it - if you want it changed, either you bring the bonds and have the beneficiary changed or the beneficiary can do it. If you have an insurance policy at home, the same applies to it... I don't know whether you do have any insurance at home, you never said. However, I know that Norman wrote to Mom and asked her to change his property to Margie. As I said before it's up to you and whatever you intend to do about it let me know won't you dear?... I hope I don't sound *grasping* darling because you know I feel about these things, but being your wife these things just have to be taken care of and I guess it is one of the responsibilities you assume when you get married - poor kid!

If all goes well I intend to go to New Britain tomorrow to see the family. My mom is sleeping at Faye⁸⁵'s house tonight. She took care of Holly⁸⁶ and Betty May⁸⁷ so that Faye could go downtown for a while and do some shopping.

It is so cold in the house tonight, my nose feels cold. That reminds me I miss your habit with noses, honey.

Oh, was it mobbed downtown today. Of course, G. Foxe & Co. was the busiest and the front of the store was jammed with people trying to get in. I don't know how those inside got out. Maybe there's still in there do you think so honey?



I am looking forward to the gum and souvenirs you sent me. You're such a good husband and I love you so much for it.

I went into Sage's⁸⁸ today to see if they had that candy I want to send you that you liked so well, hon. The Candy Department is a joke now. They had peanuts and Maple Sugar

⁸⁵ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty) May and Holly Suzanne

⁸⁶ Holly Weidman is one year old at the time

⁸⁷ Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman is seven years old

⁸⁸ Sage-Allen is a department store next to G. Fox's on Main Street in Downtown Hartford.

Candy. The selection was too varied, so I couldn't make up my mind... Consequently I bought nothing.

I still have your ration books. As yet, I didn't find the time to return them and on thinking about it - I waited a long time to get them so I'll take my time in sending them back - I know I'm being a devil but heck I have time to be an angel when I die. Wouldn't I be surprised that when the time comes, I find myself with a pitchfork and a tail, instead of beautiful white wings and a harp!

It is so quiet in the house, that the ticking of the clock sounds so loud. For a change, our neighbors are not arguing tonight. I think she has a sore throat and that's the reason.

Oh my fingers hurt, I've been writing too long. You can see what a sissy those six months made out of me - well it won't be long before I'll be tough again.

Your pen writes very nicely, hon. I have to brag about mine a little - mine doesn't leak! What a pleasure it is... because I hated to write with a pen because, no sooner had I finished one sentence and my hand was covered with ink... Today my nose got so cold when I was downtown, I thought what a wonderful thing it would be to have *nose*-muffs, with automatic nose wipers in them so that you don't have to take your mittens off to get your hanky... [to] wipe your nose. Isn't that an idea, hun? I am so *schmatt*. I think it would be a good idea.

Honey, wherever you are, I hope this letter finds you well and happy. I love you darling and please take good care of yourself. Give yourself a kiss for me. On second thought, just imagine it because you'd look silly kissing yourself - and you know me I'm never satisfied with one kiss: I'm such a she wolf! So my honey, I'll say goodnight now and, once more before I close this letter, I want to say I love you with all my heart -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

And here is a great big X because it is now after 12:00 o'clock and it is our 6th month anniversary

I love you
Sylvia



Sunday night ~
[December 12, 1943]

Darling ~

I never expected to talk to you today, but darling it was the best thing that could have happened. I kept thinking of you all day and the fact that it was our sixth month anniversary made me miss you so. It was a real honest to goodness pleasure to have longer than five minutes to talk. You sounded so much better in spirit, that it made me feel so much better. If only for that one reason - I am so thankful to be able to talk to you. I do love you so, my darling.

You certainly expect quite a bit from your wife – twins! I'm afraid you are going to lose that bet, because I don't think I'll have twins. However, if it means very much to you... I'll see what we can do about it.

So now I have a rival! *Knobby*! Honey, I bet he's as cute as he can be. If you ever take any snapshots of him please send me one. Hon, what perplexes me is how is he going to fly with you at 20,000 [feet]? Maybe he isn't going to fly with you, or are you having an oxygen mask made special for him?

I'm so glad you were able to talk with Dad because I know he wanted to say goodbye to you. It is too bad that Mom had to be in New York - I know she would have been so happy to have been able to talk with you again.

Yes, Issie⁸⁹ is in the Navy I forgot just what his rank is but it is equivalent to a Major in the Army⁹⁰. The reason why he wanted to go into the Navy is as I said he wanted to get out of the hospital⁹¹. You see, he was in line to be superintendent and [when] the superintendent retired... they told Issie that they were sorry, but being a Jew, he couldn't get it... After being there for so many years, and being in line for this [promotion] and that old story of being a Jew... isn't easy to take. So I guess he reasoned it all out very soundly, and going into the Navy must have some very definite advantages for him, or else he wouldn't do it. A man with a family of five children⁹² thinks very seriously of such a step before going on with it - so I guess he knows what he is doing.

⁸⁹ Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter has recently left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital and enlisted in the Navy.

⁹⁰ Issie has been offered a commission as a Commander, which is equivalent to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the United States Army.

⁹¹ Mt. Sinai Hospital is at 490 Blue Hills Ave. in Hartford, Conn.

⁹² Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David Maranski, Albert Leonard, Thalia, Harold Paul and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

I was supposed to go to New Britain today, but it being so cold outside, I decided to stay home and take care of some things at home. Betty May⁹³ was here all day and she kept me company. She is good company and I love to talk with her because she has such good power of reasoning for her age. You can't put anything over on her. She was in a very affectionate mood today and she kept telling me how much she loved me and how happy she is because I am home.

As yet Nate⁹⁴'s baby hasn't been circumcised as he does not weigh enough. Well Lil shouldn't feel bad about the fact that he is a little baby, because they say little babies are healthier [than] larger children later on. Well, your cousin Newton can help prove the saying.

I guess tonight's call was really goodbye. I'm so happy I was home and then of course that you were able to make the call. I hope that wherever you will be sent, it will be to your liking and goes along well. No matter where you are, I want you to know I'm always thinking of you, and I love you with all my heart. I'll pray constantly for you to be home soon, and this whole mess will be over soon. So goodnight darling I love you and, until tomorrow, when I'll write again ~

I love you
X xxx
Sylvia

Darling this great big X is for what today is our anniversary. Let's hope that when we celebrate our first year anniversary we will be together again - may God grant it. In the time you will be away, I have happiness in the thought of these past six months and it's amazing how pleasant memories can stay with you and help make things seem brighter. I am so thankful for these past six months and for what it has meant to me. It has proven to me that our love is a true love, and there is nothing more I could ever ask for, and I have happiness in knowing that I am your wife and someday we will go on where we left off ~ and our happiness will know no bounds.

I love you
Sylvia
X

⁹³ Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman was seven years old at the time.

⁹⁴ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

Monday night ~
[December 13, 1943]

Darling ~

Today has been a very uneventful day. I had a long day at work and there certainly was plenty to do. The reason why we had to work overtime was because there are so many letters that we have received that have to be taken care of, and answered... It being the last of the year we are busy keeping our accounts in order during the day – oh, the life of the working girl!

I received three copies of the *Power Of Attorney* and the letter starting your insurance that you have taken out. On reading over this copy of the *Power Of Attorney*, it is much more explicit than the ones you received at Alexandria. I have enough copies now and I can take care of things and not worry about running out of them. Thank you darling, for getting them.

It is so cold today, I had to wait twenty minutes for the bus... and my toes got so cold. In fact, my feet are still cold. Now if you were here, I'd warm them on you when we got to bed.

I wanted to call your mom tonight to find out about how the folks were in New York but Margie told me in our conversation tonight that Mom is at her club. I forgot this is Monday night.

Hon, I miss you so much I'll never get used to being without you no matter how much I have to accept the fact. I'll be so happy when I can be with you again - I love you so much my darling. I'll say goodnight now hon, because there really isn't much to write except that I'm feeling fine and I hope your cold is definitely gone by now. Take good care of yourself and once again before I say goodnight ~ I love you darling ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Tuesday night ~
December 14, 1943

Darling ~

When I came home from work tonight, I felt tired but when I saw two letters from you, it made me feel like an entirely different person.

How well I remember that day a year ago, the ninth of December. I can remember going to the diner in the RR Station and tears dropping in my coffee. I thought the hot cup of coffee would help me feel better, but... nothing would have. Yes sweet, in one year you have made something of yourself, and I am so proud of you. I'm not just saying that... I honestly am proud of you. I know how hard you worked when you were a cadet, and how much you had to take to get where you are. I know that you earned your rank... when you work hard for something, the reward at the end is so worthwhile. I feel as you do about the length of time we were together. It was longer than I thought it would be, and I can't understand how so much happiness could have been enjoyed in those six months. In a way, it was a happy year. The reason why I say *in a way* is because it would have been better if there was no war - but other than that... it was as good a year as it could be - a very eventful [one] and of course a happy ending, six months. Your wish was granted - you are an officer in the Air Corp.⁹⁵ You are flying... and you were home longer than most fellows stay in the States... If it helps, you have a wife that loves you more than could ever be told.

As for me ,darling, my one regret... is that I didn't realize a long time ago that I loved you. I just hope that every year to follow will have as much happiness as I have had these past six months.

Darling, I giggled over your copilot's romance. It certainly is... the silliest thing I ever heard and being 28 years old I wonder just what does ail him. I agree with you that he is odd.

[I] work⁹⁶ until seven tonight and at least I feel better than I did a week ago... I feel as though I know what I am doing and why I do it. Nothing that bothers me more than to follow a procedure and not know why I am. I always want to know the why.



⁹⁵ The United States Air Force became a separate military service on September 18, 1947, with the implementation of the National Security Act of 1947. Prior to that, military aviation was part of the Army and Navy. Lenny was in the Army Air Corp.

⁹⁶ Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave. in Hartford, Conn., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

Honey, I honestly [have] a bad cramp in my right hand. It can be understood if you saw me add over eight feet of figures today and pull the lever after each amount - my adding machine isn't an electric one - damn it!

I've been very lucky about getting to work in the morning. Natie⁹⁷ and I walk as far as Sigourney St. and Homestead Ave. and we are picked up from there by a friend of Natie's, and [I arrive] just a few blocks from my office.

Margie⁹⁸ called me tonight and extended a New Year's party invitation to me from Pearl⁹⁹. It will be a Hen Party... and a bunch of girls who are all in the same boat - waiting - are coming to the party. It ought to be quite a party – one bottle of hoarded liquor.

Mom told Margie she is glad we are going to a party. Of course she has a date - well I guess I'm just an old maid for the duration of your absence.

So honey, I'll say goodnight for today and feel that it is one day closer to the day we will be together. Goodnight my sweet, I love you

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

⁹⁷ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born two months ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

⁹⁸ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

⁹⁹ Margie's best friend.

Thursday night ~
December 15, 1943

Darling ~

You are getting to see more of our country, aren't you darling? When I get a letter from you I never know where it will be postmarked. I bet it is cold there because the winters there are supposed to be really mean. I certainly know what it is like to be cold because my legs get so cold on our way to work - I shiver when I think of it. You got your wish, hon. You wanted to be the passenger on a plane and let someone else do the worrying. It must be more of a pleasure trip, traveling that way.

Honey, I bet there is so much excitement going on now. There is so much ahead of you that I bet you are impatient to get going... Oh, how I wish I could be with you - and... if you only knew how much I mean that. I have got that much of a Tomboy streak in me, an adventure seems to fascinate me so much. That's what I get for being a girl - next time I'll make sure I choose the opposite sex - There's not much excitement being a girl. I guess when you are made a girl, your object in life is to be virtuous and if you are a boy - well you're just damn lucky! If I weren't married - that's if I never met you - I can assure you I would be in one of the Services now.

In regards to your not writing Sunday night after the cold... writing was up to you and if you felt like forgetting things for a while and wanted to go to the show - that's up to you. I heard that that picture was a terrible picture and I can imagine how you must have had *Shpilkes*¹⁰⁰ throughout the show.

The Field you are at now must be a very nice camp - your description... certainly gives that impression. I wonder how long you will be there. This wondering is just like a game - you never know what will happen next...

Tomorrow night, I am going to the movies with Roz, the girl in my office. We are going to work until six-thirty, have dinner in town, and then the movies.

Darling I won't worry if I don't hear from you in the days to follow, as I know you might be on the move and it will be quite impossible for you to write. I hope you are well and everything is going along fine.

Until my next letter - I love you sweet and good night ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

¹⁰⁰ *Shpilkes* is a Yiddish word that means impatience, restlessness. It's similar to "ants in your pants." (shpil-keez).

Friday night ~
December 17, 1943

Darling ~

Being a working girl again I'm glad today is Friday, because that means that tomorrow is Saturday. I worked overtime three nights this week so you can understand why I'm glad tomorrow is Saturday - it was a long week.

Last night Roz and I worked until seven and then we went to *Mickey's* on Market Street and had a spaghetti dinner.

We had to wait for seats as they were so busy. It was delicious spaghetti and the meatballs were very good, too.

After we ate all we could we went to the Strand¹⁰¹ and saw *Corvette K-225*. It kept us on the edge of our seats and the co-feature *So's Your Uncle* kept us laughing. It was one of the funniest pictures I've seen in ages and golly how I laughed.

Natie¹⁰² had me rushing tonight. I went downtown with him to help him select some gifts for his friend, Jim Daly's mother. He is overseas now and his mother has been in a hospital for about three months now. We rushed so that we could be there before 6:00 as the stores weren't open until 9:00 tonight. We got some other things but I will have to do the rest of the shopping tomorrow.

Honey I am going to wash my hair soon and how I miss your shampoos. You spoiled me honey.

Margie¹⁰³ told me that Boomey¹⁰⁴ was home for a few days. Margie was at Annette Albert's shower and she noticed that Frances¹⁰⁵ had a very pretty wristwatch. She commented on how pretty it was and Frances told her that Boomey bought it for her when



¹⁰¹ The Strand was a performing arts venue in downtown Hartford, Conn that showed feature films at the time..

¹⁰² Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born two months ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

¹⁰³ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

¹⁰⁴ Adolf (Boomey) Siegel was a friend of Sylvia's from Hartford, Connecticut where they were both in the Weaver High School class of 1938. Lenny graduated in 1936 from the same school.

¹⁰⁵ Frances was a friend of Sylvia, who is engaged to Boomey Siegel.

he was home last week. It is a very pretty watch from the description - it has rubies and diamonds on the case of the watch.

I wonder how long it will be before I hear from you again. It seemed so strange to come home from work and not have your letter waiting. I certainly do miss not hearing from you. I hope all is well and everything is coming along fine.

I proudly wear your wings every day - and I have good reason to wear them and be as proud of them as I am. I hope that the time passes quickly and we will be together again - I do love you so and without you I just never feel right.

When you write to me sweet please tell me as much of yourself and whatever you can write as possible.

Until tomorrow then my darling good night and I love you ever so much.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Saturday
[December 18, 1943]

Dearest wife -

At least I'm able to write to you, true I can't tell you half the things I would like to, but Army censorship prohibits me. Quite a bit has happened since my last letter and someday we'll spend hours talking about what I've seen and done since I kissed you goodbye that night in Alex¹⁰⁶.

I am definitely on my way to the place we've talked about so often - one of these days I expect to meet Lou¹⁰⁷ and have a nice talk with him and also be able to personally congratulate him on becoming a father.

At my last stop, I met quite a few fellows from Hartford, One of them a First Lieutenant by the name of Lassoﬀ - I can't think of his first name, but I think you went to school with him, at any rate he is a relative of Sadie¹⁰⁸'s boss so if you're interested you can find out from him.

Each new base that we land at means just so much more of an easier life. Here there is absolutely nothing to do; it even lacks the roll call we had at Grand Island, And what is worse they don't have an Esquire Room. It is extremely cold here and other than going to eat or to the PX we don't venture outdoors. Our length of stay here is doubtful but not too long I hope.

So your brother Is¹⁰⁹ has finally got himself into the Navy. I don't quite understand the move, but as you said, he must have known what he was doing for after all he is no kid. Give him my best regards and tell him I wish him the best of luck.

¹⁰⁶ Alexandria, Louisiana

¹⁰⁷ Louis (Lou) Levy is Lenny's uncle who recently married Renee and had a child.

¹⁰⁸ Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister

¹⁰⁹ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

It's three weeks my darling since last I saw you, the longest we've been apart since we were married, and to say that I miss you would be putting it very mildly. I lie awake nights thinking of you and the many happy times we had together and then I start thinking of the many more happy times we are going to have when all this is over with and we're back together again and time is our own. It won't be long my darling not when I have you to look forward to.

That's about all for now my darling. If we are still here tomorrow, I'll write again, if not the next letter will be from my next stop. I love you my darling - don't ever stop believing that and I won't ever stop telling it to you -

Goodnight and

I love you
Lenny

Saturday nite ~
December 18, 1943

Darling ~

Oh what a busy Saturday the department stores had today! The sidewalks were full of people doing their Christmas shopping and all of the stores were full to capacity.



Thank God I am no longer a sales girl! I couldn't help but feel sorry for them - it is such a nerve racking job.

I had my teeth cleaned today and I was glad to hear that I have no cavities. Now I don't have to worry about my teeth for another six months, it is such a good feeling.

It was a lucky thing I went into the Bushnell¹¹⁰ Card Shop today for a Christmas card because while I was in there I saw two baby pictures for Natie¹¹¹'s son's room, and they were just what I was looking for...

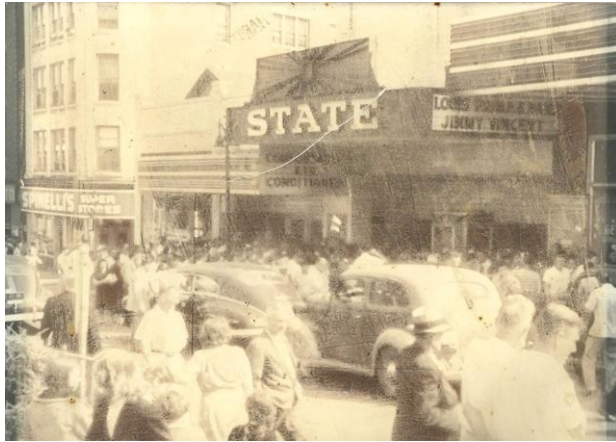
As I expected the telephone table I bought in Wise's¹¹² for my mom never came and I had to go there today and find out what happened to it. They checked on it and promised to deliver it Monday. I guess I'll have to wait and see if they do - nowadays you have to expect this kind of service and the Christmas rush doesn't help matters much.



¹¹⁰ The Bushnell Memorial Hall is a performing arts venue in Hartford, Conn.

¹¹¹ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born days ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

¹¹² Wise, Smith & Company, was a department store in Hartford, Connecticut



I met Pearl¹¹³ and Margie¹¹⁴ about three-thirty and we went to see *Happy Land*¹¹⁵ At the Capital. Why they ever named it *Happy Land* is beyond me. Everybody cried from start to finish. It was so very sad. Margie said that if Mr. Goralnik went we would have to row our way out. Speaking to Mom tonight she said that the Goralniks went - and they walked out halfway through the picture.

After the show we went to Johnson's for hot dogs. Remember the time I wanted to go to Johnson's on Farmington Ave. and you mistook it for the above Johnson's, and you took me there instead? You felt so embarrassed, I'll never forget it - it was really funny - please don't think I'm,, making fun of you - it was just cute - I guess that's the only way to put it. Well Margie and I each had two hot dogs each, and when we were on the bus we didn't feel so good.

Margie came here and we didn't do much, just talked. It is a very sad fact but Margie is having a lot of heartache now and it is a shame her being in her condition. Her folks are treating her very badly and it is all because she is pregnant and they blame Norman. They have no use for him and as far as Margie is concerned, they tell her awful things and try to make her feel... she is lucky to be with them. Margie wants to get a room somewhere but in her condition she shouldn't be alone. Hon, I feel so sorry for her. I don't care what anyone says - it may be hard on Norm, but it will never compare to what Margie is having to go through now - I guess it is so true about that saying - it is the woman who suffers. I just hope everything works out.

I expect to go to New Britain tomorrow if all goes well - I'm anxious to see the children and Babe and Issie¹¹⁶.

It is Saturday night again and honey I'll never get used to Saturdays that just don't mean very much... I haven't told you about what I intend to do on New Year's Eve. Pearl is having some of her friends over and she invited me to join the Hen Party. I know that there

¹¹³ Pearl is Margie's best friend.

¹¹⁴ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

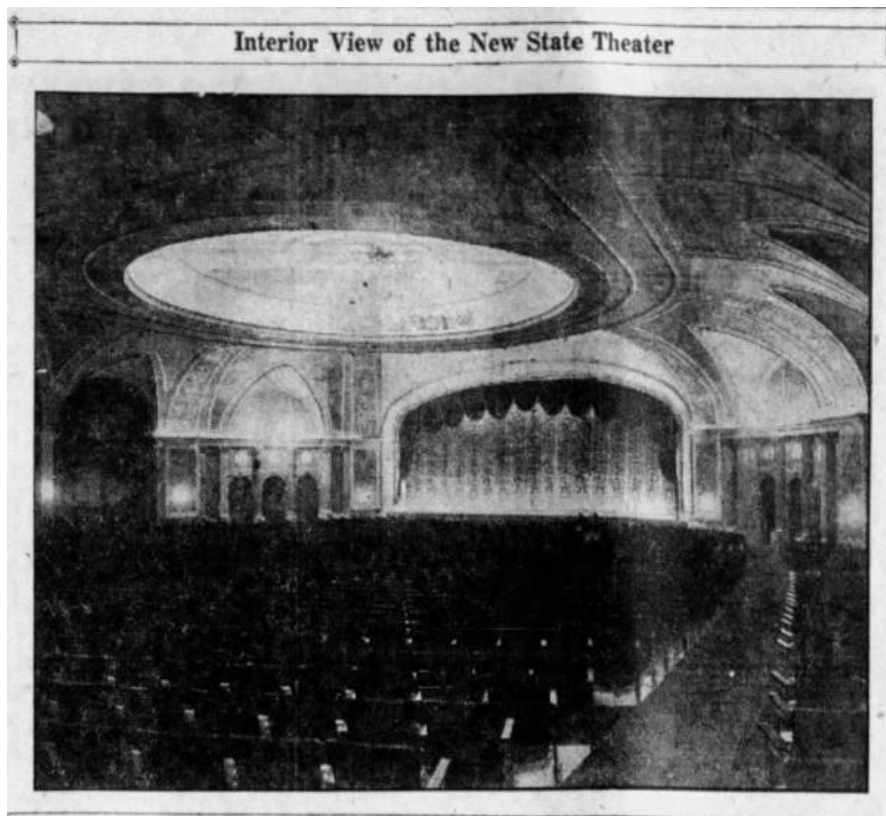
¹¹⁵ *Happy Land Happy Land* is a 1943 film directed by Irving Pichel, featuring Don Ameche as Lew Marsh, a father grieving the loss of his son in World War II.

¹¹⁶ Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter has recently left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford, and enlisted in the Navy.

will be many such parties this New Years - but let's hope and pray that a year from now we'll find all of us celebrating the new year together, and this war will be over.

Honey, before I end my letter I just wish you were here and I could kiss you again and again. I love you so much. oh honey I love you. take care of yourself and goodnight my darling.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Sunday
[December 19, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Another day and we're still here in the wilderness, but our prospects of leaving... shortly are very good.

Yesterday, after mailing your letter, I went over to the PX, had a can of beer and then went to the hospital to visit Chris¹¹⁷; yes he's there - he has a touch of the grippe and the flight surgeon thought a few days in the hospital would do no harm. The nurse wouldn't let me stay more than a couple of minutes, so I left and went to the theater, saw *True to Life* with Franchot Tone, and had a good laugh for myself.



This place is actually getting on my nerves. I purposely slept until twelve today, so that I wouldn't have too much time to kill, but even then the day dragged by. I went to the show again this afternoon and spent the rest of the day in the club reading week old newspapers and rereading magazines that I know by heart. Yes my darling, life has become a pretty boring thing but it won't last much longer I'm sure.

About all I can say for this place is that it's cold - terribly so. I don't dare go out unless I'm wearing my heavy flying jacket and most of the time I also wear the boots that go with it. There is snow everywhere and packed down so hard that it appears to be for the duration. God help the fellows that are stationed here permanently.

Having so much time to myself, I naturally get to thinking of you and then I get to miss you terribly and then I get lonesome. I've never felt this way before my darling, but I'd give anything right now to be able to

¹¹⁷ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

hold you in my arms, and kiss you over and over... Sitting in the club by myself I think of all those little things and it all mounts up to the fact that I miss you more and more as the days go by. I hope that your job is keeping you busy so that you don't have time to think too much, because judging from my own experiences it's hell. I miss not getting any mail from you - that thirty page letter must have grown by now - it sure will be a godsend to be able to sit down someday and read it over and over. Just as soon as I get to where I'm going, you'll hear from me and then you'll have my new address and believe me when I say I'll count the days until your letters start coming; just as I'm counting the days until I see you again. Once again it boils down to the fact that I'm not capable of saying what's in my heart - all I can say is I love you sweetheart more and more with each day -

I can't tell you where I'm going, where I am or what's cooking and I've said just about all there is to say So I guess I'll go to bed and think of you my darling wife -

Goodnight -

I love you
Lenny

The X's aren't there, but if they were they would be doubled tonight. I love you so much.

L.

Sunday night
December 19, 1943

Darling ~

It's happened! Margie is living with mom. Last night, when she came home... she had a big argument, and her father told her to get out. She called mom and asked her if she could eat dinner there, and after telling mom the story, mom asked her to bring her clothes and live with her and Dad. It is the only thing that can be done. I hope that things will go along smoothly - Margie has been having as much as she can take.

When I came to New Britain today everybody was busy wrapping Christmas gifts. Being a professional wrapper, a G. Fox¹¹⁸ Institute graduate, they put me to work. Hon, Issie¹¹⁹ has a family to be justly proud of. Harold¹²⁰, he's the youngest boy, is the best-natured child I have ever seen. He smiles continuously. Suzanne¹²¹ is taking after him. Albert¹²² and David¹²³ are certainly proud of their Daddy [but] they had to know about you and what kind of a plane you fly, and if you are really going to fly over the Japs. I bet Issie's heart will break when he has to leave them, and I know that they will certainly miss him...

Issie and Babe are going to be very busy this week - they are having so many parties made in their honor. Friday night, Babe is having an open house and I guess that's where I'll be.

Tomorrow is Monday again, so I better get to bed. I have an alarm that wakes me in the morning, but it is nothing like the alarm I used to jump out of bed in Alexandria to shut. As cold as I felt when I used to get up those mornings, it was a real pleasure.

Honey, goodnight and I love you my darling.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

¹¹⁸ G. Fox & Co. was a large department store in Downtown Hartford.

¹¹⁹ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

¹²⁰ Harold Paul Geetter is three at the time of writing

¹²¹ Suzanne Geetter is one year old

¹²² Albert Leonard Geetter is eight years old.

¹²³ David Maranski Geetter is ten years old

Monday
[December 20, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Here I am thirty miles north of Detroit writing the letter I promised to write last night. I have an excuse - a very feeble one - and I ask your forgiveness. After talking to you on the phone, Chris¹²⁴ and Rock¹²⁵ talked me into going to the show to see Mae West's latest picture¹²⁶, it is the lousiest thing I've seen in years, not forgetting that picture we saw in Alex¹²⁷.

Talking to you yesterday made it much easier for me to start this trip to - destination unknown¹²⁸. it was, as you said, just as if we were in the same city talking to one another but kept apart for an unknown force. Darling, I miss you terribly and when I talk to you on the phone, it eases the pain for a while but then, when the glow of happiness dies down, it becomes more acute and my love for you grows a little larger.

Yesterday at noon, we were *alerted*, which meant the beginning of what is going to prove a very interesting trip. At one o'clock we loaded our baggage onto the planes we were to use, and then went to draw our small arms. This consisted of a .45 automatic pistol and a hunting knife. Walking around like a bunch of characters from the wild and woolly West, we went and had our final physical exam, and then we were through for the day.

This morning, we were awakened at seven, had breakfast and arrived at base operations by eight. After some last minute loading and making a preflight check on the plane, we took off, arriving here

¹²⁴ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

¹²⁵ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

¹²⁶ Probably *The Heat's On*, in which Mae played Broadway star Fay Lawrence as a temperamental diva who is reluctantly persuaded by a Broadway producer to star in his latest production.

¹²⁷ Alexandria, Louisiana

¹²⁸ Lenny and Sylvia expected the new base to be England.

(Selfridge¹²⁹ Field Michigan) at two this afternoon. It is wonderful traveling as a passenger (we are being flown by ATC.) I sat in the radio room all the way, reading, smoking, eating and of course sleeping. It is bitter cold in this part of the country and consequently Chris and I are spending a quiet evening in our rooms. This air base is the *last word* in comfort. It is an old base and a permanent one; the BOQs are large two story brick buildings with steam heat, the beds have double mattresses and they even supply towels, just like a hotel. We are with the Pilot, Co-pilot and Navigator that are flying us *across* and the five of us have a suite of rooms. Each building has its own dining room, and the club is right in back of us. Our enlisted men went into Detroit for the night, so I'll be able to tell you about it in my next letter.

As I told you over the phone, we have a date to meet another couple in Boston five years from now to show off our twins. One of the girls that worked behind the snack bar in the Esquire room is getting a ring for Christmas and she was talking about the lovely times she is going to have. To shut her up, I told her about you and the wonderful twins we are going to have. To settle the argument, we made the above mentioned date - the loser to buy dinner for the winner's entire family.

About 'Knobby' all I can say is he is the cutest pup you ever put your eyes on. He's white with a few black spots... and no more than a good sized handful. He is about four weeks old and not yet strong enough to stand on his own four legs. He does one of three things - either he is drinking (milk), sleeping, or doing a 'job.' What I can't understand is how such a small animal changes the color of milk - from white to Amber so quickly!

Butch darling, there is so much I would like to write to you but I just don't dare, you'll just have to wait until I get to where I'm going before you know the details of the next few days. Just don't worry my darling everything is going to turn out all right and, before you know it I'll be back home, holding you in my arms for keeps. Just keep two thoughts in mind always - I love you very, very much and no matter where I am I'll always be thinking of you my sweetheart.

¹²⁹ Selfridge Field was also getting ready for the arrival of the 477th Bombardment Group (M) (Colored) on 15 January 1944 to train Tuskegee Airmen with Republic P-47 Thunderbolt fighters and North American B-25 Mitchell bombers.

That's about all for today – if time permits, (Or if authorities permit) all right again tomorrow. once again my darling I miss you and love you very very much -

Goodnight my darling and here is an extra one for you x¹³⁰

I love you
xxxxxxxxxx¹³¹
Lenny

Regards to all,

Love you
L.

¹³⁰ Lenny was self-censoring his X (kisses) after his signature, because he believed they were not allowed.

¹³¹ Lenny was planning to self-censor his X (kisses) on his signature, because he believed they were not allowed. Apparently, he was using extras here.

Monday night
December [20, 1943]

Darling ~

Today I received a Christmas card from Frannie¹³². As yet, I haven't had a reply to my last letter to her. I guess she must be very busy getting ready for Christmas... It is less than a week away now.

We had some excitement at work. Today, one of the cars in the parking lot next to the office caught on fire. It wasn't a bad fire but it was an excuse to stop working for a while. I guess a cigarette caused it. The man who owns the car made a mad dash for the spare tire in the trunk of his car.

Tomorrow night I am going to the Christmas party that the office has yearly. It is going to be a big party because they have a personnel of about 150.

Saturday, I splurged on my first \$27 paycheck. I bought a new dress. It is a lemon color and I surprised myself when I bought it because I honestly had no intention of buying a dress when I went downtown.

Sweetheart, [your] mom told me that your clothes came. Why did you send home your summer suit? I haven't been there yet, but she tells me that the gum is there - thank you darling.

It snowed today for about ten minutes and then the sun shone in all its glory.

Sweetheart, there really isn't much more to write tonight. Not knowing... where you are or what I'd like to know... is hard... All I can say is that wherever you are, I want you to know I love you so much and I'm just praying constantly for your return home soon.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

¹³² Frannie is married to Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani - the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Tuesday
[December 21, 1943]

Dearest wife -

No letter yesterday for the same reason that this is going to be more of a note than anything else - in other words, there is just nothing to write about. I slept until twelve noon so... I won't have as much of the day to kill. My entire day is spent eating, sleeping, reading, and going to the theater, if there is a new picture showing. (That happens every other day.)

Today saw the coming of a cold snap; that up here means bitter cold with a biting wind. The wind is so strong that it blew a [censored¹³³] completely around down on the line this afternoon.

Chris¹³⁴ is still in the hospital, It turned out that instead of the grippe, both his ears are infected, a recurrence of what he had back in Alexandria¹³⁵. He will be there a week or so and it looks like I'll go on ahead with the rest of the crew and wait for him to catch up at our final destination. It is bad enough to be well and stationed up here and I pitied anyone who is sick up here - it is just miserable.

The climate besides being cold is very dry - so dry that cigarettes just fall apart once the package is opened. Speaking of cigarettes reminds me to tell you that I lost the case you gave me for my birthday - the one you didn't think I'd use, but which I prized so much. I feel terrible about losing it, but have no idea where I dropped, or left, it.

Sweetheart, I've written time after time telling you just how much I miss you and how much more I love you but as each day goes by I realize that what I felt before was nothing in comparison to how I feel now or how I'm going to feel as time goes by. In the short space of time that we had for each other you became a part of me - deep in my heart, where no

¹³³ Censored: probably B-17, or other plane model was cut by hand from Lenny's letter.

¹³⁴ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

¹³⁵ Alexandria, Louisiana

matter where I go, you'll always be with me. I mean that sincerely my darling and I always want you to remember that I love you.

That's all the news for today, so until tomorrow when I'll write a few more lines - good night my darling -

I love you
Lenny



Wednesday night
December [22, 1943]

Darling ~

Tonight there is cause to celebrate - I finally finished my rug. As I told you when we were in Alexandria... there wasn't much left to be done on it... so today I got my final spurt of ambition. Now it will be put away with the other things I am saving for those happy days when we will have our new home.

I joined the hundreds of others in Hartford that are sick in bed with colds, etc. However, I haven't got a cold but a bad bronchial cough. It has been coming on for the past few days and last night I began to cough like a fog-horn. I don't feel sick at all but you know how annoying it is to have a tickling sensation in your throat. I've been taking cough medicine Issie¹³⁶ gave me an aspirin. So, I ought to be better in no time - you... can't keep a good Levy down for long.

Last night I went to the Christmas party our office¹³⁷ made. Perhaps if I didn't go out last night I wouldn't have such a bad cough today, but I had a good time... It was a typical office party - everybody was drunk and all the girls were out to get a 4F married 70 year old man for the evening. As far as the men - well you know what they were out for.

I left at about eleven and I had so many laughs. The photographer for the evening was at our table so consequently our group became the most photographed... If and when they are developed, I'll send you a few of them - they ought to be funny.



Transportation to and from the party was wonderful. Esther, a girl in my department, Accounts Receivable by the way, has a beautiful convertible club car, and she took Roz and myself there and back. She's a very nice girl and we have something in common - we are both married and our husbands are overseas. However, she's nine months ahead of me in her marriage... and her husband has been in India for nine months. Well to get back to the party, we all had a good time and this evening Roz called and told me half of the kids didn't show up today and the other half came in after nine - we are supposed to be there at 8:15.

¹³⁶ Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (issie) S. Geetter left his job at B Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enroll in the Navy.

¹³⁷ Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

Mom just called to find out how I feel. I just hope I'll be able to go to work tomorrow - I hate lying in bed.

Sadie¹³⁸ went downtown tonight - the stores are open until nine - and she's going to get a gift from the family for Issie - he needs plenty of clothing so I guess that's what she's getting. They are having an open house Friday - I guess I told you that in one of my previous letters.

How's Knobby - the mascot? I wish somehow I could be him for a while - at least I'd be with you for a while. I miss you my darling so much. I received a Christmas card yesterday from Mrs Rodailat. It was a coincidence as I mailed one out to her yesterday morning.

I have your pictures on my dresser and right now you are looking at me and oh how I wish those pictures were really you - I do love you darling.

Darling, as for today, there's not much else to write. I hope you are well and I hope to hear from you soon. Please give my regards to Rock¹³⁹ and Chris¹⁴⁰, and of course all of my love to you.

Yesterday I received the first letter from you since the one you wrote to me in Detroit. Although there wasn't very much you could say... just hearing from you and knowing you are well made that letter so precious. I can well understand your anxiety to get going. Perhaps at this very moment that I am writing this, you are on your way. For your sake, I hope that you are. If, as yet, you are still not here nor there, please be patient darling.

It is good to hear that you are going to congratulate Lou¹⁴¹ on the birth of his daughter. I hear she is a very cute baby and something to be congratulated on.

Well your wife is still in bed. I guess I just couldn't be different from the rest so I too have the grippe. I don't feel very sick except for a sore nose that I've blown so darn many times. Mom isn't taking any chances, however, so she makes me stay in bed and tanks me with water and fruit juices.

Goodnight, darling ~

¹³⁸ Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister.

¹³⁹ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

¹⁴⁰ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

¹⁴¹ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and just had their second daughter Holly Weidman.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Friday night
December [24, 1943]

Darling ~

Yesterday I received the first letter from you since the one you wrote to me in Detroit. Although there wasn't very much you could say... just hearing from you and knowing you are well made that letter so precious. I can well understand your anxiety to get going. Perhaps at this very moment that I am writing this, you are on your way. For your sake, I hope that you are. If, as yet, you are still not here nor there, please be patient darling.

It is good to hear that you are going to congratulate Lou¹⁴² on the birth of his daughter. I hear she is a very cute baby and something to be congratulated on.

Well your wife is still in bed. I guess I just couldn't be different from the rest so I too have the grippe. I don't feel very sick except for a sore nose that I've blown so darn many times. Mom isn't taking any chances, however, so she makes me stay in bed and tanks me with water and fruit juices.

I'm home all by myself now as the folks are in New Britain for the party for Is¹⁴³. Mom thought I'd be afraid to stay by myself but I convinced her that while I lived in Alexandria I learned how to overcome that.

It was very cold here yesterday and last night. This morning when I awoke I noticed that my windows were covered with ice. Of course, being snug and warm in bed, it looked very pretty but I guess those on the outside weren't thinking the same thing.

Roz called and spoke to my mom. She gave her all the latest news from the office for me. It seems as though the old man I danced with at the party noticed my absence, as he asked Roz about me.

He reminds me of old Mr Whipple, my boss in the Retail Credit¹⁴⁴. He danced with me and when I went home I told Nate¹⁴⁵ that I thought sure I was being *raped* rather than *danced* with.

¹⁴² Uncle Louis (Lou) Levy and his wife Renee recently had their first child.

¹⁴³ Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (issie) Geetter left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enroll as a medic in the Navy, and has just learned he will be commissioned.

¹⁴⁴ By the 1940s, Retail Credit Company was one of the nation's largest credit bureaus, holding files on millions of American citizens. It now operates as one of the "Big Three" credit bureau, Equifax.

¹⁴⁵ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter. His first child was born two months ago, Philip Henry Geetter.

**THEY'RE EITHER TOO YOUNG
OR TOO OLD**

WARNER BROS.
PICTURES, INC.
presents

**THANK
YOUR
LUCKY
STARS**

starring

★ HUMPALTY DUMBOAT
★ BETTE DAVIS
★ OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND
★ FREDERICK FLYNN
★ JOHN GARFIELD
★ JANE LEASE
★ BOB LIPKOW
★ GRACIE HUNTER
★ MARION SHARP
★ AILEEN SMITH

★ LYRIC BY
FRANK LOESSER
★ MUSIC BY
ARTHUR SCHWARTZ

★

**101 UNITED STATES
AND SAVERS
YOUNG AND STARS**

GOOD NIGHT GOOD MORNING
HOW BRILL YOU ARE
ICE COLD KATE
I'M MINE FOR A FALL
LOVE, DON'T YOU
THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS
THE UMBRELLA
THEY'RE EITHER TOO YOUNG OR TOO
OLD

★

NEW RECORDS: THESE REMINISCENT SOUNDS ARE
M. WITMARK & SONS
SUA 8135 • NEW YORK CITY

Seeing that kisses are censored at the end of letters... we will just have to pretend they're there. Reviewing your letter, the one you wrote Sunday first, I couldn't understand why they were missing. Of course, today's letter explained it, but I admit I was a wee bit in the dark about it yesterday.

¹⁴⁶ Eleanor (Kohn) Ellison married Sam Ellison, a friend of Lenny's who also trained with him at Alexandria Army and Air Force Base, and would soon join him at the same Air Base in England.

Margie¹⁴⁷ called today and my mom says that she too isn't going to work as she has a slight case of the grippe. Mr Lassoff brought some bread here today and he was telling me about his son. It so happens he is home on furlough now and his dad sure is happy.

Well, it's Christmas night and seeing that I haven't got a pair of nylons to hang up, perhaps I ought to do as Joan Davis, the comedian said she is going to do on Christmas Eve - hang up an empty bottle of Stocking makeup.

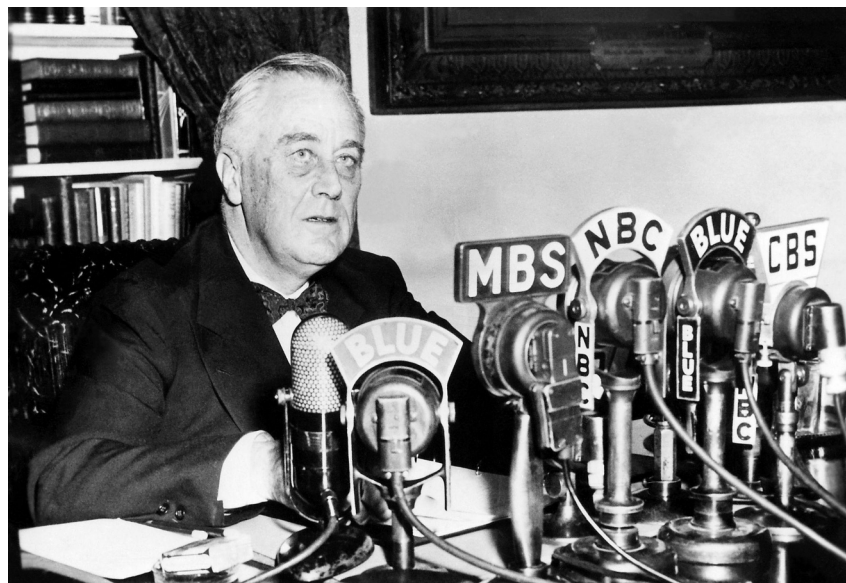
I heard the president's speech today and I thought it was a wonderful speech. Although he didn't make any definite promises he was reassuring and in times like these a little reassurance can mean so much. I wonder if you were listening to it. Did you, darling?

Hon, I hope that I will be able to mail my letters to you real soon. I admit my letters aren't letters that might win prizes but I hope they fulfill my one reason for writing... making you happier and being able to pretend you are right here with me and I am talking to you.

I'll say goodnight for now my darling and before closing let me tell you that I'm always thinking of you and how very much I love you.

Goodnight, darling ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



¹⁴⁷ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

Saturday night
[December 25, 1943]

Darling ~

Today has been a very quiet and rather uninteresting day, so if I make this a short letter it will only be, because I fear it wouldn't be very interesting reading matter.



I'm better today, but I still have to lie in bed as my temperature isn't normal yet! The radio proved good company today, because of the varied Christmas programs on today. I had Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*¹⁴⁸ dramatized three times, and at the present moment I feel as though I know it well enough to repeat parts of it word by word.

Yesterday, I received a form from the War Dept. stating that I was to receive an allotment soon. I hope they keep their word and send it soon because I can use the money right now, and I can't get down to the bank. It has been a rather expensive month – gifts, telephone calls, and new doctor bills and medicines. And not working this week, I don't expect a large paycheck next week. I hate to use that money, but I guess it can't be helped so maybe I'll be able to make it up in the future.

I believe [your] Mom and Dad went to the movies today. I hope they didn't have to join those where there was "Standing Room Only" - but it being Christmas Day, I was wondering... if they had trouble finding seats.

I am keeping my word about making this a short letter, as there honestly isn't much more to write except that I love you and hope you are well. Best wishes to Rock and Chris - and once more darling - I love you.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

¹⁴⁸ This was probably a rebroadcast of *A Christmas Carol* directed by Orson Welles in 1939. Lionel Barrymore was featured as Ebenezer Scrooge.

V-mail¹⁴⁹
December 26, 1944
Somewhere in England

Dearest wife -

Remember my saying that I'd have tea in England for Christmas - well that's just what I had and nothing more. The trip over wasn't bad - a lot better than going by boat. The base I'm at now isn't too bad, but I'm still not at my final destination; we finally caught up with the rest of the crew and now we'll have to wait for Chris.

England is a beautiful place - from the air, but on the ground it is miserably dank and cold. The blackout here is really something to see - or rather not to see. So far, we have seen no indication of a war, things being very peaceful.

Sweetheart, use the address on this sheet and eventually your mail will get to me. Write just as often as possible, and you can be sure that I will too. I miss you terribly and love you more than ever. Give my regards to all at home.

I love you
Lenny

¹⁴⁹ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad.

PRINT THIS COMPLETE ADDRESS IN PLAIN BLOCK LETTERS IN THE PANEL BELOW, AND YOUR RETURN ADDRESS IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. USE TYPEWRITER, DARK INK OR PENCIL. WRITE PLAINLY. VERY SMALL WRITING IS NOT SUITABLE.

No.



MRS. LEONARD LEVY
148 MAGNOLIA ST.
HARTFORD 5 CONN.
% GETTER U.S.A.

25 DEC 1943

1/6 L. Levy
SENDER'S NAME
A.P.O. 12662 AA
SENDER'S ADDRESS
% Postmaster N. York
Dec. 26/1943
DATE

Dearest wife -

Somewhere in England

Remember my saying that I'd have tea in England for a man - well, that's just what I had and nothing more. The trip over wasn't bad - a lot better than going by boat. The base I'm at now isn't too bad but I'm still not at my final destination; we finally caught up with the rest of the crew and now we'll have to wait for Chris.

England is a beautiful place - from the air, but on the ground it is miserably damp and cold. The blackout here is really something to see - or rather not to see - so far we have seen no indication of a war, things being very peaceful.

Sweetheart, use the address on this sheet and eventually your mail will get - to me. Write just as often as possible and you can be sure that I will too. I miss you terribly and love you more than ever. Give my regards to all at home.

I love you
Leonard

V-MAIL

Sunday
December 26 [1943]

Darling ~

Today is one of those days when everything outdoors has a gray cast. I guess it may snow or perhaps rain.

Everybody is at Natie¹⁵⁰'s house now as they are having the *Bris*¹⁵¹ for the baby today. I bet the apartment is full to capacity and then some.

I called your mom today and Margie¹⁵² is in bed now. I'm home, too, with the grippe, but she went outdoors yesterday and I guess she wasn't well enough. Dad suggested I take a cab and come over for the afternoon, but the weather is changing as it is, and still having a slight temperature, I'll be a real good girl and stay in the house.

Not having much to do and the radio programs on right now aren't very interesting, so I've been looking through our scrapbook and I've been reading some of your letters. I get such a kick out of the ones you wrote to me, while you were in pre-flight [school.] You were so worried, my darling. Someday, we will have fun... going over so many things, and although they say it isn't good to dwell too much in the past, it... is so much fun to reminisce, when there are so many pleasantries attached.

Issie¹⁵³ leaves tomorrow morning - he will be stationed in New London for a while. He's afraid he'll be court-martialed right off because his uniforms, he just got them from Fox's¹⁵⁴ do not have the proper insignias. He certainly had to get so many things, but he [also] received so many gifts from his associate doctor friends at the hospital and from his friends in town. I'll bet he is all excited - he's been looking forward to this for a long time.

Your mom just called. She wants to visit me, but I told her it wasn't necessary as I am really fine. I told her I was going to write to you and at first she didn't understand - she thought I *had* your address. She laughed when I told her I'm saving them until I can mail them to you.

¹⁵⁰ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had the first of two children, Philip Henry, who was one month old at the time this was written

¹⁵¹ The *bris* ceremony, also known as *brit milah*, is a Jewish ritual circumcision performed on male infants when they are eight days old, symbolizing the covenant between God and the Jewish people. The ceremony typically involves a *mohel*, who performs the circumcision, and includes blessings and the naming of the child.

¹⁵² Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

¹⁵³ Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter has recently left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford, and enlisted in the Navy.

¹⁵⁴ G. Fox & Co. is the largest Department Store in Downtown Hartford.

Last night, I heard a joke on *Can You Top This One*¹⁵⁵ – program. In fact I heard two that amused me quite a bit so I'll try to tell them as they were worded and maybe you'll enjoy them too. Now let's see - how did they go - oh yes -

One morning this particular married woman said to her husband, “Did you know you cursed me in your sleep last night?” And her husband replied - “Who said I was sleeping?” I bet you heard it - if it's an old one I guess that's why I heard it.

And the other is about a little [woman] who made all her own clothes. One day, she made a dress out of an old curtain. Her boyfriend took her to see a play one evening and she decided to wear this particular dress. When the lights were dimmed and the familiar cry, “Curtain going up” was issued - she fainted.

Now hon, do you think I should be wearing *Poils*¹⁵⁶ for two such jokes?

I'm hoping that this coming week will bring word from you. Until tomorrow, I'll end this letter with all my love and I'll keep my fingers crossed and my hopes high that I'll hear from you soon.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Just for Laughs! – Tune in **CAN YOU TOP THIS?**

Starring

★ SENATOR FORD

★ HARRY HERSHFIELD

★ JOE LAURIE JR.

Hear what America's three top wits
think about America's most mirthful
subjects in this laugh-loaded,
completely unrehearsed program!

And read their best in the current August TRUE
STORY magazine now on sale on the newstands

EVERY SAT. – N.B.C.

Check your local newspaper for time and station

¹⁵⁵ Can You Top This? was a radio panel game in which comedians told jokes and tried to top one another.

¹⁵⁶ Pearls, spoken with a New York accent.

V-mail¹⁵⁷
[December 27, 1944]
Somewhere in England

Dearest wife -

I can't imagine why people say the English are cold and unfriendly... everyone that I've met has been extremely friendly and more than willing to go out of his way to help. The *Yank* with his chewing gum and candy, is king here. The kids on the street run after you asking for American candy or chewing gum - with the English accent it sounds terrific. The beer here is all that they ever said it was - it tastes unlike anything you ever drank before.

By the way darling, in your next letter to Sam and Eleanor tell Sam to thank God that he left his pilot when he did. I can't write details, but I think you know what I mean.

Tonight is a holiday in England, Boxing Day and I think I'll go to town tomorrow. I'll tell you what I saw darling.

Goodnight my darling.

I love you
Lenny

¹⁵⁷ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad.

SPACE PROVIDED - USE TYPEWRITER, DARK INK OR PENCIL. WRITE PLAINLY. VERY SMALL WRITING IS NOT SURFACED.

No.



CENSORS STAMP

MRS. LEONARD LEVY
148 MAGNOLIA ST.
HARTFORD 5 Conn.
C/o GEETTER U.S.A.

Leonard Levy
SENDER'S NAME
A.P.O. #12662-00
SENDER'S ADDRESS
Belmont, N.Y.
Dec. 27, 1943
DATE

DEC 28 1943

Somewhere in England

Dearest wife -

I can't imagine why people say that the English are a cold unfriendly race, every one that I've met has been extremely friendly and more than willing to go out of his way to help. The 'Yank' with his chewing gum and candy, is king here. The kids on the street run after you asking for American 'candy or chewing gum' - with the English accent it sounds terrific. The best here is all that they ever said it was - it tastes unlike anything you ever drank before.

By the way darling, in your next letter to Sam and Eleanor tell Sam to ~~the~~ thank God that he left his pilot when he did. I can't write details but I think you know what I mean.

Tonight is a holiday in England, 'Boxing Day', and I think I'll go to town - tomorrow I'll tell you what I saw. Goodnight my darling -

*I love you
Lenny*

RECEIVED

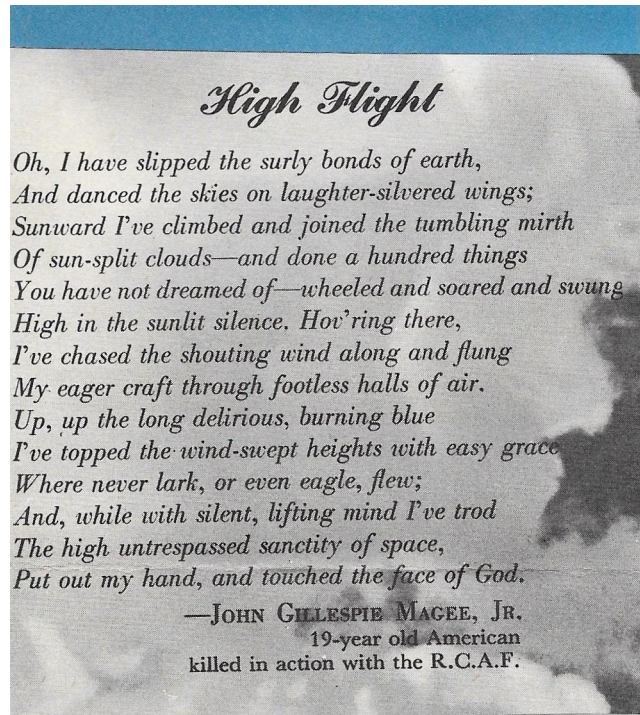
Tuesday night
December 28, 1943

Darling ~

I am enclosing a copy of the poem *High Flight*¹⁵⁸ that was in the *Coronet*¹⁵⁹ this month. I think it is very beautifully written and I thought perhaps you might enjoy it.

I went to work today¹⁶⁰, as my cold is gone. My bosses were kidding me about getting sick the day after the party - they said I can't take it anymore. From all the stories I've heard, there were plenty of goings-on Friday - the day before Christmas. The office was to close at one o'clock but by 10:30, everybody was drunk and all the men were running around kissing the girls, and some of them coupled off in empty offices. The head boss from New York happens to come through the office that morning, and hearing all the noise, and seeing his help all over the stairways... he got mad and told everybody to go home - it was ten-thirty. So instead of getting out at one o'clock, they went home at ten-thirty. Natie can't get over it - the way everybody acts, but once you work in a large office, it is to be expected, when a big holiday comes along. I learned that in the insurance company, but it seems that in this office it is much worse because the heads of the departments just don't give a darn.

I intended to go back to work yesterday, but it rained in the morning. By twelve, it cleared up, so I decided to visit [your] mom and Margie¹⁶¹ (She didn't go to work either because of a cold.) I ate dinner at three, and the way I ate, Margie thought I was the one pregnant. But I could prove it to her that I definitely am not.



¹⁵⁸ The poem was written by John Gillespie Magee, Jr., an Anglo-American aviator and poet. Magee served in the Royal Canadian Air Force, which he joined before the United States entered the war; he died in a mid-air collision over Lincolnshire in 1941.

¹⁵⁹ *Coronet* was a general interest digest magazine published from October 23, 1936, until at least March 1971

¹⁶⁰ Sylvia worked at Associated Transport, 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

¹⁶¹ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant.

I'm chewing some of the gum you sent me. I got it yesterday when I went to mom's. By the way hon, where are those souvenirs you told me you were sending to me? Mom said that the only thing she found in the foot locker or whatever you sent your things home in, was the box of chewing gum. Did you forget to send them to me?

I'm very sorry to hear that Chris¹⁶² is having trouble with his ears again. I hope it isn't serious and he will be well soon. Give him my regards and best wishes , dear, and tell him he's too *smabt* a pilot to be getting sick.

Darling, your going to the movies so often just to pass the time reminds me of how I did the same thing in Monroe [Louisiana] at times. I do wish I could send some of my letters to you now, it might help to hear from home.

In case you didn't know this, Norman¹⁶³ is in the hospital. Before I go any further - it is - honestly nothing serious - and you know I tell the truth. He has been having trouble with his nose, as you know, so he is under observation. As yet, they can find nothing wrong with him. They think it may be caused by the fact that when he was a baby he had croup or bronchitis. It doesn't mean anything. It's what my nephew David¹⁶⁴ coughs from now - that bad case of croup he had two years ago and Izzie¹⁶⁵ said he thinks David will always have some sort of condition... Meanwhile Norm is taking it easy and gaining weight. He says that he expects to have a doctor stay at his bedside all night, to listen to how he breathes as he sleeps. It is all part of the observation. In case Mom or Norman haven't written to you about it yet, don't mention it until they do. Please keep it another one of those things between the two of us.

Hon, if in the future you feel the same way you do, about not having much to write – please, please don't take it in mind, not to write at all. Even if it is just an “I'm an all right” note - it means so much to me just to hear that. After all, letters mean as much to us at home and hon I look forward to them so much.

Tonight I glanced over the want ad section of the *Times*¹⁶⁶ and I was so surprised to [see] that jobs aren't to be had as they have been in the past. I don't know the exact reason why there aren't, but it is certainly a definite change. There are just two columns of Female Help Wanted.

¹⁶² Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

¹⁶³ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy is trying to enlist in the Army.

¹⁶⁴ David Maranski Geetter is ten years old at this time.

¹⁶⁵ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David , Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne.. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

¹⁶⁶ At the time, Hartford, Conn. had two daily papers. *The Hartford Times* was the evening paper.

The insurance agent from Prudential was supposed to come here tonight so that I could sign the necessary papers in order that I can [pay] the seventy-five dollars that has come due. It is quarter to ten now, so I guess he isn't coming tonight after all. Maybe he has the grippe.

Mom and Dad gave me a ten dollar bill for Chanukah. Not wanting anything - particularly right now, I decided to hold onto it until I do.

Sweetheart, telling me that you miss me a little means so much - if my telling you that I love you helps sweet, then I ought to be very helpful because I do love you so and words will never express how much I miss you. Please remember my thoughts are always with you and there's a constant prayer that you will be home soon. so take care of yourself - be a 'schmaht' Navigator and you will come home wearing "Poils¹⁶⁷."

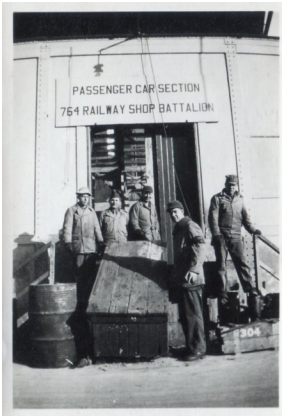
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

¹⁶⁷ Pearls, spoken with a New York accent.

Wednesday night
December 29, 1943

Darling ~

I just finished addressing some New Year greeting cards. Among them, I included cards to Boomey, Ebner¹⁶⁸, Norm and I signed them from the both of us. Seeing we can't wish them a happy New Year personally, a card might be the next best thing.



I spoke to Ebner's dad tonight in order to get his new address. I learned that he is no longer in Louisiana; he is now in Ohio, and he is in the Railway Battalion, doing practically the same thing he did in civilian life. He had his folks send him his overalls as that is his uniform during the day. It seems as though the camp he is in now isn't very large, and he's not... near to a large city... In comparison to New Orleans, and how much he liked it there, it will take him some time to get used to his new surroundings. Darling, here's his address. .. If you can drop him a card, he would love to hear from you...

PFC Ebner Glooskin 31380681

Company A, 764th Railway Shop Bn.
Camp Millard
Bucyrus, Ohio

I also called Leona Alexander tonight. She told me that Boomey is now in Virginia, but he doesn't expect to be there much longer, before he is on his way to a staging area. Oh, yes, he was home again this past weekend. He came in rather unexpectedly. I don't know whether he will still be at this address when you get this, but if you want to write to him and use it, I'm sure it will get to him eventually -

Squadron 355, 302 Bombing Gp.
Langley Field, Virginia

I was speaking to Margie¹⁶⁹ tonight and she said she received a letter from Norman¹⁷⁰ today. He's having a wonderful time in the hospital, running around all day doing nothing and gaining weight.

¹⁶⁸ Ebner Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia in 1938 and has been a friend of his since Lenny and Sylvia started dating.

¹⁶⁹ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman's Levy and is pregnant.

¹⁷⁰ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy is trying to enlist, but has medical issues.

From the news, it seems as though Germany is really taking her much deserved beating. All of us at home are hoping that Eisenhower was right when he stated that '44 would be the doom for Germany and the European War will be over. However, I shudder to think what this victory will cost - I don't mean cost in regards to money.

Eddie Cantor's program is on now and, darling, the impossible is happening - it is worse than ever.

Poisoned Natie¹⁷¹ today. I brought some coffee in a thermos bottle to work and he had some and it was terrible. I used NesCafe, but I guess I didn't measure it accurately and it was terrible. No wonder I have a complex, when I make coffee in any form...

Betty May¹⁷² has been calling me recently and asking me to take her ice skating, when I'm not working. I have ice skates but I invariably end up on my *end*. I told her, if it snows, I'll go sledding with her in the park - just like a married woman. I honestly hope it snows so that we can go Saturday.

Honey, I haven't much more to write today. I am wondering where I found so much to write tonight - when I started this letter I expected it to be much shorter, but I guess that's a woman for you - there's always something she can talk about.

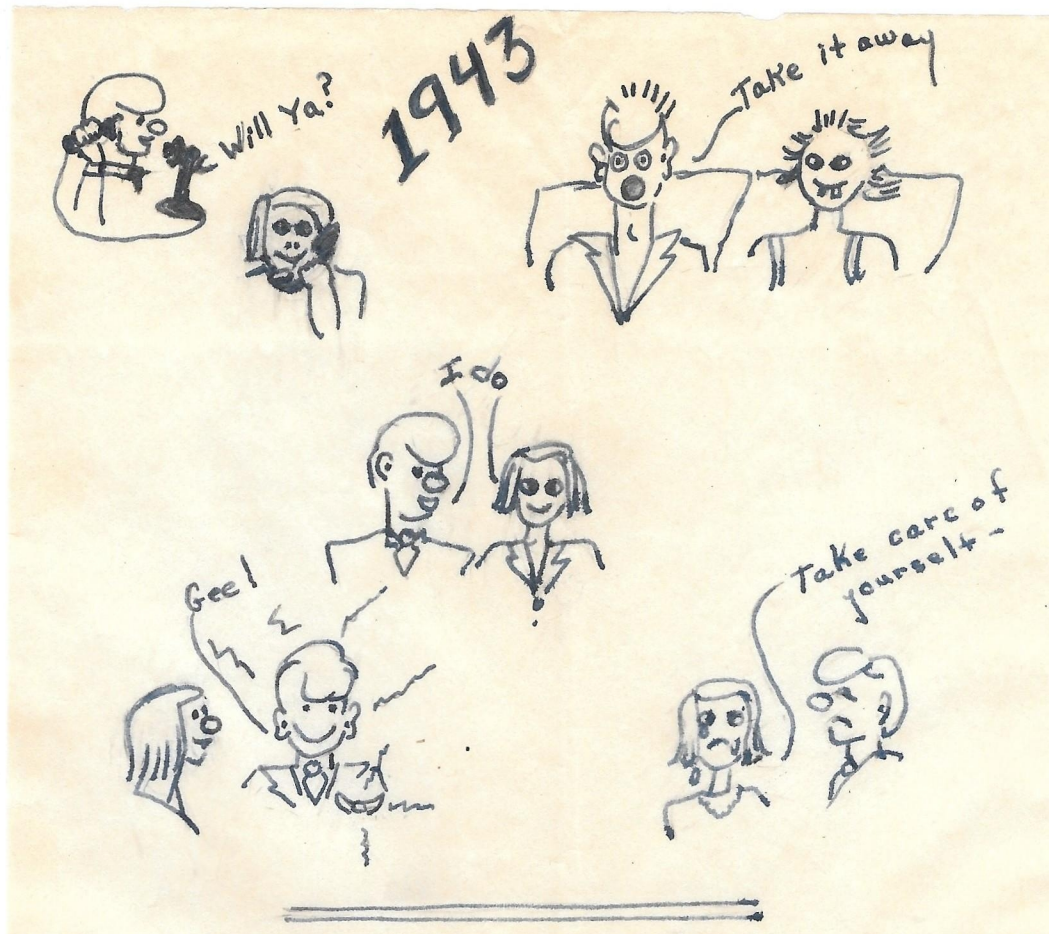
Honey, I love you and I hope that it won't be long until you will be able to write. Take good care of yourself and once more - remember -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



¹⁷¹ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had his first of two children, Philip Henry, who was one month old at the time this was written

¹⁷² Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty) May and Holly Suzanne, who were six and one at the time this was written.



Thursday night
December 30, 1943

Darling ~

The above is a result of my doodling. I was just listening to the radio and my thoughts were wandering over the happenings of this year and as I thought about them I doodled... Right now I am thinking of the morning after we went to your graduation dance in Monroe [Louisiana] and I heard crickets singing in my room. Now, when I think about that incident I can laugh, but that morning, when I discovered my new evening gown all eaten up, I didn't see anything to laugh about.

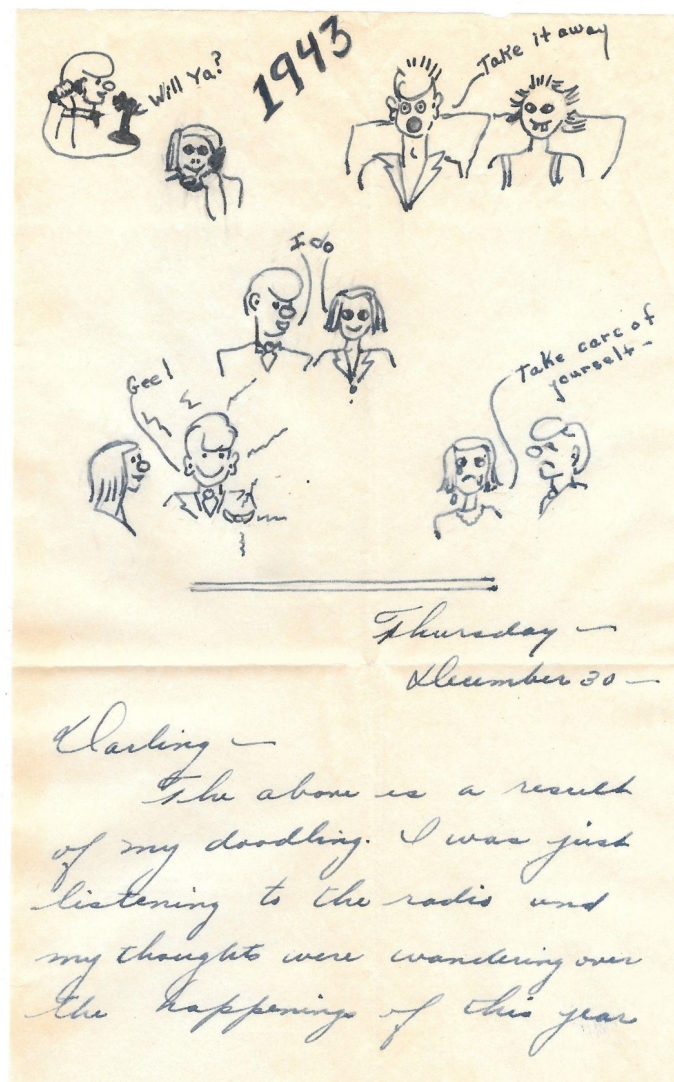
Sweetheart, this past year has been the most eventful and happiest year of my life. So much has happened in one year, that if... anybody had told me what lay ahead of me... I'd think they were a bit tipsy. As long as I live, 1943 will be a year I'll always think about. It is made up of such pleasant memories and happiness. Of course, the goodbyes we had to say were the hardest thing in the world to do, but now that the goodbyes are said, there's pleasure in the thought that our next step will be "hello again," and let's hope that we will

never have to say goodbye again. As much as '43 means to me, I'm anxious to have '44 come along. I feel that '44 will be that much closer to victory and back to normal living.

So, sweet, this is a very poor attempt to tell you... when the New Year rolls in, I'll be thinking of you, how much I love you, and everything you mean to me. Darling I want to thank you for all the happiness I have had this year, because of your love... I pray this will be the last New Year we will ever be separated.

A happy New Year, darling - and I sincerely hope it will be full of happiness, and success, and health, and pretending we are drinking to the New Year together - Well - here's to us and the chance to go on where we left off.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



England¹⁷³

Friday, [December 31, 1943]

Dearest wife -

Less than an hour left before this year is last year, and when it does leave us it will be taking the most pleasant episodes of my life with it, namely my marriage to you, our living together, for a short while, and my becoming an officer in the Air Corps. What more could a man ask for, than being the husband of the loveliest, grandest, sweetest person in the world *and* wearing wings? It has been a good year, despite the fact that it also separated us, but I assure you that there are better ones coming, my darling. I do love you so very much, sweetheart and each day that passes means just one less between us. I miss you more and more with each passing hour. God what I wouldn't give to be holding you in my arms right now.

I may have spent a lousier New Year's Eve but I don't recall it. Even last year's, spent in Blackstone VA, was better; I at least went into town and had a few beers, but here I'm just stuck at camp, not even daring to take a beer, the taste being so awful. I played cards for a few hours, made myself about ten pounds (roughly forty dollars) and decided I had done enough celebrating!

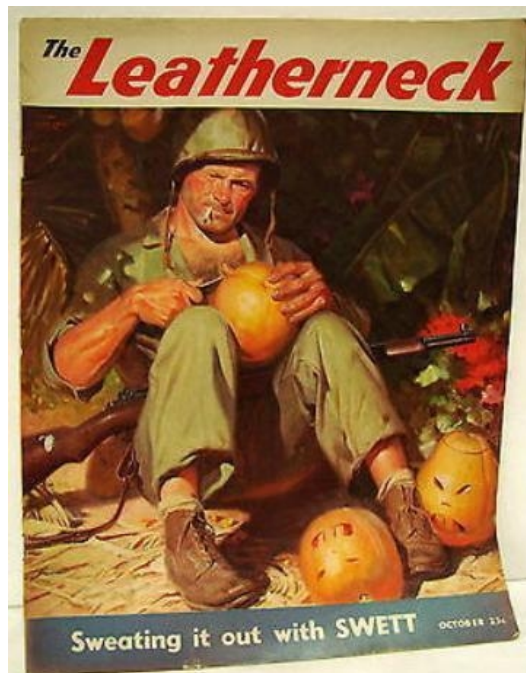
By the time this reaches you, you should have received my cable and at least one letter. The only reason I'm sending part of them V-mail¹⁷⁴ and part regular [mail] is to find out if one is really faster than the other. There is so little that can be said in V-mail, so if there is not too much difference in time I'll send the mail regular.

Concerning me, there is nothing that can be said that I have not already written. I'm still waiting around for orders, taking life easy but not putting on any weight because of the lack of sleep. I just can't sleep

¹⁷³ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

¹⁷⁴ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

nights and that is probably the cause of the miserable headache I have right now. I took two of the Aspirins that you gave me before leaving Alex¹⁷⁵ and they may do the trick. you will no doubt be interested to know that my hair has finally grown in and I actually part it, where you want it done too!



Chris¹⁷⁶ hasn't arrived yet and I'm beginning to 'sweat him out.'¹⁷⁷ I would sure hate to back in with a new pilot, And besides he's a pretty nice fellow, easy to get along with etc.

Happy New Year, my darling wife - it is just twelve. This makes the third one that we've known each other, and none of them have we spent together. Let us hope that this is the last one to see us apart - may this year see what we all want, with it bringing us together.

Sill darling I miss you more than I ever thought possible, and my sweetheart I'll be counting the days till we're together again. I do love you so very very much. Goodnight my darling and here is an extra one for you x¹⁷⁸

I love you
Lenny

Regards to all, Wish them all a Happy New Year for me, and tell them that I'll write just as soon as I get to a permanent station.

Love you
Lenny

¹⁷⁵ Alexandria, Louisiana

¹⁷⁶ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

¹⁷⁷ Sweating Out is a military slang that means anxiously awaiting something, or someone

¹⁷⁸ Lenny was self-censoring his X (kisses) after his signature, because he believed they were not allowed.

V-mail¹⁷⁹
[January 1, 1944]

Dearest wife -

After mailing your letter last night, I came back to my room, got into bed and had the first good night's sleep since arriving here - in fact I didn't get up until eleven-thirty, Or just in time for dinner.

Nothing of importance, or excitement happened today, if it weren't for the Pork Chops we had for dinner, one would never know that it is a Holiday. This past month and a half has been a soldier's dream come true - eating and sleeping with very little of anything else thrown in.

My darling, this is going to be a short letter because what little news there was I told you yesterday. Not because it's customary, but because I want to I'll tell you I love you and miss you very much.

Goodnight my darling.

I love you
Lenny

¹⁷⁹ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad.

SPACE PROVIDED USE TYPEWRITER, DARK INK OR PENCIL. WRITE PLAINLY. VERY SMALL WRITING IS NOT SUITABLE.

No.



MRS. LEONARD LEVY
148 MAGNOLIA ST.
HARTFORD 5 CONN.
% GELTER

76598
SENDER'S NAME
APO # 3662-20
SENDER'S ADDRESS
% Portsmouth N.H.
Jan 1, 1944
DATE

JAN 2 1944

Dearest wife -

After mailing your letter last night, I came back to my room, got into bed and had the first good night's sleep since arriving here - in fact I didn't get up until eleven-thirty, or just in time for dinner.

Nothing of importance, or exciting happened today, if it weren't for the pork chops we had for dinner one would never know that it is a holiday. This past month and a half has been a soldier's dream come true - eating and sleeping with very little of anything else thrown in.

My darling this is going to be a short letter because what little news there was I told you yesterday. Not because it is customary, but because I want to tell you I love you and miss you very much. Goodnight my darling. Love you
V. M. A. Levy

Saturday night
January 1, 1944

Darling ~

The best way to start the new year, and knowing it is the right way, I'll start right off by telling you ~ I love you. That's one thing I'll never have to make any resolution to do.

New Year's was spent in a very quiet way. I didn't go to Pearl's house as I told you I intended to do in one of my previous letters. Instead I went to your house. I went there directly from work and had supper there. Mr and Mrs Goralnick¹⁸⁰ came over later on. Margie¹⁸¹ got silly and I had two drinks. We didn't stay up late, in fact we were all in bed by 11:00. I guess I'm getting to be a real sissy because those two drinks made me very heavy headed and I fell asleep as soon as I got into your bed and hon, I wasn't awake when the new year arrived. I'm really glad I was asleep because without you with me to welcome it in - there was just no pleasure attached to it. I'm looking forward to the 1945 new year and we will be together to celebrate it.

This afternoon I went to the movies with Margie and Adelaide - our sister-in-law Claire's sister... We saw Rosalind Russell and Brian Ahern in *What a Woman*. It was very amusing and I enjoyed it very much.

I looked all over the house for my fountain pen and I couldn't find it, that accounts for my letter being written in pencil tonight.

Darling, the insurance agent was here the other day and he had me sign the necessary papers so that I will get that seventy dollars.

Oh yes hon, your wife gave up a very desirable date [on] New Year's Eve. One of my bosses - fat and 40 - pestered me all afternoon to go with him on New Year's Eve.



¹⁸⁰ Roslyn (Mandell) Goralnick was married to H. Robert (Tuddy) Goralnick (also known as Bob Gorin). Tuddy's parents lived next door to Lenny's parents.

¹⁸¹ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant for the first time.

In regards to New Year's resolutions, I didn't make any. The reason why I didn't is this: I began to think of things I could resolve to do and be like and hon, there were so many, I just knew I couldn't keep them all. The only resolution I made is to keep my chin up, and as you asked, not to believe any rumors - no matter what. Do you think those are good resolutions?

I was paid yesterday and rather surprised too. As you know, I didn't work on two days last week. We get paid only for working days and that means 16 hours at \$0.60 per hour – well, you figure it out.¹⁸² Well, I got almost \$14 And hon, I made a wish that they always figure my paycheck like that.

Sweetheart, I hope you had a pleasant New Year's Eve - no matter where you are. It has been our second New Year's apart, but regardless of that fact, you were on my mind all night. I kept wondering where you were and how you were. I hope you are well and everything is as good as it can possibly be.

Hon, please give my regards to Rock¹⁸³ and Chris¹⁸⁴ and I know that when you get this it will be a little late - but nevertheless tell them I wish them a very happy New Year...

Well darling it is time to say goodnight again. I hope that I'll be hearing from you soon. I don't mean to practice repetition but once more let me tell you - I love you with all my heart and miss you more than words can say.

Goodnight my darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

¹⁸² Sylvia's net pay should have been \$9.60

¹⁸³ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmarki is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

¹⁸⁴ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Monday night
January 3, 1944

Darling ~

When the doorbell rang yesterday morning, I had no idea that it would be a telegram... from you. Naturally, I was so excited I could just about get it open without it tearing. I have been anxiously awaiting word from you, and darling I am so happy that everything is fine. I called [your] mom immediately and she was so happy, too... She didn't get your telegram until about three-thirty in the afternoon.

I mailed to you, my seventeen letters, that I have been saving. It is a shame [we] didn't know your address was unchanged, because you would have received some of my mail by now... Getting all of those letters at once will be quite a bit of reading... I hope... you will get them soon, and I hope that the same applies to me in regards to your letters.

I went ice skating yesterday morning with Betty May¹⁸⁵, Beverly¹⁸⁶, Marilyn¹⁸⁷, Lorraine¹⁸⁸, Lou¹⁸⁹, Nate¹⁹⁰ and Moe¹⁹¹. We had so much fun but today I feel sore. We played *Switch* and Betty May insisted on being on the end, and she'd have no one else but me – hon, it was a riot. Issie¹⁹² surprised us by coming to the pond to say hello. He came in for the day. He expects to be able to come home every other weekend. He looked nice in his uniform but hon, I'm still partial to yours. When he went to see my mom he took your address so I guess he intends to write to you. David and Albert were with him and they were sorry they didn't bring their ice skates.

¹⁸⁵ Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman is Sylvia's seven year old niece

¹⁸⁶ Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

¹⁸⁷ Marilyn Geetter was nine at the time this was written.

¹⁸⁸ Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine Geetter Goldberg and a son, Allan Joel Geetter, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

¹⁸⁹ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty May) and Holly Suzanne, who were six and one at the time this was written.

¹⁹⁰ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan (Nate) A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had their first child, Philip Henry Geetter, who was one month old at the time this was written.

¹⁹¹ Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter

¹⁹² Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

I went to your house yesterday afternoon with the intention of getting some of my things that I left there Saturday. I expected to go to the movies with a girlfriend in the evening, but... we changed our minds, so I had supper at your house and slept there, as well. Helen came over with her soldier boyfriend and Margie and I made supper. We boiled potatoes! Well, we sat and talked until 11:00. Mom and Dad were at the Goralnicks playing cards and when they came home they were surprised to see we were still up. We didn't get to bed until after twelve and we finally made up our minds to go to sleep at about 3:00. Then the trouble began. I was overtired and so was Margie and we couldn't fall asleep. She has the damndest habit of whining and groaning when she sleeps and although she claims she wasn't sleeping, she kept me awake by making groaning sounds. Tonight the both of us are dead tired. Today I had a lot of work to do and at about 3:00, I thought my eyes would never stay open. It was one of those days I thought would never end. Hon, as soon as I finish this letter I am going to bed.

Hon, do you like the enclosed clipping? I read it in the *Coronet* magazine and thought you would be interested in it too.

Here is some scandal for you. Mayer was fired from his job at Fox¹⁹³'s. He was fooling around with some woman there. I honestly can't understand that man. Mom was telling me how terrible she thinks he is and how bad Mr and Mrs Goralnick felt.

My brother Ben¹⁹⁴ works in Veeder-Root as you know and so did Charlie Weiner until recently. It so happens that as long as Tootsie and Charles had been married, Charles always got upset stomachs and he couldn't hold anything down. A few weeks ago, he had pains again and my brother told him to go to the doctor. He finally decided he'd go, and he found out that he has an ulcerated stomach. So he quit his job and he's back with his father. Now I guess he doesn't have to worry about being drafted... so he doesn't want to work in a defense plant. Toots hasn't mentioned this to me as yet, my brother Ben told me about it.



While I was waiting for the Blue Hills Ave. bus to take me to your house yesterday afternoon, I was talking to Irving Lubin... He told me that he is being inducted next week. I guess he is very happy now because he wanted to get into the Army.

¹⁹³ G.Fox & Co. is the largest department store in Downtown Hartford, Connecticut

¹⁹⁴ Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter

Margie¹⁹⁵ is definitely beginning to look like a prospective mother. She is just going into her fourth month. Hon, she expects her baby about the first part of July... for all you know your new niece or nephew will be born on your birthday. Mom and Dad keep telling Margie to make sure it will be a girl. I'll let Margie have the girls and I'll still have my sons. I gather that Margie will have to give up her job very shortly because her office doesn't know she is married. She applied as *single* and it will be a perfect... scandal if she walks around with a baby bump.



I

*Hit Parade*¹⁹⁷ was on, Frankie Sinatra was the guest singer. (and I think that was all the audience was composed of) when *jokingly* I decided to scream too - only she didn't. I had yesterday afternoon. Annette was so worried these people would like to ask in regards to what you are doing etc., but I knew I got it from Margie - she had it all this time. My muscles hurt so - I guess I skated too much for the first time.

love you
Sylvia
XXX

¹⁹⁵ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant with twins.

¹⁹⁶ January 1, 1944

¹⁹⁷ ***Your Hit Parade*** was an American radio program that was broadcast from 1935 to 1953 on radio. The show Sylvia is referring to was the New Years' Day show on January 1, 1944.

¹⁹⁸ Frank Sinatra was more than a guest host, by this time; he was the regular host. Sinatra's move to Hollywood led to a conflict with the American Tobacco company which sponsored the show..



Sylvia Geetter Levy outside of 148 Magnolia Ave., Hartford, Connecticut

England¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

Tuesday
[January 4, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Still in the same place hanging around waiting for something to happen. Nothing unusual, or of interest, has occurred but nevertheless I'll try to make this an interesting letter. It would be a much easier job if only I had gotten a letter from you full of questions - as it is I don't know what about this place interests you.

I still haven't seen much of the surrounding countryside in the daytime but from what I hear and read while censoring mail it is really nice - If one is interested in nature or old buildings. A few churches nearby that were built in the Twelfth century, making them *just a bit* older than some of the houses out around Windsor²⁰⁰. It is practically impossible to buy anything in the nearby towns because what little merchandise is left on the shelves is highly rationed; clothing along with all else, is rationed and the English never [seem] dressed up in comparison to... the States. The soap, along with all cosmetics, is a luxury available only to the wealthy and those who know a 'Yank.' Well, imagine what a majority of the people look like; but remember these people have been at war for five years. All women are subject to government draft, not to the armed services but to the factories and when called have the privilege of either donning a uniform or going to work, for twenty pounds a month in some munitions factory.

But enough of this country, there are so many things about home that I want to hear about, if you haven't answered my questions in previous letters please do so in the very next one. How is Natie²⁰¹'s 'Little Katchka' (A poor name for a boy) has he the appetite and sense of humor

²⁰⁰ Windsor, Connecticut is a town just north of Hartford with historic buildings.

²⁰¹ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had a son , Philip Henry Geetter, who was one month old at the time this was written..

of his father? How are Faye, Lou, Betty May, Holly²⁰²? Tell Betty May²⁰³ that I sure would like another letter from her, and tell her father that just as soon as I'm stationed somewhere permanently, they'll hear from me. The same for Sadie²⁰⁴, Ben²⁰⁵ (How is he making out with the draft board), Moe²⁰⁶ and the rest of my in-laws. What about Is²⁰⁷ - has he left for the Navy, did he get a commission²⁰⁸ - tell me all.

Butch darling by the time you receive this you should also have received your first allotment check from the government. Did you? If not, don't fail to let me know as I'll no doubt be able to straighten things out at this end. Once I get settled, I think I'll be able to send you some extra money as living conditions here are very inexpensive - days go by before I spend so much as a shilling.



Speaking of spending money, I got my weekly rations today and with it a large bar of P&G laundry soap - one of these days I'm going to have to wash my laundry, handkerchiefs and all. In fact, it better be very soon as I'm down to the end of them.

Once again my darling wife I find that I've run out of news and also questions; so I'm afraid that this letter is going to come to an

²⁰² Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth Weidman and Holly Weidman, who were six and one at the time this was written.

²⁰³ Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman

²⁰⁴ Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and was unmarried at the time.

²⁰⁵ Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

²⁰⁶ Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

²⁰⁷ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

²⁰⁸ Isidore left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the Navy, and has just learned he will be commissioned a Commander..

end. But not before I reaffirm my love for you and tell you that being away from you just can't last - I miss you terribly, my darling but knowing that you are waiting for me keeps my dream castles from crumbling away. Take care of yourself my darling wife and always remember that no man hath greater love than what I have for you.

Goodnight my Butch -

I love you
Lenny



Wednesday night
January 5, 1944

Darling ~

In tonight's paper they had the enclosed article. Your name is on the list of those ordered to active duty. I noticed that 2nd Lt. is after your name - did you get your promotion, darling?

We were told today that we are to work three nights a week now - Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights... It will be two hours extra each night - that means I won't get out until seven o'clock. We have so much work to do, that it is the only way to get it done.

Darling, {your} mom is going to New York over the weekend. Bertha's youngest son, will be *Bar Mitzvahed*²⁰⁹ this coming Saturday. I think I will sleep with Margie²¹⁰ - that's if I don't go roller skating with some girls.

Sweetheart, last night I had a wonderful dream. I dreamt that we were buying our own home and we were so happy... Just when I was so happy, Sadie²¹¹ poked me to get up - it was 6:30 and time to get up to go to work. It was certainly an awful let down. Darling, at least there are always hopes, and my one hope is that it won't be long before such dreams will come true.

I miss you so much darling. Hon, remember that I'm always thinking of you and I love you with all my heart.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

²⁰⁹ A *bar mitzvah* is a Jewish coming-of-age ceremony for boys that occurs when they turn 13, marking their responsibility to follow Jewish commandments. The term translates to "son of the commandment," and the ceremony typically includes a public reading from the Torah.

²¹⁰ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant with twins.

²¹¹ Sylvia and her older sister Sadie Geetter share a bed in a single bedroom at 148 Magnolia Street in Hartford, Conn.

Thursday night
January 6, 1944

Darling ~

What a day! It snowed and then it rained and the slush just slushed all over. It never fails - when I should wear my boots I don't and that goes for today. Every time a car rode by, my heart was in my mouth - I could just feel myself being showered.

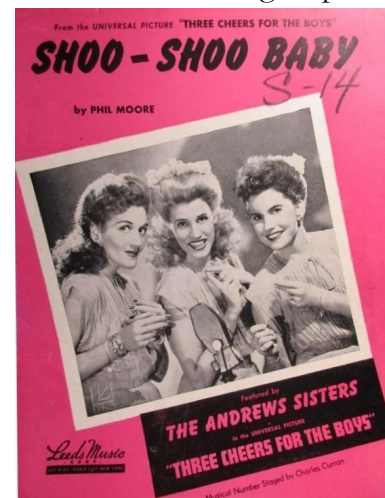
How do you like the *Dagwood* cartoon? It was in last night's paper and it struck me as being about the funniest cartoon I've seen in a long time. In fact, this afternoon when I was supposed to be working very hard I happened to think of it and... I just grinned away. The girl who sits next to me noticed that I was smiling and she asked what I was thinking of. All I had to say was whether she read *Blondie* in last night's paper and she laughed.

Tomorrow is the happy day of the week – payday. I'm certainly looking forward to it - I'm broke but flat. I had to borrow a quarter from Roz tonight. It has been expensive living these past few weeks, but it is a comfort to know that I have no bills whatsoever, and when I get paid tomorrow all I have to deduct is my \$10 board²¹².

Darling, one thing I am very grateful for is the fact that I have some nice girls to work with in my office. It means so much when all the girls get along. We have to work hard but I don't mind it at all. Of course sometimes I come home from work so tired but it makes it easier for me to fall asleep and there's no desire to do much thinking about anything.

Every afternoon, four of us get together and talk during our lunchtime. The group consists of all married girls and we work in the same group. One of them is the girl I told you about in our previous letter - her husband is in India now and he has been overseas for over a year now. The other is thirty-five, has three children and is divorced, and the third is in her early thirties, and her husband is not in the army. She's been married for a few years. Today's conversation turned to whether married girls can trust their husbands while they are overseas. I'm not telling you what the opinions were or what was said, but I certainly can say it was quite a discussion.

Oh yes, I have a new name – Shoo-Shoo. It all came about when I was telling a girl about the Frank Sinatra program



²¹² Sylvia and Sadie each paid a monthly rent to their mother Adeile Geetter to live in a single bedroom at 148 Magnolia Street in Hartford, Conn.

the other night and how he sang *Shoo-Shoo Baby*²¹³. Ever since then she has called me Shoo-Shoo and the name is getting popular with the rest of the girls - what a name!

Sweetheart, I have no idea how many times I've written that I love you - it must be hundreds of times but hon, I'll never stop. It just isn't possible not to tell you because I love you so much. I think about you so much and hon, I can't begin to tell you how much I miss you.

Please take good care of yourself - And let's pray there won't be long before we are together again.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

SHOO-SHOO BABY
The Andrews Sisters
words and music by Phil Moore

You've seen him up and down the avenue
And now he's wearin' the navy blue
She had a tear in the corner of her eye
As he said his last goodbye

Shoo, shoo, shoo baby
Shoo, shoo, shoo baby
Bye, bye, bye baby
Do-dah do-day
Your papa's off to the seven seas

Don't cry baby
Don't sigh baby
Bye, bye, bye baby
Do-dah do-day
When I come back we'll live a life of ease

Seems kinda tough now
To say goodbye this way
But papa's gotta be rough now
So that he can be sweet to you another day

Saturday night
January 8, 1944

²¹³ A song made popular by The Andrews Sisters in 1943 and covered by Frank Sinatra recently.

Darling ~

My wish came true today - I have at last heard from you. Although there wasn't much you could say in your V-mail²¹⁴, it meant everything in the world to just hear from you and know you are well. I know that there is so much that you won't be able to tell me in your letters, but hon, when you write, tell me as much about yourself as possible. I can't tell you how much your letters mean and how much I look forward to them.

I am wondering whether Chris²¹⁵ has joined you as yet. Coincidentally, I received a letter from Fran²¹⁶ today and she wants to know whether I've heard from you because... she has had no mail from Chris and she believes he is on his way. Perhaps by now, she has had some word from him.

Seeing that you are not at your destination, I imagine anxiety is riding high. Darling, I hope that wherever you go... will be to your liking. That may sound foolish but I think you understand what I mean.

Since last night, I have been to three movies... I find it is the best way to just relax for a while.



[Your] Mom is not home this weekend, as she left for New York this Friday. I bet she will be so excited when she finds out we heard from you.

This afternoon I went to Mickey's for a spaghetti dinner with some of the girls with whom I work. It was a good dinner and I took pride in the fact that I am slowly learning the art of eating spaghetti. It feels like a great accomplishment to me.

Dad told me that in your letter to them you mentioned that you met quite a few friends from home and you also met Hank there. That's quite a coincidence, but... it really is a small world now and no matter where you go you will meet somebody from home.

²¹⁴ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

²¹⁵ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

²¹⁶ Fran is Chris Christiani's wife

Norman²¹⁷ is out of the hospital now and he will be going on maneuvers soon. He is still waiting for something to be done that might transfer him into a new outfit, or should I say branch.

Ebner²¹⁸ will be very surprised this week when he receives his mail. I wrote to him on the spur of the moment and enclosed your address. I thought he might want to write to you and having your address would help, wouldn't it hon.

Next week will be a hard week for me, as I will work ten hours for three days of the week. Whenever I tell folks I'm working three nights a week... the first thing they say is that I should think of all the money I'll be making. I guess they don't stop to think what a lazy thing I am, and I'm not convinced... the extra money will ever make me rich.

As yet, I haven't received any allotment²¹⁹. After speaking to Margie²²⁰ I gather that the first allotment is generally held back and the second month two checks will be received. It's a good thing the folks in my neighborhood are honest because I've been reading in the newspaper about checks being stolen out of mailboxes. I am not worried about that at all and I guess that next month I will receive two checks at once.

Darling, I wish this war will end soon. I don't mean to be impatient nor do I mean to complain, but it will be so nice to have you home again. I know that there is so much to be done yet and it will take time, perhaps more time than some folks expect, but nevertheless I won't give up... hope that you will be home soon. I miss you darling and my love for you grows more each day. So darling, until I'll be with you again, please always remember that I love you and my thoughts are always turned to a happy future.

Goodnight my darling,

I love you
Sylvia²²¹

²¹⁷ Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy is trying to enlist, but has medical issues.

²¹⁸ Ebner Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia in 1938 and has been a friend of his since Lenny and Sylvia started dating.

²¹⁹ An **allotment** is a designated amount of money that is automatically distributed for you, from your pay. Lenny had designated \$200 a month to be sent directly to Sylvia from the US Army, which is believed to be half of his pay. January was supposed to be the first time, and both Lenny and Sylvia were awaiting the check's arrival in the mail.

²²⁰ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant with twins.

²²¹ Sylvia also censors her xxx kisses.

England²²²

Monday
[January 9, 1944]

Dearest wife -

As you can probably tell by the lapse in dates, my orders finally came through and I'm now at another base in England. How long I'll stay here remains to be seen. I can't tell you much about this place, in fact I'm not supposed to say anything about anything, so I'll just confine myself to generalities.

Still no mail from you, don't really expect any for another week or so, and I sure do miss hearing from you, my darling. The mail system is slow enough as it is, but with the constant moving around one never knows when it will catch us. One thing though, when it does start coming I'll have to take off a week to read it all. Don't disappoint me, sweet.

The post has something that is very rare in England, and with the extra money that I have I'm sure taking advantage of it; they have a complete supply of clothing and equipment for officers and already I've left a few pounds there. Yesterday, I bought a foot locker, six pairs of heavy wool socks (the English rib type that sell for \$1.50 a pair in the States,) another dozen handkerchiefs and some more underwear. Tomorrow I'm planning to buy a pair of shoes and a bathrobe (it's cold here.) Oh yes, I got myself a pair of flannel pajamas... to keep warm in bed.

Now that I'm in England I'd sure like to take a trip into London but it looks like I'll have to wait for a while, we are restricted to the base here - just like the days back at Monroe!

Chris²²³ finally caught up with me at the last base - or according to what he told me, the doctor was rather surprised that he got well so soon, or at all. Did I tell you that he had both ears infected and for a

²²² Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

²²³ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

while he couldn't hear? He sends his regards, as does Rock²²⁴ who constantly talks of those *Latkes*²²⁵ you made for him - He's still the same Rock though, having a good time for himself without a care in the world.

Butch, darling, I know that this is going to reach you too late but I want you to know that I haven't forgotten that this month marks our seventh [month] anniversary. It seems like yesterday that we were marching off, first the weeks of our engagement and then, through weeks of our wedding... My only hope, my sweet, is that someday I can tell you and show you again just how much I love you and how much I long for you these days.

They've kept us pretty busy today and we are not used to it. I'm rather tired, so after finishing this I'm going to turn in for the night although it's only eight o'clock.

Goodnight my darling - once again I want to say I love you very very much.

I love you
Lenny

²²⁴ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

²²⁵ A latke is a type of potato pancake or fritter in Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine that is traditionally prepared to celebrate Hanukkah.

England²²⁶

Monday
[January 10, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Just got through moving my bed to be nearer the fire, and before I lose what little ambition I have I'll write this letter. Our barracks is heated by just one small coal stove and inasmuch as we are severely rationed on the amount of coal we use, no fire at all until five in the evening, it really gets chilly in here. Some of the boys at the warm end moved out, so I got one of their beds.

We were paid our per diem (the refund on the money spent for food and quarters en route) today and I went on another buying spree, getting a short coat (the type that Rock²²⁷ and Chris²²⁸ wear) a pair of shoes and some more underwear. It seems that every place I stop at I keep adding to my luggage - it won't be long before I'll need a truck all to myself when I move.

We are not allowed to write about our activities at this base, but you may rest assured my darling that I'm in no danger yet. If it weren't for the cold this would be an all right place. The food is very good, being comparable to what some camps back in the States serve, the place itself is fairly well laid out and we even have hot and cold running water. There is a bar on the base, serving beer and Cokes, a library and a theatre showing a new picture every night.

No mail yet, so I've been contenting myself by rereading the letter you wrote while I was at Grand Island²²⁹. That reminds me, how is your job? Are you still at the same place or have you changed since last I

²²⁶ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

²²⁷ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

²²⁸ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

²²⁹ Lenny's point of debarkation for England.

heard from you? Be sure and tell me all in your letters, including the latest about Margie²³⁰ and how Mom and Pop are taking it now.

Golly, Butch, I can't begin to tell you how much I miss you lately - every minute of the day is spent thinking of you and the times we had together. I do love you so very much my darling and I am taking care of myself for you.

This is a short letter, I know, but truthfully there is nothing to write about, so if you'll forgive me I'll close now.

Goodnight my darling -

I love you
Lenny



²³⁰ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant for the first time and living with Lenny's parents.

V-mail²³¹
[January 10, 1944]

Darling ~

I can see that the space provided on a V-Mail is sufficient space for all you had to say for the month since you wrote last. Seeing that you like it so well, I have come to the conclusion that you ought to enjoy receiving it. Personally, such letters have the same effect on me as did your first postcard.

I worked until seven o'clock tonight and I am very tired. I guess I better get used to it because I'll have to work overtime for a long time.

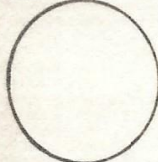
You will receive a package from me soon. I am sending you a new cigarette case and Ben has an old cigarette lighter, which I am having fixed before sending it along, too. Although it isn't a new lighter I hope you like it.

Glad to hear you like England and so far everything is fine. take care of yourself and give my regards to Rock and Chris.

I love you
Sylvia

²³¹ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

No. _____



CENSOR'S STAMP

To

710 Leonard Levy
A.P.O. 12622-AA
% Postmaster, N.Y.

From

MRS. Leonard Levy
(Sender's name)

148 Magnolia St.
(Sender's address)

High, 5, Conn.

January 19, 1944
(Date)

Darling—
I can see that the space provided on a V-mail letter is sufficient space for all you had to say for the month since you wrote last. Seeing that you like it so well, I have come to the conclusion that you ought to enjoy receiving it. Personally, such letters have the same effect on me as did your first postcard.

I worked until seven o'clock tonight and I am really very tired. I guess I better get used to it because I'll have to work overtime for a long time.

You will receive a package from me soon. I am sending you a new cigarette case and Ben has an old cigarette lighter, ^{which} I am having fixed before sending it along too. Although it isn't a new lighter I hope you like it.

Glad to hear you like England and as for everything is fine. Take care of yourself and give my regards to Rock & Chris.

I love you
Dolma

V-MAIL

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT BUREAU NO. 14

England²³²

Tuesday
[January 11, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Just a few lines to let you know that I'm feeling as well as can be expected in this miserable weather and also managing to keep myself busy. It is really getting to be a problem to write a letter as everything here is so damn secret. I got optimistic today and went to the post office to claim my mail - naturally there was none; I figure that it will be another week before it catches up to me.

As I wrote in my first letter from here, we are restricted to the base, but some of the boys have managed somehow to get into the city²³³ and their stories make me think of New York the last time we were there. They say the crowds are reminiscent of Times Square and despite the war, London²³⁴ is still London²³⁵, but the prices are way up. Here, as well as in the States, liquor is hard to get and the boys moan about it day and night - I sometimes think they miss it more than they do their homes.

The weather here the past few days has been utterly miserable - rainy and cold all the time; it's a wonder that all of us aren't down with the flu or pneumonia. Instead of Justice having what is known here as The ETO cough. it is just impossible to stay warm here.

One of the boys in my barracks has a dog *Roger* by name and he has us nuts. Either he is doing a job on the floor or chewing up somebody's socks; he has already cost his owner three or four pairs. Right now one of the fellows is teasing him with a glove, and in jumping up, he skipped and landed on his hind end; he put his tail between his legs and walked over into a corner.

²³² Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

²³³ London, England is where a big mission is being planned against Berlin, Germany

²³⁴ Cut out of the paper.

²³⁵ And Cut out again.

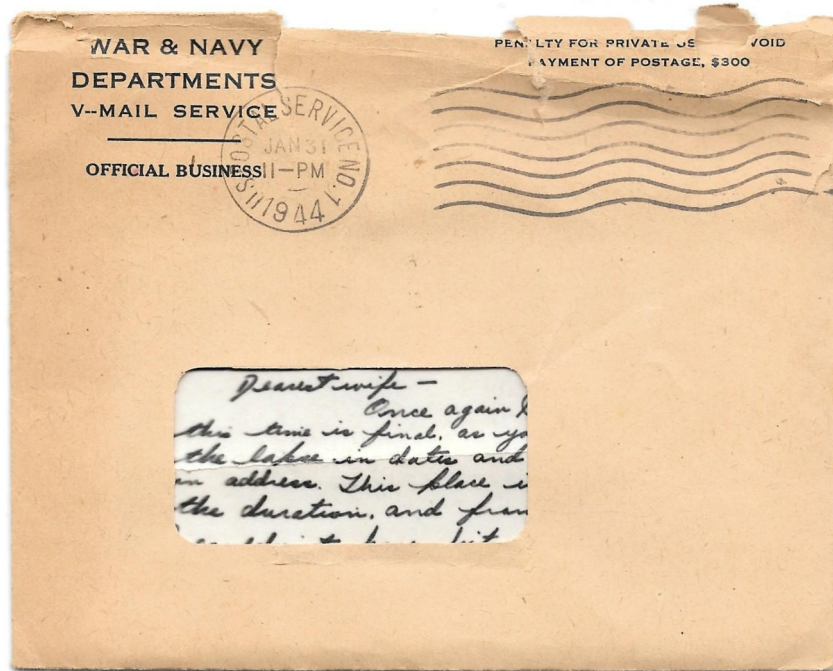
Instead of just rambling along, my darling, I think I'll close but not before I tell you again that I do love you so very much my sweetheart and miss you more today than ever. Not only do I love you my darling but I like you too.

Goodnight sweetheart -

I love you
Lenny



V-mail²³⁶
[January 11, 1944]



Darling ~

I thought I had surprises before - but never was I more surprised than when I read you are sorry that you didn't get a wedding band before leaving the States. Darling if you are really serious about that and you would like to have one, well I'll send you one, if you tell me the kind you would like. Oh yes, and have your finger measured at a jewelers for your ring size. Hon, you told me about Boxing Day being a holiday in England, but now my curiosity is aroused - just what kind of holiday is it?

Once more darling - if you are serious about the ring - I would like to send it to you and also please mention in one of your letters that you would like to receive a package, and if this is anything in particular that you need - please tell me and I'll be happy to send them to you.

I love you
Sylvia

²³⁶ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No. _____



(CENSOR'S STAMP)

To F/O LEONARD LEVY
APO 12662 AA
c/o POSTMASTER
NEW YORK

From

Mrs. Leonard Levy
(Sender's name)

142 Magnolia St.
(Sender's address)

Wichita, Kan.

January 11, 1944
(Date)

Darling -

I thought I had surprises before - but never was I more surprised than when I read you are sorry that you didn't get a wedding band before leaving the States. Darling, if you are really serious about that and you would like to have one, well, I'll send you one if you tell me the kind you would like. Oh yes, and have your finger measured at a jeweler's for your ring size.

Now, you told me about Bonae Day "being a holiday in England but now my curiosity is aroused - just what kind of a holiday is it?"

Once more, darling - if you are serious about the ring - I would like to send it to you and also please mention in one of your letters that you would like to receive a package, and if there is anything in particular that you keep - please tell me so I'll be happy to send them to you. I love you,
Lynnie

V - MAIL

POST OFFICE DEPT. PERMIT NO. 16

England²³⁷

²³⁷ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

Wednesday
[January 12, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Today brings back a happy memory of a day seven months ago²³⁸. It was sunny that day in Monroe and my life has been bright ever since; truly my darling nothing but good has happened since the day we were married. Of course our being so many miles apart is not good but then that was inevitable, we knew it would come sooner or later. I'd give most anything to be with you, not only tonight but every night, but inasmuch as that can't be, the only thing I can say is - I love you with all my heart, my darling wife, and I pray that it won't be too long before we are together again.

Chris²³⁹ arrived here today and with him came news, via Francis²⁴⁰, that you are well. For some reason he is getting his mail while I'm still 'sweating it out.' It shouldn't be too long now, as the mail is coming in and quite a few of the boys who came over with me got their first mail today.

Still can't say what I'm doing here, but please believe me when I say I'm not in any danger - don't worry as I'm in a safe spot (as safe as any place in England can be) and feel fine. Another thing, don't pay too much attention to the headlines.

The weather, though still very very dank, has warmed up a bit and it is almost possible to get up in the morning without shivering to death. Outside of that, this place is all right - we even had a fresh egg for breakfast today - I've yet to see that bugaboo of all ETO breakfasts - powdered eggs.

Of course we see *Spam* in all forms - sometimes it is disguised so that we don't recognize it - but the taste gives it away every time.

²³⁸ Sylvia Geetter and Lenny Levy were married June 12, 1943 in Monroe, Louisiana while Lenny was in Flight Training School at Alexandria Army Air Base.

²³⁹ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

²⁴⁰ Francis is Chris Cristiani's wife, who became friends with Sylvia while they were living in Monroe.

They've kept me busy from eight this morning until almost ten this evening and not being able to tell you about it leaves nothing for me to say in the line of news. I hope you understand, my darling, why my letters lately have been so short and packages uninteresting or even boring.

I'm going to bed now - it's eleven o'clock - in preparation for another big day tomorrow. Sure would like to have you snuggle up close to me, not only to keep me warm but because I miss you so much, my darling, and I do love you very much, Butch.

Goodnight my darling, and here is an extra one (x) for our night

I love you
Lenny

It's a shame, what with the scarcity of paper, to finish so high on the sheet, but for the life of me I can't think of another thing to write.

Love,
L.

How Do You Make Your Points Go 'ROUND?

MEAT STRETCHING
SPAM BIRDS
 STUFFED AND BROWNED!

SPAM BIRDS

Wrap thin slices of Spam around your favorite stuffing, fasten with toothpicks, brown in hot oven. Serve with garden peas, fried candied sweets. IMPORTANT!—Spam gives you full point value... no bones, no waste, no surplus fat.

WHY YOUR GROCER MAY BE OUT OF SPAM... explained by letter from Lt. [redacted], Hormel salesman on leave with the U. S. Marines in the Southwest Pacific.

"New Year's Day was made exceptionally bright by the arrival of mail and the presence of plenty of good old SPAM! Boy! You never fully realize how delicious and good Spam is until you taste it out here in the bottom of a fox-hole. All the boys out here think Spam is swell."

COLD OR HOT... **SPAM** HITS THE SPOT!

HORMEL
 GOOD FOODS

Wednesday night
January 12, 1944

Darling ~

I just can't write another V-mail letter. There is so much about them that I don't like. So hon, please don't send me any more of them. If it takes... a little longer to send... regular mail, it will really be worth waiting for.

Sweetheart, I hope you can get cigarette lighter fluid. I am sending out the lighter tomorrow and there will also be some extra flints and wicks. It is against the law to send the lighter fluid, as it is inflammable so... you will... have to furnish the most important part of the lighter. I do hope you will be able to get it.

As soon as I get your request for a package, I'll send you some Mary Oliver Chocolates²⁴¹... If you haven't done so as yet - try to... as soon as possible. All you have to do is mention the fact that you would like some cigarettes, or something, sent out in one of your letters... There is always something I can send to you. Darling, do you need razor blades, and what kind do you use? Do you smoke Camels or Chesterfields, and hon, do you have enough socks, handkerchiefs and underwear? If there is anything you need please ask for it as I know that it is very difficult for you to get so many things.

Tomorrow is Nate'²⁴²s fourth engagement anniversary. He had me go to the florist for him tonight and have a bouquet sent to Lillian. We Geetters are a sentimental clan, but there is a good reason why we are.

I was trying to figure out why you are having difficulty sleeping the night through. It might be nervousness or excitement, darling, and it will pass off. Tomorrow night, I am going out to dinner and the movies with some of the girls at work. We will work until seven and then rush like mad in order to make the last show.

When Mom and I had our daily conversation tonight, we were both wondering whether you had received our letters yet. Hon, every day I think of it and I'm just praying that you are receiving mail now.

I have some of the girls in the office thinking that I am pregnant. I didn't feel very well the other morning - I was dizzy and had nausea - well that's the only symptoms I needed to give them that impression. It was really due to being tired, but I don't think I can make them believe it.

²⁴¹ A chocolate store in Downtown Hartford, Connecticut that was on Main St. next to the Strand Theatre.

²⁴² Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan (Nate) A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had the first of two children, Philip Henry Geetter, three weeks earlier than the time of the writing.

Do you know what today is darling? It's our seventh month anniversary. I guess out of these seven months I've been with you but a short time. However, there was so much happiness in that brief time that I can always have pleasant thoughts. My main wish is that you will be home when our first year anniversary rolls around and we will be able to celebrate it together. Is that wishing for too much darling?

Sweetheart, it's time to go to bed now so I'll have to end this letter. Goodnight darling I love you so very much.

I love you
Sylvia²⁴³



Strand Theatre²⁴⁴ - 1466 seats

1017 Main St., Hartford, Conn.

²⁴³ Sylvia also censors her xxx kisses.

²⁴⁴ The Strand was destroyed in 1974.

England²⁴⁵

Saturday
[January 13, 1944]

Dearest wife -

The person who first said, 'No news is good news' was probably never two thousand miles from the person he loved with all his heart, as I am. Anything, even a notice of an overdue bill, would be welcome. Watching the other fellows collect and read their mail brings the homesickness and loneliness on, and I don't mean maybe. I know you are writing every day, my darling, it's just that I seem to be the unlucky one whose mail got held up en route. There was no mail at all today for anybody, so it wasn't too bad and I feel almost sure that tomorrow will be my day.

Butch, I had to come all the way to England to hit the jackpot on a slot machine. This evening, just before leaving the club, I put a shilling in, and out came five pounds, the equivalent of twenty dollars. It more than made me even for the night, as I had lost two pounds in a poker game earlier. Chris²⁴⁶ standing near me, thought the machine fell apart and I just stood there with my mouth wide open.

But for the censor, I would have lots of news to tell you, but as usual I'll just have to confine myself to general items.

Right now, there is a hot argument going on here, as to whether or not a flying man is worth the extra money he gets for flying - and I do mean that. Everybody is in a happy frame of mind because we've been promised Turkey for dinner tomorrow, and on top of that school will be out at two instead of five tomorrow. The weather here has been almost beautiful the last two days - the sun has shown for a minimum of three hours which is a rare treat. (My, how I ramble on.)

It was rather *smaht* of me to buy all that extra clothing when I did, I gave my laundry out when I came here and it was promised for today - Now

²⁴⁵ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

²⁴⁶ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

they tell us that it won't be back until next Saturday and I am running low.

... I had every good intention of writing last night, but when I got back to the barracks, there was no fire and it was so cold in there that it was just impossible. Finally at 12:00, I was sleeping by then, the orderly came in and made the fire but by morning it was out and just as cold as ever. Please forgive me, sweet?

I've tried to make this a long and interesting letter - hope I've succeeded. Truthfully, outside of telling you how much I love and miss you there just isn't another thing for me to say. I do love you very, very much my darling and my longing for you grows larger with each minute. Won't be too long before we are together again, Butch, and then we will surely make up for all this lost time. Take care of yourself my darling and don't ever change - stay the way you've always been - the way I fell in love with you - the way I married you - and the way I want you!

I love you
Lenny

Regards to all -

Tell Sadie I'm still wearing
the sweater and socks she
gave me when I left.

Love,
Lenny

Thursday night
[January 13, 1944]

Darling ~

Tonight I went to the movies as I had planned. I went to the *Strand*²⁴⁷ and saw *North Star*. It was an excellent picture and although I cried more than halfway through it, I enjoyed it very much. We had to stand quite a long time before we got seats; there was a long waiting line.



I must be getting used to working until 7:00. I didn't mind that very much tonight. I guess by keeping busy all the time I don't notice the passing of time. Tomorrow night I am having eight girls here as sort of a reunion. They are the girls who once made a club, and I was a member too. We never see each other unless there is a gathering of some kind. Most of the girls are married and being mothers too - they find it hard getting around.

Darby is back in the hospital. I don't know just what it is all about as [your] mom hasn't said anything to me about it - I guess she doesn't want to talk about it. Margie²⁴⁸ gave me the little information she knows - I guess he had a relapse. Hon, don't say anything about it in your letters home to Mom unless she tells it to you first.

Hon, I received my allotment check today - and the funny thing about it, I wrote to Newark and asked about it. I guess that's the way it always is - just when you try to find out about things like that - the check comes through. Hon, you should see me dictate a letter in the dictaphone at work - just like an executive. I enjoy that more than any part of my job - it really is loads of fun. Sweetheart, I am not the least bit tired tonight but it is after twelve and getting up at six-thirty won't give me enough rest - so I'd better get to bed. good night darling all my love to you

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Stamped "Return to Sender" through the addressee, and two Army Directory Service stamps with a redirect to APO 790 NR. The first is dated 2/4/44 and the second is undated. On reverse dated June 12, 1944 a Postal Service, and two date stamps: May 5 1944 and May 23 1944.

²⁴⁷ A movie theatre in downtown Hartford, Connecticut

²⁴⁸ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant for the first time..

England²⁴⁹

Sunday

[January 16, 1944]

Dearest wife -

At last At last! Yes, my darling, today the mails came, not much to be sure, but enough to keep me satisfied until the deluge comes. To be exact, there were two: one from you dated the fifth of the month and one from mom mailed the second. Judging from that, I would say that airmail is the best way for you to send me letters... you [must] have written letters previous to the one I got, for you make no mention of the cable and various other things that would sound like a *first* letter. Your letter didn't contain much news but it was the type of letter I wanted; that seemed as though you were actually right here telling me about Lou²⁵⁰ and his troubles with the hot water. It's just like you - devil - to beat him to the draw - each time. Has he been sick or is it his nose that is troubling him again? According to her letter Lou is near him and no doubt has been to see him - what does he write about Norm²⁵¹?

You wrote that you would like to send me a new cigarette case - I sure would like one of the same type as the one I lost, if you can find one. Talking about things to send me - I will have a definite need for writing paper, absolutely none can be had in England, as there is a definite shortage of paper here, so send me the largest box of it you can find. And all the chocolate bars you can buy! God knows I crave it! If you can't find any, tell Dad to try and get some from one of the salesmen that come into the store. Outside of those few things, there is nothing I can't buy here. Don't by any means send cigarettes as we can buy them for five cents a pack here and besides I have a reserve of twelve or thirteen cartons - We were each given ten before we left the States. Before I forget, when you do send me the package, write *Soldiers Requests* on the outside so that I'll get it without any trouble.

²⁴⁹ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

²⁵⁰ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth Weidman and Holly Weidmans, who were six and one at the time this was written.

²⁵¹ N. Norman Levy is Lenny's younger brother who is trying to enlist in the Army.

Half-holiday proved to be a false alarm and I was kept busy until well after four. The Turkey dinner was forthcoming as promised, and lived up to expectations. Not only did we have Turkey, but two desserts. The War Department says that men overseas should have turkey at least twice a month, so we can be sure of two good meals a month.

The dog I spoke so endearingly of is no more - at least not for our crew. Some low character dog-napped him at our last base. Rock²⁵² and I were both a bit heartbroken as he was our special charge. We looked for days but couldn't find him. You mentioned working overtime; don't overdo it, my darling - take things easy so that you won't over-tire yourself. Glad to hear that you are taking Mom to see *Abbi's Irish Rose* - hope she enjoyed it.

Mom's letter contained two bits of news, one you had previously spilled to me and the other was rather startling. The fact that Margie²⁵³ is living with Mom and Pop was, to say the least, unexpected. Don't you dare forget to write me the whole story, leaving out none of the details. Frankly the whole thing doesn't sit right with me. I don't understand Mom going back on what she has previously said. She writes that Dad and she don't mind but I doubt that very much. Mom and you mentioned the fact that [Norman] expects to be transferred soon by the medical board. What is the story behind that move?

The argument I wrote about last night continued until well after midnight with no final victor. Thank God it did not continue today.

It's getting late, my darling, and I want to write to Mom so I'll close... until tomorrow -

Good night my sweetheart, I love you, like you and miss you.

I love you
Lenny

²⁵² Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

²⁵³ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant for the first time.

Saturday night
[January 17, 1944]

Darling ~



It is impossible for me to tell you how happy I was to receive an honest to goodness letter from you today. Although receiving your V-mail²⁵⁴ letters mean as much to me, they leave me very melancholy. Letters are the only things we have to bring us together - and they mean as much to us at home as they do to you boys overseas.

I guess all of your questions had been answered in my previous letters. Betty May²⁵⁵ was here when I was reading your letter and she was thrilled when I read her the part where you asked to have her write to you. In fact, she's sitting here at the table with me now, and she wants me to help her write a letter to you... I had a hard time trying to convince her that there isn't time for one tonight - but I had to promise to help her with one very soon.

I took her and Lorraine²⁵⁶ to the *Lenox*²⁵⁷ this afternoon to see *Lassie Come Home*. Yes, *we* saw it in Alexandria [Louisiana] but I thought *they* would enjoy it - so I sat through it a second time. I wish you could have seen the two of them crying during the picture - at one time I thought Betty May was going to lose it.

Last night I had the girls²⁵⁸ here and although there were just eight of them besides myself - from the noise we made it sounded like ten times that many. I guess all the jabbering was caused by the fact that the girls get together very rarely and when they do - well there's so much to be said - they all talk at once and nobody is doing any of the listening.

Hon, today I bought a quarter of a pound of candy - it's just a few pieces - but seeing that I can send you a package as heavy as eight ounces without a request, I thought that perhaps a few pieces of candy will be better than none at all. When you see



²⁵⁴ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination

²⁵⁵ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty May) Weidman and Holly Weidman, who were six and one at the time this was written.

²⁵⁶ Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

²⁵⁷ A movie theatre in Hartford, Connecticut

²⁵⁸ A reunion of her childhood friends

the box - don't think they are the Mary Oliver's I plan to send you - they are not, darling - it's just the only box I have.

Yesterday I received a letter from Ebner²⁵⁹. He is now a Corporal and expects a furlough in about five or six weeks. Perhaps by this time you have already heard from him, as he has your address.

Darling, do you remember Francine Andrews - the girl I worked with me in the Two Hartfords²⁶⁰? I told you that she and Phil practice the rhythm system, in order not to have children. The other day I met another girl... and she told me that Franny expects a baby this month. I guess that system wasn't as safe as she claimed - Thank God - we thought differently of that system - or I'd join Margie²⁶¹ in the rush for maternity dresses. Speaking of Margie, she is getting there. None of her clothes fit her and she has to get those extension models now.

I'll have to get a book that gives the American valuation of English money. Hon, if you have that extra money you spoke of - or when you have it - please send it home. I guess I'm being the thrifty wife now but today I was looking at furniture in Fox's²⁶², just for the fun of it, and everything I would like to have in our house someday is expensive. So, darling, we will need every cent we can save. I don't mean for you to deprive yourself of anything - but whatever you have that you don't need - well that will mean so much in the future.

Sweetheart, I have to take Betty home now. It's getting late and furthermore she's getting wild now. So, darling, it's good night again until tomorrow. and hon when I go to sleep tonight and I think of what you wrote in your letter, believe me hon, will make me feel so happy. I love you so much sweetheart - if only time goes by quickly and we can be together again. Take good care of yourself sweetheart -and remember

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Tuesday night
January 18, 1944

²⁵⁹ Ebner Glooskin graduated in 1938 from Weaver High School, one of Hartford's three high schools. He became friends with Lenny while he was in Basic Training.

²⁶⁰ Hartford Fire and Hartford Accident & Indemnity were the Two Hartfords. The company is now The Hartford again.

²⁶¹ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

²⁶² G. Fox & Co. was an American department store chain founded in 1847 by brothers Gerson Fox and Isaac Fox. Its flagship store and headquarters were located in Hartford, Connecticut, and operated throughout New England. It was the largest privately-held Dept. store in the United States until its acquisition by The May Co. in 1965.

Darling ~

I didn't work until seven tonight as my cold is still with me. I feel all right except that my nose is so sore. I don't think I've kept a *Kleenex* away from it all day.

Hon, can you get stationery? If not, do you like the stationery I am using? Just say you would like a box of it and I will send it to you.

I've been forgetting to tell you something. I don't smoke anymore. That's the truth, darling. I told you that I would stop smoking as soon as I had to buy my own.

Norman²⁶³ is going to be stationed in Tennessee now. He told Margie²⁶⁴ that he is leaving this week and as for the future, he expects to be in the States for a long time yet.

Natie²⁶⁵ was so excited today. His son was going to have pablum (that's a cereal) for the first time. Guess how much he had? It's really funny – ½ teaspoon! And next week he can have ½ an inch of banana for supper. What a hearty meal - Nate was telling me he feeds the baby at ten at night, and twice a week he feeds him at six in the morning so that Lil²⁶⁶ can sleep. I told him that I don't think you'd ever do that, and he said... you might like it when your time comes to be a Daddy.

Hon, I received a letter yesterday which was forwarded from Alexandria [Louisiana]. It was from the unemployment office in regards to whether I was to receive unemployment benefits. I was to appear for a hearing on December 6. Well they say it's better late than never - in this case it just doesn't matter.

Remember my telling you about the girl in my office whose husband has been overseas for nine months? She's been acting very down in the dumps lately. Today she told me that she is sorry she got married and she wanted to know if I felt the same way. I really feel sorry for her, it must be terrible to feel that way.



²⁶³ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

²⁶⁴ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

²⁶⁵ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter who recently gave birth to their first child, Philip Henry.

²⁶⁶ Lillian (Lil) R. Geetter

Sweetheart, Mom wants me to get to bed. I'm going to have some hot lemonade. Maybe if I had some of that beer you write to me about, it would either kill or cure me. Well, sweetheart, it's goodnight again and remember - with all my heart -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

**"But I've Never Worked Before !
— what kind of war job could I do ?"**

**"The More Women at Work—
The Sooner We'll Win!"**

Experienced or not, there's a job *you* must do—*you* and millions more women—to save our war effort, our boys' lives! If you're married, your job won't change your husband's draft status. If he's called anyway, you'll be financially prepared!




You can take any Civilian Job . . .
Restaurants, hotels, department stores, transportation—*all* are war jobs! Read your newspaper want ads for the job that needs *you*! Or get advice without obligation from your U. S. Employment Service Office. Full or part time, you're wanted—*immediately*!



You can work in a War Plant . . .
If there is a war factory in your community, or a shipyard, or a government arsenal—there may be dozens of different kinds of jobs you can do to help bring Victory closer! Read the want ads or ask your U. S. Employment Service office.



You can be a WAC or WAVE . . .
— Spar or Marine. Send a soldier to fight, bring our boys home sooner! If you qualify, you'll be serving your country, *and* learning an important job you may need, after the war. Get full details at any U. S. Army or Navy Recruiting Office, or Naval Officer Procurement Office.



You can be a Cadet Nurse . . .
Healthy? 17 to 35 years old? A high school graduate? Get free training, with pay, to replace nurses who are with the armed forces. War workers—ill or injured, civilians needing operations, new mothers and babies—depend on you! Ask your local hospital about the U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps!



Published in the interest of the
war effort by Kleenex* Tissue

Paper, too, has a war-time job . . . that's why there's not enough Kleenex Tissues to go around. But regardless of what others do, we are determined to maintain *Kleenex quality* in every particular, consistent with government regulation.

(*T. M. Reg.
U. S. Pat. Off.)

England²⁶⁷

²⁶⁷ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

Wednesday, [January 19, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Just a short letter today - it's getting harder and harder to write as the days go by - to let you know that I'm feeling fine and also to tell you that I love you more today than I did yesterday.

Intended to go to town this evening, but I realized that I hadn't written today so postponed the trip till tomorrow; I won't miss much, and what I wanted to do will keep until then. Overslept breakfast again today and had to be content with wieners again for dinner - if after this is all over, I suddenly get up from the table some day when you serve Franks and Beans blame it on my present mess officer. Evenings I lie in bed and dream of those truly delicious meals you used to turn out for me back in Alex²⁶⁸ especially those wonderful steak dinners and... those breakfasts of ham or bacon and eggs. Those were the happiest days of my life, Butch, but I'm afraid that I never showed my true appreciation. I'll make it all up to you my darling, just as soon as this mess is cleared up.

The past few days have been clear, although a trifle cold, after Monday's rain. Maybe winter is coming to England - will have to take a walk through the surrounding countryside, the fellows that have done so, say it is really worthwhile. Got paid today, and... your allotment was taken out so you should be getting it soon.

No more to write about my darling, So until our date tomorrow, I'll say I love you very, very much and miss you terribly. Good night darling.

I love you
Lenny

Please send me Nate's new address.

Love,
Lenny

²⁶⁸ Alexandria, Louisiana was Lenny's last post before shipping out for England.

Wednesday night
January 19, 1944

Darling ~

So little has happened since yesterday that I guess this is going to be a very short letter. Hon, will you please write the date on the top of your letter? It will be a way of knowing... when you wrote the letter.

Do you remember how my nails kept breaking when we were in Alexandria? Well, they are long again and I certainly am proud of that fact. I just wrote a letter to Franny. I should have answered her letter sooner, but I guess it's just one of those things you just put aside not meaning to...

I thought it would surely snow today, but toward the latter part of the afternoon, the sun came out in all its glory. There has been quite a bit of ice skating and it makes me mad to think I've only gone ice skating once so far.

Margie²⁶⁹ is not going to work after this Saturday. She hasn't been very well since she became pregnant, and furthermore she's getting bigger every day And she is known at work as Miss Naidorf.

Ben²⁷⁰ is still working in Veeder-Root²⁷¹. He is getting used to the work now and likes it pretty well. As I told you Charlie Weiner isn't working there anymore since he found out that he has ulcers. Adelaide's husband sent home some pictures he took in the Aleutians. Photography is his hobby and he takes some wonderful pictures. Cheer up hon, I know you want a camera - and I'll keep my eyes open until I can find one for you.

Does the cigarette lighter I sent you work? I hope so. If it does not just tell me so, and maybe I can get another one from somebody. I've got 4 brothers and they must have more than one lighter hanging around the house.

Sweetheart, as there is not much more to write tonight, I hope that everything is coming along fine. I love you so much.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

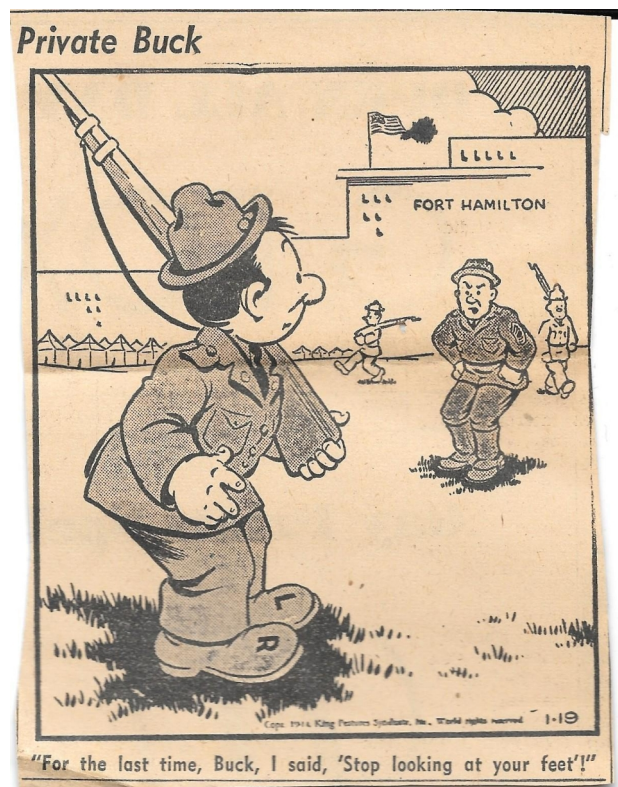
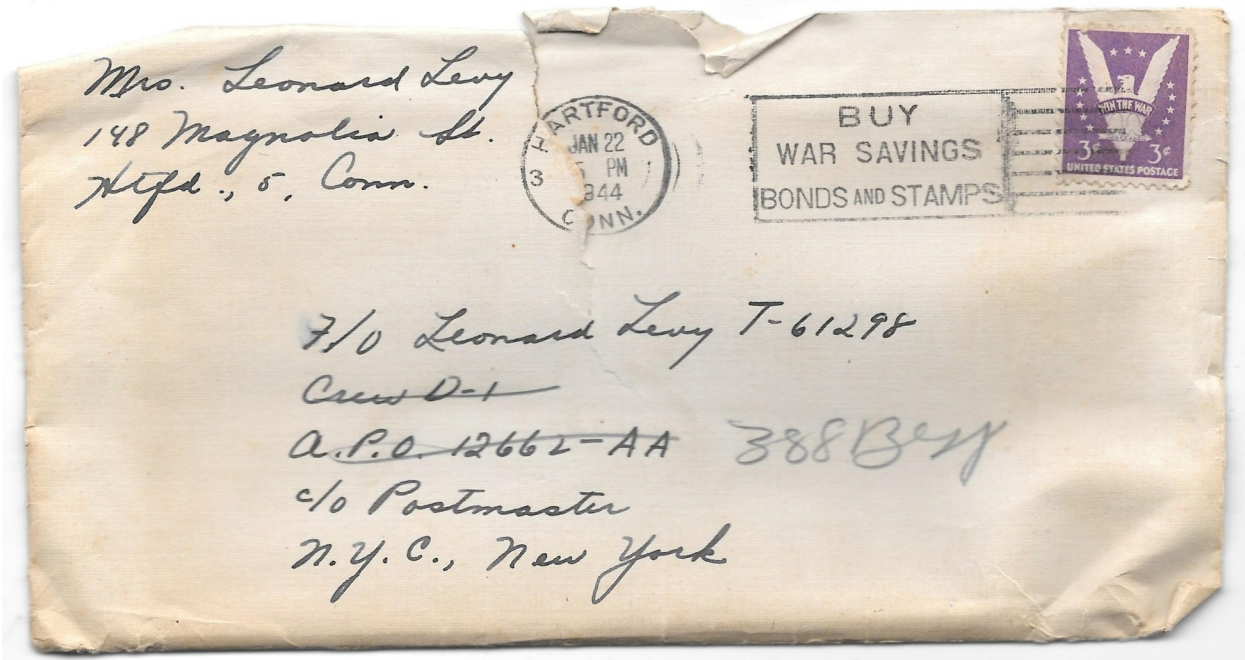
²⁶⁹ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant.

²⁷⁰ Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

²⁷¹ Veeder-Root is the largest manufacturer of precision-counting equipment. Their counters were used by Rear Admiral Byrd to measure the miles traveled by his dog sled on the way to the South Pole.

January 21, 1944

No letter. Cartoon and one page of Local News from *The Hartford Times*.



News About Local Men and Women
Now in the Service of Their Country

It's a Family Custom



G. J. Breen J. W. Breen

Cpl. Freedman A. Freedman



Sgt. M. Bourret Sgt. J. Bourre

Sgt. M. Bourrel

Sgt. J. Bourrel

Sgt. M. Bourrel

Sgt. J. Bourrel

C. Zappulla

John Caroes

Sgt. Curtiss

L. Brennan



Ensign Allen Ensign Glaser

La. He attended American International College in Springfield and the University of Connecticut and

JOHN J. EOLANDER son of

Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Folander, 130 Earle St., received his commission as a second lieutenant in the Army Air Forces at Columbus Army Air Field recently. He began pilot training last March.

PVT. ALBERT I. FREEDMAN, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Freedman, 2708 Main St., and husband of the former Edna Rescan, South Norwalk, is with an infantry unit at Camp Edwards, Mass. He was graduated from Weaver High School and State Teachers College, New Britain. He received his M. A. degree from the Uni-

Lady Serves with the Marines

Judy, two-year-old Doberman Pinscher from South Windsor, went ashore with Marines when they hit Bougainville. She was donated to the Marine Corps by her owner, Marshall F. Bidwell.

Judy, two-year-old Doberman Pinscher from South Windsor, went ashore with Marines when they hit Bougainville. She was donated to the Marine Corps by her owner, Marshall F. Bidwell.

Ensign Marmaro Lt. Polander Sgt. Garofalo Cpl. Heumann

Judy Serves with the Marines



Judy, two-year-old Doberman Pinscher from South Windsor, went ashore with Marines when they hit Bougainville. She was donated to the Marine Corps by her owner, Marshall F. Bidwell.



Ensign Mariano Lt. Polander Sgt. Garofolo Cpl. Hessmann

From there he was sent to the Naval Air Station at Jacksonville, Fla., where he served as an ordnance instructor until he left for overseas duty someplace in the Pacific about four months ago. He is a graduate of Hartford High School in 1940 and of Hartford medical school. She has enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps with the rank of second lieutenant and will report at Ft. Devens Jan. 26. A graduate of Hartford Public High School in 1940 and of Hartford

Judy Serves with the Marines

Judy, two-year-old Doberman Pinscher from South Windsor, went ashore with Marines when they hit Bougainville. She was donated to the Marine Corps by her owner, Marshall F. Bidwell.

From there he was sent to the Naval Air Station at Jacksonville, Fla., where he served as an enforcement instructor until he left for overseas duty someplace in the Pacific about four months ago. He is a graduate of Midway Post School and was employed by the Wisconsin Company, Elmwood.

MARION GLATZ, daughter of Mrs. Lena Glaser of 23 Sharon St., has been commissioned an ensign in the WAVES. She is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and formerly was a teacher-aid in the State Department of Health and at Madenbrook Hospital, Hempstead, N. Y.

MAJOR CLAYTON has enlisted in the Army Nurse Corps with the rank of second lieutenant and will report at Ft. Devens Jan. 26. A graduate of Hartford Public High School in 1941 and of Hartford Hospital Training School last year, she had been on the hospital staff since then. Her brother, **C/PLT. 5TH GRAD. JAMES F. KALTSOUNIS,** is serving in the Medical Corps at the 67th Tropic Hospital, Port Jackson, S. G. Ceylon. **KALTSOUNIS**, now at home on furlough, joined the Army eight months ago and received his basic training at Camp Pickett, Va. He was graduated from Hartford Public High School in 1943 and prior to joining the Army.

Ensign Mariano **Lt. Toland** **Sgt. Garofalo** **Cpl. Neumann**



Connecticut birdmen prepare for final post-graduate Central Instructors' School, Randolph Field, Tex. Left, Lt. Thomas P. Gleason, 15 Highie Dr., East Hartford; John C. Hammond, Meriden.

he
up



Pfc. Robert A. Brown Jr. of Avon, receives Soldier's Medal from Brig. Gen. Walter J. Reed of Seventh Air Force Squadron at Central Pacific base for "exceptionally gallant conduct" at scene of airplane crash.



M. C. Smith	Cpl. Leshin	Lt. Edgerton	H. R.
Bradley Field before entering the service in May, 1943. He has sev-		He began pilot training September, 1942	

Money of 115 Arnold St. has reported for duty at the Air Forces Bombardier School, Carlsbad, New Mexico. He is a former student at St. Peter's College in Jersey City, N. J., and at Fordham University.

FFC. MEL of Mr. and Mrs. of 232 Hillside as the Unit College Park program. He MEL

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FFC. MEL of Mr. and Mrs. of 232 Hillside as the Unit College Park program. He MEL

ANTOINETTE M. MARZANO.
an ensign in the WAVES, has been
assigned to general duty. Daughter
of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Marzano of
236 Putnam St. she was
graduated from St. Joseph College
and formerly was employed as ad-
ministrative secretary at the University
of Connecticut and as secretary
to the priorities manager in the
Hartford War Production
Board office.

ALEXANDER J. McCAFFERY, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander McCaffery of 133 Tremont St., received the wings of an Army Air Forces pilot and commission as a second lieutenant at Spence Field, Ga., recently. A graduate of Hartford Public High School, he worked as an apprentice machinist before he enlisted in the Air Corps.

Friday night
January 21, 1944

Darling ~

Isn't the enclosed *Blondie* cartoon funny? How about trying to drink your tea that way darling? You might start a new trend in England.



Received the letter you wrote to me on our anniversary day. It was a very nice letter and I don't know why you should feel that your letters are uninteresting. I know that there is so much you can't write about, but what you can write and do write, means so much.

I learned from your letter that Chris²⁷² is with you now... I was anxious to hear about him. Give him my regards and tell him I'm glad to hear that he is well.

I guess they are keeping you so busy now... Regardless of how tired you are at the end of the day, I bet you prefer it to just hanging around, doing nothing all day. At least time doesn't weigh heavily on your hands.

Do you know that I thought I couldn't put the X's at the end of my letter - so I had to sign all of my letters without them. I found out today that it is all right and I did feel like a real fool.

Tomorrow, my mom and I are going to the matinee performance of *Abbi's Irish Rose* at the Bushnell.²⁷³ I have good seats and I'm so happy about that because as you know Mom doesn't hear nor see too well. I hope it will be good because I had to do a lot of convincing to make Mom want to go.

Darling, I am buying a \$100 war bond this month and I decided that out of your allotment I am going to buy a \$50 bond monthly.

²⁷² Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

²⁷³ Bushnell Memorial Hall is a music and performing arts venue in Hartford, Conn. that also shows feature films.

Issie²⁷⁴ is home tonight but he came in just for a few hours. He had a lot of trouble with his car on his way in and when he got home he was exhausted. He said he likes the Navy so far and he sends his regards to you.

Tootsie called tonight and wanted to know what I heard from you and she asked me to send you her regards too.

Did I tell you that your niece or nephew will be born in July? Tonight Margie²⁷⁵ was telling me that July will be an expensive month for me - your birthday, the baby's birthday, and her anniversary. Now, she can get back at me for her expensive month – October.

Today we received a notice from our supervisor warning us that there has been too much talking during working hours and it must come to a halt or else dismissals will be necessary. I couldn't help but giggle as I read it and Bernie - he's my supervisor - heard me. It was really funny although it wasn't meant to be - it was like the notices we got in school. I had to ask Bernie if that means we will get report cards every month and get marked in deportment - Well he broke down and laughed too.

My cold is all gone and it is wonderful not to have to sneeze every five seconds. Every time I sneeze, I lose a bobby pin and darling you know how hard bobby pins are to get. So, I can't afford to get anymore colds.

We have a new girl working in our office and she's Jewish. I guess she's ashamed to say she is, so she tells one girl she's Swedish, to another she's Irish, and to another she's Polish. When the girls got together... it was funny to hear the nationalities she was supposed to be. They have nick-named her *League of Nations*. They want me to say something to her in Jewish and see if she understands. However, this is one thing I've learned it's best to just stay out of.

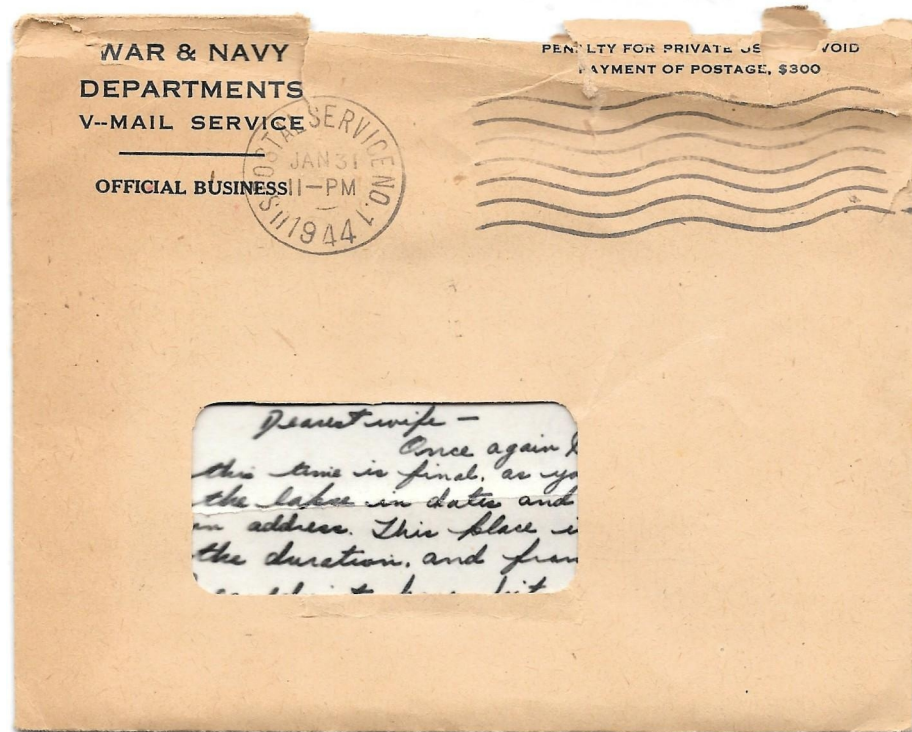
Sweetheart, ohh how I hope time passes quickly until we are together again. I miss you so much darling. and I love you so much. Take care of yourself darling and remember you are always in my thoughts.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

²⁷⁴ Isidore left his job as a physician at Blue Hills Hospital in Hartford to enroll in the Navy. He is commuting from his apartment in New Britain to the Sub Base in Groton.

²⁷⁵ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy. She is pregnant with twin boys Richard and Steven Levy.

V-mail²⁷⁶
[January 22, 1944]



Dearest wife -

Once again I've changed bases, this time is final, as you can tell from the lapse in dates and also the change in address. This place is home for the duration, and from what I hear I couldn't have hit it any better. For a base in the ETO²⁷⁷, this place has everything - a beautiful club - I'm in it now - a very good mess [hall], and heated barracks. I'm just about ready to start in with what I've been training all this time for, so it can't be too long before the 25 missions are over and I'm on my way home. Due to the change I'll probably have to 'sweat out' the mail all over

²⁷⁶ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

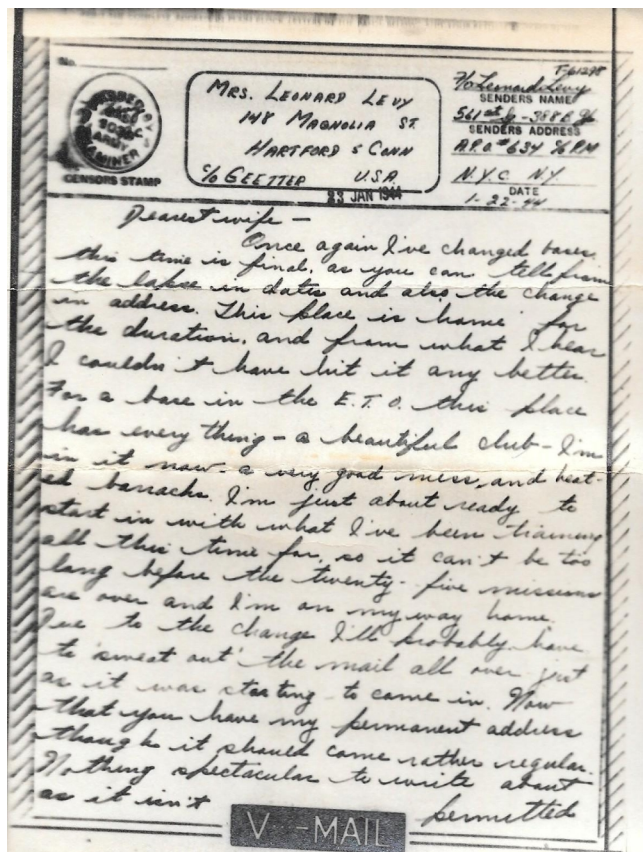
²⁷⁷ European theatre of operation

just as it was starting to come in. Now that you have my permanent address though, it should come regularly.

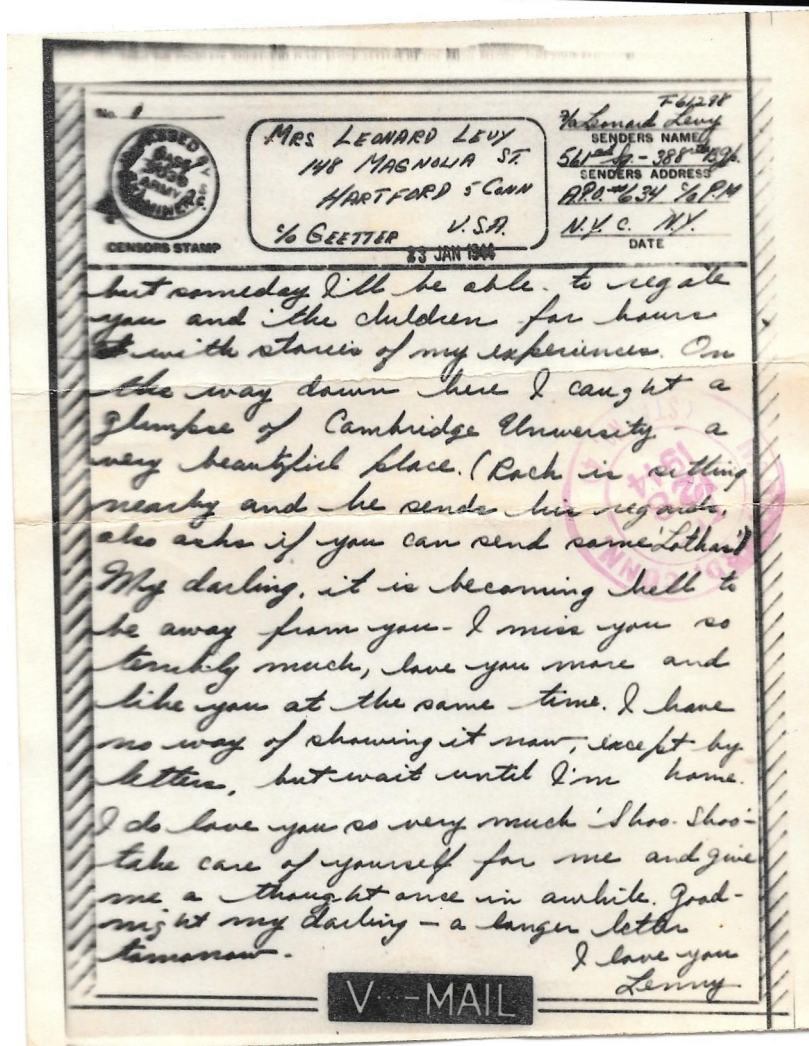
Nothing spectacular to write about as it isn't permitted, but someday I'll be able to regale you and the children for hours with stories of my experiences. On the way down here I caught a glimpse of Cambridge University - a very beautiful place. Rock²⁷⁸ is sitting nearby and he sends his regards, also asks if you can send some *latkes*. My darling, it is becoming Hell to be away from you. I miss you so terribly much, love you more and like you at the same time. I have no way of showing it now, except by letters, but wait until I'm home.

I do love you so very much 'Shoo-Shoo' take care of yourself for me and give me a thought once in a while. Goodnight my darling - a longer letter tomorrow.

I love you
Lenny



²⁷⁸ Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.



This V-mail was written by Lenny Levy on 1-22-44, posted by the US War Offices Post on the Knettishall AFB on 22 JAN 1944 and received by the Hartford Connecticut post office on January 31, 1944.

Jan 22, 1944

Hi Lenny,

First – you’ll forgive me for addressing you as Flight Officer as that is now incorrect. It has been rumored about at home that you may be a Second Lt. [Lieutenant]. I haven’t been home in 10 days. I’m not up to the minute on any news.

The plus for this informal note is to send my belated best wishes on your foreign mission. Matters of a military nature have overwhelmed me the past few weeks and I’m just about getting my head out of the water. On Monday next, I’ll be in my 2nd month of service. Of course, that’s small potatoes when matched against your... time – Yet the days are slipping by faster than I had expected.

As you know, I’m stationed at the Sub Base in New London – fortunately close to home. I don’t know how long I’ll be here - so any day I may find myself detached – I hope not for long. I hope not for a few weeks. I do want to break away from the family easily and not all in one shove. The work I am doing is of a medical nature but is not at all in the field of anesthesia or hospital administration. That doesn’t disappoint me one bit. I was prepared to do something different once I got in, so I’m not upset.

Have seen the family in Hartford but once this month – saw Sylvia at the time. They all looked well to me then. Do call up Nate and Mom when I get to New Britain or inquire of the Hartford gang when I call New Britain²⁷⁹.

Well, I wonder what goes with you since you reached foreign shores. There is no doubt that it will be in for a big share of active service. In spite of everything I ought to be doing, my thoughts often turn to you and the important missions you and the remainder of your crew will be undertaking. And always, I wish to the utmost the complete success of each of your assignments.

Yes, Lenny, this is just a note to say “Hello” - to tell you of my sincerest wishes for your safety.

Love always
Is

Ft. Cmdr.
I. S. Geetter U.S.N.R.
Sub Base – New London Conn.
561 Bomb Squad
D. O. Q.

²⁷⁹ New Britain is the relatively new home for Isidore and Rebekah (Babe) Geetter and their five children aged 1-10. Issie’s return address shows his commission in the US Navy, which has him posted at the Submarine Base in New London, Connecticut.

Saturday night
January 22, 1944

Darling ~

Today I received a letter from you which you wrote on New Year's Eve. It took a long time getting here but it was a letter worth waiting for. I don't know what caused the delay because your letters seem to be arriving about ten days after you write them.

Darling, we are sort of perplexed about your APO numbers. [Your] Mom wanted to send a cable to you last night and when she called the Western Union office they told her there was no such APO number listed. I called the American Red Cross today and explained about the cable gram and they said the APO number 12662 is an *embarkation* point number and that's why we can't send the cable gram... If you have a delay in getting our mail, it's because it has to be rerouted from that embarkation point. Darling, haven't you got another number now? In regards to why Mom wanted to send a cable - she just wanted you to know that we are receiving your mail and everybody is well. However, I hope that our mail is getting to you. It is terrible if you are not getting it - and you have been waiting such a long time to hear from us.

I mailed a 5 pound package to you today - that's a regular overseas package. I am not saying *how* it went through but nevertheless, it's on its way. There is candy in there and although there's not too much you can put into that [size] box, I hope you will like it.

This afternoon I went to the *Bushnell*²⁸⁰ with my mom to see *Abie's Irish Rose*. Very good seats but Mom still had difficulty hearing everything. The performance was "all right" but that's about all. It wasn't as good as I expected it would be and I was disappointed.

This evening Roslyn²⁸¹ called me and we decided to go to the movies. I was home later than I expected and it is now twelve o'clock. Truthfully, it is hard for me to stay up much later than twelve - that shows how [much] I am getting away from nightlife.

There's not much else to write tonight as not much more has happened. However, if only I could tell you how much I miss you and how much I love you - this letter would be volumes. I hope that just being able to... say that I love you and miss you so much, helps express what I feel. Take good care of yourself darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

²⁸⁰ Bushnell Memorial Hall in Hartford, Connecticut is a venue for live theatre and music that also showed movies.

²⁸¹ Roslyn (Mandell) Goralnick was married to H. Robert (Tuddy) Goralnick (also known as Bob Gorin). Tuddy's parents lived next door to Lenny's parents.

Somewhere in England²⁸², unstated

Monday - 23
[January 23, 1944]

Dearest wife -

At last I have the time to sit down and write. Overnight my life has changed from one of leisure to that of a busy person. As you know, I'm now at my permanent base and my work has finally begun. Yesterday, just as I sat down to write to you, a captain, who sleeps in the same barracks as [me], asked if I wanted to go for a ride. Not having been up in over two months I went, partly to see England from the air and partly to get my flying time for the month. While at operations I met the squadron Navigator and he made an appointment to see me at seven last night. When we met he took me down to the *line* where we spent a pleasant two hours talking about the work of navigation in actual combat.



He gave me quite a few helpful hints and promised to give me more from day to day. When I got back to the barracks I found that there was an *alert* on and the lights went out rather early because most of the fellows had to be up by three. All of the above is in explanation of why there was no letter for yesterday. Forgive me, my darling?

After mailing your letter Saturday, I stepped into the bar room for a drink and found that there was a dance going on (later learned that it was a weekly affair.) While standing around listening to the music I met a fellow I haven't seen in over four years, We lived on the same street at

²⁸² Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

home for a good long time, rehashing the fun we had 'way back when.' He brought me up to date on all the boys from the 'old gang' and then after a dance or two I went to sleep.

This morning I was up by 10:00, had coffee in the snack bar, took care of some details and am now in the lounge writing. My 'home' is even nicer than I thought at first - the club is much better than the one we had at Alex²⁸³, the fellows are all very friendly, the meals good, the theater has plush seats (my aching *'twizzzy'*) but there is still school to go to. It seems that as long as I'm in uniform, there'll be something to learn. So long as it will help to bring me back to you, my darling, I'll be willing to go.

Saw quite a bit of the country-side on the way down here, and as the sun was shining it looked quite nice. Stopped in Cambridge for a while and, except for the narrow streets and the wrong-side-of-the-street drivers, it looked like any average size city back home. Cambridge University looms out on the skyline and is really an impressive sight.

With the exception of Chris²⁸⁴ (and we expect him along any day) Crew18 is intact. Rock²⁸⁵ already has one mission to his credit and is still talking about it. He has relatives in London and on our first pass we are going to visit them and maybe get a real home-cooked meal – *latkes*²⁸⁶ and all!



Speaking of passes: we get a fifty-six hour pass every three weeks so I guess it will be some time before I see the night life of London again.

²⁸³ Alexandria, Louisiana was the last US Base Lenny served at before shipping out to England.

²⁸⁴ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

²⁸⁵ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

²⁸⁶ A *latke* is a type of potato pancake or fritter in Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine that is traditionally prepared to celebrate Hanukkah.

No mail from you in almost a week, due to my change of bases, so once again I'm eagerly awaiting news of home and you, my sweetheart.

It's time I took care of some important matters, so if you'll excuse me from rushing off, I'll go attend to them. Before I go, however, I want to tell you once again that I love you ever so much my darling and do miss you terribly - pray that it won't be long before we are together again.

Until tomorrow - when I'll write again.

I love you
Lenny

I like you too 'Shoo-Shoo'

Love,

L.

Somewhere in England²⁸⁷, unstated

Tuesday - 25²⁸⁸
[January 24, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Here I am, after a hard day of trying to keep one step ahead of those who are trying to put me to work, reporting the events of the day - hope all my small talk makes for an interesting letter. Awoke just after 8:00, in time to miss breakfast as usual, so contented myself with buttered toast and coffee (complements of the snack bar.) After that hearty repast I fetched myself over to Ground School where I heard more of the same dribble that's been thrown at me since leaving school. Class lasted until eleven-thirty when it was time for the noonday meal which consisted of that delight of all *Etousians*²⁸⁹ (GI's of the ETO²⁹⁰ - stew! Had planned to go back to school for more dribble but Lieutenant Arban, the squadron Navigator collared me for some extra help and practice on (*censored*²⁹¹), the greatest aid²⁹² to navigation since the compass. After an hour and a half of this I decided to call it a day - and that I did. Hung around the barracks, washed up, straightened things out a bit until time for supper. Eating over for the day, we took ourselves to the Post theater to see a musical revue staged by the enlisted men of this base. The name *You've Had It* is a story in itself and I'll endeavor to explain it now. If you run after a bus and just miss it, the English say 'You've 'ad it, chum,' meaning 'You had your chance and missed it' - translated literally into GI talk T.... S... The revue itself was very good, depicting the humorous side of various phases of army life. The music, all original, was very good

²⁸⁷ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

²⁸⁸ A typo

²⁸⁹ A word coined by Lenny

²⁹⁰ European theater of operation

²⁹¹ In this letter, Lenny self-censors the word radar, the X kisses below his signature, and the location of the ase.

²⁹² Royal Air Force: Knettishall was a fully operational RAF base before serving as an American base. Lenny was pleasantly surprised by the condition and state of technology of the radar and navigation tools here.

and quite catchy; it was played by *The Gremlins* - The hottest thing in the ETO. The show lasted a full two hours and every bit of it thoroughly enjoyable. One fellow in particular stopped the show; originally he sang with Xavier Cugat and Ernie Madaguina - sang *Amabala* among others in Spanish and as I said he stopped the show. From there we adjourned to the club where, after a game of *Snooker* - a form of billiards - I came into the lounge to write. That my darling was today - not unlike many that have gone by.

Due to the fact that Chris²⁹³ is not here yet we are not *operational*, so I'm still 'sweating out' my first mission. Foolish as it may sound, I am anxious for them to start because the sooner I get them over with, the sooner I'll be back with you, and that my sweetheart is all that I'm living for. Mail has yet to catch me, so I'm in the dark as far as news of you, the family or Hartford is concerned. Please don't neglect to include all the details in your letters, things like how the city looks with the lights back on, your job and even the weather.

Time to get some 'sack time' Butch, So, once again, I want you to know that I love you very much. If I remember correctly you were once afraid that I'd stop telling you that but, believe me my lovable wife, I'll never get tired of telling you that I love you nor how much I love you -

Goodnight my darling - take care of yourself.

I love you
Lenny



²⁹³ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Monday night
January 24, 1944

Darling ~

The newspaper that you sent me, the *Evening Standard*²⁹⁴ arrived today. It was very interesting and I read it from start to finish. I am going to put it in our scrapbook.²⁹⁵

Evening Standard (London) - December 13, 1944

Not the issue date Lenny sent to Sylvia



We had miserable weather yesterday - it rained and then it snowed -then it snowed - but it was a wet snow. I was just speaking with Margie²⁹⁶. She isn't working anymore as I have already told you. She told me Boomey is in town – he visited Dad this afternoon. That's all I know about it - but isn't it nice that he can get home. I guess it was another sudden *pass* and he came in very unexpectedly.

²⁹⁴ Lenny and Sylvia expected he was heading to England. This was the part of the plan to share his Mission location, which otherwise would have been censored: sending a newspaper. The *Evening Standard* is a newspaper published weekly and distributed free of charge in London, England.

²⁹⁵ Sylvia's scrapbook of Lenny's mailed souvenirs has been lost.

²⁹⁶ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant with their first child..

Last night I went to the *Lenox*²⁹⁷ with Sadie²⁹⁸. I saw Red Skelton in *I Dood It* and hon, I laughed so much. It was very entertaining and I enjoyed it immensely. Looking over the theatre section of the newspaper you sent to me, I noticed that most of the pictures are films that were produced here. Oh yes, I get a real kick out of the crossword puzzle - the way it is worded - it is a puzzle!

Sweetheart, I'm hoping I get a letter from you tomorrow - missing you so much - you have no idea how I look forward to your letters. Every night I pray that you are well and hon, add that you will get my mail - I just hope you have received all of it. Goodnight darling, and with all my heart, I love you.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



²⁹⁷ The *Lenox* was a movie theatre on Albany Ave. in Hartford, Connecticut.

²⁹⁸ Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter

Somewhere in England²⁹⁹, unstated

Wednesday - 26³⁰⁰
[January 25, 1944]

Dearest wife -

Just remarked to the fellow sitting next to me that writing gets to be more of a problem every day - there just isn't anything to write about. This was one of those good days, slept till eleven, attended a couple of lectures but took it easy the rest of the time. Oh yes, I drew some more equipment - soon I'll need a warehouse to store it all.

Felt rather ambitious earlier so I wrote a few outstanding letters including one to the future mother Marge³⁰¹. She no doubt fell over when she saw it.

Still non operational so I can't fill the sheet with exciting reports of dropping bombs on Europe - in fact I seem to be just as far from the war as we were back in Alexandria. Remember my saying that I wanted to come here because the navigation was so easy? Well it's even easier than I thought with all the aids the R.A.F.³⁰² have; soon I'll be able to get as much sleep as Rock³⁰³.

Not another thing to say, so with all my love i'll say goodnight -

Goodnight my darling -

I love you
Lenny

²⁹⁹ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

³⁰⁰ A typo

³⁰¹ Margie Naidorf Levy was Norman's wife and pregnant for the first time.

³⁰² Royal Air Force: Knettishall was a fully operational RAF base before serving as an American base. Lenny was pleasantly surprised by the condition and state of technology of the radar and navigation tools here.

³⁰³ Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

Somewhere in England³⁰⁴, unstated
Thursday
[January 26, 1944]

Dearest wife -

After reading your first V-mail³⁰⁵, I heartily agree with you that they are not very pleasant to receive; not only are they too short, but they do not even look like a letter. I'm truly sorry I sent the few that I did, But you can be sure that there will be no more. It's true that stationery is very hard to obtain; as you can easily see from the very assortment I've been using lately, but no more V-Mail.

Can readily understand your surprise about the ring, my darling, but I did mean every word of it. Just as soon as I get to go to a town, I'll have my finger measured and send it (the size) on to you. Glad you didn't ask for an explanation of my change in feeling for I'm afraid I couldn't give one - it's just that I want everybody to know that I'm married instead of trying to keep it a secret, as you, jokingly, accused me of trying to do.

So you are curious as to what Boxing Day is? I was too for quite some time, until I found somebody who knew. The explanation as I got it, is this: years ago the fortunate few who were wealthy made boxes, containing gifts, food and clothing, on Christmas night and then, through the Church, they would be distributed to the poor the next day - hence the name Boxing Day. Like all holidays, about all that remains is the name, and now the holiday merely calls for an extra day of celebration.

Along with your two letters today I also received one each from Norm³⁰⁶ and 'Boomey the Kid' wrote his from the hospital and there was nothing of interest in it. Norm's letter further proved that his luck is all good. He is now stationed at Langley Field Virginia - only thirteen hours, by train, from home and he is free practically every weekend. Just before

³⁰⁴ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

³⁰⁵ V-mail, short for Victory Mail, was a hybrid mail process used by the United States during the Second World War as the primary and secure method to correspond with soldiers stationed abroad. To reduce the cost of transferring an original letter through the military postal system, a V-mail letter would be censored, copied to film, and printed back to paper upon arrival at its destination.

³⁰⁶ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

arriving there, he got into a poker game and made a fistful of money. Traveling by plane, he saved some time and was able to spend a few days in Hartford. He also told me that Ebner³⁰⁷ is now stationed somewhere in Ohio - as yet I haven't heard from him but sooner or later the mail catches up to me. No doubt he (Boom) and [Frances] will get married one of these weekends - do you get to see her much?

By the time this reaches you, the package will have arrived. The lighter will be very much appreciated, for even matches are rationed - to the tune of one box a week.

This was another easy day; slept until nine-thirty, had coffee - at the snack bar and then attended class, with Rock³⁰⁸, for an hour. The afternoon was free and we spent it playing Gin Rummy - He keeps beating me though and therefore it's not enjoyable. Oh yes, Chris³⁰⁹ came in last night, so once again we are all together - it shouldn't be too long now before we start work again. I keep threatening to write to Fran about his alleged misdoing and now he's trying to find out your address - to hold over my head.

Your pictures, all three of them, occupy a place of honor in the barracks, my sweetheart, And the usual compliments on what a pretty wife I have, have been forthcoming with regularity by everyone that sees them. They all three overlook my bed and each morning I awake to look right into your brown eyes - I do love you so very very much my Butch - I'd give most anything just to hold you in my arms for a moment - God how I miss you. Nothing matters but that, someday, I am able to come home to you and make you the happiest girl



³⁰⁷ Ebner Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia in 1938 and has been a friend of his since Lenny and Sylvia started dating.

³⁰⁸ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

³⁰⁹ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

in the world. Just pray that the Allied successes continue and that time will [come] sooner than we dare hope.

By the way, I notice that your customary X's were missing in the last two letters - please put them back - or did you purposely leave them out because I did? Mine are out only because censorship forbids them.

In one of your letters you mentioned the fact that you are putting in quite a bit of overtime and that it tires you out - please take care of yourself for me, my darling because I want you just as I left you.

Until tomorrow then, when more of your letters should give me more questions to answer, I'll say goodnight - but not before I tell you once again that I love you very, very much (and like you too.)

Goodnight my darling -

I love you
Lenny

On the back of the envelope is a penciled greeting from another Hartford boy in Knettishall: Hiya Toots – S.E.³¹⁰

³¹⁰ Sam Ellison

Wednesday afternoon
January 26, 1944

Darling ~

I am writing this letter in the thirty minutes I have left in my lunch hour. I didn't write last night because as soon as I came home from work - all I could do was eat and go to bed. I thought my eyes would close at work all during the day, I was so sleepy. So, by nine o'clock last night I was fast asleep and I feel wonderful today.

It is very cloudy today and it looks as though it is going to rain. I hope not, because as usual, I don't have my umbrella.

This morning just flew by.³¹¹ I was so busy all morning that when the lunch bell rang, I couldn't imagine what it was... I don't kill time at this job like I used to do when I worked for the Retail Credit Company³¹². Speaking of the Retail Credit Co., reminds me that I have to call them up about what my earnings were for the time I was employed there. I have to file my income tax returns. I won't have a large tax to pay this year because I didn't earn very much - I only worked four or five months. Oh, What a life - Just working five months out of twelve. Yes I'm lazy.



The insurance agent was around last night - I was working overtime. He has the money from your policy. I called him and I expect him to come again tonight.



I'm thinking of visiting [your] Mom tonight... if it doesn't rain.

My boss just passed by and he told me to tell you that I'm working hard. He is always kidding with the girls.

Sweetheart, I don't know whether there is a letter from you today as yet - but I'm looking forward to receiving one.

I am going downtown tonight directly from work. It is Tootsie's birthday tomorrow and I have to get her a gift - just what is still a problem.

The girl who sits in front of me was just remarking about my diamond - I wish you only heard all the compliments I get on it.

³¹¹ Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

³¹² By the 1940s, Retail Credit Company was one of the nation's largest credit bureaus, holding files on millions of American citizens. It now operates as one of the "Big Three" credit bureau, Equifax.

It has been a little more than two months since we have said goodbye. Darling, I've missed you so much. I'm really thankful for the fact that I'm working and although it requires a lot of extra time and energy - it keeps me busy and I don't notice the time passing. It's time to get back to work, so I'll have to end this letter. Until tomorrow when I write to you - remember that I love you with all my heart.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Thursday night
January 27, 1944

Darling ~

It is now eleven o'clock and everybody is in bed. It is so quiet that the scratching of my pen is magnified a million times louder.

Sweetheart, I've missed not receiving mail from you so much this past week. I am not feeling sorry for myself - really I'm not - but I can understand how you must feel not getting our mail for such a long time. I do hope with all my heart that you have received some of it.

I tried to send you a copy of this week's *Saturday Evening Post* but they wouldn't accept it at the post office.

Came home from the *Lenox*³¹³. I went with Florence Greenberg, very unexpectedly. We saw *Guadalcanal Diary*. It was good as far as I could see - the woman in front of me had a peculiar hairstyle and it got in my way. If it was her hat I could have asked her to remove it, but, in this case, as you can well see, I was just plain stuck.

We did not work overtime tonight and it felt just like a holiday. My boss suddenly thought we were tired, so he generously let us go home at five. It was appreciated nevertheless.

It gave me a chance to get Tootsie a birthday gift. I got her a cookbook too - remember she got me one, too? I called her this evening to wish her a "happy returns of the day." She was all set to go out for the evening. She was going out to dinner and she and Charles were going to the *Bushnell*³¹⁴ to see *Jane Eyre*. She asked me to come to supper Saturday night - so I guess that's where I'll be Saturday night.

I was speaking to your mom tonight. It has been several weeks since I've been at the house, so in order to make sure I come this Sunday, she invited me for dinner. It really isn't that I need an invitation to visit Mom and Dad. In fact I like to go there, but I just haven't had much time lately.

Darling, I've been trying so hard to be brave and not wear my heart on my sleeve - so to speak. but golly, honey, I hope I'm not being a sissy when I tell you that I miss you so very much. I must confess that all I think about lately is how wonderful everything will be



³¹³ A movie theatre in Hartford, Connecticut

³¹⁴ Bushnell Memorial Hall presents live theatre and music, as well as feature films.

when you are home again as my darling husband. I find myself looking at linens, and dishes, and silverware, and furniture: things that never interested me before. It is perhaps just dreaming... when I look at all these things but I know that God will make these dreams come true in the very near future. So darling, until that happy day, with all my heart I love you.

5Goodnight, darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
4-21-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 23, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and a Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated April 20 1944 by the Control Section.



Somewhere in England³¹⁵, unstated

Friday
[January 28, 1944]

My darling wife -

Evidently my days of sleeping late are to be but fond memories; today I was rudely awakened at six-thirty and told to be at briefing at eight. Therefore, I had my first breakfast at this base and then went down to the line for a practice mission. Chris³¹⁶ was 'checked out' today and we flew as a crew for the first time since leaving Alex[andria]. When we got out to the *ship*, I found the squadron navigator waiting for me - instead of going along just for the ride I, too, was to be checked out on the type of navigation used here. We took part in a big formation with Chris doing very well - I think I did also but no word was forthcoming from the navigator; however, I did not get lost and, over here, that is quite an accomplishment. We flew about three hours and I hate to say this, for the first time since flying in a B-17, I felt a bit woozy. I blame it on the fact that my stomach is a bit unsettled and also because it's been so long since last I flew. This afternoon was spent at school so you can see that there was no time for the 'sack' today.

Expected mail today, but was sadly disappointed - not a one. That is the sad state of affairs that the postal system is in here in the E.T.O. (By the way, in case you are a bit puzzled, E.T.O. means European Theatre of Operations.)

By the way Butch, you've never mentioned, in any of the letters I've received from you, whether or not you ever got the stuff I sent you from Grand Island³¹⁷. Let me know in your next letter if it came; in case it didn't I'll write to G.I. and have it traced, for there was some valuable equipment, including that box of gum in it for you. Also let me know if you've received your first allotment check yet.

³¹⁵ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

³¹⁶ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

³¹⁷ The Grand Island Army Air Field was located in Grand Island, Nebraska. It was the final stop for many airmen, including Lenny, before going overseas for combat in the European Theater against the Germans.

I tried to cable you yesterday, but what I had to say would have been so decided against it. The one thing I wanted you to get in a hurry was my change of address but they won't let it go by cable - why I don't know.

Last night's lengthy letter, plus the lack of anything exciting today leaves me with nothing more to write about, my sweet.

(Chris just went to the bar to buy a couple of *Cokes* - not the real McCoy - and when he went to pay for them found that he had no money - so Lenny had to pay.)

It's getting towards the end of the letter and not once have I told you that I loved you - but not because I forgot or because I didn't want to - it was merely so that I could say that for the end, like some people [save] the best part of their dessert. I do love you so very very much my darling and miss you more than ever. Please take care of yourself for me-

Goodnight my darling-

I love you
Lenny

Friday night
January 28, 1944

Darling ~

I just finished polishing my nails. I couldn't do my right hand, so Sadie³¹⁸ did it for me. Halfway through the job, she got very silly and so did I, so I can't brag about how nice my right hand looks right now. I have to do it over again when I finish writing this letter.

I received three letters today, but none from you. I received a letter from my cousin in Denver. It was a very nice letter. She invited us to visit them someday as her guests. Oh, darling someday let's take a trip there - it's one place I always wanted to visit.

I also received a letter from my cousin Evelyn in Newark. Her boyfriend is in England now. She's taking a Nurse's Aide course to help pass the time away. If... I didn't have to work three nights a week, I'd love to enroll in a class.

Eleanor finally got around to answering my letter. It was just like Eleanor. I laughed from the start to the finish. She is in Tampa FL and I guess Sam has about one more month before he will be on his way. She's not too keen about his crew. She still would like to have me go someplace with her. I honestly don't care to go any place now darling. If I can't be with you, I'm happiest being with my family. I guess I finally learned that home isn't just the place where you hang your hat.

Your cousin Buster gave me a ride to work today. He asked about you and sent his best wishes.

Sweetheart, is there anything you want that I can send you? I know there are so many things you can't get, and if it is at all possible for me to get it - please tell me.

Hon, how are the boys in the crew? is Chris³¹⁹ having any more trouble with his ears? I hope not. How about you darling? How do you feel? Did you lose any weight? I imagine you did - but that doesn't matter as long as you are feeling well.

Sweetheart, nothing more to say... I want to tell you before I say goodnight - That I love you with all my heart and miss you. Take good care of yourself darling. goodnight hon-

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

³¹⁸ Sadie Geetter is Sylvia's oldest sister.

³¹⁹ Augustine (Chris) Cristani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Somewhere in England³²⁰, unstated

Saturday
[January 29, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Once again Saturday has rolled around and everybody is preparing for the night's 'big doings.' Some of the boys are at the shower room, others are shining shoes, while others are just resting up. I've already done my preparation - what little I had to do, and after mailing this will stop in for my weekly sample of Scotch and Sodas.

Your letter of the 12th came today: while it was full of questions I'm afraid that most of them have been answered in previous letters. My request for a package should have reached you by now, you know of the countless handkerchiefs I bought [and] also socks and underwear - as for the fluid - that is the only part of the lighter that I *can* buy, so you see that things are still working out for us. I'm still awaiting the chocolate although the situation here is a bit better - my biggest need now is stationery - if I don't find some soon I'm going to have to ration my letters.

Sweetheart, you write that you were sick from over-tiredness, while the girls at the office think it is due to pregnancy - one is as bad as the other; if your present job is proving too much please, give it up. I'm sure that there are easier jobs to be had.

Haven't done any flying lately and we are all becoming a little bored with things. The only thing for us to do here is go to Ground School and even that is called off when the boys go out on a mission, so you can see that most of the time we do nothing but hang around killing the day. Today for instance, I slept until almost noon and then ... a good part of the afternoon - taking my weekly shower - I can't afford to take them more often because I don't have the necessary changes of underwear - the laundry situation being what it is. If you think of it, send me some handkerchiefs and underwear - I can always use them.

³²⁰ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

Darling in your letter you wrote 'We Geeters are a sentimental clan, but there's a good reason why we are.' What, my Butch, is that good reason?

The boys are getting ready to leave now - I guess I'll tag along. You can be sure my darling that each sip of each drink will bring back memories of the times we went out and we drank - you and your Scotch and Ginger Ale - me and my Scotch and Soda, at the Old Mill, Club Ferdinando and all the other places. Someday soon my sweet we'll relive those days, but with a fuller appreciation of what they mean to us. We'll know then of our great and wonderful love for each other, and what it means to be separated from the one we love so dearly. I do love you so very very much my darling. As they may have said it in the days of Caesar *Ego sui te amo* -

I love you
Lenny

Saturday night
January 29, 1944

Darling ~

Today when I came home from work, I had no plans made as to how to spend the afternoon. While I was eating my dinner I thought that I'd take Betty³²¹ and Lorraine³²² to the movies to see Margaret O'Brien, the child star, in *Lost Angel*. But when I called them, I found that they both had colds, so that was out. and then, when Sadie³²³ came home, she told me she wanted to look for a dress, so I suggested I go with her. So, all afternoon we went from one place to another looking for a dress, but there was nothing really nice. So Sadie went home and I went to Tootsie's house for supper - that was the invitation she extended the earlier part of the week. I haven't had bacon in such a long time and I like it - so it was a good supper.



She was glad I gave her a cookbook for her birthday. I gave her one just like the one Mrs. Rodeilait had. Now... that Charlie can eat everything again, she can use the cookbook to full advantage. Speaking of Charlie, he doesn't want people to know that he doesn't have to be on a special dish anymore, because it might get around [to] the draft board - and then they might not believe he has ulcers.

Little Robbie is as cute as he can be. He still doesn't talk - Just one word at a time and most of it is in a language of his own. He calls me Wa-Wa, That's a new one to my collection. I fed him his supper and darling my maternal instinct was awakened. I just couldn't help but think how happy I'll be when I'll be feeding a son of ours.

Charlie went back to the store after supper and Toots and I talked as usual about everything and yet nothing in particular. She wants me to come over again next Saturday - I didn't want to promise I'd come - but I think I will [go] there again Saturday.

Tomorrow, I am going to your mom's house for dinner. I would have slept there tonight as long as I was at Tootsies but two reasons kept me from doing so. First, I have to help clean the house on Sunday mornings - and I don't enjoy sleeping with Margie. She has a

³²¹ Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman is Sylvia's niece

³²² Lorraine Geetter is also Sylvia's niece

³²³ Sadie Geetter is Sylvia's oldest sister

terrible habit of groaning in her sleep and the last time I slept there - I was awake all night and I had to go to work the next morning and I thought I'd never last through the day.

Do you recall in my letter, I think the one I wrote last night, that I went to the movies with Florence Greenberg³²⁴? She's been acting very unhappy lately and on the way home from the *Lenox*³²⁵ she told me something that surprised me. Darling, this is a secret, so I'm trusting you to keep it. She told me she isn't happy at all and it all revolves around the fact that she hasn't had a child. I was always under the impression that it was she that couldn't have the baby, but instead she told me that there is something wrong with Lou, and he refuses to go to a doctor and see if something can be done. Isn't that a shame darling? I feel very sorry for Florence because she wants a child of her own so much³²⁶. I do hope that something happens and things will work themselves out.

Everybody asks me about you but there's not much I can tell them, not hearing from you lately. I imagine you must be on the move now and it may be a while longer before I hear from you again. I hope that you are well, darling and are getting my mail regularly now. Don't worry about us at home as we are all well. I must admit we do miss your letters.

It is time to say goodnight now darling. I'll be thinking of you, darling And loving you with all my heart.

Goodnight darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

³²⁴ Florence Greenberg Gold

³²⁵ A movie theatre in Hartford, Connecticut

³²⁶ Florence Greenberg Gold had three sons

Monday night
January 30, 1944

Darling ~

The dinner that was made today was delicious. The way Mom and Dad felt about how long it had been since I had visited last - like years instead of a few weeks.

Margie is the same - there are so many things she says and does that I can't understand., I have just given up. I guess it would be wise not to say any more because you've convinced me that I have faults too.

Your Mom and Dad went to your Aunt Ann³²⁷'s house for the afternoon, Mr and Mrs Goralnick went too. It seems that they have been getting together these past Sunday afternoons and have a card party. Mom told me that Dad slept until a quarter to twelve this morning. That doesn't sound like Dad does it, darling? I was up at six-thirty - can you imagine getting up that early on Sunday morning at home? I had a good reason. I began to menstruate and I always feel better if I exercise - so at six-thirty I was cleaning the kitchen.

Ann, Claire, Bubie Levy and Pauline



Rosalyn came over to Mom's in the afternoon. and Margie's girlfriends, Helen and Pearl were there too. It seems as though they both bought furs for their suits. Pearl had hers and they were very pretty. we played the records, yes the same ones that we had when you were home. Pearl and I jitterbugged - and hon, not being a jitterbug, I was dead tired after a few numbers. Later on, Pearl, Roz and I went to the *Strand* and we saw *Desert Song* - which was awful. We had to separate as the show was crowded, as usual. I sat between two couples and how I certainly missed you. Both couples were holding hands and every so often they'd whisper those little things - I guess I paid more attention to them than I did to the picture. Somebody asked me at work yesterday if I am getting used to going out without you - that's

³²⁷ Ann is one of Bubie Levy's sisters

one thing I'll never get used to - I always feel like part of me is missing, no matter where I go. I love you so much sweetheart - so very much.

I am not going to work at 8:15 as usual tomorrow. I am taking a few hours off to go to the bank and get things straightened out.

Sweetheart, I want to ask so many questions but honestly I don't know what you can tell me. I want you to tell me as much about yourself in your letters as possible and if you can ever send me any pictures of yourself please do. and hon, the other night I put the newspaper you sent me in our scrapbook³²⁸. It was a tough job "but I *dood* it."

Sweetheart, tomorrow is Monday and a long day of work so I better get to bed. As usual I'm wide awake now, but when that alarm goes off in the morning, it won't be the same feeling. So angel, I'll say good night - and once more I love you darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

³²⁸ Sylvia's scrapbook of Lenny's mailed souvenirs has been lost.

Somewhere in England³²⁹, unstated

Monday
[January 31, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Days without any mail from you, but I'll try to make this a long and interesting one to make up for yesterday, when I failed to write.

Saturday night was a flop - the red 'alert' was on and consequently the boys kept themselves in reserve, there were very few drunks and the whole fiasco broke up early, Chris³³⁰ and I were in the barracks by 11:00. Most of my time was spent at the roulette table where, through Chris's advice, I made a few pounds.

We slept late, took things easy all day and at night went to the large hangar where there was a big party going on. Yesterday was the first anniversary of the 388th Bomb Group and our CO³³¹, in conjunction with the Special Services made a huge success of the evening. They had all the beer that could possibly be consumed by even this thirsty bunch, there were free cigarettes... for everyone and then there was entertainment, both professional and by the boys of the post. The imported talent included, naturally, a striptease act, and you can well imagine the disturbance she created in front of those hundreds of hungry GIs and officers. Included also, was a well known British songstress who sang an all-requests program of American songs. The band played several numbers, the newly formed Glee club sang, medals were given out for outstanding service to the group, the CO made a short speech and as a finale the striptease led a Conga line that had the 'Wolves' standing on their hind legs with their tongues hanging out. From there we went to the snack bar for a bit of food and then called it a day.

This morning I was up bright and early - seven-thirty - had breakfast (delicious pancakes) and then decided to do myself a good deed. Believe it or not my darling, I washed out fifteen handkerchiefs and four pairs of socks. It was a case of do it or go without. After hanging out my wash I took my watch (the expensive one) to the watchmaker - I broke the crystal in Grand Island³³².

³²⁹ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

³³⁰ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

³³¹ Commanding Officer

³³² The Grand Island Army Air Field was located in Grand Island, Nebraska. It was the final stop for many airmen, including Lenny, before going overseas for combat in the European Theater against the Germans.

Walking out of the building I saw a familiar face and on looking twice recognized a fraternity brother of mine, Ivan Finkel³³³ by name. He is a radio operator in the 562nd Squadron and has nine missions to his credit.



[We had a] good long talk about the whereabouts of all the boys and then I went to the finance office to draw my pay. By then it was time for Chow, so off we went.

Ground School took up most of the afternoon and the rest of the time was spent in drawing more equipment (yes more), and straightening out my locker. Tonight, [with] the boys being flush, there was quite a bit of gambling going on. Rock³³⁴, as usual, went broke and Chris and I decided to back him to the tune of five pounds apiece. Our money brought him luck and he left the game well over \$200 ahead! That accounts for the past forty-eight hours my darling. You can judge for yourself what a hard life I'm leading.

Butch darling, I'm really worried about you - and your job - please don't work too hard and overtire yourself. If you are rundown but are afraid to leave for lack of money, let me know and I'll send you an extra allotment - money has no value here and I can easily spare some if you need it.

As yet your package has not come, but the next few days should see it along with some more of your letters.

That, I'm afraid, is all the news and views of the day.

As usual, the best is saved for the end, and the best is when I tell you that I love you so very much my sweetheart. I'm getting so that I dream of you [at] night which means that I'm thinking of you continuously one-thousand, four hundred and forty minutes a day. I do love you, and like you, my Butch.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
Lenny

³³³ Tech.-Sgt. Ivan N. Finkle, son of Louis Finkel, graduated from Weaver High School with Lenny and was flying in the "Blitzing Betsy."

³³⁴ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.



Monday night
[January 31]³³⁵, 1944

Darling ~

I feel as though I accomplished something today. I went to the bank...and I made myself the *power of attorney* of your account. I also bought two bonds - a \$100 bond and a \$25 bond. From now on I'm going to use my allotment money for war bonds. I manage to get by on my salary, so I don't have to touch this money, and I'm glad I don't need it now, because it will come in very handy in the future.

You should see what your *smaht* wife did tonight. I covered a box I had with some wallpaper I had, and it is a very pretty box to keep your letters in. In case you don't know this, I have all your letters filed according to the date you wrote them... I read your letters over and over - in fact every night before I go to sleep I take another one out and read it - and then just before I fall asleep I think about everything you wrote in that letter. It may sound silly to you, but perhaps you understand.

Just think, today is February 1. that future we dreamt so much about together is getting closer and it won't be long before everything comes true. I just know everything is going to work out fine, and we are going to have so much happiness someday. You just wait and see, and hon, everything is going to be for the best - like it has always worked out... for us. (Of course, my fingers are crossed on the last remark - just for good luck!)

It seems, colds are getting everybody. My mom has a terrible cold, and all she does is sneeze continuously. So many girls didn't come to work today because of colds. My boss gets so mad when one of us stays out because the work piles up so fast.

Don't forget to mention anything you may want or need, that I can send you, darling.

As yet Frannie has not answered my last letter, and I am very anxious to hear from her.

There's not much more to write now, darling. So, once again, it's goodnight, darling and -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

³³⁵ Dated February 1, 1944 in error.

Somewhere in England³³⁶, unstated

Tuesday
[Feb 1, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Just a few lines tonight to let you know that I'm still well but not too happy; there was still no mail from you and I am beginning to think that somewhere along the route they are neglecting to forward my mail. Surely by now they all have my forwarding address so there can be no other excuse.

Today, like all the preceding days, has been one of comparative leisure. We were up by 9:30, grabbed a bite at the snack-bar and then went to a class in Communications. First there was a written test, in which I did fairly well, and then my old bugaboo, [Morse] code, reared its ugly head (to coin a new phrase.) Not having taken any in so long I was very slow at it and required a bit of help from my radio operator.³³⁷ With our combined efforts I managed to squeeze through. In the afternoon we had another hour of the same subject and then I was free for the rest of the day.

In place of Monopoly we three have become *Gin Rummy* and *Fan-Tan*³³⁸ addicts. By 'we three' I naturally exclude the co-pilot³³⁹ who is just as eccentric as ever. I just can't figure the fellow out. He keeps to himself all day long and never has a civil word for anyone. God only knows what we ever did to deserve a character like that. He is just the opposite of 'Red' or 'Copy' - who was one swell fellow. Getting back to the card game, because I was winning most of the time, Chris³⁴⁰ and Rock³⁴¹ ganged up on me and really took me for a ride.

We are still non operational and getting more tired of it as the days go by. What is holding us back nobody seems to know, but that's the way it is.

³³⁶ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

³³⁷ William Burtle Mayne was the Radio Operator in Lenny's crew.

³³⁸ Fan-Tan, or fantan, is a gambling game long played in China. It is a game of pure chance. The game is played by placing two handfuls of small objects on a board and guessing the remaining count when divided by four. After players have cast bets on values of 1 through 4, the dealer or croupier repeatedly removes four objects from the board until only one, two, three or four beans remain, determining the winner.

³³⁹ Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington is the Co-pilot of Lenny's crew.

³⁴⁰ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

³⁴¹ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

From doing nothing I'm very tired and so I think I'll cut this short and go to bed.

Until tomorrow then, my darling, again I want to say that I love you very very much. I also like you very very much 'Shoo Shoo.'

Goodnight my darling

I love you
Lenny



Tuesday night
February 1, 1944

Darling ~

Yesterday I was ahead of myself - I was under the impression that it was already February 1 - see what love does to me. The Fourth War Bond Drive ought to go over real big this year when you hear who is helping to sell them - Betty May³⁴². I came home from work tonight to hear she's been calling everybody about buying war bonds. She even called your mom. It is for the school drive and hon, it's a riot to hear how she asks you to buy a bond. She really doesn't know what it's all about. She couldn't ask me about it today because by the time I got home from work tonight, she was in bed. However, I will have to buy one [from] her - after all, she gets such a thrill out of it.

Which reminds me, she wouldn't come here Sunday afternoon because I wasn't going to be home. It's not because she doesn't like Sadie and Mom as much as me, but when I'm home, she has somebody to talk to, and I usually end up playing with her.

She told me she wrote you a letter and when I asked her what she wrote her reply was "Do you tell me what you write in your letters?" That ended that.

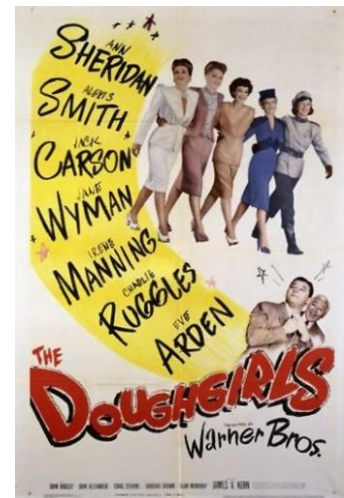
Golly, is it cold tonight? Oh how I would love having you here and snuggling up to you tonight.

A girl in my office was married a week ago and she just came back today. Her husband was discharged from the Army. Well, she is getting the usual rubbing. She made me laugh today when she told me that I will have to learn all over again, while she'll be experienced...

I almost had my two tickets for the [movie] *Doughgirls* thrown out. I was looking for them... and I found them in the wastebasket. Don't ask me how they got there, but they were there.

The office is having a party Thursday night for two of the fellows that are leaving for the Army. The old timer I was dancing with at the Christmas party tried to convince me I should go, but he didn't win.

I saw an awfully cute dog as I was going to work today. It reminded me of your promise to get me a dog someday - I always wanted a dog; and yet, I'd rather wait until I had a baby and have the dog grow up with the child. Don't you agree with me, darling?



³⁴² Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman is the daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

We had good news at the office today. I think we are only going to have to work two nights a week overtime instead of three - that will be on Monday and Tuesday nights. I'm really very happy about it because I find it hard to get anything done at night when I get home so late.

Mom told me that you mentioned in your last letter to her that you bought a new coat. Is it a short one? I know you wanted to get one when you were home. Well, now you have an English tailored one. I know it must be very nice and it looks well on you. Wear it well, darling.

I'll say goodnight now darling - and hope to hear from you soon. I love you darling and miss you. Take care of yourself. Goodnight darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



The girl he left behind him!

"I come from fighting stock..."
You should see my father. Fighter's jaw, steady eyes, handsome uniform. I like to look at his picture. Mother looks at it a lot too, at night when she listens to the radio news. My Dad helps make the news.
Nobody's going to push him around, him or his family. He's independent and going to stay that way. So we're buying War Bonds. War Bonds are Family Bonds, promises of happy family futures, Mom says.

We're going to have a house all to ourselves, just us together and no more worrying for anybody.
Mother's right I know, but can't we hurry up a bit? I want my real father back soon. Not just a picture on top of the radio. I want him home, rushing in, grabbing me hard. He'll come quicker if we buy more Bonds. Couldn't you, maybe, buy another Bond right now today, lady? mister?"

Beech-Nut Packing Company, Canajoharie, N. Y.
WAR BONDS ARE FAMILY BONDS

War Bond booths in hotel lobbies are the only places where Bond subscriptions, or sales, are made 24 hours a day. If your bank is closed for the day go to the most convenient hotel for your War Bond purchases.

Get a picture of a future WAR BONDS for home and the world

Wednesday night
February 2, 1944

Darling ~

It's funny how things happen. Ida, she's a girl in my office, hasn't heard from her boyfriend for about as long as I hadn't heard from you, and today she was so excited because she received a letter. She said that maybe when I go home, I'll have a letter from you - and so I did. It is hard to tell you how happy it made me feel to hear from you. It is good to hear that you like your new place and everything is fine. Yes, there will be so much you will be able to tell me and of course we can't forget the children. However, I do wish I could be with you - I know that's just wishful thinking. If it is permitted, can you tell me where you are?

Hon, I have such a surprise tonight. You'll never guess who called and the news I was given. Well, Ann Pratt called and she has a son five weeks old - isn't that wonderful? I had no idea she was pregnant - and I was under the impression that she couldn't bear children. She's still living in the same place. Florence³⁴³ was confused when she told me Pratt moved. She invited me to see the baby Monday night, so I'm going there after work. I'm so excited about it - I think it's just wonderful and I am so happy for her.

Oh yes, speaking about babies, Charlotte Greenberg³⁴⁴ expects to give birth next month. I had no idea she was even pregnant. I just found out about it.

Margie³⁴⁵ visited Ruth Schechter³⁴⁶ today and she says her baby is very cute - it's three months old now. Walt has never seen him but they say it looks just like him. By the way, Walt is in Sicily now.

It warmed up considerably today. It certainly was cold yesterday - brrr - I don't want to think about it. But, on second thought, I'd rather think about being cold than hot - I prefer cold weather.

My check came today and I expected it about the fifteenth - that's when my last check came.

I am giving up cigarettes but somehow I wish I had one right now - if you were here, I'd take one of yours. Darling - that reminds me - do you have enough cigarettes?

³⁴³ Florence (Greenberg) Gold is one of Sylvia's closest friends at the time.

³⁴⁴ Charlotte (Greenberg) Greenberg graduated from Weaver High School in Hartford, with Sylvia. Her younger sister is Florence (Greenberg) Gold.

³⁴⁵ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was living with Lenny's parents in Hartford, Connecticut.

³⁴⁶ Ruth Schechter graduated from Weaver two years after Sylvia.

I am using your statement about Rock³⁴⁷ asking for *latkes*³⁴⁸ as a request and I am going to send you a package this weekend. I wish I could put myself in the package.

I was glad to hear that you received some of my mail. I guess it will take time before you get the rest of it. Did they seem like old news by the time you got them darling?

So, you're calling me "Shoo-Shoo" now - it's become so popular in the office that I answer to it. Oh, and I have another name - "Cookie Puss" - you figure that one out. That's what a girl calls me. Today I met Saul Hoffman³⁴⁹ (he's an old friend) and his wife - and he called me Corky.

I almost forgot that name - but that's the only name he knows me by. Best of all, I like it best when my husband calls me Butch.

Sweetheart, I could just about keep my eyes open during work today, so I'm going to bed now. I'm happy because I heard from you and I hope that there will be another letter tomorrow.

I love you very very much, dear, Goodnight darling -



I love you
Sylvia
XXX

³⁴⁷ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

³⁴⁸ A *latke* is a type of potato pancake or fritter in Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine that is traditionally prepared to celebrate Hanukkah.

³⁴⁹ Saul A. Hoffman and his wife Rosalind Markowitz also graduated in Sylvia's class of 1938 at Weaver High School in Hartford, Connecticut. Lt. Leonard (Lenny) Levy graduated from Weaver in 1936.

Somewhere in England³⁵⁰, unstated

Thursday
[Feb 3, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

So much to tell you last night but I didn't write; for a change, however, I have a legitimate excuse. Seems as though something I ate didn't agree with me and I went to bed early with a bad case of indigestion. I feel better today and if I can remember what it was I had to say, I'll put them in this letter.

Yesterday was a big day as far as mail was concerned. I received two from you, three from Mom, one from Ebner³⁵¹ and two that make me feel ever so good: Valentines, one from Moe and Claire³⁵² and one from Bev and Marilyn³⁵³. Butch you've no idea how swell that made me feel. It does something to a fellow to know that his people back home haven't forgotten him, especially in the case when I've known Moe and Claire for such a short time. At the very first chance I'll write to them - not tonight as it's too late - and try to show my appreciation for their thoughts.

Eb's letter contained just general information concerning his change of address and the addition of a stripe to his uniform. From his letter it appears that he is still the same old Eb - drifting along, and taking things as they come. Mom's mail was a bit outdated and most of her news was old, having read it in your letters. She did say that she had a nice time in New York for which I'm very glad. Both she and Pop have so few good times that it does me good to hear of them going out once in a while.

Your letters, too, contain some good news. You mentioned the fact that you received the first check which takes a load off my mind. At least now I know that it has gone through all the 'red tape' and they will be coming in regularly. So, my darling, you're getting to be a true spaghetti eater! Glad to hear it. Now when I come home we can really go out and have a good steak and spaghetti dinner, or will you cook it for me? You seem to be going to quite a few shows - that's more than I can say. I've been to exactly three shows since

³⁵⁰ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

³⁵¹ Ebner (Eb) Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia and became friends with Lenny after they enlisted.

³⁵² Maurice S. (Moe) Geetter is Sylvia's second oldest brother and his wife is Claire K. Geetter.

³⁵³ Beverly and Marilyn Geetter are Moe and Claire's two daughters who were ten and nine at the time of the writing.

arriving here in the ETO³⁵⁴ The last time being tonight when I saw *King's Row*³⁵⁵. I really enjoyed it very much - so much in fact that I intend to get the book and read it.

This was another easy day - up at 11:00, in time for lunch, then off to school for a few hours and then free for the day. Still 'sweating out' becoming operational and consequently we do very little flying. Our day will come soon and then you'll be reading about us - still haven't decided on a name for the *ship* if and when we get it, but you can be sure that it will be a good one.

I've started a new saying here on the base - instead of saying *TS*, so often, it's now 'Hard Luck' - everybody is saying it -

I am writing this without reference to your letters so if there were any questions they'll have to wait until tomorrow. Still no sign of your package but I understand that they take a little longer to get here.

Sweetheart, by the time you get this letter Valentine's Day will no doubt have passed. I've tried everywhere to buy one - anything - but all to know avail. There just aren't any to be had. This letter, therefore, will have to substitute for it, so Happy Valentine's Day my darling - I do love you very much.

Nothing more that I can think of Butch, so I guess this is about all for tonight. Good night my darling and when you go to bed tonight do so with the knowledge that your husband loves you, misses you, and likes you very very much. Kiss yourself goodnight for me and, as I do for you, pray that it won't be much longer before we can ... do it for ourselves.

Goodnight my darling

I love you
Lenny



³⁵⁴ European Theatre of Operations

³⁵⁵ *Kings Row* is a 1942 film starring Ann Sheridan, Robert Cummings, Ronald Reagan and Betty Field that tells a story of young people growing up in a small American town at the turn of the twentieth century. The picture was directed by Sam Wood. The film was adapted by Casey Robinson from a best-selling 1940 novel of the same name by Henry Bellamann. The musical score was composed by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and the cinematographer was James Wong Howe.

Somewhere in England³⁵⁶, unstated

Friday
[Feb 4, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Really nothing to write about tonight but I'll make an attempt at a letter. I'm really ashamed to make the above statement, for all I've done today is write letters, one to Moe and Claire³⁵⁷, one to Ebner³⁵⁸, and one to [my] folks. Surely if I can find what to write to them, there must be something to say to the most wonderful person in the world - you.



Went to another movie tonight - saw *The Man in the Iron Mask*. It seems that the few pictures I do see here are really good ones. You no doubt saw this one too, did you enjoy it Butch? One thing I miss while watching a picture now is holding your hand. And to think that once you became angry at me for neglecting to do that very thing. Oh my darling, some things are going to be so different when I come home - no more will I be the forgetful husband - I've learned what it means to show love for somebody, especially when that somebody is you.

Among my latest accomplishments is the drinking of black coffee. Just a short while ago, I stepped into the Snack Bar for a cup of coffee, rather than wait for the attendant to bring us some fresh cream (or rather condensed milk.) I decided to drink it black. To my surprise, it was good - in fact it was the best tasting cup of coffee in the E.T.O.³⁵⁹ for me.

³⁵⁶ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

³⁵⁷ Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

³⁵⁸ Ebner (Eb) Glooskin graduated from Weaver High School with Sylvia and became friends with Lenny after they enlisted.

³⁵⁹ European Theatre of Operations

Life is still of the easy variety for me although I had to get up early for a class today. It lasted all of half an hour and the rest of the day was mine to do with as I please, namely go crazy for lack of something better. We've gotten to the stage where we're even playing double solitaire. I think we'd even be grateful for a Monopoly set!

It's beginning to look like Chris³⁶⁰ is going to have a recurrence of his ear trouble. He complains of difficulty in chewing and swallowing due to a pain in the Eustachian tube. Both Rock³⁶¹ and I are trying to get him to go to the Flight Surgeon but he refuses, saying he can take care of it himself. The last time he said that he wound up in the hospital. Don't in any of your letters mention this to Francis³⁶². Speaking of Rock, he and the Co-pilot³⁶³ had it out 'hot and heavy' the other day and Rock flatly refuses to fly with him. It's been brought to the attention of our Group Commander and it looks as if we'll get a new Copilot. Everyone on the base knows of our eccentric crew member and he is the laughing stock of the post. He speaks without thinking, making ridiculous statements, and has no friends; in fact lives in a world of his own .

There is an 'alert' tonight which means that I may be awakened early tomorrow to go on a mission so I'd better close soon and get some sleep.

So, my darling, once again at the end of my letter I want to say that I love you, that I'll always love you – [and] when I come home I'll prove it. And, 'Shoo-Shoo,' besides loving you very much, I like you. I'll not try to say how much I miss you because I just can't - would it ... suffice just to say that I do miss you?

Goodnight my sweetheart

I love you
Lenny

By the way Butch, [my] Mom writes that Lenny Karathen is here in England. Do you think you can get in touch with Helen and find out his address?

Love
L.

³⁶⁰ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

³⁶¹ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

³⁶² The wife of Lt. Chris Christiani

³⁶³ Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington was the Co-Pilot in Lenny's crew.

This letter is continued in another letter.

Friday night
February 4, 1944

Darling ~

Right now there is a package I am mailing to you tomorrow, resting on the kitchen scale. There is so much I wanted to put in that package but it is surprising how quickly a package can weigh 5 pounds - that's the maximum weight. I put in some chocolate bars, nuts, a box of assorted chocolates and a few other things I thought you would like. Did you get my other package? It had chocolate in it and in your letter today, you told me how much you crave it, so it set me to wondering... whether you got it, yet. I hope so darling.

Today was really a banner day for me - I received four letters from you. They weren't recent letters - all were written before the seventeenth of January, but it was wonderful to get them. I've read them over and over again, and I know before I put them away, they will be read several more times.

Hon... I meant to explain to you about something I put in my last package. Please don't think I'm silly for doing so - but I put in a large cake of soap. When you wrote in one of your letters about how pitiful it is to see the people walk around as though they haven't had a soap bath in years - it bothered me. I wanted you to give it to somebody and, hon, if you can't eat all the candy, give some to the children you see. Mom told me that you buy gum in the PX to give to the children when you go into town - darling, that was very nice to do, and I love you for it.

I'm going to send you some stationery darling, so don't worry about not having any paper. Giving stationery is a [selfish] gift - you get it back in the end. *smabt* huh, hon!

I just washed my hair but I miss the shampoos you used to give me. Speaking of hair... do you know that we switched *parts*? Let me explain. you part hair on the side, and now, and you used to part it in the middle. Now I part my hair in the middle and it used to be on the side.

Tootsie called me a short while ago and she wants me to come over tomorrow night for supper. I think I will go. Tomorrow afternoon I intend to take Lorraine³⁶⁴ and Betty Mae³⁶⁵ to the movies, that's providing the weather will be nice.

³⁶⁴ Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

³⁶⁵ -Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman is the daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

Last night, the office had the party I mentioned for two of the fellows leaving for the Army. This morning everybody has big heads and nasty dispositions. It seems that a good time was had by all.

Darling, you asked me to tell you all about why Margie³⁶⁶ is living with [your] Mom and how the folks feel about it. Hon, this is something just for the two of us to know so please don't ever let on to Mom that I told this to you. When Margie came home pregnant - her parents were furious and from what Margie says they made it unbearable - nagging and telling her that she *made her bed*.

Margie was here one Saturday night - when she went home, she had a big argument with her folks, and the next day she called Mom and told her. Mom told her to pack and come to live with her. No, Mom didn't want Margie to come and live with her, if it could be helped. She felt it was Margie's parents' [responsibility] to keep her and take care of her... Well the Naidorf³⁶⁷ and Mom had a fight and now they are not on speaking terms.

In fact, Margie never calls her mother and one day she was downtown [Hartford,] she passed her mother, and her mother didn't even look at her. Hon, I don't mean to be a *Doubting Thomas* - all I know about this big quarrel in Margie's house, is what Margie told me. I have a feeling there is more to it than we know... but no parents tell their child to leave and disown them for the reasons Margie gave. I've spoken with Mrs. Naidorf - she's a nice person and she's had a hard life...

Margie bought a new coat and two dresses that were form fitting, when she [is] pregnant and she won't be able to wear them very long. Her mother took the dresses back, when Margie didn't know about it - and I think that started something. I don't blame her for wanting to buy clothes, everyone likes [new] clothes, but Norm³⁶⁸ isn't making very much now, and whatever money they have in the bank will be needed soon for doctors, hospital bills, and the *what-not* that comes with having a baby... Perhaps her mother argued with her about not being wealthy - or even well off - she [Mrs Naidorf] can't buy the things Margie is going to need.

Mom will have nothing to do with Mrs Naidorf... As much as I feel sorry for Mom, I can't side with her, so I don't say anything. Mom never got the story from *them* and as I say there are three sides to every story - the Naidorf's story, Margie's story and the right story. There must be something to it because I don't believe Margie's parents would have this attitude. As for [your] Mom and Dad, well Mom took Margie in because there was nothing else she could do. She wasn't happy about it - I can assure you. However, this Sunday, she

³⁶⁶ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was living with Lenny's parents in Hartford, Connecticut.

³⁶⁷ Irving and Etta (Weisman) Naidorf also lived in Hartford

³⁶⁸ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

told me they are getting used to the idea and don't mind anymore. I hope all this works out all right - but you wanted the story and that's it.

Darling, I think my lucky stars that we were careful - it just is very selfish to have a baby now because it puts the responsibility on those that just shouldn't bear it. I admit I'd love to have a baby but not now, not without you to be with me. I wouldn't want anyone else to take care of me. It's a very complicated case as far as Margie is concerned. I feel sorry for everybody – Margie, Norm, Mom, Dad and the Naidorf's. It's something that just shouldn't have been... they say, *time* takes all matters in hand, so I guess everything will work its way out. Mom and Dad have life in the house now and Margie is happy because Dad and Mom are very good to her. So hon, I guess everything will be all right.

I can't write more because six sheets is the limit for airmail letters. So, sweetheart, I'll send this letter, but start in on another letter - nothing like two letters in one night -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Sarah (Bubie) Levy, Arthur Levy and Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy
108 Colebrook St. Hartford, Conn. (front step)

Friday night
February 4, 1944

Darling ~

This continues my other letter -

Well, now you know the whole truth about Margie³⁶⁹. I know [your] Mom won't be pleased if she knows I told you all this, so darling, just don't let on that you know.

There isn't much else right now that I can think of that has happened. I guess I told you everything in the first part of this letter. So, I'll say goodnight now darling, and I'll be dreaming of you I know. Goodnight, sweetheart - and with all my heart - I love you. Until tomorrow then -

Goodnight -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Sylvia Margie ?

Saturday night
February 5, 1944

Darling ~

³⁶⁹ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and at the time of this letter was pregnant with twins.

Do you like this stationery? I hope so, because I am sending you four boxes of it and five packages of envelopes. It is supposed to be a fine grade of stationery, and I can say... that it *is* easy to write on. I hope that your stationery holds out until you get this. I'm making sure that you have enough... so that you can never use the excuse [of] not having any paper. *Smahtt* – huh, hon?

When I came home for dinner, Betty May³⁷⁰ was here to keep me to my promise of taking her to the movies. I had quite a time making her agree to the fact that we were going to see just the one picture, *Lost Angel* and not sit through the co-feature. From what everybody told me about the co-feature, it was a very morbid picture and definitely not for children. Well, we went and I got such a kick out of her. There was another little girl sitting in back of her, but she was like that little boy when we went to the Don in Alexandria, [Louisiana] – remember? Betty tried to be patient, and she suddenly turned around and said to the girl, who was older than her - “Some children just don't know how to behave in the movies...” I had all I could do to keep from laughing. There were a few sad parts in the picture and not understanding emotions,... she looked at me and said her throat hurts terribly. I was sorry Lorraine³⁷¹ couldn't go - because I believe she would have enjoyed it very much.

It was funny when I was on the bus with her. Everybody looked at her and then me... [and] thought she was my child. So, if you hear any stories of your wife having a daughter you'll know it was just your niece.

After I took her home I went to Tootsies. I had bacon and eggs and - this may not tempt you - baked beans. Phyllis came over too, so we had a nice time just talking. Charlie came home later on, and he had us laughing - he can be funny when he wants to be. He told me to tell you to be “Wrong Way Corrigan³⁷²” and navigate your plane *home* sometime. He thinks it would be very simple. The baby is adorable and as healthy looking as he can be. He is talking more now and Tootsie feels so proud of him. Charlie took us home and it is now almost one o'clock. It's rare for me to be up this late.

It is very windy outdoors now and I guess it will rain tomorrow.

Sweetheart I'm wondering - just what are you doing right now. I often wonder if there is such a thing as mental telepathy - perhaps you know I am thinking of you. Oh darling, I love you so much. I think so much about the time when you will be home again.

³⁷⁰ Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman is the daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

³⁷¹ Lorraine Geetter is the daughter of Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. and Gladys M. Geetter.

³⁷² Douglas "Wrong Way" Corrigan was an American aviator known for his unauthorized transatlantic flight from New York to Ireland in 1938, which he claimed was due to a navigational error. His adventure captured public imagination and earned him the nickname "Wrong Way" Corrigan.

There will be so much that can be said but I bet I'll be so happy, there just won't be a word I can say. Until then sweetheart, I'll be happy just loving you as I do - so goodnight darling and take care of yourself.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Somewhere in England³⁷³, unstated

Sunday
[Feb 6, 1944]

³⁷³ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

Dearest Wife,

According to the clipping you enclosed in the letter I received today my promotion went through, now if only my orders reach me it will be official. I feel sure that by now that is the case, but not having the papers to prove it, I must still call myself 'Flight Officer' [instead of Lieutenant.] The feeling of disappointment I experienced when first learning of the title has worn off, and then again there is that extra money I get while overseas.

I've just had something that I'd almost forgotten existed - a bath in a real old fashioned bath-tub. Through the *grapevine* Rock³⁷⁴ and I heard of one at the hospital, so after supper we took a walk over and sure enough, there it was. I got in and just soaked for what seemed hours.

We are doing plenty of flying lately, but just over England. Chris³⁷⁵ is going through the process of being checked out in formation flying³⁷⁶, and until it is completed we'll not go on any real missions. However I have a feeling that the next time our group goes out, we'll be right in there - I hope!

Last night's dance was quite an affair. What the celebration was I have no idea, but besides the usual girls there was a stage show that was very good. Among the acts was the fellow who... was Jimmy Cagney's [stunt] double and the camp favorite: the Mexican fellow that I wrote about before. Each time I see him he gets better.

In between the aforementioned bath and now, I went to the show and saw *This is the Army*³⁷⁷.

³⁷⁴ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

³⁷⁵ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

³⁷⁶ This is a big step for a Pilot – and all ten in Lenny's crew. Flying in formation requires manually keeping the plane in its assigned position and distance from the other B-17G's in the 561st Squadron.

³⁷⁷ *This Is the Army* is a 1943 American wartime musical comedy film directed by Michael Curtiz, designed to boost morale during World War II. It features a story about soldiers putting on a show, with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, and stars Ronald Reagan among others.



As you can see I go to very few shows, but those I do get to see are good ones. Along with the picture was a USO³⁷⁸ show with a MC that had the place roaring. He, Al Bernie³⁷⁹, by name, had a million gags and he kept firing them off one after another - and some were on the raw side. The cracks he made about the officers didn't make us feel too good either. All in all though, it was a pleasant evening with the best part of it taking place now when I sit down and talk to you on paper. Honestly my darling, it is this part of the day that makes being away from you bearable.

Very little else to say, my sweetheart, about today's doings.

I do love you very very much my darling and like you too -

Goodnight sweetheart

I love you

Lenny

³⁷⁸ **USO** (United Service Organization) is a nonprofit organization that provides programs, services, and entertainment to the people and families of the U.S. military.

³⁷⁹ Alfred Bernard Price, 1920-2003 was a gifted impressionist, who started out as a regular on Rudy Vallee's radio show. He toured with the USO for two years before resuming a notable television career.

February 6, 1944

To My Uncle Lenny,

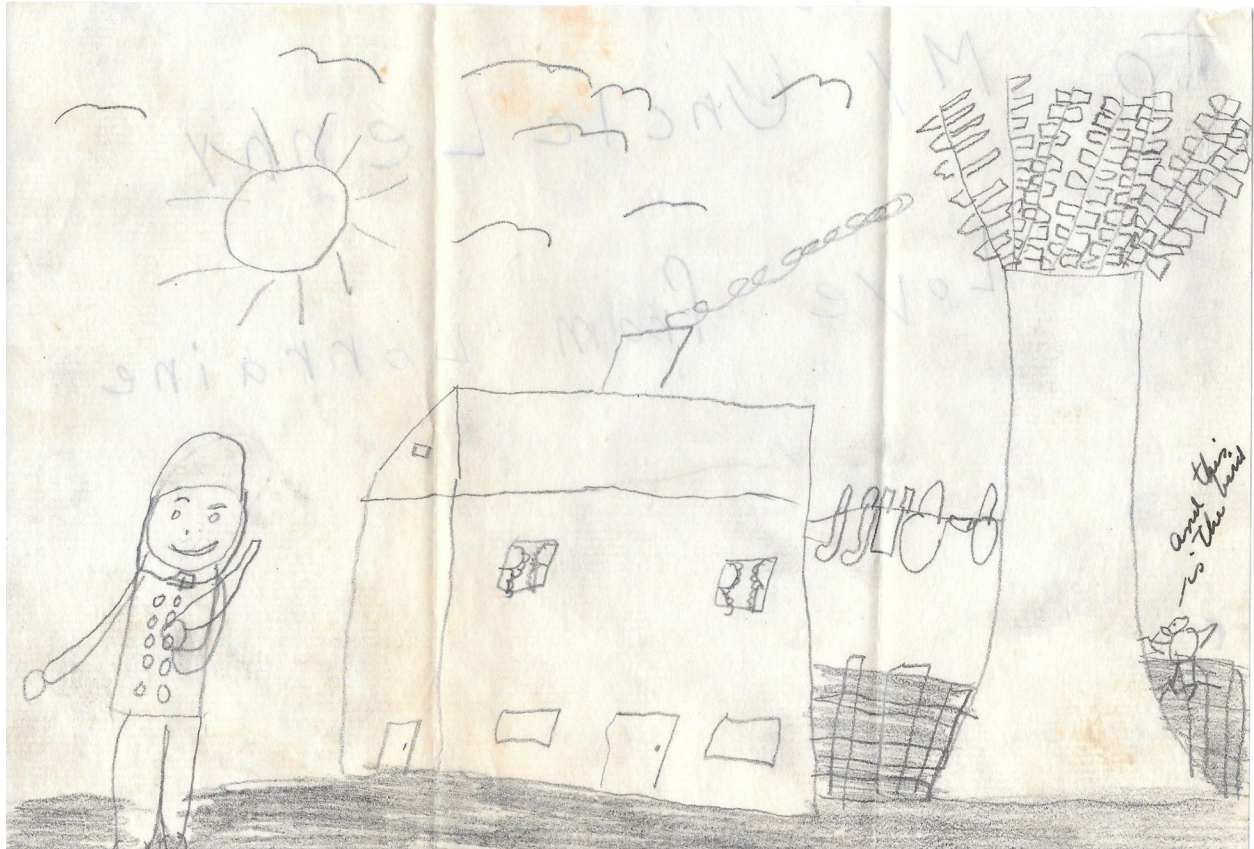
Love from Betty May Weidman



February 6, 1944

To My Uncle Lenny,

Love from Lorraine³⁸⁰



To My Uncle Lenny
Love from Lorraine

³⁸⁰ Lorraine Geetter is the oldest child of Belamin G. and Gladys M. Geetter. She was seven at the time.

Sunday -
February 6, 1944

Darling ~

Right now Lorraine³⁸¹ and Betty³⁸² are sitting here at the kitchen table with me making pictures to send to you. They are so intent on what they are drawing - It's cute to watch them. Lorraine is biting her bottom lip. The man next to the house is supposed to be a soldier holding a gun. It is more like a picture of surrealism.

Nate,³⁸³ Ben³⁸⁴, and Lou³⁸⁵ are playing cards in Mom's room³⁸⁶. It's very quiet in there right now - every so often, they laugh so loud the house shakes.

Right now Betty and Lorraine are getting into a quarrel as to who is copying. Lorraine just made a bird, so Betty has to do her one better - so she's going to make a bird house.

I've been very industrious today thanks to Sadie³⁸⁷. I kid her about the reason why she can't sleep nights³⁸⁸ is because she thinks of what she can have me do when Sunday comes around. This week she had me wash the windows - so hon, I won't have to rely on not having a profession - I can always wash windows. Ouch - my arm aches.

Darling, I'm thinking about taking out a \$1000 endorsement policy. I have no [Life] insurance and I thought it could be wise if I had some. What do you think about it, darling? I wish I could talk to you about it, but this letter will have to do... my premium will be about 40-something a year - I was thinking about taking it out under the Prudential.

Rosalind called me earlier this afternoon - She wants me to go to the movies with her tonight. I'll go. She's a very nice girl, hon, and I like her very much. We get along very well at work³⁸⁹, and you know how much that means. We certainly have some characters in my office, and someday I'll have you in stitches telling you about them.

³⁸¹ Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and a son, Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

³⁸² Elizabeth (Betty May) Weidman

³⁸³ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter

³⁸⁴ Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter

³⁸⁵ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth Weidman and Holly Weidman, who were six and one at the time this was written.

³⁸⁶ Adelle Stolper Geetter was 64 at the time and living at 148 Magnolia Ave. in Hartford, Connecticut. Hayman Geetter had died in 1940 and Adelle (Sylvia's mother) was having a series of health concerns of her own. She would die in 1946.

³⁸⁷ Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and her Mom's primary caregiver.

³⁸⁸ Sylvia and Sadie shared a bedroom with one bed in the home at 148 Magnolia Ave.

I spoke to [Bubie Levy] today and she's made up a very nice package to send to you. Rock³⁹⁰ and you will have a treat - she's sending a salami.



(?) Sadie Sarah W. Levy Adele S. Geetter
Two Bubies (1944)

I'm afraid that in the future I won't be going to [your] mom's house as often as I have in the past. My job keeps me so busy during the week that I don't have as much time to visit as I wish I did. Mom understands, but you can be assured that I'll visit as often as I can.

Everybody has left and the house looks like a cyclone hit it. That's the way it always looks when the family gets together. However, I enjoy having them come over - it brings so much life into the house. However, Mom says I make enough noise. I guess I do that.

Issie was here last night with Babe³⁹¹. He's been coming in quite regularly over the weekends - which is very nice. He says he wrote to you about a month ago. Did you get his letter? I bet that when you tried to read his handwriting, it was like working out a jigsaw puzzle. I always had trouble reading his letters. They all look like a prescription to me.

³⁸⁹ Sylvia and Roz worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

³⁹⁰ Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

³⁹¹ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

It's time to eat supper now, if I want to go to the movies with Roz. I know we will have to stand before we get in, and I'm not looking forward to that.

It's goodnight for today and again - let me tell you I love you darling. I must admit that no matter where I go, I miss you terribly and wish you could be with me. Well, that someday may be sooner than we expect - and then, darling, we'll have wonderful times together – like we used to. So sweetheart, goodnight for now.

Regards to Rock and Chris³⁹² - and of course, all of my love to you.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

³⁹² Augustine (Chris) Cristani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

Monday night
February 7, 1944

Darling ~

Do you remember in one of my previous letters I told you about having my girlfriends over for a reunion? It was just two weeks ago. Well, Sylvia Ronner Zimmerman was one of the girls - Sammy Zimmerman's wife - he was a big name in Weaver [High School] at one time for football.

Well, Ronnie³⁹³ has been married three years and they have a little girl who will be two years old this April. She was pregnant when she was here and hon, I wish you could have seen her. She expected her baby any day and she ran up the two flights of stairs.

Well, last night Sonny Rosen³⁹⁴ and Florence took her to the hospital as she began to have her labor pains and she was fine. She gave birth to a boy - just what she and Jimmy wanted - and she didn't live through it. She died of a hemorrhage two hours after birth. Naturally, you can understand what a tragedy that is - she was so healthy nobody expected anything like this to happen.

Her mother is like my mom - on in years and not well - her sister has three children of her own - in fact one is just an infant and Jimmy's parents are divorced. He was brought up in an orphanage and his father married a Gentile³⁹⁵ woman. So, I don't know what will happen to the children - it's so pathetic. I went to the funeral this afternoon and hon, I'm still crying.

I knew her very well. When we were kids we played together - she lived across the street from me³⁹⁶ - we were in the same club - I went to her wedding, and she helped make my shower. It was the saddest thing I have ever seen - she was only 22 and such a lively, full-of-the-devil girl.

I hope that it's true about there being a heaven... it's good to believe she's happy in heaven. As for the children and Jimmy - I hope that everything works its way out for them.

³⁹³ Sylvia Ronner Zimmerman (1920-43) was Sylvia's best friend.

³⁹⁴ Harold L. "Sonny" Rosen is a Weaver graduate who married Sylvia's friend Florence, and lives in Hartford with their two children

³⁹⁵ *Gentile* is a word that today usually means someone who is not Jewish. Other groups that claim Israelite heritage, notably Mormons, have used the term gentile to describe outsiders.

³⁹⁶ She lived across the street on Elmer St. where the Geetters had a 6 room flat from 1929 until they moved to 148 Magnolia Street sometime in the 1930s.

I was hoping for a letter today but I guess the mailman forgot me. Well there's always tomorrow...

Last night I saw *Flesh and Fantasy* and hon, I was on the edge of my seat, all the way through it. And when I looked about - everybody was in the same position.

Florence was just in and she was telling me to tell you that I'm still the same imp. Don't believe her, hon.

Well darling, I'm afraid that's about all the news for today. However this may be a bit old now - but I mean more now than I ever did - I love you - and I love you more as each day goes by.

So it's goodnight for now, sweetheart, but you'll be in my heart until I write you again tomorrow.

Goodnight darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Tuesday night
February 8, 1944

Darling ~

There were two letters from you today, and they were recent letters - the ones you wrote to me and January 25 and January 23. Since you haven't been writing "Somewhere in England" on the top of your letter, I was under the impression you were in another country since you moved. Not until your letter today did I realize you were still in England. I guess that sounds funny to you, but that was just the impression I was under and I just couldn't imagine where you were...

It makes me much happier knowing you have different forms of entertainment in your leisure hours. The Officers Club must be lovely, and the show given by the GIs must have been very funny. I'm sending out the stationery tomorrow - I finally got it all packed. I think you will have enough to last a long time - in fact I hope you will need very little of it. By that time I mean - you'll be home a long time before you can use it up.

I just came home from Ronnie³⁹⁷'s mother's house. I went with Tootsie and Charles and Phyllis. We all dreaded going in knowing what a tragedy this has been. However, after a few minutes the tension let up a little and we talked about everything but really nothing in particular - just talk. I know her family well, as we were neighbors for a good many years. It's such an awful thing I can't think of it, without choking up.

Darling, you mentioned a boy you met there who you knew on Adams St. [Your] Mom told me you wrote his name to her - Ben Berman. Is his name Bennett Berman? I was just wondering whether he is the same fellow I know.

There is a girl who sits at the desk in front of me at work³⁹⁸ and she certainly is a character. She's married and has a daughter who is three years old. However, she has a boyfriend, a lawyer, who is married, and they go out together. She told me he was waiting for her after work (we worked late tonight) and they were going out. I asked her how her husband doesn't find out about her affairs and if he did, what would happen. She laughed and said he doesn't know about it, and if he found out he'd kill her. I asked if he goes out with other women and she said he doesn't, because he's home every evening right after work. She feels sorry for me - I don't know why - and wants to "fix me up" some time. I think I convinced her that I happen to love my husband very much, even if she can't understand what that means.

³⁹⁷ Sylvia (Ronnie) Zimmerman (1920-43) was Sylvia's best friend. She lived nearby in the North End of Hartford, Connecticut and died after delivering her second child.

³⁹⁸ Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

I didn't do a darn thing during the two hours I worked overtime tonight. I guess the Associated will never get rich by my efforts tonight. I just sat there and pretended to be busy - it was more fun! It will be very nice if you and Rock³⁹⁹ go to London on your first pass. It is fortunate he has relations in London - it will make it so nice for Rock, and of course, it will be nice for you, too.

Time passes quickly when I write to you. I just realized it is after twelve and I should be getting ready to go to bed. So, sweetheart, I'll have to say goodnight now and in closing - I send you all my love darling.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



ON TARGET

Kodak optical systems
for fire control destroy the legend of
"German supremacy" in lens making

For America's bombights—which have shown our enemies the bitter meaning of "high altitude precision bombing"—most of "the optics" are made by Kodak. For our Army and Navy, Kodak also makes 29 of the most complex types of optical systems for fire control—the sighting of guns—including the famous height finder for anti-aircraft.

GERMANY has enjoyed a reputation for world leadership in lens making. But—as so often happens—reputation outlived performance. Well before Pearl Harbor, Kodak optical research was developing lenses superior to any ever made by anybody, anywhere. An outstanding development has been the perfecting for new, finer cameras of a revolutionary new optical glass which gave lenses greater speed—definition . . . or could more than double the "field of view" of a fire control periscope.

This glass was immediately incorporated in instruments for fire control . . .

In this war, fought at great heights and distances, effective fire power—hits, not "tries"—is the result of sighting through a series of lenses . . . an optical system . . . which locates, magnifies, and "ranges on" the target.

Army Ordnance experts now report: "We have examined captured German sights and periscopes and, element for element, we are turning out better material."

The effectiveness of American fire power is making history . . . Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y.

REMEMBER CORREGIDOR? . . . and the last words ever their radio—"Just made broadcast to arrange for surrender . . . everyone is bowing like a baby . . . I knew how a mean fella. Caught in a trap waiting for guys to come along to finish it up." Corregidor is a stern example to us at home. **BUY MORE WAR BONDS.**

Serving human progress through photography

Official Photographs, U.S. Army Air Forces

Here are the bombs . . .

Here is an enemy cruiser "safe" behind her torpedo net . . .

"On Target" . . .

Drifting bubbles . . . but no crew

³⁹⁹ Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier on Lenny's crew.

Somewhere in England⁴⁰⁰, unstated

Wednesday
[Feb 9, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

The ice has broken - at long last, we, as a crew are *operational*; that last word means plenty of work from here on in, as if my letters do not come in regularly it is not because of lack of something to say, or laziness but simply the absolute lack of time. Monday evening we were told, by operations, that we were scheduled to fly the following morning, this meant getting up at three so we went directly to bed. After breakfast and briefing, we went out to the plane and at ~~seven~~ (the time is censored) we took off.



Due to engine trouble we were unable to continue so we turned back and landed. By the time we had cleaned our guns and the ship, we were all so tired that we went directly to sleep, awaking in time to have supper.

Walking into the club we were told that we were due to go up again this morning and that I had to attend a special meeting of Navigators. When the class was over it was time to get some sleep for we were to get up early again. That, I hope, my darling, explains fully the lack of letters.

⁴⁰⁰ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

Yesterday, and today, were big days for me as far as mail is concerned. Yesterday was truly the jackpot - nineteen letters from you and two letters and a valentine from [my] Mom. This afternoon, there were two letters from you and valentines from Betty-May and Holly Suzanne⁴⁰¹. Best of all was the receipt of your package containing the lighter and the case. Thanks a million, my darling, you'll never know [how] handy the lighter is; on opening the package I filled it with fluid and it works like a charm.

Your three large envelopes with all those letters were most welcome, for they cleared up a good many questions in my mind; mainly the one about the package sent out from Grand Island⁴⁰². What happened to the souvenirs will, I guess, remain a mystery. Speaking of mysteries, Butch, who addressed the large envelope? Surely it wasn't you, because my name is misspelled on all three! Sweetheart, one of the letters I got from you today made me feel very good. I'm referring to the one in which you wrote that you're happy at home. You've no idea how often I wondered whether or not you regretted going home instead of to Denver⁴⁰³ as originally planned. Someday my darling, we'll surely take a trek out there.

On rereading the first page I find that I didn't tell you what happened this morning. We got off the ground all right but while flying around we got word over the radio to return to the base So - *two* take offs and *no* mission. I naturally can't tell you where we were to go, so you'll just have to read the papers to find out what part of the world I'm flying over these days. Someday, when I lack something to write about, I'll tell you as much as possible about the briefings we have - they are very interesting.

Right now I want to get off a letter each to [my] Mom, Lou and Faye⁴⁰⁴, and, if time permits, one to Ben. I say 'if time permits because once again we are scheduled to fly in the morning and it is now eight-thirty.

⁴⁰¹ Sylvia's six year old niece Elizabeth (Betty May) Weidman and one-year old niece Holly Suzanne Weidman,

⁴⁰² The Grand Island Army Air Field was under the command of the Second Air Force that was headquartered at Colorado Springs, Colorado. Initially the field was home to the heavy bombers such as the B-17 Flying Fortress and was the final stop for many airmen before going overseas for combat in the European Theater against the Germans. Typically crews would receive their final gear and instructions at Grand Island and many had their last memories of a night out on the town here. Lenny was still waiting for his belongings to arrive in Knettishall.

⁴⁰³ Dora Kaufman invited Sylvia to her home in Denver. Aunt Dora was Adelle Stolper Geetter's oldest sister.

⁴⁰⁴ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman is married to Sylvia's younger sister Fay Geetter Weidman and the parents of Betty-May and Holly.

By the way, in your letter you say that you imagined I'm losing weight. Quite to the contrary I'm getting fat - more so than at Alex⁴⁰⁵. (Those were the days, my darling, without fear I can truthfully say that they were the happiest days of my life.) Yeah, honestly darling I'd give most anything to relive them, and someday we will, only more fully I promise, Sweetheart.

From the above you may gather that I love you my darling. That's true. I do love you very very much and miss you.

Goodnight my darling

I love you

Lenny



⁴⁰⁵ Alexandria Army Air Base in Alexandria, Louisiana

Somewhere in England⁴⁰⁶, unstated

Thursday
[Feb 10, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Thought for a while tonight that I'd have to forgo writing this evening, or more drastic than that resort to the V-mail for lack of stationary, but after a bit of house cleaning in my foot locker I found this⁴⁰⁷.

No mail today, and we didn't go on the raid this morning, so there is very little news to write about. Rather glad I didn't fly - it turned out to be rather a rough party.



In yesterday's letter I promised to tell what goes on at a briefing. Hoping that what I'm about to say passes the censor: we're awakened very early by the orderly, and after dressing we walk to the mess hall for a good breakfast. Trucks take us from there to the briefing room where each man is checked in. When everybody is there the door is locked and the briefing officer takes the floor. In the background is a large map covered by a screen; without a word the screen is rolled up and everybody moans and groans because on the map is the *course* for the day's mission. The officer then explains why the target is to be bombed, [and] just how much it means to the Axis⁴⁰⁸. When he is there, we are briefed on the weather and the fighter escort⁴⁰⁹ we can expect. At this point the Navigator and Bombardier go to ... separate briefings: I, to draw the necessary maps and also to get information pertinent only to navigation. I'm left busy

⁴⁰⁶ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

⁴⁰⁷ The letter is written on stationary from Alexandria Army Air Base Alexandria LA

⁴⁰⁸ The Axis powers, originally called the Rome–Berlin Axis and also Rome–Berlin–Tokyo Axis, was the military coalition which initiated World War II and fought against the Allies. Its principal members were Nazi Germany, Kingdom of Italy and the Empire of Japan. The Axis were united in their far-right positions and general opposition to the Allies, but otherwise lacked comparable coordination and ideological cohesion.

until it is almost time for takeoff, so by the time I get out to the *ship*, the crew is all ready, just waiting for me. That is just about all I can say, hope I've made it sound half as interesting as it really is.

Completely forgot in last night's letter to compliment you on the 'doodles' enclosed in one of your letters. They were really very good, my darling, and depict certain highlights in our life to 'T.' It looks like I'll never live down that now infamous remark, made in jest, of that morning. These drawings, along with other pieces... confirmed the opinion I made long ago. If you were to earnestly take up painting I really believe that you are capable of turning out something worthwhile. Why, my sweet, don't you get an oil set, you've always wanted one, and, who knows , someday one of your works will hang in a place of honor in our home - try it anyway Butch?

Looks as if your husband is not as 'smaht' as he thought. Today he was completely fooled. Not having anything to do, I decided to go to the show - this afternoon - the picture billed was *The Girl in Overalls*. It was new to me until the first flicker, then I recognized it as one I had seen back in the States, but still the name wasn't an unfamiliar one. Halfway through the picture I remembered - I had seen it under the name *Swing Shift Maisie*!

I guess that does it for tonight my darling - I do love you , my sweet and I want you to always remember that.



Goodnight Butch -

I love you

Lenny

⁴⁰⁹ Fighter jets were not based at Knettishall. P51s of the 354th Fighter Group based at Boxted England and/or P38s of the 20th Fighter Group (King's Cliff England) escorted B-17G Bombers of the 388th Bomb Group at Knettishall to provide navigational support and armed protection to the bomb group.

Thursday morning
February 10, 1944

Darling ~

I didn't write last night as I decided I'd wait until this morning. It won't matter because you will get it at the same time, so there shouldn't be a lapse between letters.

It's only 8:10 now and I feel so darn sleepy - I can just about imagine how I'll feel about 3:00 this afternoon. I didn't get to bed until after 1:00 last night. I went to Mrs. Ronner's again and Jimmy⁴¹⁰ didn't want us to go home. He asked us to have coffee with him, and as he hasn't been eating, we decided to stay and [thought] it might do him some good. He was in a little better spirits and I don't think he was quite as shocked about things... He's realizing just what happened. As yet, I don't know what will happen to the children - I know he doesn't want to put them in a home - he's especially attached to Elaine... the little girl who will be two years old in April. I called all the girls who used to be in the same club a few years ago and we made a collection for prayer books in her name at the Emmanuel [Synagogue] and we all are going to services Friday night.

I'm writing the rest of this after lunch. As I expected, I didn't accomplish much work this morning but surprisingly enough, I don't feel tired. You asked me for Nate's address. It's 641 Albany Ave. [Hartford, Connecticut.]

Last night your cousin Charlotte Levy Wice and her friends were all at Mrs. Ronner's house. Let's see Sid Eichelman and his wife Mitzi Cone were there, too. I haven't seen them since I was in Weaver [High School.] Telling some jokes and there was one joke I just couldn't get - and I finally got it... five minutes later. They told me I better go to England too, if it takes me so long to get... a joke.

It's beautiful outdoors today, and I believe that accounts for my not doing much work today. I keep thinking of all the things I'd rather be doing.

You still have to go to school - well I guess no matter how much you have already learned, there is plenty more yet to come.

There is a girl sitting at a desk two rows in front of me writing to her boyfriend. She has his picture on her desk and she keeps looking at it so lovingly. He's overseas, too - in fact, he's been there for quite some time now.

I expect the bell to ring soon - just like school - and so I better start ending this letter. There - it just rang... I just noticed that my boss is reading a *Sports Stories Magazine*. It reminds me that you enjoy reading those stories. Everybody is getting back to work - except

⁴¹⁰ Samuel (Jimmy) Zimmerman was married to Sylvia (Ronnie) Ronner Zimmerman (1920-43) who was Sylvia Geetter's best friend. She died in childbirth three days ago.

me. Sweetheart, I'll end my letter now and... remember that I love you with all my heart and I wish I could seal this with a real live kiss.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Thursday nite
February 10, 1944

Darling ~

Seeing [as] I wrote this afternoon, there isn't much more that has happened... However, this afternoon, the best in me came out. A girl in the office had some candy on her desk, and she turned around to talk to two girls sitting behind her. Nobody but these two girls sit [near] her. Well, I walked over and took the candy away. When she turned around to take a piece of the candy, she had the funniest expression on her face. She looked all over her desk... and, for about an hour, she asked everybody if they saw her candy. She turned around again, and I put it back in the same spot. She still doesn't know who did it.

I just washed my hair and it's dripping down my back - call me a *drip*. Margie⁴¹¹ had a bad cold this week because she visited Frances Goralnick⁴¹² - I mean Mosesson - this past Saturday and she washed her hair there. Larry⁴¹³ ran outside - the door leads right outdoors and because of the draft - she certainly had a cold.

I wanted to go to Mrs Ronner's house tonight but I am afraid if I did, I'd fall asleep at work tomorrow. So, I'll go to bed early tonight. I am going to Faye's house Saturday night, so that Faye and Lou⁴¹⁴ can visit Ethel - that's Ronnie⁴¹⁵'s older sister. Rosalyn and Ida are going to keep me company. I'm going to [your] mom's Sunday afternoon. It's been a few weeks since I've been there. Income taxes have to be filed next month. I'm leaving my returns up to Sadie⁴¹⁶ - she figured mine out last year - so you can see that's a job well rid of - of course, paying it will be left to me.

I better set my hair now because it is beginning to dry - and the hot water in the bathtub is beginning to cool. I wonder if Lou wanted to take a bath tonight - it would be too bad if he did - I used all the water. I'll say good night now - and with all my heart ---

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

⁴¹¹ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

⁴¹² The Goralnick family was a neighbor of Lenny's parents and also a friend of Sylvia's parents.

⁴¹³ Lawrence Mosesson was the eldest son of Frances Goralnick

⁴¹⁴ Sylvia's youngest sister Faye and her husband Lou Weidman

⁴¹⁵ Samuel (Zimmy) Zimmerman was married to Sylvia (Ronnie) Ronner Zimmerman (1920-43) who was Sylvia Geetter's best friend. She died in childbirth three days ago.

⁴¹⁶ Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter

Somewhere in England⁴¹⁷, unstated

Friday
[Feb 11, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Have you ever seen a bunch of fellows act like a flock of vultures? That was my experience today and, I hate to admit this, I took part in the scavenging. Yesterday three fellows from my barracks were lost in a raid⁴¹⁸ and today everybody grabbed the articles they had their eyes on. First of all Chris⁴¹⁹, Rock⁴²⁰ and I took over the three beds, giving us an entire end of the barracks. Two of the fellows owned bicycles, so now Rock and I ride them! A shameful way to act, but that is life in the Air Corps.

Still living the good life, no combat missions but plenty of local flying. Every time there is a free *ship* they send us up for practice. The only one that really gets the practice though is Chris as we stay close to the base, and fly in formation, which gives me no chance to do any real navigating. I am, however, learning the neighboring terrain and that should help when coming back from a raid.



Felt very good to read that the family likes me and... inquire once in a while about my well-being. By now you should know that I've written to most everybody; the only ones left out are Nate⁴²¹ and Is⁴²². Nate because I still don't have his new address, and Is

⁴¹⁷ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

⁴¹⁸ This was during yesterday's mission, which Lenny's crew failed to take part in and he said turned out to be rather a rough party

⁴¹⁹ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁴²⁰ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

⁴²¹ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan (Nate) Geetter.

⁴²² Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Is) S. Geetter.

because you once mentioned that he would write to me from his new station. I suppose, however, that I should write to Babe⁴²³ Esther and the kids - if time permits tonight, I'll do so.

Butch, it looks like I'll have to ask you to get me a new toilet kit. It doesn't look as if I'll get to London soon, and besides I doubt if I'll be able to get anything worthwhile here. So, if you will send me something similar to the one I have - nothing expensive please darling. I've been asking for quite a few things lately and I know that you don't have the money so I'll make a deal with you. This month I expect to [receive] three months back pay for flying, and... as I have no use for it here, I'll send it home to you. It should amount to well over two hundred dollars - spend as much as you want on yourself for anything that catches your eye - the remainder you can put away for that time when I come home - okay sweet?

Received a nice letter from Norm⁴²⁴ today that cleared up a couple of questions, namely what was wrong with him and where he is going. Mom, no doubt, is happy over the fact that he has been declared unfit for overseas duty, it's a good break for him especially in view of his present predicament⁴²⁵ and that is what it is.

Neither he nor [my] Mom mentioned the fact that Margie is living with Mom and Pop, but I'm afraid that I committed a *faux-pas* when I wrote to Margie in care of the folks. If the matter is not cleared up by now you'll do both of us a favor if you would casually mention that the reason I did so was because I had forgotten her home address. Please?

I'd better get some sleep if I'm to be in any shape to fly tomorrow, so with all my love I'll say good night my darling.

I love you

Lenny

⁴²³ Rebekah (Babe) M. Geetter is married to Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Is) S. Geetter.

⁴²⁴ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

⁴²⁵ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy was Norman's wife and pregnant for the first time.



Pvt. N. Norman Levy - 1944
Lenny's brother

Friday night
February 11, 1944

Darling ~

It has been snowing all day - the first real snowfall I have seen this winter... which has been very mild in comparison to last year. But, it being the month of February... it might be just as bad as... last year.

We aren't going to the Emmanuel [Synagogue] tonight as I told you we intended to do. Mrs Ronner wanted to go tonight but it is snowing so hard it would be very hard for her to walk from Green St. She doesn't ride on Friday⁴²⁶. So one of the girls called the rabbi and explained everything, so he will read her name before Kadish next week.

Right now we are waiting for Dr Kaschmann. My mother isn't feeling too well again. It's the first time she is having him because her doctor, Dr. Rosenbaum, is in the Navy. You know Dr Rosenbaum don't you?

I hope the weather will be nicer tomorrow as we intend to go to the Bushnell⁴²⁷ in the afternoon. We are going to see *Doughgirls*. From what I have heard it is very good, so I am looking forward to it. Your mail must be held up somewhere, as we haven't heard from you since Monday. I know you are writing regularly as you said you would, but I wonder what is causing the delay in the letters coming here.

I have to address my valentines to the nieces and nephews today. Sadie⁴²⁸ bought some for me, and hon, I don't know where she got them. They are cute in an odd sort of a way, if you know what I mean.

I keep teasing her about what she's planned all week to have me do this Sunday morning. Sadie just told me now that I better make out my income tax, but I'm trying to convince her that she's had more experience at bookkeeping than I, and she'd better do it - I don't know who will win yet.

[Your] Mom told me that it has been taking time for Norm⁴²⁹'s letter to arrive - so they haven't been getting any mail either. Margie⁴³⁰'s cold is better now. I hope I don't get any more colds this winter - I've had two and that's record breaking for me.

⁴²⁶ Honoring the Jewish Sabbath, which begins on Friday evening and concludes on Saturday evenings

⁴²⁷ Bushnell Memorial Hall in downtown Hartford, Connecticut is a live music and theatre venue as well as a movie theatre.

⁴²⁸ Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter

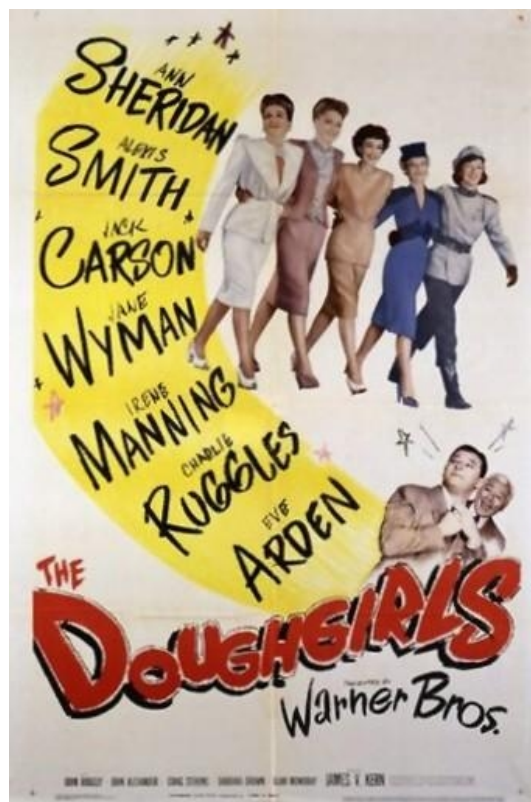
⁴²⁹ Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy has recently been posted to an Army base in the US after being classified unfit for overseas duty. This classification also precludes him from joining his older brother in the Air Corps.

⁴³⁰ Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy.

How have you been darling? You haven't caught any colds lately have you? Are you having trouble with your stomach? I hope not.

Sweetheart, tomorrow when I write again, I'll tell you how I enjoyed the show. There is no more to write tonight. I do miss you darling more than I can ever say and I love you more than words can express. Take good care of yourself darling -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Somewhere in England⁴³¹, unstated

Saturday
[Feb 12, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Today has more than made up for all the time we've spent hanging around doing nothing. First thing this morning we were awakened and told there was but ten minutes before we were due for a briefing. We jumped out of bed, rushed to the Mess Hall and then to the briefing. When we got there we found out that it was to be only a practice flight. Some Inspector General was to give us the once over, After a slight delay we got off the ground, pulled into the formation and then flew all over England.



We landed around three, and then we got the jolt of the day: our squadron CO got a brainstorm - he devised a new type of formation and wanted twelve crews to go up and try it out. Needless to say, we were one of the crews - we were all very hungry and tired and became angry. After an hour of talking I finally convinced Chris⁴³² that it was foolish for us to fly, and besides, the fellow that was to be our co-pilot⁴³³ never did show up. Off we went to the mess hall

⁴³¹ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

⁴³² Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁴³³ Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington is the Co-Pilot of Lenny's crew

where we convinced them that we were hungry and finally got something to eat. Back to the barracks we went where I got about two hours of sack time.

Now, after having washed, I'm writing to you before going to the club. Chris and I have promised each other that we would get drunk, we were both so angry this afternoon.

This is not only Saturday, but it is also the 12th my darling. It is exactly eight months since the memorable event took place Butch - an event that, had it not happened, I would have regretted it for the remainder of my life. As you have so often said, and written, it is both good and bad, that this is not our 18th month anniversary. Good because it gave you time to realize something... and bad because we could have had so much more time to ourselves had we taken the step when we first contemplated it.

The little time that we did spend together, my darling was the happiest part of my life. I'll never forget you as a blushing (?) bride - nor your meals, cooked under protest that you did not know how. There was our first home⁴³⁴ and then Alex where you bought your first cooking utensils! Golly darling - there are so many pleasant memories connected with our lives that it should be impossible for me to ever get really blue. Some day soon, we'll be able to sit by the fire and talk, and laugh, about all that happened. Of course we'll be busy with our new life, but there'll always be time for a pleasant memory.

It's pouring out now, so instead of leaving for the club right now, I'll do a bit of fixing up first and try to make my corner more livable.

Last sheet of paper, so whether I want to or not it's time to end. Goodnight my darling, and on this special night more love than usual (if that's possible.)

Goodnight Butch -
I love you
Lenny

⁴³⁴ In Monroe, Louisiana, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Levy lived in their first home, a rented room in a private house.

Somewhere in England⁴³⁵, unstated

Monday
[Feb 14, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

Today is Valentine's Day, so to the sweetest, and best, Valentine a fellow ever had, all the love in my heart. I do love you so very much my darling.

Sunday, yesterday, was the most mixed up day I've ever had. To begin, I must go back to Saturday night. When Chris⁴³⁶ and I finally got to the club, the sign was *green* meaning that there was no flight scheduled for the following morning. On seeing this we started to have a good time. First we played the roulette wheel until we had each made four pounds; then we started to drink, and kept it up until almost 12:00 when Rock⁴³⁷ convinced us that we should go to bed. We did so and it seemed that no sooner had I closed my eyes than Chris was waking me, saying we had just five minutes to get to the briefing room, there was a mission.



I was too busy rushing to become excited over the fact that this was to be my first Combat Mission. After much delay, we got out to our plane, took off and, for a while, everything went off fine. We got into formation all right and

⁴³⁵ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

⁴³⁶ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁴³⁷ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

Chris was doing a good job. Just as we got to the English coast, and on our way, one of our engines went bad and we had to turn back! Three attempts and no missions. For one long second during our flight back I thought I had given Chris the wrong heading, and that we were over enemy territories, and then, lo and behold, a familiar landmark and we split the field.

After landing we had something to eat and then went to the club; when we looked in at the bar, the sign was red. Being late we went to the barracks to sleep, for red means a mission in the morning. Sometime during the night, it was canceled and they never did wake us. So instead of flying and giving Hitler hell, I went to school and got a little more learning.

This evening, after a delicious steak dinner, with real ketchup and plenty of raw onion, it's calmer. We went to the show and saw *Mr Smith Goes to Washington*. It's been so long since I saw that, [and] having forgotten some parts, I enjoyed it. From there we went to the club where I lost 10 shillings (about two dollars) playing FanTan⁴³⁸, and decided that was enough. That takes care of the past forty-eight hours and explains, I hope, why there was no letter yesterday.

Butch sweet, now that we are *operational* there will be many a day, sometimes two and three in a row, when it will be physically impossible for me to write. You do understand, don't you my darling, about me telling you this, so that you won't worry. No mail from you in three days. I hope tomorrow brings me a goodly number. By the way my darling in your last letter you mentioned a cold coming on. Hope by now it is gone and that you are feeling well. As for myself, I'm feeling great and really putting on the weight.

Time to get to bed - so to the sweetest girl and best wife a fellow ever had - I love you, I do so very much my darling and miss you and like you.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

⁴³⁸ Fan-Tan, or fantan, is a gambling game long played in China. It is a game of pure chance. The game is played by placing two handfuls of small objects on a board and guessing the remaining count when divided by four. After players have cast bets on values of 1 through 4, the dealer or croupier repeatedly removes four objects from the board until only one, two, three or four beans remain, determining the winner

Monday night
February 14, 1944

Darling ~

You will have to forgive me for not writing last night. My Mom hasn't been well, and I just couldn't write... I know you will understand. I didn't go to work today so that I could take care of her. It's easier for me to stay out of work than it is for Sadie⁴³⁹. Well, we had Dr. Kaschmann again this morning. He wants to take X-rays of her stomach. She has been losing... a good deal of weight and I think he suspects she has the same thing my dad died from⁴⁴⁰. I'm afraid my Mom suspects [this as well] - and she's afraid to take the X-rays. Truthfully - I don't blame her - oh God - I just hope it's *not* so.

In your letter today you were... wondering whether we received your package from Grand Island⁴⁴¹ which you stated contained valuable equipment and a box of gum. most likely you never received my letter in which I told you that we received it - so darling don't worry about it. I am wondering whether you ever received three letters from me which contain six letters each. These letters were the ones I had saved, when you first left, waiting for your address. Did you get them, dear?

About that practice mission - don't feel bad about that woozy feeling you got - you haven't been flying in quite some time and having your stomach upset... well you don't need to fly to feel woozy, anything could make you feel like that. I hope your stomach settled and you are back to normal again. I am sure you must have done well on that mission because if you didn't - you know you would have been told about it. And, darling, if you did everything you were taught and didn't get lost... I'm sure that's good.

I visited [your] folks yesterday afternoon. Margie⁴⁴² was in bed, as she let something bother her last week, which in her condition made her nervous. I guess you want to know what it is, and I hope I can tell it correctly. It seems that Norm⁴⁴³ met Lou Fierberg in a town near his camp one weekend and they went out for a steak dinner and had a good time. Well, [Norm] wrote to Margie and told her he had a steak dinner with Lou and they sat around 'chewing the fat' *all evening* before he went back to camp. Well, Helen called Margie last week, as she had just received a letter from Lou in which he told her about seeing Norm, and he

⁴³⁹ Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter

⁴⁴⁰ Hayman Geetter died of cancer in 1940

⁴⁴¹ The Grand Island Army Air Field was located in Grand Island, Nebraska. Initially the field was home to the heavy bombers such as the B-17 Flying Fortress and was the final stop for many airmen before going overseas for combat in the European Theater against the Germans.

⁴⁴² Margie Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy and is pregnant for the first time.

⁴⁴³ Lenny's younger brother N. Norman Levy had recently enlisted in the Army.

told her they went to a *dance* and had a heck of a good time. Well being such a true friend, she had to tell this to Margie, which made Margie very unhappy to think Norman lied to her. A few days later Helen called again about another letter she received from Lou and although what he said wasn't incriminating... it could imply a good deal if read a certain way - it was one of those double meaning statements. Well Margie got mad and wrote a letter to Norm - telling him... she wasn't the least bit pleased about his not telling her the truth. This letter was written five days ago and she hasn't written to him since. Of course this is a personal matter... but it doesn't do her any good in her present condition. She feels better today - in fact she was very happy tonight as she received a Valentine from Norm and it had a lovely handkerchief in it.

Again I have to ask you to keep secrets - the ones I refer to now pertain to my Mom and the episode of Margie's. I know you will do this for me. Darling, Claire (your sister in law) is making up a package to send to you. I don't know just what it will be composed of, but I know it will be a delicious package and you will enjoy it.

Today when Dr Kaschmann was here I told him I wanted to gain weight and I was so surprised when he told me I shouldn't because he said my body will always be young looking which will be a true compliment to me when I get older and all of my friends will be trying all sorts of diets to reduce. Now do you wonder why I like him?

Darling - do you know that I don't know the Rock's⁴⁴⁴ name - I mean his full name. Is he the one who wrote "Hya 'Toots" and signed SE⁴⁴⁵ on the back of one of your letters? I got a kick out of it...

Boomey⁴⁴⁶ is home now I hear. From what I can gather, he's home on his last leave as he expects to go overseas soon. I hope it's not true but if it is, I hope that it will be possible for you to perhaps get to see each other. That would be nice wouldn't it hon?

Darling, like you, I like to wait until the end of my letter to tell you how much I love you. I do love you so much sweetheart - and I know it won't be long until we will be together again and go on being happy together.

Take good care of yourself for me darling because

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

⁴⁴⁴ Raymond (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

⁴⁴⁵ The note was from fellow Hartford native and Weaver graduate Sam Ellison.

⁴⁴⁶ Boomey Siegel is a friend of Sylvia's who is also training in the Air Corps.



"Goodbye Guesswork"

Before our fighting men close with the enemy, aerial photographs help point the way—where to shell... to bomb... to land... and advance. This picture is from a series made while bombing the Japs on Wake Island.

As shown in the more detailed illustrations below, made near Buka and Munda Airfields, colors themselves are so important that much photographic reconnaissance is in full color—using Kodacolor Aero Reversal Film, with which these pictures were made.



You're 4 miles up in a Navy plane, shooting straight down through a telephoto lens at an Army bomber as it lays its eggs near Jap-held Buka Airfield, north of Bougainville. Notice the details—even the bombs in the air below the plane's left wing—in this Kodacolor Aero vertical. Official U. S. Navy Photographs

Kodak's new color aerial film answers a lot of military questions

Because of its pioneer research in color photography—research that had produced Kodachrome Film, and had Kodacolor Roll Film well under way—Kodak was "ready to go" when asked by the armed forces, before the war, for a new aerial film

... a full-color aerial film which could be processed in the field

... would have haze-penetrating contrast

... and with speed and sensitivity enough for use in modern military airplanes.

Kodak met these specifications—and more—with Kodacolor Aero Reversal Film. It is entirely new; the fastest color film by far; rapidly processed in the field.

The Kodacolor Aero shots shown here

only suggest its military importance...

Just as earlier research contributed to Kodacolor Aero Reversal, the additional knowledge gained, in turn, helped to perfect Kodacolor Roll Film—for full-color snapshots with ordinary cameras. You may occasionally get a roll—though it's still scarce—and see what these color accomplishments mean to you.

EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

REMEMBER THE U. S. S. NEW ORLEANS?—how, in action off Guadalcanal, the explosion from a Jap torpedo sheared off her whole bow—and with 178 men dead or dying, flames shooting above her foremast, and water 45 feet over her main deck, she was yet kept afloat by the almost superhuman efforts of her officers and crew... saved to fight another day?—A stern example for us at home. BUY MORE WAR BONDS.



The Navy reports that capture of the Munda Airfield was facilitated by information gained from photographs filmed on Kodacolor Aero; and that increasing quantities will be needed as our amphibious operations expand toward Japan. This vertical of white shoals and green islands near Munda Airfield shows how Kodacolor Aero Film penetrates below the surface, "charting" unknown waters preliminary to landing operations.

Officers checking "The Lay of the Land," as shown on Kodacolor Aero Reversal Film. More detailed examination is made over the ground glass of a "light box."



Serving human progress through Photography

Somewhere in England⁴⁴⁷, unstated

Tuesday
[Feb 15, 1944]

Dearest Wife,

This was another red letter day; first, and most important, there were four letters from you and then this afternoon just as I was complaining about not having any clean clothes, my laundry came from the last base I was at. Once again I am well stocked with clean clothing. You don't know what a good feeling that is.

They woke us up and gave us five minutes to get to briefing this morning and when we got there found it was just a practice flight, so up we went and flew over England for the remainder of the morning. I took it fairly easy, relying mostly on the radio, glancing out once in a while to see where we actually were. On our way to dinner, after landing, we stopped for our rations and besides the usual candy and stuff we were each allowed a can of grapefruit juice. One of these nights we'll be able to hold a real party!

Butch darling, the idea of an insurance policy is a very good one. In fact, if it is at all possible, try to make it for more than one thousand [dollars]. That may sound like a lot but think of what it will mean when it is all paid up. Your new friend Ray sounds like a nice person... I'm really glad you found somebody like that at your office, for, as you say, it makes things all the more pleasant. As yet the only package I've received is the one containing the lighter, so I'm eagerly awaiting all the others. I told Rock⁴⁴⁸ about the salami and you should have seen his face and eyes light up. You mentioned the letter from Is⁴⁴⁹ as yet I've failed to receive it...

The Red Sign has just gone up, so it looks like I'm going to be in bed early again. In fact, my darling, I'm going to have to close now in order to make the necessary preparations. Goodnight my darling and to quote you "wherever I go," I think of you and love you very much.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

⁴⁴⁷ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

⁴⁴⁸ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

⁴⁴⁹ Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore S. Geetter.

Tuesday night
February 15, 1944

Darling ~

Today was really the jackpot day - I received five letters from you. Really made me so happy darling. However, I do feel bad because you aren't getting my mail. I don't know just why you are having such trouble in receiving your mail but whatever is causing it I hope has cleared up by now.

It is quite a coincidence that you should mention in one of your letters that you received the clipping in regards to your promotion from Flight Officer to Second Lieutenant. Well if ... you haven't already received your orders that you are now 2nd Lieutenant - let me assure you that you are – and [accept] my most sincere congratulations. If you were home I'd give you the biggest hug and squeeze ever - but darling seeing I can't - at least you know it is what I would like to do. You deserved it a long time ago, but nevertheless you got your gold bars - even if it did take a little longer.

Now I bet you wonder how I know all this and am so certain about it. Last night at about 12:00, the telephone rang - and we were all asleep. I didn't hear the phone ring, but when I heard Sadie say “Mrs Levy is my sister” I woke up. I answered the phone, and it was a telegram from the Adjutant General of Washington DC requesting your address, so they could send your orders of promotion... to you. How do you like that? - Your wife knows more than Washington! No doubt you can understand that such a telegram at that hour of night was quite a shock and I must admit I was in a cold sweat. So hon, that's how I know about it. When they mail me a copy of the telegram I'll send a copy of it to you.

You asked me to send you Lenny Karathan's address. I called Helen tonight and she and I had quite a long conversation. By the way, Lenny's son is a year old today. It seems like he was just born. Time does pass rather quickly doesn't it?

Well here's Lenny's address.

Staff Sergeant Leonard Karathan 31326714
Co: B. 296th Eng. Bn. C
APO 230 c/o P.M.
New York City, NY

Sadie⁴⁵⁰ just called Dr Kaschmann and my Mom is going to the hospital tomorrow – Mt Sinai for X-rays. Hon, If you can, it would be nice if you just wrote her a short letter and as to what you should say - well - just generalize - and just say you hope she is feeling better -

⁴⁵⁰ Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter both lived with their mother at 148 Magnolia St. in Hartford, Connecticut.

I'll leave it to your discretion - it will make her feel happier... and she will think it very nice of you. So please write her a letter.

Darling, please don't worry about my job. it's not as bad as you think it is. If I think it is making me ill, I'll quit. In regards to sending me more money - Well as I said before if you feel that you have extra money - well send it home. There are so many things we are going to need when this is over and hon, if I have a baby, as I want to so badly, when this is over - we'll need the money. Mind now - I mean extra money - I don't want you to deprive yourself of a thing. If you feel that you have money you don't need... then, ... send it home.

I hope that something has been done about your Co-pilot⁴⁵¹. I can't understand just what is wrong with him. I can't help but feel sorry for him - he must be unhappy deep down inside and there must be something wrong with him... I honestly think he just can't help being the way he is. Of course - it does make it very unpleasant for those who have to associate with him so I do hope you get a new co-pilot who can be like "Red."

I'm going to try to find a Monopoly set that will meet shipping requirements for size and send it to you. I'll also get the handkerchieves and underwear. I hope I get what you want - oh the trials and tribulations of a wife!

The party that was held to celebrate the first anniversary of the 388th Bomb Group sounded like a real good time. I'm so happy that you do have some entertainment where you are.

I'll have to ask Ben⁴⁵² if he knows Ivan Finkle⁴⁵³. If he's a fraternity brother of yours he would know him.

I'm sorry to hear that Chris⁴⁵⁴ is being troubled with His ear again. you can trust me to say nothing about it to Franny. I do hope he is better and he won't be troubled with it anymore.

I'm getting to be a real good girl honey - I very rarely use slang. Of course I still say bull shit when I lose my temper at work. The kids laugh so hard when they hear me come out with it suddenly after I can't get a column of figures six feet long to balance. Hon, it can make anybody mad. Truthfully, I expect all the girls in my section to get fired someday. That married girl I told you about who has boyfriends has so many stories to tell us during work and they are so funny - well we don't always keep our minds on our work.

⁴⁵¹ Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington was the Co-Pilot in Lenny's crew.

⁴⁵² Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter

⁴⁵³ Tech.-Sgt. Ivan N. Finkle is a Hartford airman also stationed at Knettishall

⁴⁵⁴ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

You asked me what I meant by saying “We Geetters have our reasons for being sentimental.” Of course, I’m a Levy now but you know what I meant by that statement. It’s just that we didn’t have much affection while we were children. So it means a great deal to us when there is a little sentiment attached to things, than it might to those who have been used to it all of their lives. Have I explained it darling?

So, you have taken to writing to me in Latin now! Well I have a Latin book here, and I’m going to look it up tonight. you’re so *Smaht* hon! - And I love you so much.

I have to do something that’s going to make Lou Weidman⁴⁵⁵ mad - I’m going to fill up the tub and there won’t be anymore hot water. I think I enjoy my bath twice as much for that reason – oh, I’m a mean one!

Sweetheart, I’ll say goodnight to you now with a million “I love you’s” in my heart. Oh yes, I forgot to tell you that Sadie⁴⁵⁶ was very provoked at me the other night because in my sleep I got close to her. so sweetheart if some morning I wake up to find myself on the floor - you’ll know why.

Well sweetheart it’s good night for now - and with all my heart -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



⁴⁵⁵ Lou Weidman is married to Sylvia’s youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman. They are living at 148 Magnolia St. in Hartford, Connecticut with their two young daughters, but trying to find their own rental.

⁴⁵⁶ Sylvia’s oldest sister Sadie Geetter

Somewhere in England⁴⁵⁷, unstated

Wednesday
Feb 16, [1944]

Dearest Wife,

You've certainly made me the envy of the barracks today - seven letters and all from you. You can't imagine the enjoyment I get out of opening them one by one and imagining that, instead of just reading letters, I'm actually sitting, holding your hand, with one arm around you, and talking with you. Judging from the contents, you are not getting my mail as quickly as I get yours; there can only be one cause for the delay and that is that they have to pass through the censor's office. Speaking of censors, I can't tell you in what part of England I'm in - about all you are allowed to know is what squadron and group I'm in and that you know from my address.

Your letters contained news both good and bad, about babies. I was indeed glad to hear that the Pratts are proud parents - convey my best wishes if you haven't already done so. Your news of Zimmy's wife was truly a shock - I know him very well, in fact I grew up with him. As for Florence Greenberg - well I don't know just what to say - I remember you telling me, more than once, how she would love a child of her own and that it was a shame that she wasn't physically able to have one. The biggest surprise was your saying that your maternal instinct was awakened the time you fed Robbie. I clearly recollect your firm statement that you could never stand the thought of bearing a child - how time changes a season's viewpoint. Don't worry Butch - when I get home you'll do your share.

This was another hard day for me - it rained all day so flying was called off, then the ground school schedule was canceled, so all I did was eat, play cards and go to the show. What a life, eh? That last remark reminds me. Rock⁴⁵⁸ got a letter from the 'Knob' - he is in Italy.

Your story about Margie and her troubles and the home front sound just like Margie. I'm sure, just as you are, that there is a great deal more to the story than what she told, but I guess it's none of our business. When I hear things like that it makes me almost happy that I'm not there, because I'd be sure to say something that I'd probably be sorry for later. Keep me posted on the latest happenings.

⁴⁵⁷ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent.

⁴⁵⁸ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

If all goes well, I expect to be in London at the end of this week. We are next on the list to get a three day pass, and that should be a Saturday. If I do get there, you can be sure, Butch, that I'll get some kind of souvenir for our 'crap book' and also to try to have my picture taken. The letter may be impossible as the materials for it are rather scarce over here.

Among the items that are rationed, is this stationery, so if my letter seemed short that is the only reason. This is the last sheet, save one which I am going to write... a note to Mom, so I'll say good night my sweet and remind you again that I do love you very much.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny



Wednesday night
February 16, 1944

Darling ~

This has been a very busy day for me at work. Truthfully, I am glad it was because the day just flew by.

I went to the hospital to see my Mom. She went this afternoon to have X-rays taken... She is so frightened, it's pathetic. The doctor said she'd be there about a week until all X-rays could be taken. She's in the Mount Sinai Hospital and there are two others in the room with her. It makes it a little more pleasant for her because she doesn't have to be alone - she didn't want a private room. Dr. Kaschmann was there and he took me home.

I received the telegram today which I spoke to you about. This is what it says, "Present Address [Of] Your Husband Flight Officer Leonard Levy T-61298 for Notification of Promotion." Adjutant General, Room 436 Munitions Building, Washington DC. If I never received such a telegram I'd never believe it. I can't understand why they don't have your present address.

Tomorrow night Sadie⁴⁵⁹ and I are going to the Bushnell⁴⁶⁰ after we visit Mom. There is going to be a big band show - featuring Captain Glenn Miller⁴⁶¹. We have good seats as Sadie bought two \$500 bonds for her boss and the seating arrangement is according to the valuation of the bonds purchased.

We have had several invitations for supper tomorrow night. Faye⁴⁶², Claire⁴⁶³ and Gladys⁴⁶⁴ asked us to have supper at each one's house tomorrow.

Something very funny happened at work this afternoon right after lunch. A girl who sits near me made a sudden dash for the ladies room – holding her mouth. When she finally came back I asked her what was wrong and she said she had eaten pickles and milk for lunch. She said that she didn't believe it was a bad combination but I guess she's convinced now. She does the dumbest thing - She has us laughing all day.

⁴⁵⁹ Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geetter.

⁴⁶⁰ Bushnell Memorial Hall in Hartford.

⁴⁶¹ For a brief time during World War II, big-band leader Glenn Miller was stationed at the Army Air Force Technical Training Command at Yale University in New Haven. The show at the Bushnell, featured the same musicians that performed with Capt. Miller at Woolsey Hall in New Haven.

⁴⁶² Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman

⁴⁶³ Claire K. Geetter is the wife Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice (Moe) S. Geetter

⁴⁶⁴ Gladys M. Geetter is the wife Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter

Claire called tonight to tell me she received your letter and she thought it was a very nice one. She says she'll answer it as soon as she can. Her dog, Spunky, was sick this week and she had the doctor this evening. I asked her if I could send some flowers or a box of candy to her. I'm going to buy a get-well card tomorrow and send it. If she gets Valentines - she ought to receive a get well card.

Well, darling, I guess I'll go to bed now. It's late now and I should get my sleep. So darling - remember that I love you with all my heart - and miss you more than I could ever tell.

Goodnight darling -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Capt. Glenn Miller at Woolsey Hall, New Haven, Connecticut in 1944

Saturday Morning
[February 19, 1944] undated

Darling ~

I felt just like a wife this afternoon. I bought you some shorts and jerseys and I guess it may sound silly to you, but it did give me a proud feeling.

Margie's⁴⁶⁵ birthday is this coming Friday but I was a bit ahead of time and I bought her gift today. She's been talking about wanting to take care of her nails so I got her a manicuring set. When I gave it to her tonight she seemed very pleased, so I guess I hit on the right thing.

My mom came home from the hospital today as all X-rays have been taken. From the results... they found out she has an enlarged liver - but thank God - no cancer. As you know, that's what we were all afraid of - and although having an enlarged liver is serious, we are thankful it wasn't a cancer diagnosis - nothing could be worse.

My cousins were here from Newark. Melvin, He's the oldest boy, 18, is in the army and he was home on furlough. He also has a brother 16, and darling, what good looking cousins they are. Both of them are 6' 2" and one's dark and the other a sandy colored redhead. I guess for the first time I didn't mind kissing them! Evelyn was here also and she and I had a nice talk - it's been quite some time since we have seen each other.

I received a postcard from Eleanor yesterday. It was from Miami Beach - if you recall I told you that she and Sam are living in Tampa. Well the message was typical Eleanor - It said, "Hi, Syl" - Flew down - It's hot - Elly."

I also received a letter from you today - and it was so good to get it. The way you got your new beds and the bicycle I guess is an example of the world today. Darling about that money you are sending home - it is very sweet of you and as long as you won't need it, I'm glad you are sending it home. There are some things I want - a new gold bracelet for my watch is one of them. And, of course, whatever I don't need - I'll put into bonds. You see hon, I promised myself that as much as possible I'll buy bonds with my allotment... The bonds I have been buying are going toward that wonderful future we are going to have together.

As you know, I visited the folks tonight. Claire⁴⁶⁶, Ben⁴⁶⁷, Mr. and Mrs. Goralnick and Mom were having a poker game - Margie and I talked in the living room. [My] Mom gave

⁴⁶⁵ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy was Norman's wife and pregnant for the first time.

⁴⁶⁶ Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

⁴⁶⁷ Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin (Ben) G. Geetter

me six very pretty dish towels - Baskets of strawberries on them. She told me to make sure you break them in!

Faye⁴⁶⁸, Lou⁴⁶⁹, Betty Mae⁴⁷⁰, and Holly⁴⁷¹ were here this afternoon. They brought the letter which you wrote to them. Betty was so thrilled about you mentioning her letters she asked me to read it to her again.

Well, sweetheart, it's late now and it's time to say goodnight once again. Oh yes, I tried to get a Monopoly set small enough to send overseas - but they don't make the boards small enough. Is there any game you would like - say a new kind of card game?

Darling - I miss you so much and I can't tell you how much I think of you. Sweetheart, I love you so much, I just wish you were here so that I could tell you so. Well, it won't be too long will it hon, when we are together again.

So my darling, Goodnight -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

⁴⁶⁸ Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman

⁴⁶⁹ Louis B. Weidman is Faye's husband.

⁴⁷⁰ Elizabeth (Betty) Weidman was the oldest daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman and her husband Louis B. Weidman. Betty was six at the time of writing and one-year old Holly Weidman was at home.

⁴⁷¹ Holly Weidman was the one year-old daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman and her husband Louis B. Weidman.



The Ground Crew takes a breather at Cochran Field, Ga.

When you think of the job they're doing—and all it means to us—anything we can do seems so little...

But if you could watch their faces when they get "snapshots from home"—if you could see how they carry those prints with them through thick and thin, and look at them over and over again,

long after they're battered and worn—you'd realize that sending snapshots is very important.

Film is hard to get now, the Army and Navy need so much. Dealers are rationed. So make the most of every roll you can get. Snap the faces and scenes he longs to see. Make your letter "a snapshot visit from home"... Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y.

REMEMBER TORPEDO SQUADRON 8? . . . how, knowing exactly what the odds against them were, this heroic band of 30 Navy fliers drove unswervingly into the massed fire of the Japanese fleet off Midway? And only one man survived? A stern example to us at home.

BUY MORE WAR BONDS

Visit him in SNAPSHOTS

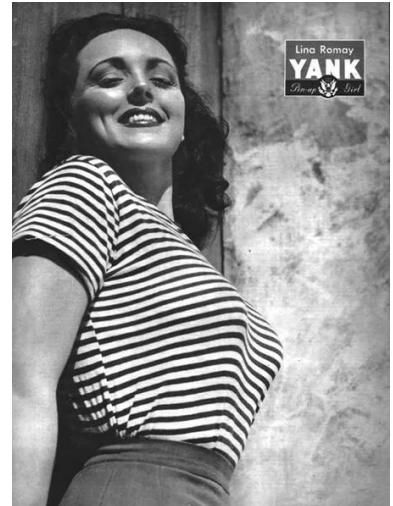
Kodak

Sunday night
Feb. 20, 1944

Darling ~

Today has been a funny day - I didn't do much yet, before I knew it, it was time for supper. I had all intentions of staying home all day but about six-thirty, I got restless and called Rosalind. She and Ida were going to the *Far East* for supper and then to the *State*⁴⁷² to see Xavier Cugat. I had already eaten my supper so I met them at the *Far East Garden*.

There were a few girls sitting at the next table and I recognized one of them as Lina Romaine, Xavier Cugat's singer. She is a very beautiful person. When we did get inside the *State* I sat behind a woman whose hat must have been a mile high and a mile wide. So you can understand when I say that Xavier Cugat sounded good because I couldn't see him. The lady left when the picture came on. I wished she had stayed because I wouldn't have missed a thing - you know the kind of picture they show at the State - all Academy Award winners. Jane Withers was in this picture and there were a group of teenage boys sitting in back of us and they couldn't stand it so they just made all the noise they could.



I sent the get well card to Spunky and signed it "Mrs. "Ziff. In case that means nothing to you - well Mrs. Ziff lives next to Claire⁴⁷³ and Mo and she's threatened time and time again to have the dog pound take Spunky away. Spunky senses she hates him so whenever she sees this as if they have all they can do to keep her from jumping on her.

Gladys was here this afternoon and she was so pleased with your letter. It is nice of you ... to write the letters you have written to my family and it does please me so much, not saying how much the family appreciates it.

I'll end my letter now darling, as there's not much more I can say tonight. So goodnight my darling and with all my heart I love you.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

⁴⁷² The *State Theatre* was the largest performing arts venue in Hartford at the time. It seated 3880 people, had a Geneva Organ, was located at 70 Village St. and torn down in 1960.

⁴⁷³ Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.



State Theatre - 3880 seats
70 Village St., Hartford, Conn.

Monday night
undated February 21, 1944

Darling ~

There was so much excitement in the office today⁴⁷⁴. All the girls in my department and the girls in several other departments are going to be out of work about April 1. They are transferring all the work... to the office in New York. It has been rumored for quite a while but nobody was sure of just what it was all about. This morning I asked Bernie, he's my supervisor, if he knew what the story was all about and he went up to see Don Whalley - he's the personnel director and office head - and he was told that it was time that all the work was going to be sent to New York and by April 1, about 100 girls will be dismissed and the newer ones will leave before the old, but in due time all of the girls will be let go. Well when he came back with the news you can imagine the commotion that it caused. Everybody was mad because no notice had been given. The assistant in my office who has been with the company for nine years has been told to look for another job. At lunch today I thought some girls were going to talk themselves horse. Oh yes, we also got a notice thanking us for our cooperation in the past but from now on there will be no more overtime work. So we all went home at five tonight instead of seven.



As far as I'm concerned, it is good news as I wasn't too keen about my job but I couldn't get a release as I was frozen to it and if I quit it meant two months of staying idle which I didn't want. However I wish it happened a little closer to summer because if it did I wanted to go to the beach with Faye for a while before starting a new job. Well what I have decided to do is to stick to my present job and wait until I get my notice. My department may be kept on a little longer as there is so much work yet to be done. Well, what will be will be-and I'm not worried about it in the least. I just hope it will hold out for a few more months.

Issie⁴⁷⁵ was in New Britain tonight for a few hours. He called and he wanted your new address. Did you get the letter he wrote to you about a month ago? There's a great tragedy that happened in his home. Issie told me *Silvio the Snail* died. They named the snail in the fishbowl after me.

⁴⁷⁴ Sylvia worked at Associated Transport. 436 Capitol Ave., which was one of the largest Transportation Companies in the country at the time. They were in a period of growth and mergers.

⁴⁷⁵ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written. Issie left his job at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the Navy, and has just learned he will be commissioned a Commander.



Moe⁴⁷⁶ called tonight - he knew it was me who sent the card to Spunky. Your letter was very interesting today. Although you couldn't tell me everything you do at [a] briefing, I have a good idea about it. You see, I have a copy of *Pix Magazine* which really tells quite a bit about it and there are pictures of what is done, too. These pictures were taken in England.⁴⁷⁷

Darling, I know you must be really busy flying these days. You will have so much to tell me when this is all over - won't you? Meanwhile, darling, do your best and keep your mind on your work - it means so much.

I made up your package of underwear tonight. I won't be able to mail it until Wednesday as the Post Office won't be open tomorrow. Seeing you are gaining weight - I got four pairs of shorts in size 34 and one is a 32.

Sweetheart, it's almost three months since we have seen each other. I have missed you so much in these three months. I love you so much darling that, until you are home again, I'll miss you more everyday.

Goodnight darling
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Inserted: letter from Issie in a separate envelope.

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 19 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and a second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 20 1944 by the Control Section.

⁴⁷⁶ Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

⁴⁷⁷ Sylvia and Lenny had discussed the possibility of being deployed to England.

Somewhere in England⁴⁷⁸
Feb 22, 1944

Dearest Wife,

It's been quite a while since my last letter and I really am ashamed of myself, but I'm hoping that by the end of this letter you will understand why it's been so long.

In one of my recent letters, if you will recall, I told you that we had a three day pass coming to us. Well, we got it but instead of three days it turned out to be almost four! Naturally we went to London and that is where my story, and excuse, starts.

We left here Friday afternoon and got into London quite late, so we went directly to the Officer's Club in town⁴⁷⁹ and got a bed for the night. Saturday we were up early - 10:00 - and after breakfast we got into a cab and started to look for a hotel room. The cabs are of the 1920 vintage - not a modern one in the city.

The driver took us to almost every hotel in the city from the Savoy, comparable to the Waldorf in New York, down to the cheesiest one he knew of, but all to no avail; there just wasn't a room to be had. It reminded me of the weekend that we spent in New York, Butch. Finally after pestering the manager of the Savoy for over an hour, he gave us a phone number to call and at last we had rooms for the night. Just like the hotel the Taft referred us to that weekend, this was a third rate place, away from the center of things but it was clean so we took it. At first the



⁴⁷⁸ Knettishall was the unnamed American Base where Lenny was sent. **Royal Air Force Knettishall** or more simply **RAF Knettishall** was a former Royal Air Force station in Suffolk, England, UK. The 388th Bomb Group, which stayed at Knettishall for their entire service in the ETO, flew B-17 Flying Fortresses on missions over occupied Europe and its four squadrons consisted of the 560th, 561st, 562nd, and the 563rd Bomb Squadrons. Lenny served in the 561st Bomb Squadron.

⁴⁷⁹ The town of Knettishall

woman at the desk said she had but one room with only two beds. There were four of us and we finally talked her into moving somebody out and giving us two rooms, one single, and one with three beds. By the time all the arrangements were made it was almost five in the afternoon.



Forgot to tell you where we had lunch. We ate in Scott's - the evening place of London where we had, of all things, (no not steak) [but] *Jugged Hare*, better known as Roast Rabbit; it was truly delicious; along with it we had a vintage wine, real tomato soup, coffee and pastry.

After leaving the hotel we went back to the heart of London, and after walking around a bit decided it was time to eat again. We found, of all things, a Jewish restaurant! So in we went, Chris⁴⁸⁰, Rock⁴⁸¹, the Copilot⁴⁸² and myself. Rock and I drove the waitress crazy asking for *latkes*⁴⁸³ but there were none... We did have... pickled herring with onion, chicken soup with *lokshen*,⁴⁸⁴ roast chicken, potatoes and vegetables, real sour pickles, Jewish pumpernickel and rye bread, and finally coffee and pudding. It was a meal that I never expected to have 'over here.'

After leaving the restaurant we went into a *Brasserie* (known as a *Grille* back home) where all we could buy was beer. Being Saturday night the place was packed with soldiers, both male and female. We stayed there until 11:00, when everything in London closes down, or at least Chris and I did. Rock and Red (the co-pilot) [each] picked up a girl. From there Chris and I went to Piccadilly Circus where we amused ourselves watching the prostitute's doing business. Piccadilly is the red light district of London, and business is done out

⁴⁸⁰ Augustine (Chris) Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁴⁸¹ Ray (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

⁴⁸² Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington was the Co-Pilot in Lenny's crew.

⁴⁸³ A **latke** is a type of potato pancake found in Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine. The dish, which is traditionally served during Hanukkah, can be made with grated, shredded, or mashed potatoes.

⁴⁸⁴ The word **lokshen** is Yiddish for noodle. A lokshen kugel is a kugel made with noodles. There are endless variations on the noodle kugel theme; they can be made savory or sweet, topped or untopped, with dried fruit or nuts or seasonings.

in the open. We were approached more than once and the price is exorbitant. One prostitute asked me to go home with her for £5 , the equivalent of \$20, when I told her that was a lot of money she said she would throw in a bottle of scotch!

12:00 rolled around and we decided to go to the hotel and that is when the fun started. There just wasn't a cab to be had - we stood on a corner for half an hour without any luck, finally a truck came by, picked us up and took us where we wanted to go, or at least in the neighborhood. It was dark, with the blackout, and neither of us had a flashlight. We finally found what looked like our hotel. In fact there was a sign but we couldn't find the door! Just as we were giving hope of sleeping we turned a corner and there was the entrance! *Smaht*, eh? Finally got to sleep, and around 6:00 in the morning Red came in, grabbed his things and that was the last we saw of him until this morning.



After breakfast Sunday morning the three of us went sightseeing. First stop was Petticoat Lane, the Delancey Street of London. It was just like it too, the pushcarts on the streets from which one could buy anything he wanted, provided he had the coupons (ration cards) and we had none, so we contented ourselves to look until almost 1:00. From there we went to another Jewish place for dinner - we had... chopped liver with chicken fat , roast chicken with Kasha.⁴⁸⁵



We got into a cab and told the driver to take us to all the historical places in London. We saw St. James Palace and park, Buckingham

⁴⁸⁵ Kasha is a type of porridge made from roasted buckwheat groats, commonly used in Eastern European cuisine. It can be served as a savory dish or a sweet breakfast cereal and is often associated with Jewish comfort food, such as kasha varnishkes, which combines kasha with pasta and onions.

Castle, Queen Victoria's monument (a beautiful memorial), Westminster Abbey, Big Ben and places I can't remember. We were allowed inside of Westminster Abbey and, Darling, it was beautiful. There were services going on and even I was impressed with the beauty and solemnity there. The walls are covered with memorials of England's great and in the floor are buried the greatest of England's statesmen. A truly impressive sight, and that was the end of our tour. From there we went to the Officer's Clothing PX⁴⁸⁶ and bought some needed items such as socks, underwear and I bought two pairs of pants, one pair of pinks and a pair of OD's. After taking this stuff back to the hotel we went out to eat, then Rock took off to keep a date and Chris and I went to a bar, Odenino's for a few drinks.

While sitting there, who should walk in but Mike Manone. Remember him Butch? He's the one that gave that brilliant answer to the question about the blue bar. We had a long talk, over a few Scotch and sodas, and then went back to the hotel for some sleep.



Due to the fact we were due back at 6:00 Monday evening, there was little that we could do that day, especially when we didn't get up till almost 11:00. We did manage to get to the London PX to secure our rations for this week. Among my purchases were pipes: yes my sweet, your husband is now a pipe smoker. I also bought this excellent linen finish stationery there. Truthfully, it was the only thing they had and I thought that anything is better than nothing.

The ride back to camp was uneventful but we came back to some bad news. One of the crews sleeping in our barracks went down on a raid held while we were on pass. It was hard to take because they came here with us and our

crews had become good friends. It sort of took the edge off of our good time.

Around seven the orderly came in and told us that there was a raid scheduled for this morning, being just a bit overtired from our trip we *hit the*

⁴⁸⁶ Post Exchange (PX): During World War II, thousands of post exchanges operated throughout the world, from the smallest South Pacific island to London, England.

sack almost immediately. We took off with high hopes of getting our first raid today, but Lady Luck is still looking the other way and the mission was called off and we are still virgins. It's getting to be quite a joke, every time we take off something happens and we have to turn back.

Last night when we came home, I found quite a few letters awaiting me - there were three from you, one from Betty-May,⁴⁸⁷ one from Is, among others. How does one read his letters? It took me fully half an hour to decipher it and then I [still] couldn't make out all of it... I gather he is enjoying his work even though it is a bit different from what he is accustomed to.

My trip was quite an enjoyable one but, as you have so often said, something was missing. Honestly, sweet, it could be so much better if only you were there with me seeing those things with me seeing those things that I once thought I would only read about. Golly, but I do miss you in everything I do.

This was another banner day for me, as far as mail from you is concerned There were seven letters from you, including the works of art of Betty-May and Lorraine and the clippings - thanks a million for them. As yet no packages have arrived for me - just have to *sweat* them out I guess.

There is, probably, a lot more that I can say but right now my mind is blank so I'll call it quits for a while. Although it's afternoon here it's night back home, so I guess it's all right if I say goodnight to you my darling and say once again that I love you very very much my sweetheart. I too hope that it won't be much longer before we are together again.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny

⁴⁸⁷ Elizabeth (Betty) Weidman Klein, Sylvia's niece who was six and half years old at the time.



Tuesday night
Feb. 22 - 44

Darling ~

No work for me today and I spent the day at home. Sadie went to work today, so I kept my Mom company⁴⁸⁸. She's feeling much better. I guess the relief of knowing that it is just her liver making her feel ill has made her feel so much better.

Today David⁴⁸⁹ and Albert⁴⁹⁰ came to Hartford by bus all by themselves. Nate⁴⁹¹ met them downtown where they got off the bus. They were here for about an hour this afternoon and weren't still for a minute. In fact they had a fist fight in the kitchen because David told me about the valentine Albert sent to a girl in his room that was covered with "I love yous" and x's. This fight had to be stopped by [my] Mom pulling them apart and my poor dog took an awful beating. David used it for a punch bag until I caught him at it. I always wanted boys but after watching them I realize I have quite an order ahead of me. Betty May⁴⁹² had school today and she came here for dinner. Her "halo" suddenly appeared. She was so quick and so good while Albert and David were here I couldn't quite understand it. She made me laugh though because she had such an angelic expression on her face.

This afternoon I didn't do much - just sat around and read some articles in the *Saturday Evening Post*. About five o'clock Faye⁴⁹³ called and asked me to come over for a while and she wanted to look at a five-room flat to rent on Cabot Street. I rushed over there and it began to rain. Faye and Lou left and I finished feeding Holly⁴⁹⁴. Betty wanted to learn how to

⁴⁸⁸ Ever since their father Hayman Geetter died in 1940, Sylvia and her oldest sister Sadie Geetter lived at home with their mother Adelle Stolper Geetter. at 148 Magnolia St. in the North End of Hartford. The two sisters also cared for their ailing mother who was sick with thyroid cancer and a new liver diagnosis. Adelle would die in 1946.

⁴⁸⁹ David Maranski Geetter was the oldest son of Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore S. Geetter. who was commissioned a Commander in the US Navy and trained in New London, Connecticut. David was ten at the time of this writing.

⁴⁹⁰ Albert Leonard Geetter was the second oldest son of Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore. He was eight at the time of the writing.

⁴⁹¹ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had two children, Philip Henry, who was three months old at the time this was written, and Diane who would be born in December.

⁴⁹² Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman was the oldest daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Fay Geetter Weidman and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

⁴⁹³ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth Weidman and Holly Weidman, who were six and one at the time this was written.

⁴⁹⁴ Holly Weidman was the younger daughter of Sylvia's youngest sister Faye Geetter Weidman and her husband Louis B. Weidman.

write - she knows how to print so I wrote the alphabet and I was showing her how to write them. I think what has made her ambitious to know how to write it so that she can read letters and write them.

Holly is so cute but I'm afraid she's going to have straight hair like me. She's walking now but she does so with great care. She's afraid of the floor coming up to meet her. I called Nate tonight and asked him how he felt - if the boys hadn't run him ragged.

Sweetheart, I hope you get the stationery I sent to you soon - after all I don't want the lack of paper to be a reason for not writing.

Well, darling, until tomorrow I guess this is about all. A million times I love you and with all my I miss you.

Goodnight darling -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and a cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 19 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 20 1944 by the Control Section.



Sylvia in front of 148 Magnolia St. Hartford, Connecticut

[Somewhere in England]
Feb 23 '44

Dearest Wife,

This letter contains , as you may have guessed from the slight change in the return address, some long awaited news. Yes, my darling wife, your husband is now Lieutenant Levy. No longer F/O [Flight Officer]. The order came through while we were on pass, and due to the fact that we've been doing so much flying of late, they had a hard time getting in touch with me. Coincidentally, in his letter to me, Is⁴⁹⁵ apologized for addressing me as F/O thinking that the promotion had already gone through.

As I wrote last night, we were up very early again this morning, presumably to go on a raid. At the last minute it was called off and so we still have no missions to our credit. The entire base knows of our 'luck,' and when they see us they shake their head and smile. John Lindsay, the ex-cop from New York (you'll remember him if I say that he is the fellow that always had that silly look on his face) gets in his now famous remark 'Some have it, and some don't,' every time we meet.

The day became a complete success when, after being sworn in, I came back to the barracks and found another letter from you. Chris⁴⁹⁶ says there ought to be a law against one fellow getting so much mail. The truth is, my darling, lately I've been getting more than my share. I'm afraid that if it ever stops... I'll be lost. Speaking of your letters reminds me, Butch, can you change the type of envelope you're using to something heavier? All your letters lately have come open on the way over⁴⁹⁷.

I'm smoking my new pipe knowing that you like it. I thought that line would give added pleasure to this letter. I really enjoy smoking it, especially now that I found some American tobacco for it...

We are still talking about our weekend and that once again the Co-pilot has found his 'one and only' That makes five he's met since I've known him.

Butch, you have no idea how good I feel when you write and say that the family really likes me and in particular your Mom. I do want... them to like me and, if it's in my power, I'll never do anything to make you, or them, sorry that you picked me over the rest. I do love you so very much, my darling.

⁴⁹⁵ Sylvia's oldest brother Isadore (Is, Issie) Geeter.

⁴⁹⁶ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁴⁹⁷ The US Army censors were opening both Lenny's outgoing and Sylvia's incoming mail.

You seem to have become a rather steady patron of the Bushnell⁴⁹⁸ of late. Good for you sweet! By the way, was *Dough Girls* on the sexy side?

In last night's letter I forgot to say that much to our regret , we took no pictures while on pass. We were planning to take some with the Co-pilots camera but, as I wrote, he disappeared for the weekend. As far as commercial photographers it would take two months of Sundays to get any results... and the price is prohibitive.

The flag is red again tonight meaning another early awakening so I'd better hit the sack shortly. Before saying goodnight I want once again... to tell you that I love you very, very much , like you and miss you

Goodnight my darling -
I love you

Lenny



⁴⁹⁸ Bushnell Memorial Hall is a Performing Arts venue in Greater Hartford serving as a gathering place for movies, live music, dance and theatre.

Wednesday night
February 23, 1944

Darling ~

It seems as though you are certainly having delays before getting off on your first mission. Well, darling let's hope that when they do come about they pass quickly and in no time you will be home again.

Sue, the girl who sits next to me at lunch, came back from lunch so excited. She received a letter from her husband who is in the Navy and he will be home tomorrow. It's been four months since she has seen him. Gerry, the married girl I told you about that has boyfriends, gave her an envelope and on it she wrote, "Better be safe than sorry." You can imagine what was in it. Sue showed it to me and I could feel my face get hot. Bernie noticed it and he wanted to know what we had - and darn it if I didn't blush more - I wish I could get over that.

The radio and newspapers are full of the news being made by the American bombers flying over Germany. Everytime I listen to the news I wonder if you were on that particular mission.

It's such a good feeling knowing that we do not have to work overtime anymore. It gives me the evening to do with as I please. It was very hard trying to go anywhere or do anything after I got home from work when I had worked overtime.

About those rooms Fay and Lou⁴⁹⁹ looked at last night - well they didn't take them. It was the usual reason. The landlord couldn't clean them.

Did you know that Mr. Garolnik⁵⁰⁰ sold the house.? [Your] Mom and Dad have an agreement of some kind where they can live there for three more years. But your Uncle Ralph⁵⁰¹ has to move, as the family who bought the house is moving in there⁵⁰². They want to buy a house but you know how hard that is today. When Mom told me she was sending you a nougat I knew it would make Rock⁵⁰³ happy, I hope you received it by now and you both had a wonderful time eating it.

⁴⁹⁹ Sylvia's younger sister Faye, her husband Lou and their two children are looking for a larger apartment in Hartford.

⁵⁰⁰ The owner of the two family house where Lenny's family lives.

⁵⁰¹ Wolfe Ralph Rosenthal married Annie Levy Rosenthal and had two children, Irene Rosenthal and Myron M. "Buster" Rosenthal who were aged 29 and 27 at the time. Annie died in 1929 at age 36. Uncle Ralph remarried in 1932.

⁵⁰² The downstairs house.

⁵⁰³ Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

How about your co-pilot⁵⁰⁴ - is he still with you or have you a new one? How is Chris⁵⁰⁵'s ear and is the Rock as goofy as ever?

There is a girl I have seen quite a few mornings when I'm on my way to work who is as high as a kite. She can't be more than 26 and at eight o'clock in the morning she's so drunk it's terrible. This morning she was singing "Here Comes the Bride" at the top of her lungs. I don't know where she gets her liquor but it sure does the trick. You asked me if Roz is like Eleanor. No hun, she's not like her - she's quieter but she's very nice and what I like most about her is that she's a good sport.



Edith Spector, formerly Edith Kohn, twin sister of Sammy, called me this evening. She's having a gathering Friday night at her mother-in-law's house. I'm going to the Emmanuel⁵⁰⁶ [Synagogue] first but I'll go there as soon as services are over. I haven't seen her for such a long time.

I received four letters from you today and you can understand what a good feeling it was.

⁵⁰⁴ Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington was the Co-Pilot in Lenny's crew.

⁵⁰⁵ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁵⁰⁶ In 1919, the Emmanuel Synagogue was established as the first Conservative synagogue in Connecticut. At the time, the synagogue was in the North End of Hartford on Woodland St.

Darling, two of the letters were rather recent - one was the 12th and the other the 14th. It makes me so happy knowing you didn't forget our anniversary date or Valentine's Day. I have the water running in the tub and I better take my bath as it's not too warm. Lou must have beat me to the draw this time. So my darling - let me tell you that I love you so very much and I miss you more every day. Take care of yourself, darling.

Goodnight darling -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

JP. Gross [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-25-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 27 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 28 1944 by the Control Section.



The Woodland Street building today

Thursday night
Feb. 24 - 44

Darling -

We had such beautiful weather today. One nice thing about this winter so far is the fact that it has been comparatively mild to last year.



This evening I went to the *Lenox*⁵⁰⁷ with Roz. We saw Alice Faye in *The Gang's All Here*. It was in Technicolor and what made the picture [so] good [is] the photography. It was really beautiful. The co-feature was one of the *Falcon* series.

Sadie⁵⁰⁸ is home this week doing the cooking. Well, she said she would have a surprise for supper. We had gingerbread with whipped cream. Speaking of cooking I'm afraid that whatever little I learned about cooking will be forgotten in the time I'm home. The only thing I've cooked since I've been home is an egg - and a soft-boiled one at that.

I spoke to your Mom tonight and although there wasn't much news we just talked. Everybody is well - so that's something, darling.

There's not much more to write tonight - guess this is just one of those very uneventful days. However I can't close my letters without telling you that I love you with all my heart -

Goodnight darling -
I love you
Sylvia
XXX

⁵⁰⁷ The *Lenox* was a 1000-seat performing arts venue at 961 Albany Ave. in Hartford, Connecticut. This theatre was a 5-minute walk from Sylvia's house.

⁵⁰⁸ Sylvia's oldest sister Sadie Geeter.

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

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Lenox Theatre - 1000 seats
961 Albany Ave., Hartford, Conn.

Friday night
Feb 25, 1944

Darling -

Right now the *Double Or Nothing*⁵⁰⁹ program is on the radio and so far I've got most of the answers - there's a catch to that - everybody stopped at the \$12 question - nobody has gone as high as the \$64 one

How do you like the enclosed cartoon? I thought it was very funny. Tomorrow is Saturday again and of course I'm glad it is - it means a short workday.

Gerry bought her horoscope for this year and her birthday is two days after mine so it applies to me as well. So, we have a new pastime at work - we read it and find out what each day holds for us. Well, yesterday it stressed being friendly, so we were friendly (of course we overdid) it a bit - just for good luck.



IDA LUPINO - PAUL HEINRICH in "IN OUR TIME" with NANCY COLEMAN - A Winner Post-First National Picture

darling she said she saw Paul Heinrich in his latest picture last night. He told her that I'm apt to forget myself and call out "Lenny" in the middle of some dramatic moment.

The papers are full of headlines about the two-way bombings on Germany and that's all we hear on the news broadcast - so darling - you are making the news today.

Maybe we can go to New York some weekend sometime in April for the weekend. I hope for more snowballs.

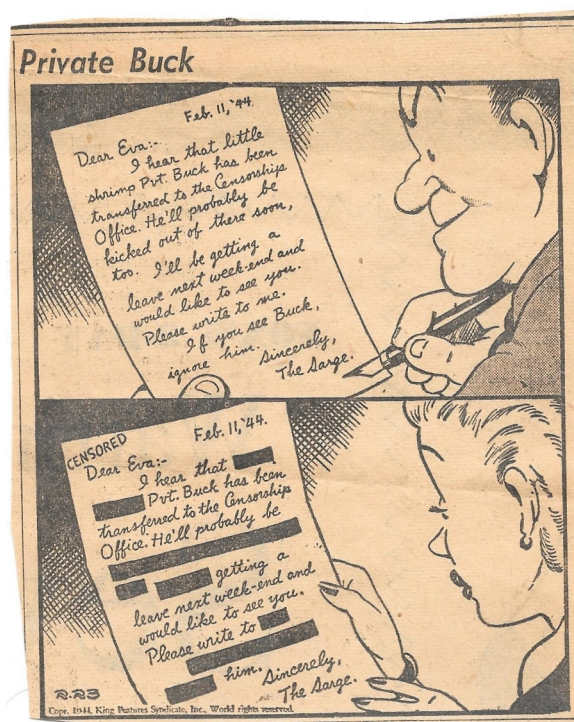
When I think of going to bed I think of that alarm clock that goes off.

Well, my darling, it's another day gone, another day closer to when we will be together again and another good night. Goodnight, darling, all my love to you -

⁵⁰⁹ In *Double or Nothing* featured Guests are asked an opening question, the answer is worth \$5. Then they have one minute to ad-lib on the topic of the question, and earn money for each statement. After the ad-lib they are asked a final question, the correct answer doubles their winnings.

⁵¹⁰ Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



Enclosed *Private Buck* cartoon

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A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

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02/25/2018

American flyers and ground crew "Somewhere in England"

...and during these precious moments, their camp on foreign soil really seems to become *America...Home...*

Snapshots can be that important—can be like a visit with old friends, in the old familiar surroundings. For a time, the little changes and happenings around home become more

important than some world-shaking event... On the word of our boys overseas, snapshots from home are the remembrance they "can use" and never tire of.

Don't let the film shortage (most film goes for military purposes) discourage you. Keep on trying. And when you get a roll, snap the home faces and home scenes you'd long to see yourself, if you were away from home. Make your letters "snapshot visits from home"... Eastman Kodak Company, Rochester, N. Y.

REMEMBER THE U. S. RANGERS ON THE NORMANDY COAST—how, scaling a 200 ft. cliff, they silenced German guns menacing the allied landings?... low, under withering fire, they conquered the precipice and wiped out Nazi gun crews, "sailing careless lives and tons of shipping and material"... A grim cost to themselves?... A stern example to us at home.
BUY MORE WAR BONDS.

Visit your man in the service with SNAPSHOTS

Kodak

The Christiani Crew⁵¹¹

Mission 1

February 25, 1944



B-17G 42-38177

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Target of first bombing mission: Pazen, Poland

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani

Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington

Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy

Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline

Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.

Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio

Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne

Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith

Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of first bombing mission: Pazen, Poland

⁵¹¹ Crews were listed by the pilot's name until the aircraft assigned to them were named.

England
Feb 26 [1944]

Dearest Wife,

There is a saying that things happen in threes; this week was no exception. As you know, Tuesday I was sworn in as a 2nd Lieutenant, that was the first of the three incidents. Wednesday we went to [the] briefing and nothing happened, but Thursday and again Friday our early awakening meant *something*. Yes my darling I now have two missions over enemy territory to my credit. I can't say where we went, but if you read the [news]papers you'll know [where.]⁵¹² I was naturally very excited and nervous the first time, but this excitement wore off and except for a few moments it was similar to a [training] flight back in the States. These few moments were when we saw *flak*⁵¹³ and when the [German] fighters made a pass at us.⁵¹⁴ I can readily see why we were allowed to lounge around the past month - they were building us up for the let down. In the past three nights I've had exactly fifteen hours of sleep - knowing me, you can well imagine how tired I was this morning. Luckily we didn't fly this morning and so I slept until 5:00 this afternoon. Due to the fact that I was out of bed by three, and then didn't get back until almost nine, it was physically impossible to write. Please forgive me, my darling?

Chris⁵¹⁵ has proven our confidence in his flying; the higher ups have noticed his good work and it looks as if he is being groomed for a Squadron Leader. This means we will fly in a safer spot, and I will have a lot more responsibility.⁵¹⁶ We were given a ship⁵¹⁷ of our own today, now we have to think of a good name for it. What do you suggest, Butch?

Honestly my sweet I've had so much to write and so little time to do so and now that I've got the time my mind is going in such a whirl that I just can't think. There's been no mail for me the past three days and still no packages. Of

⁵¹² Censors would have cut out any details about the two bombing missions over German-occupied territory. Obviously, Lenny is proud that his two missions were so successful.

⁵¹³ Antiaircraft artillery from the German ground forces.

⁵¹⁴ The faster and more agile German fighter pilots attacked the US bombers from the air.

⁵¹⁵ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁵¹⁶ Lenny's role as Navigator for a Squadron Leader's aircraft.

⁵¹⁷ Aircraft

course I shouldn't complain, not having written so much myself lately, but I do have a legitimate excuse, or don't I?

Once again it is time for me to say that I love you very very much, darling and for the days that I missed [writing] I'll make it up when I come home. With these two missions in, I'm that much closer to coming home. Once again my darling, I do love you and miss you very much.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you
Lenny

How is mom feeling give her my regards as well as to The rest of the family

Love
Lenny



Saturday Night
February 26, 1944

Darling ~

In my letter yesterday I told you how I like Saturdays best because it is the shortest workday of the week. Well, it seemed that all of my accounts sent checks in today in payment of their bills and I thought I'd never apply them all. But the incentive of getting out at 11:45 - I had them all applied and balanced by that time.



for a spaghetti dinner – yes, I really like spaghetti now. We r

When we came out of the movies, it was only six o'clock and Ida and I didn't feel like going home so we went to the *Empire* for supper and had a long wait until we got a table. I must admit I felt so lonely - I work all the time.

You and I went there for Sunday night dinner - we did have such nice times together - didn't we? Well, when you are home again we'll go right on having those good times.

When we left the *Empire* we noticed that the *Palace* had two old pictures which were brought back by popular demand - so seeing that neither one of us saw them we decided to go. However, Ida couldn't take it she fell asleep during the second picture. I guess you would like to know a little more about Ida. Well, she's a typist in my office and usually she and I make a threesome.

She lives in Rocky Hill but she boards in Hartford. Her mother isn't living and her father is an invalid. Her boyfriend has been overseas for over two years which is a long time, as you would agree. He was in the hospital a long time as he contracted malaria. He's back in battle now. Ida is a very sweet girl and very good-natured. I enjoy her company very much.

⁵¹⁸ Elizabeth (Betty Mae) Weidman

⁵¹⁹ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth (Betty May) Weidman and Holly Weidman, who were six and one at the time this was written.

Well here it is after 12:00, and your wife is tired. It is miserable outdoors tonight - it's raining and there's that cold damp. Rosalyn went to New York for the weekend but it looks as though she took a bad weekend to go. There has been no mail from you since Monday and darling I must admit I miss hearing from you so much.

Well darling, it's time to go to bed. I know that I lie in bed and think of all those pleasant memories and I'll fall asleep and have such nice dreams - so sweetheart it's good night - once again I love you so much my darling - so very much take care of yourself -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

A. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt. AC Adj
561 Bomb Squad
3-15-44

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*The Christiani Crew*⁵²⁰

Mission 2

February 26, 1944



B-17G 42-38177

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (1) Pazen, Poland

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani

Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington

Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy

Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline

Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.

Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio

Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne

Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith

Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Regensburg, Germany

⁵²⁰ Crews were listed by the pilot's name until the aircraft assigned to them were named.

England
Feb 27 [1944]

Dearest Wife,

Life has reverted back to what it was last week, for the present at least, and once again I'm well rested. We slept until time for dinner today, and then we called up for transportation and took a ride over to one of the nearby Fields to look up some friends from Alex. The place is only 20 odd miles from here, but it took us over two hours to get there due in entirety to the road systems of this country. There are no signs whatsoever at the crossroads and needless to say we always took the wrong turn. We finally got to our destination, spent an hour talking about the good old days back in Alex, and then came back here just in time for Chow.

Last night's party was a huge success due, no doubt, to the fact that the green flag flew for the first time in a week. Liquor was poured much in the same way as water, and there were more fellows drunk than sober. For the first time in a long time, I, too, had a little too much, and the boys told me that I was a riot when I got to the barracks. Seems that I put my pajama pants on backwards, and when I had to 'go,' couldn't, so one of the fellows took his knife and cut a hole in the pants for me. This Saturday night occurrence is known [here] as a 'drunk front' - when bad weather comes in, it is known as a front, hence the name 'drunk front.'

And now, my darling, for the choicest morsel of the month. I've written to you quite a bit about our unique Co-pilot, and by now, you should know the type of person he is. Sit back and listen to the climax - you remember my writing that he met a girl in London last week? Well, yesterday, she came out here for the weekly shindig. He left her all to himself in a corner, not even having a dance with her. She stayed overnight, and this morning, he was up at seven and has been with her all day. Just a moment ago, two of our enlisted men came in and told us that he applied for permission to marry her! The entire barracks is talking and laughing about him.

That, my darling, is just about all the news there is, and because the flag is a brilliant red, I'd better sign off and get some sleep.

Again, I want you to know that I do love you so very, very much and miss you terribly, my darling.

Goodnight my darling -
I love you

Lenny

Sunday night ~
February 27, 1944

Darling ~

Hello darling, how are you today? I've been thinking of you so much today. Issie and Babe⁵²¹ were here this afternoon. He looks about the same - he enjoys his life in the Navy⁵²² and likes being in New London. Then Nate⁵²³ and Lou⁵²⁴ came over and from then on it was noisy. When Is and Babe left, they had a card game but I don't know who was winning today - they were unusually quiet.

Sadie⁵²⁵ has gone to the movies tonight. My mom is sitting in the living room listening to the radio; I bet she's asleep - she's like Uncle Barney⁵²⁶ - sleeps best when the radio is on full blast. I wanted to visit your folks this afternoon but because Issie came in I had to cancel the visit. I spoke to Mom and she was just finishing her morning cup of coffee. Margie⁵²⁷ is getting bigger everyday - the new niece or nephew is coming along fine.

It's been raining today and this makes the third Sunday in a row that the weather has been far from pleasant. However, it didn't keep Betty May⁵²⁸ from coming over here - she's still as lovable as ever. Sadie made spaghetti for dinner and it was good. That makes having spaghetti two days in a row.

⁵²¹ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written.

⁵²² Isidore left his job as a physician at the Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the US Navy. He is finishing his training in New London, Connecticut.

⁵²³ Sylvia's youngest brother Nathan A. Geetter married Lillian R. Geetter and had two children, Philip Henry, who was three months old at the time this was written, and Diane who would be born in December.

⁵²⁴ Louis (Lou) B. Weidman married Sylvia's younger sister Faye Geetter Weidman and had two children: Elizabeth Weidman Klein and Holly Weidman Philips, who were six and one at the time this was written.

⁵²⁵ Sadie Geetter was Sylvia's oldest sister and was unmarried at the time.

⁵²⁶ Barney Levy was Lenny's oldest uncle.

⁵²⁷ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy. She is pregnant with twin boys Richard and Steven Levy.

⁵²⁸ Elizabeth (Betty) May Weidman



I went to the Crown Market⁵²⁹ this morning to do the shopping but it's Bedlam in that place. On Sunday morning I had to buy meat and when I looked at the woman pushing to get waited on I wished I didn't have to get *that* meat. Well, I summoned all my courage and went to the meat counter. The woman on my right was yelling at the woman on my left that she was there "Foist" and the woman on my left was twice as mad and claimed it was her turn. The butcher smiled at me - I smiled back and I was waited on "foist."

Claire just called and she wanted to tell me that your package is all packed. You better have a can opener darling - you'll need it. I could hear Adelaide supervising the package. She got a cable this morning from Jarvis - he moved recently and he arrived at his new post.

Do you know that this is my last sheet of stationery? I have to buy a box so that I can write tomorrow. Speaking of stationery - I hope you got my box of stationery that I sent to you - or as Nate said - you'll be writing on the kind with perforations! If you know Nate and you do - you know what he means by that. I hope that tomorrow will bring a letter from you darling - until then I'll be thinking of you, loving you and missing you -

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

⁵²⁹ The Crown Market is a Kosher supermarket founded in 1940 by Sam Smith, Sam Sowalsky and Meyer Goldfield on a piece of land on Albany Avenue between Magnolia Street and Irving Street in Hartford. The business was originally a group of concessions operating in the store. The meat and delicatessen was run by the Crown founders, while the bakery was run by the Lassoﬀ family, the fruit department run by Bob Kotik, and the fish department by Hymie Goldfarb. The grocery department was run by the Winer family. In 1943, Meyer Goldfield left the business and was replaced by Jack Sloat.

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-15-44

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England
Feb 28 [1944]

Dearest Wife,

Your letter today was the first indication I've had that [your] Mom is in the hospital. I hope that by now the doctors have found the trouble and that it is nothing serious. Also hope that by the time this reaches you, she is home and feeling well again. Give her my best wishes for a quick recovery, Butch.

Today's mission was canceled during the night, so another easy day was spent by most of us. Poor Chris⁵³⁰ had to fly with one of the new crews and check out the pilot. Rock⁵³¹ and I slept 'til almost three and then went to the show where we saw *Assignment in Brittany*. Very good.

We've all been laughing at [our] Co-pilot⁵³² and his latest exploit, but I'm beginning to think that maybe he has a smart idea. She has evidently taken a room in a nearby hostelry, [and] tonight she was in the Mess Hall for supper. At least he has *his* 'girl' nearby, while we who are laughing have but a picture and happy memories to keep us happy.

Funny coincidence, your letter told of Gladys and Ben⁵³³ spending the weekend with, and in the same mail... was a letter from Lorraine.. Somehow, I still think of her as a young kid, and when she mentioned [being in] high school, I was surprised. Her letter means still another one that I have to write - at the rate I'm going, I'll never catch up.

We (the crew) have finally decided on a name for our ship.⁵³⁴ It is to be officially known as the *Shack Rabbit*. I'm afraid you'll have to guess the meaning of the name. One hint, you surely know what rabbits are famous for! We hope to have a [picture of a] rabbit and a nickname under the window of each crew member. Just as soon as the name is painted on, we are going to have our picture taken as a group, and then you'll have an idea what it looks

⁵³⁰ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁵³¹ Ray (Rock) Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

⁵³² Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington is the Co-pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁵³³ Sylvia's brother, Ben Geetter and his wife, Gladys.

⁵³⁴ A Boeing B-17G *Flying Fortress*, the most common of heavy bombers in England with the US Forces.

like. Rock's suggestion for the name under the Co-pilot's window is *Bugs Bunny*.



The enclosed slip of paper is, as you may have guessed, my ring size. I tried to find a jeweler around here to have it taken, but there are none. I completely forgot about it while in London. I'm really sorry, my darling, that I let it go for so long. I assure you that I shall be more than proud to wear it when I get it. I'm leaving the choice of style completely up to you. I trust your taste.

The flag is bright red again, and fearing that we are in for a long ride,⁵³⁵ I'm going to hit the sack early. I do want to write a few lines to [my] Mom, haven't written since Wednesday, so this is fairly close to the end.

Once more, I want to assure you that I am feeling fine, and there is nothing for you to worry about. Just take... care of yourself for me, and I'll be happy. So, it's goodnight, my sweet, and once again, I love you so very, very much, like you, and miss you terribly.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you
Lenny

Yes, the lighter is really just what I wanted. It's in use all day, every day.

Love,
L

⁵³⁵ This indicates Lenny was prepared for a longer flight plan for tomorrow's mission.

Monday night ~
February 28, 1944

Darling ~

As of late, there's never a dull moment in the office now since the story came around that our jobs will end April 1. There is constant buzzing in the ear last week about four girls in the office found new jobs and were released today. Three girls asked for releases as they had no jobs too - but as of today no releases will be issued until April 1. Well, one girl had a good job lined up and she was so disappointed when she didn't get her release - she said she cried as soon as that happened. You can imagine how noisy the office became, so now you know what I mean by my remark that there's never a dull moment and of course now I enjoy my job.

We had company tonight Mr. and Mrs. Kaplan - my sister-in-law Claire's parents⁵³⁶. Claire and Adelaide were here to visit my mom. I got rid of two of my hats. I gave my Debbie hat to Beverly and my black hat to Claire. I never wear them because I don't like them. Claire said she was glad she came over as it turned out to be a profitable evening for her. Adelaide was telling me about the \$10 she won playing Bingo at the St. Michael Church last week so we made a date to go next Tuesday night. I never played Bingo for prizes with the exception of that night we went to that Carnival in Alexandria⁵³⁷ - remember?

Tomorrow night I intend to visit Libby Clavin. It's a long overdue visit. Speaking of long visits brings to mind so many people I should visit as I've been asked to come there time and time again. Let's see there's Ruth Schecter, Ann Pratt, Hermie and Miriam that's Gladys⁵³⁸ sister and brother-in-law. Remember the?. I don't want to think about it anymore. I feel guilty. Well, I'll make good intentions of trying to visit them soon. Now I feel better.

Well, darling - this is about all the news for today. Goodnight, darling - I love you very much.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

⁵³⁶ Claire Kaplan Geetter married Sylvia's second oldest brother Maurice S. Geetter and had two daughters: Beverly and Marilyn, who were ten and nine at the time this was written.

⁵³⁷ Alexandria, Louisiana

⁵³⁸ Gladys M. Geetter married Sylvia's third oldest brother Benjamin G. Geetter and had a daughter, Lorraine and Allan Joel, who were seven and two at the time this was written.

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-26-44

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England
Feb 29, 1944

Dearest Wife,

Another day, another raid, and more importantly, another payday. The raid we went on today was more like a sightseeing tour of the country than anything else. As I mentioned in a previous letter, we are being extremely lucky in the positions we are drawing, and the danger we are placed in is lessened. I'd like very much, my darling, to go into complete details about my missions, but I'm afraid that these stories too will have to wait for that time when I'm home and in your arms.

The end of the month means but one thing in the army, payday. Just as soon as the interrogation was over with, I went to the finance office and drew my pay. It was not quite as much as I expected. They forgot to pay me for one month's flying time, but there was enough to enable me to send you an extra \$200. You should receive it in two or three weeks. Do with it as you wish.

No mail again today, my sweet, and I'm beginning to worry. Is there something wrong at home? Please don't keep anything from me, as waiting for news is worse than reading bad news. I do think that it is just the faulty mail system, but again, don't hold anything from me, please, my darling.



For quite some time, Butch, I've been meaning to tell you of the work that the various organizations are doing for us. The best way to explain what is on my mind, I guess, is to tell you which ones are doing good and which are nothing but a lot of show.

If and when the Red Cross⁵³⁹ has another appeal for funds, give till it hurts, sweet, for they are really *taking over* here. Not only do they have an office on most bases, but they also maintain a club on each block for the enlisted man. In towns such as London, they have tremendous club rooms where a soldier can have anything up to and including a place to sleep. In London alone, they have three or four such places for enlisted men and two for officers. The Officers Club in London run by the Red Cross, besides having rooms, also has an all-night cafeteria where at times you can even get real “Yank” hamburgers.

As for the USO⁵⁴⁰... they use some of the biggest names in the world of entertainment, but who gets to see them? Only those lucky enough to be stationed near a large city even get the chance to *sweat out* the line for tickets. Or they send shows around to the camps, but the performers wouldn’t rate billing in a third-class vaudeville house back home. It seems odd to me, but in the States where the need for morale building is not as great, the entertainment is much better...

Having been up since two this morning, I'm getting just a bit sloppy, I'd better end this and get some much-needed sleep. I do love you so much, my darling, and you can feel sure that although you're not there in person, at least in my mind, you are on every raid I made. I think of you constantly, my darling, more so every day.



Goodnight my sweetheart –
I love you

Lenny

⁵³⁹ American Red Cross workers provided assistance to all servicemen and women wherever they were stationed or deployed at home and overseas. Services were also extended, with limitations, to some civilian groups, such as the merchant marines, civilian pilots in the Army Transport Command, and to the armed forces of the Allies when they were in the United States or serving with the U.S. military. Military and Naval Welfare Service was basically of three

kinds: Camp, Club, and Hospital.

⁵⁴⁰ The United Service Organizations Inc. is an American nonprofit-charitable corporation that provides live entertainment, such as comedians, actors and musicians, social facilities, and other programs to members of the United States Armed Forces and their families. Since 1941, it has worked in partnership with the Department of War, and later with the Department of Defense, relying heavily on private contributions and on funds, goods, and services from various corporate and individual donors.

Your **RED CROSS**
is at his side



1944 WAR FUND

Tuesday night
February 29, 1944

Darling ~

Today I bet a girl a half-pound of Mary Oliver's [chocolate] if she would take advantage of it being leap year day and propose to an old bachelor in the office. Well, she took me up on it - of course, she told him it was only a dare but I wish you could have seen the expression on his face. He didn't know what to make of it and he looked so dumbfounded. We all got a laugh out of it so it was well worth the loss of the bet. The girls in the office think it's a good idea that our jobs won't be for long because if I keep on the way I do we'd all get fired.



Mary Oliver and the Strand Theatre

1017 Main St., Hartford, Conn.

Darling, you never mentioned whether you received my valentines - did you? I sent you two of them to be sure you got one, in case one got lost. Speaking of valentines, Ruth Schecter received roses today from Walt that he had wired to her for Valentine's day. She said that everybody in Sicily has seen the picture she sent him of the baby - of course that's a slight exaggeration.

I hope you did get your three day pass so that you could go to London for the weekend. If it were possible for you to take those pictures you mentioned, it certainly would be nice.

I went to Libby's⁵⁴¹ house tonight. It was snowing when I left and I was covered with snow when I got there. Her baby is so cute and for sixteen months he speaks so well. I visited until eleven and I was sorry I stayed that late because the weather is so bad tonight – well, it doesn't matter now because here I am and I'm thawed out. It is very cold outdoors.

Mom received the letter you wrote on your last sheet of stationery. I hope that until you get the stationery I sent you, you can manage somehow to get some paper on which to write your letters home.

Well, darling, it's time to say good-night. Take good care of yourself - give my regards to Rock and Chris.

Goodnight, darling ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

W. C. Williams [Signature]
1st Lt.AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 21, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 22 1944 by the Control Section.

⁵⁴¹ Libby Handler is one of Sylvia's closest friends. She graduated in the same 1938 class at Weaver High School, where she was also a member of the Girls Business Club along with Sylvia (Ronnie) Ronner, Eleanor Kohl, Sylvia Geetter, and others who have stayed in Hartford and remained good friends.



*War Brides*⁵⁴² 1943 - Hartford, Connecticut

Adelaide	Bonnie	Sylvia	Libby	Margie	Nettie
Kalin	Spector	Levy	Handler	Levy	Siegel

⁵⁴² Titled by Sylvia in a photo album.

Shack Rabbits⁵⁴³

Mission 3

February 29, 1944



B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (2) Pazen, Poland and Regensburg, Germany.

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani

Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington

Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy

Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline

Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.

Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio

Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne

Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith

Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Brunswick, Germany

⁵⁴³ The Lt. Christiani crew wished to name their aircraft *Shack Rabbit*, which had already been named by another crew in 1943. They could have chosen *Shack Rabbit 2*. Instead they selected *Shack Rabbits*.

Wednesday night ~
March 1, 1944

Darling ~

Another month has gone by and it was a pleasant feeling to tear off the month of February on my calendar this morning. It meant one thing to me, one month of separation was over and we are one month closer to that time when we will be together again.



Hartford is having a big Red Cross Drive this year. It seems rather unnecessary to have such an extensive campaign for donations and I think everybody realizes how important the work of the Red Cross is today. They had a parade today and the fellows from Bradley Field and Rocky Hill had to do their left-right.

This afternoon was a complete waste of time in the office. Nobody did very much and everybody was fooling...

[missing page]

I guess by refusing to give out releases, they did the wrong thing because the girls' attitude towards their work is [now] indifference. The girl who sits in front of me is in a ticklish situation now. She has [a] bad appendix and [was] warned by a doctor about a month ago to have an operation as soon as possible. Well, she's afraid to be operated on as her sister died from an appendix operation three years ago. Well, she decided that she would get her release by saying she was going to have her operation – which she really isn't - what she's going to [is] look for another job. But, my boss was one step ahead of her because through

his various "informers" he found out just what her intentions were - so he's giving her a release but... it will be for "medical attention." Now, when she looks for another job she will have to explain what that means and naturally it will be almost impossible for her to get a job because no company will want to hire her when she is in bad need of an appendix operation which can take her out of her work with no notice. So, she has to take this release and she certainly is sorry she asked for it.

I went to a dress shop on Albany Avenue this evening with Sadie. She is looking for a new dress and she heard of this new dress shop and she thought she would find something she might like. It was opposite Kent Street so you can see it was a walk from my house and it was so windy we were practically blown there and back. She didn't buy anything but as long as we were near the library I got some books to read.

I was just listening to Frankie "Swoonatra" He does sing some songs very well I guess I'm beginning to live up to my name of "Shoo-Shoo."

Darling, is there anything you need that I can send to you? I hope you won't neglect to mention anything you may want in your letters - so hon - you won't forget will you?

My goodness - it's getting late - it seems that the time just flies when I write to you - but there is no better way to pass my time.

Darling ~ I hope that with this letter I could send all of my love - but it would take more than a letter. I love you so very much sweetheart and I miss you more and more everyday. Have you heard that new song "I wish I could hide inside this letter"⁵⁴⁴ -? well, darling - I wish I could, and as the words go - "I'd seal me up and send me out to you." That would be wonderful!

Goodnight, darling ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX



⁵⁴⁴ As performed by Lawrence Welk with vocals by Jayne Walton. See lyrics below.

I Wish That I Could Hide Inside This Letter

Performed by Lawrence Welk

Recorded December 2, 1943

Written by Nat Simon, Charlie Tobias

My heart's in this letter I'm sending
The same as the others I write
I close it and then start pretending
The same as I do every night
I wish that I could hide inside this letter
And seal me up and send me out to you
What a surprise in store
They'd bring me to your door
I'd pop right out and kiss you
like you've never been kissed before
We'd be so happy we could cry together
And then we'd love the way we used to do
I wish that I could hide inside this letter
And seal me up and send me off to you

We'd be so happy we could cry together
And then we'd love the way we used to do
I wish that I could hide inside this letter
And seal me up and send me off to you
Special delivery
I'd V-mail this female to you

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

W.C. Williams [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-16-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 21, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 22 1944 by the Control Section.



V Mail
March 2, 1944

Darling ~

I'm writing this in the office just before we start work for the day. In my letter last night I forgot to tell you that I bought a kit for your shaving things and I am sending it to you this week. The reason why I didn't send it last week is because we are allowed to send one package a week (with the request of course) and I sent your underwear out last week.

I better get to work now my adding machine is still covered and everybody around me is busy working. I'll write a long letter tonight - so until then ~

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J.R. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
4-15-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and a cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 20, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and a second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Apr 21 1944 by the Control Section.

Shack Rabbits

Mission 4

March 2, 1944



B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (3) Pazen, Poland, Regensburg, Germany and Brunswick, Germany.

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani

Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington

Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy

Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline

Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.

Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio

Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne

Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith

Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Chartres, France

England
Friday, March 3

Dearest Wife,

As I mentioned in a recent letter, my letters to you will be less regular than they have been in the past, but only because we are being kept so busy now. In the past three days, I've flown three times, twice on regular combat missions, and once as an instructor. Yes, my sweet, I said as an instructor. The other day, when a practice flight was scheduled, I was told to fly with one of the new crews and help the navigator get started. Can you imagine my surprise when I find out that the fellow I was to teach was formerly an instructor at Selman Field⁵⁴⁵? He graduated about a full year before I did, and taught at Monroe till a year ago, January. There were, however, a few things he didn't know about navigation over here, so I didn't appear too dumb.



Phillip Brejansky - Navigator⁵⁴⁶ - 563th Bomb Squadron

⁵⁴⁵ Selman Army Airfield is an inactive United States Air Force base, approximately 7.7 miles east of Monroe, Louisiana. It was where he received his Pre-flight training as a Navigator.

⁵⁴⁶ Once a crew has completed five missions, the US Air Corps takes official photographs of the crew: a group shot similar to the one on the next page and 10 crew shots at their stations in the aircraft.

The two combat missions have boosted my total to five, meaning that I will soon wear the Air Medal. This is an automatic award given for five missions. What do you think of your husband now, my darling?

There is a saying, 'All things come to the one who waits.' Today, I not only got a letter from you, the first one in a week, but also two packages, the first two you sent out. Needless to say, I now have a goodly supply of candy. Thank you very much, Butch. Was very glad to hear that Mom is out of the hospital. I was beginning to worry, not having heard from you in so long. Give her my regards.

The weather over here is the one thing that reminds me of New England. For a while, the days were warm. Then the other day, we woke up to find the ground covered with snow. Since then, it has been rather cold, and we have an acute coal shortage. A long time ago, I promised you a picture of the crew. Just as soon as our plane is finished up, that is, when the name and the other things are painted on, we are to have a crew picture taken by the base Photo Department. It is all settled, and they have promised us enough copies for each.



B-17 42-30340 "Screaming Red Ass" & Crew, 563rd Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group Standing L to R are: 2nd Lt. Harry L. Cotter 1st Lt. William K. Bowler 2nd Lt. Bruno A. Manno Kneeling from L to R are: T/Sgt. Denton E. Walthall T/Sgt. Matthew Bejma S/Sgt. Willis D. Condren S/Sgt. Calvin Hoagland S/Sgt. Roy T. Patterson S/Sgt. Fred C. Kerr

My darling, I'm thrilled you felt just like a wife when you went out shopping for shirts and jerseys that day. I'm very glad that you had that proud feeling. I'll always do my best to keep you feeling that way. I do love you so very much, my darling.

There is no rest for the wicked on the Air Forces in the ETO⁵⁴⁷, meaning that the red flag is flying again, so your "baby" must go to bed very shortly. These early morning awakenings are really tough on one who loves his sleep as much as I do. Again, my darling, I love you very, very much and miss you terribly. Until that day comes when we shall be together again, always remember that. Not that I'll ever let you forget.

Goodnight my darling -
I love you
Lenny



⁵⁴⁷ European Theatre of Operation, which was the area of military operations for the United States Army during World War II in Europe from 1942 to 1945.

Friday night ~
March 3, 1944

Darling ~

This is going to be my first letter addressed to Lt. Leonard Levy and it makes me so proud to be able to do so. Mom received the letter in which you told her all about it and she told me about it tonight. Again darling - let me congratulate you and may your gold bars bring you all the luck in the world.

I received the letter you wrote to me on February 22 - yes, the nice long one that came in separate envelopes. I am so happy you had such a good time in London and darling no excuse was necessary for not writing. However, did you get me the souvenirs for my scrap-book⁵⁴⁸? I was hoping you would send something - have you darling? If you couldn't find anything for the scrapbook - it's perfectly ok. I know it's because there was nothing to send.

I can see where you'll get very little sleep when you come home dear, I'm going to keep you awake telling me about all the things you are seeing and have yet to see. Just think of all the interesting stories you will be able to tell our children. Did Rock look up his relatives in London? I must say that prostitution is a good profession in England. I get a kick out of the trouble you and Chris had getting back to your hotel - it surprises me that you did find it after all. I hope that it won't be long before you can have another weekend and have a good time again.



I just came home from the Emmanuel⁵⁴⁹. There were quite a few sailors from Trinity there and they were all so young - I went with Libby. It is snowing now but I don't think it will snow very long.

⁵⁴⁸ Sylvia collected souvenirs Lenny sent her from the bases and nearby cities he was deployed to. This scrapbook was lost years later.

⁵⁴⁹ Formed in 1919, Emanuel Synagogue in Hartford was Connecticut's first Conservative congregation. In 1920, members dedicated its first synagogue in the former North Methodist Church on Main Street. With a growing membership, the congregation purchased farmland on Woodland Street in Hartford's Upper Albany neighborhood. A new synagogue, designed by Ebbets and Frid, was completed in 1927. The former Hartford synagogue is now Faith Seventh Day Adventist Church.

So, you received Issie's⁵⁵⁰ letter at last. I knew you would have difficulty reading it because I have that trouble myself.

By the way, in your letter you mentioned that Rock and Red went out together. Does that mean that Red is getting to be more sociable? That really surprised me because the Rock had so many "outs" with him.

It's another coincidence, meeting Mike at that bar. How is he? Is he stationed near you?

No, your stationery isn't very pretty but it's beautiful to me because it is something for you to write your letters on - and that's all that counts.

Tomorrow, I am mailing you your new kit for your shaving things etc. I hope you will like it - and I hope it won't take as long to get to you as my other packages are doing.

Today the girls at work were talking about the Devil and some of them believe that the Devil actually makes people devilish - and they all tell me that I have the Devil in me. Some of the things I do at work is what causes them to think it. As usual, I'm always up to something. Yesterday the boss on the other side of the room called up my boss to tell the girls to be quiet as we were disturbing his department - and do you know who was at the bottom of it - yes - me! This is what started it - a girl brought in her wedding pictures and Bernie, he's my supervisor, had one on his desk. Well, I made believe I was jealous - so I drew a picture which was supposed to be my wedding picture and I must admit - it was no pin-up girl. Well, I left it on Bernie's desk and that started it all. The girls got around the desk - and were laughing and talking and innocent me - I was busy at my desk. *Shmabt* huh, hon. I guess you'll still have your hands full when you come home, darling.

I'm enclosing an article taken from the *[Hartford] Times*. It's about Ivan Finkle. I thought you would enjoy reading it - especially after bumping into him recently.⁵⁵¹

Darling, about those delays you've had taking off for your first mission - please don't feel bad about it - remember what you always say - "Everything Happens for the best." I have to tell myself that a good many times and I find that it always turns out to be true.

Hon, I'm getting sleepy - so I guess it's time to say goodnight. I know it won't be long before you will be here and I can kiss you goodnight again - Until then - darling - remember

-

⁵⁵⁰ Rebecca (Babe) M. Geetter married Sylvia's oldest brother Isidore (Issie) S. Geetter and had five children: David, Albert, Thalia, Harold and Suzanne. They were ten, eight, five, three and one at the time this was written. Isidore left his job as a physician at the Mt. Sinai Hospital in Hartford to enlist in the US Navy. He is finishing his training in New London, Connecticut.

⁵⁵¹ Ivan Nathan Finkle was stationed in Knettishall AFB in the same Bomb Group 561 as Lenny. He graduated from Weaver High School in Hartford two years after Sylvia.

I love you
Sylvia
XXX

Letter marked "Missing" below the return address, by:

J. P. Gross [Signature]
Capt. AC Exec
561 Bomb Squad
3-17-44

Stamped "Return to Sender Verified 1st Base Post Office" below postage, and
cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 20, 1944 by the US Army Postal Service, and
Second cancellation stamp on reverse dated Mar 22 1944 by the Control Section.

Contents: Article (undated): **Sergeant Finkle Wins Citation**

March 3, 1944

Sergeant Finkle Wins Citation

Tech.-Sgt. Ivan N. Finkle, son of Louis Finkel of 15 Milford Str., a member of the Eighth Air Force, stationed in England, who recently completed 18 missions, has been awarded the Air Medal and two Oak Leaf Clusters.

According to a citation, Sergeant Finkle was commended for "exceptional meritorious service while participating in aerial flight. The skill, coolness and courage displayed by the enlisted man (Sgt. Finkle) reflects great credit upon himself an[d] the Army Air Force.

Sergeant Finkle is a member of the crew of the *Blitzing Betsy*.

Sergeant Finkle Wins Citation

Tech.-Sgt. Ivan N. Finkle, son of Louis Finkle of 15 Milford St., a member of the Eighth Air Force, stationed in England, who recently completed 18 missions, has been awarded the Air Medal and two Oak Leaf Clusters.

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Sergeant Finkle is a member of the crew of the "Blitzing Betsy."

Collapses

Allied Headquarters, Naples—(AP)—American heavy bombers again attacked Rome's railroad installations today, the Mediterranean Allied Air Force announced.

"Flying Fortresses attacked Littorio and Tiburtina freight yards," the announcement said, "while Liberators bombed the main Viterbo Airdrome 35 miles north of Rome."

"Early reports," the statement said, "indicate the railway yards were well covered and that the airdrome bombing was good. Both the Fortresses and Liberators were escorted by fighters."

It was believed a sizeable force struck the Italian capital's chief freight yards through which military flows to both the

Blitzin' Betsy



B-17G-15-DL #42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy'

Aircraft delivered to Denver 10/2/43; Gr Island 10/21/43; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 10/25/43.

Crew:

Pilot: Lowell H. Watts
Co-pilot: Robert M. Kennedy
Navigator: Emmett J. Murphy
Bombardier: Edward J. Kelley Jr.

Waist gunner: Raymond E. Hess
Waist gunner: Donald W. Taylor
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Joseph B. Ramsey
Radio Operator: Ivan N. Finkle
Ball turret gunner: Robert M. Sweeney
Tail gunner: Harold A. Brassfield

Shack Rabbits

Mission 5

March 3, 1944



B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (5) Pazen, Poland, Regensburg, Germany, Brunswick, Germany, Chartres, France and Berlin, Germany.

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani

Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington

Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy

Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline

Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.

Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio

Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne

Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith

Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Berlin, Germany

Shack Rabbits

Mission 6

March 4, 1944



B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Aircraft delivered to Cheyenne 1/6/44; Gr Island 1/10/44; Grenier 1/24/44; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 2/14/44. Successful bombing missions: (6) Pazen, Poland, Regensberg, Germany, Brunswick, Germany and Chartres, France and Berlin, Germany twice.

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani

Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington

Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy

Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (pictured above)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline

Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr.

Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio

Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne

Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith

Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom

Target of this bombing mission: Berlin, Germany

Dearest wife -

Spare time is, of late, a very rare thing but when I sit down to write to you it is the best, and happiest part of my day. You have no idea how good it makes me feel to be able to sit down and 'talk' to you.

Since my last letter to you I have added another mission to my name - they are starting to add up, my sweet. The only bad feature of having them so fast is that at night we are so tired that we simply hit the 'sack' and are out until the orderly wakes us in the morning. Last night we didn't even bother to dress and go to the weekly shindig. Rock⁵⁵² went to bed while Chris⁵⁵³ and I went to the show for a few hours of relaxation. The picture was *Girl Crazy* and it did have a few laughs in it. Slept until 10:00 this morn' and then had to get up to attend a group meeting. Chris had to fly as an instructor again this afternoon - I put my time to good use by taking a much needed bath. I was honestly shades lighter when I got through; it is so darn inconvenient to wash around here that we just let it go until we become unbearable to ourselves.

Syl, Mom finally wrote me the story of Margie⁵⁵⁴ - of course it was just her side of the story and I still can't make any sense out of it. Her folks must have had a reason (good or bad) for doing what they did and knowing Margie the way I do I'm inclined to think she did more than her share in provoking them into it. I'm of the opinion that it is a dirty trick on Mom + Pop but I think they had no alternative to do what they did. I'm wondering what will be when the baby is born. Frankly my darling I'm truly happy that we were as careful as we were. I do so want a child of my own but I want to be with you when the time comes.

So once again you are to be a lady of leisure - I too hope that it holds out until summer so that you will be able to go to the shore with Faye - didn't know that you didn't care for your present job. Just what is wrong with it Butch?

Started to read one of the books you sent the other night and almost finished a can of nuts along with the book - both were very good. Reading material is scarce also but then I don't miss that too much as there isn't the time to read anyhow. Told Chris that you wanted to send out a 'Monopoly' set and he wanted to know if you could also send the time along with it.

⁵⁵² Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark is the Bombardier of Lenny's crew.

⁵⁵³ Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani is the Pilot of Lenny's crew.

⁵⁵⁴ Marjorie (Margie) Naidorf Levy is married to Lenny's brother N. Norman Levy who is a Private in the US Army. Margie is pregnant with twins and living with Lenny's mother and father in Hartford, Connecticut.

It's time once again to say goodnight to you my sweet – Remember always , my darling, that I love you so very, very much and miss you more with each passing day.

Goodnight my darling –
I love you

Lenny





Black Monday

Mission 250

March 6, 1944

On Monday 6 March 1944 the US 8th Air Force for the first time mounted a full scale daylight attack on Berlin, capital of the Third Reich. As a result of the hard fought battles on the way to the target, over it and during the return flight, 75 US 4 engine bombers and eleven escorting fighters failed to regain their bases; in no other days fighting before or after, would the 8th Air Force lose a greater number of aircraft.

A total of 730 bombers were sent to Berlin, of which 504 B-17 Flying Fortresses and 226 B-24 Liberators. The formation flew a fairly direct route to Berlin, which passed over Southeast Drenthe on both the outward and return journeys. 801 American fighters were sent along to escort the bombers. These were of the P-38 Lightning, P-47 Thunderbolt and P-51 Mustang types. Approximately 10% of the bombers did not return: a total of 75 bombers were lost. This day would become known as 'Black Monday'.

Introduction from

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe

<https://www.slodrenthe.nl/>

Target Berlin Mission 250: 6 March 1944

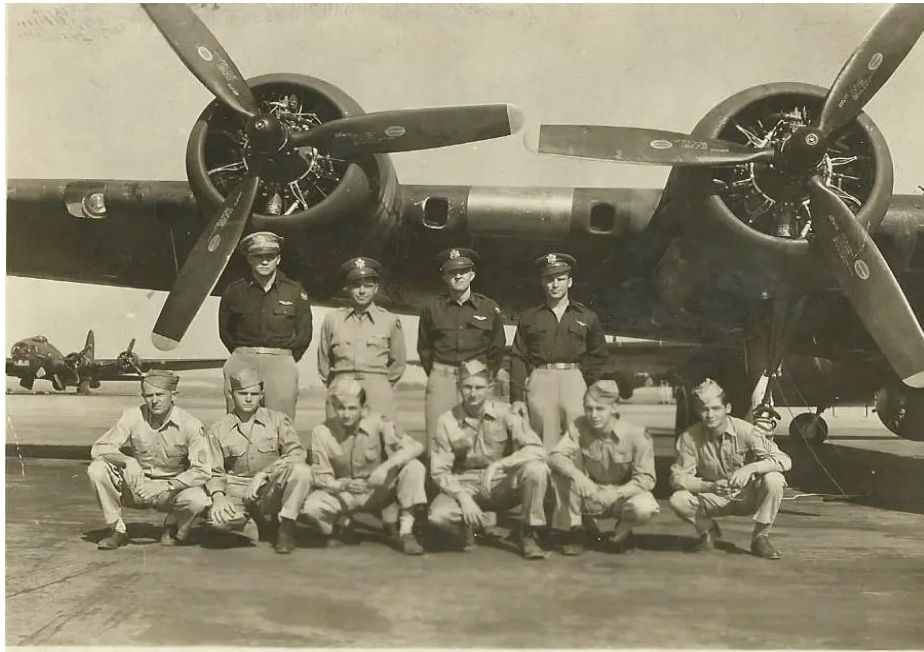
By Jeffrey Ethell and Dr Alfred Price

Green Hill Books London

Blitzing Betsy

Mission 21

March 6, 1944



B-17G-15-DL #42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy'

Aircraft delivered to Denver 10/2/43; Gr Island 10/21/43; Assigned 561BS/388BG-H Knettishall 10/25/43.

Crew:

Pilot: Lowell H. Watts (Prisoner of War)

Co-pilot: Robert M. Kennedy (Prisoner of War)

Navigator: Emmett J. Murphy (Prisoner of War)

Bombardier: Edward J. Kelley Jr. (Prisoner of War)

Waist gunner: Raymond E. Hess (Killed in Action)

Waist gunner: Donald W. Taylor (Killed in Action)

Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Joseph B. Ramsey (Prisoner of War)

Radio Operator: Ivan N. Finkle (Prisoner of War)

Ball turret gunner: Robert M. Sweeney (KIA)

Tail gunner: Harold A. Brassfield (KIA)

After taking off from RAF Knettishall at 0801 hrs, B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' of the 562nd Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group was flying the same direct route to Berlin. B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' was part of B Group, led by B-17G 42-40054 'Jinny', along with 17 other B-17 Flying Fortresses. The aircraft was carrying the usual crew of ten.

On the return from a mission to Klein Machnow, Berlin on March 6, 1944, B-17G #42-37886 'Blitzin' Betsy was severely damaged by attacks from several FW190s causing it to collide with another 388th B-17, namely #42-40054, exploding in mid-air and crashing near Emmen, Holland.

The formation followed the route and, despite several attacks by German fighters, successfully arrived at Berlin. The first group (B Group) dropped its bombs at 13:47 and hit Oranienburg, a northern district of Berlin. The second group (A Group) waited a little longer; they dropped their bombs at 14:07 and hit Wittenberg, northwest of Berlin. After completing their mission, the formation flew back towards England.

As B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' approached the Dutch/German border without fighter escort, the crew soon spotted German fighters approaching from the front and rear. Edward J. Kelley Jr., the bomb aimer, and Joseph B. Ramsey, the flight engineer, opened fire on the Focke Wulf Fw 190s approaching from the front. Harold A. Brassfield, the tail gunner, opened fire on the Fw 190s attacking from the rear.

The navigator of B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy', Emmett J. Murphy, fired a few bursts from the forward side guns and felt his knee buckle as he was hit by shrapnel. He also saw smoke coming from the bomb bay and opened the hatch to see a blaze. He tried to extinguish it but the fire extinguisher did not work. In fact, the bomb bay was not on fire but the engine and wing were on fire and flames were coming in through a large hole.

Harold A. Brassfield shouted over the intercom, *"I got one, I got one!"* And almost immediately he shouted, *"I got hit in the eye!"* Donald W. Taylor, the left side gunner, left his gunnery position to help him.

Pilot Lowell H. Watts reports: *"Our plane was set on fire by 20-mm incendiary shells fired by Fw 190s from positions 11, 12 and 1 o'clock. From the intercom conversation I got the impression that we were also being attacked from the rear, although I did not see this. The 20-mm shells entered our plane through the nose section and exploded under my feet near the fuel lines and main oxygen supply. The combination of incendiary shells, 100-octane gasoline and oxygen was of course extremely flammable and the fire spread very rapidly."*

The shooting down of B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' was attributed to Hauptmann Hugo Frey, flying Focke Wulf Fw 190A-6 Wnr. 470083. Hauptmann Hugo Frey also crashed with his aircraft on 6 March 1944, after having shot down a total of four B-17 Flying Fortresses, at Erm. It is unknown whether the gunners of B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' were the cause of its crash.

Lowell continues: *"I remember someone calling over the intercom that the plane was on fire and at the same time noticing smoke and flames coming from under my seat. Since we were flying in the forward position of the low squadron, I was in the co-pilot's seat on this mission. I requested the navigator to use a hand-held extinguisher in an attempt to control the fire.*

"Further action would be useless," Lowell said. "At that moment I gave the order over the intercom to abandon the plane, but received no acknowledgement. Whether this was due to the fact that the communication system on board had been shot to pieces or to general confusion, I do not know. The alarm switch in a B-17 is located on the left wall next to the pilot's seat; the fact that I was in the right seat made it impossible for me to operate the alarm. I did not hear him ring, and whether my co-pilot, Bob Kennedy, operated the alarm I do not know, although it was my impression that the bell did not ring.

The flames were now so intense that I could no longer see outside or even the instrument panel. I called Bob over the intercom for help. When I got no answer, I turned my head in his direction and found that he had already left the aircraft. The nose hatch, which allowed the officers in the front of the aircraft to exit, was still open, further fanning the flames. My lack of visibility made it impossible to determine exactly what happened next .

As the crew left the aircraft, I pushed the wheel forward, as there was a burning aircraft on my left, descending below the formation. I leaned forward to engage the autopilot. Just as I felt it engage, there was a violent jolt and great confusion, which I only learned later was caused by my aircraft having collided with the command aircraft of our formation, which was flying above us and was being flown by Captain Job." This was B-17G 42-40054 'Jinny'.

" Since I could not see anything because of the fire, I did not know that our aircraft had actually started to climb, although I was trying to descend. Personally, I believe that our aircraft had been damaged in the tail section, which changed the trim and caused the aircraft to climb instead of descending. I tried to reach the throttles to reduce the power, but the aircraft went into what I suspect was a kind of spin. This caused so many G-forces that I was unable to take my hand off the autopilot controls to operate the throttles. Because of the fire in the cockpit, I am not certain, but I had the impression that both inner engines were also on fire. "

Emmett J. Murphy tells his side of the story: *"During the frontal attack we were hit in the inner engines by 20 mm shells; one shell went through the Plexiglas nose, missed Ed Kelley's head and mine, and exploded in the oxygen tanks under the cockpit. The whole thing started burning. So Ed jumped out the forward hatch and I followed him, singeing my eyebrows. Bob Kennedy also jumped in time, having to knock out the fire on his chest parachute before it could hook up."*

Emmett J. Murphy was just diving out of the hatch when the explosion occurred: "When I last saw our plane, hanging from the parachute, it was on its back in a steep dive, burning like a torch with its engines screaming and running wild. Then it exploded. We were flying at an altitude of 15,000 feet when we were hit and I opened my parachute after dropping perhaps 7,000 feet , wanting to get away from the plane and out of the battle area as quickly as possible.

As I hung from my parachute I saw our fighter escort – P-47 Thunderbolts – coming up and a big dogfight developing. If we had held out a little longer the Germans would undoubtedly have been driven off.”

Lowell H. Watts jumps back a few seconds in the story: *“Knowing that my ball turret gunner, Bob Sweeney, could not have had an opportunity to escape, I tried to relieve the G-forces on the plane by pulling back on the wheel with all my strength. I was now aware that the windshield, the top of the cockpit and the dorsal turret were destroyed and that I was, quite frankly, sitting in a burning pile of scrap metal. The G-forces finally subsided somewhat, but I am not certain of the position of the plane at that moment. We had been in a spinning dive for so long that I expected the plane to crash to the ground at any moment.*

At the same moment there was an explosion in the aircraft and I was catapulted out of the top of the cockpit with considerable force. As I was wearing a back parachute and not a chest type, my parachute was in place and I was able to open it shortly before I hit the ground. An Fw 190 shot past me into the depths with the pilot apparently wounded or dead in the cockpit and crashed close to where I landed.”

Lowell H. Watts, Joseph B. Ramsey, Ivan N. Finkle and Raymond E. Hess were all thrown from the plane by the explosion. All but Raymond E. Hess managed to open their parachutes. He was found a short distance from the wreckage with his unopened parachute still on.

The collision marked the end of both B-17G 42-37886 'Blitzing Betsy' and B-17G 42-40054 'Jinny'.

from

Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek Drenthe
<https://www.slodrenthe.nl/b-17g-flying-fortress-42-37886-blitzing-betsy/>

Suzy Sagtitz

March 6, 1944



Delivered Cheyenne 25/9/43; Gr Isle 8/10/43; Romulus 12/10/43; Assigned 562BS/388BG Knettishall 14/10/43; Missing in Action Berlin 6/3/44 with

Montgomery Givens, Co-pilot: Harry Teat, Navigator: Ken Betts, Bombardier: Larry McMillan, Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Roy Kesanen, Radio Operator: Jim Geraghty, Ball turret gunner: Tom Foulds, Waist gunner: Jack Karr, Tail gunner: Dan Walstra (9 Prisoner of War); Waist gunner: Willard McGee (KIA-killed by enemy a/c, over Holland) Missing Air Crew Report 3082. SUSY-SAG-TITZ.

Suzy was shot down at 15:05 hours by Hauptmann Hugo Frey in his Fw 190, who himself was killed in the air to air battle, after shooting down 4 B-17s in the battle. Enemy aircraft crashed at Oud Schoonebekerveld, alongside Dommerskanaal, near Emmen, Hol.

Suzy was a loaner AC, Givens AC 'Quarterback', was being repaired from battle damage from March 4 Berlin Mission.

from

American Air Museum
<https://www.americanairmuseum.com>

Shack Rabbits

Mission 7

March 6, 1944 - Black Monday



B-17G 42-38177 'Shack Rabbits'

Crew:

Pilot: Augustine (Chris) Benedict Christiani (Prisoner of War)

Co-pilot: Clarence (Red) Darryl Farrington (Killed in Action)

Navigator: Leonard (Lenny) Levy (Prisoner of War)

Bombardier: Raymond (Rock) Robert Newmark (Prisoner of War)

Waist gunner: William N. Kline (Prisoner of War)

Waist gunner: William (Bill) Alfred Pope Jr. (Prisoner of War)

Flight engineer/top turret gunner: Salvatore (Sal) Ciaccio (Killed in Action)

Radio Operator: William Burtle Mayne (Killed in Action)

Ball turret gunner: Rupert Garland Smith (Killed in Action)

Tail gunner: John Clayton Griscom (Killed in Action)

Target of this bombing mission: the VKF Ball Bearing Works at Erkner, an eastern suburb of Berlin, about seven miles from the city center.

Shack Rabbits failed to hit the primary target in Berlin (VKF Ball Bearing) and dropped bombs on the secondary target. On the way back, close to the Dutch border, *Shack Rabbits* fell slightly back from the formation and was attacked by a German Focke-Wulf Fw 190A-6 Wnr at around 14:50. 470083, flown by Hauptmann Hugo Frey. This attack damaged the aircraft to such an extent that the crew of *Shack Rabbits* was forced to leave the aircraft. Five of the ten crew members manage to bring themselves in safety with their parachute. The other five either failed to leave the plane or their parachute malfunctioned. The aircraft crashed and its remains were later found in a swamp at Neu-Ringer, 14 miles north of Nordhorn, Ger.