

Folder 14: Edna Minker, August – December 1944

During this period Lee Minker finished operational training with his crew in Gulfport MS, flew to England in October to be stationed as one of the replacement crews for the 447th bomb group.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] August 4, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Update of summer activities: first performance of Brandywiners for the sisters, family members travels. Luncheon for the United War Fund. Trip to Elkton explosive plant for Women's Society of Christian Service to assist with leisure activities for workers.			
Names: Mrs. Lamnot du Pont Copeland			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] August 9, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Various young men, friends of Shirley's are coming to Wilmington. Report on Ginger's puppies noting that with rationing old shoes to chew on are not available. Watermelons are at an outrageous price of \$1.50 or more.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] August 15, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Detailed report of a one-day trip to NYC in the heat including Radio City and the Rockettes. Edna's longing for her son is expressed as they attend family events without him. Comments about recruiting for the war. Bernice may get a scholarship to Tower Hill [School]. Enclosing clippings including one about an RAF ace pilot.			
Names: [Dominic Salvatore] Gentile			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] August 17, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Long hot spell, complaints make her think of him in Gulfport. Wishing he were there to enjoy the fruits of summer with them. Discussion of Shirley's future and voice training. Hoping to go to the beach after Labor Day. More news of local boys, Tom Twilley wounded in the invasion.			
Names: Tom Twilley			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] August 21, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Anxious they had not heard from him, letter came for Bernice. Report on party Bernice held using one of the cottages at the [Ferris] school. One of the boys ran away, they may have to go to Maine to get him. Asks Lee about his possible shift to a B-29 as the war in Europe is now progressing for the Allies.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] August 25, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Shirley's voice teacher wants her to stay in Wilmington this winter rather than return to college. Recognizes that the war news has been exaggerated, wonders if it is going to impact his training. Invites him to bring home any members of the crew. Daddy and Bernice want to keep one of the puppies. Long dry spell has damaged the garden, asks his advice.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
August 28, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Problems with money orders he has sent; death of Mr. Gassaway's son in training plane crash; snapshots of puppies. News of Dick Rhoades and Johnny Curlett. News of his sisters.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] September 1, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Shirley has decided to return to Williamsport to finish her two year course. Report on Lee's finances and taxes. Daddy will not go with them to the beach. The Red Cross was to conduct life-saving training at the [Ferris] School, cancelled due to infantile paralysis [outbreak in summer of 1944].			
Names: [George] Hering			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday, September 6, [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Rehoboth Beach, DE
Wishing Lee was with them at the beach. Asks if he knows anything about the future; wonders how Germany can hold on. Reports on the family and another friend who has left to serve.			
Names: Bill Boykin			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday [September 9, 1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Rehoboth Beach, DE
Brings the family vacation alive for her son describing people, the dinner menu, and their sunburns. Edna's anxiety emerges as the time grows close for Lee to leave for overseas. Regrets he was not able to finish college at Dickinson and prays he will be able to re-enter soon.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] September 13, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Lee is expecting a change of address on Sept. 22. Wishing he could have enjoyed the vacation with them. News of Shirley and activities of the Ferris School.			
Names: Ben Johns			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] September 18, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
A storm did considerable damage to the cottage they stayed in at Rehoboth. His sisters are getting ready for school. Have convinced Ralph Sr. not to make the hectic trip to Savannah [where Lee was stationed]. Lee told them he will be leaving from Hunter Field [Georgia]. Christmas boxes for overseas have to be shipped by Oct. 15, will they have a new address by then?			
Names: [George] Herings, Justin Kyser, Jimmy Goldey			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] September 20, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Bernice is going to Tower Hill [high school], Edna describes her classes and hopes she will buckle down to her studies. The pup that they kept is getting into mischief. For the first time they cannot get butter and are eating margarine, but feels this is not important. Covers her worry for Lee with expressions of support and love.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday morning [September ?, 1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Excited to have talked with her son last night, Ralph Sr. was not home. Reassuring him with faith that there is a presence other than his own as he prepared to leave Gulfport to go overseas.			

There is a two-week gap in letters as Lt. Lee Minker transfers from Gulfport to debarkation at Hunter Field, Georgia.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, October 2, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
[Note: the addition of the date of 9/29 in the first sentence was made by Lee Minker in the 1990s] Responds to news of Lee's delayed departure due to loss of co-pilot. His father is conducting a funeral service for a pilot who was killed in an accident. Shirley's activities at Williamsport, Bernice is not comfortable socially at the new school but is studying harder. Edna will be busy with the new United Fund Drive. More announcements of weddings, friends going overseas or wounded returning. News of Dickinson[College], fraternities are now closed. Consoles Lee about the loss of his co-pilot, hopeful for the new man [Gordon Dodge].			
Names: Howell Wilkins [Dickinson]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] October 3, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The puppy was named Pilot and is growing to be part of the family. Edna and Ralph Sr. activities.			

2nd Lieutenant Ralph Lee Minker departed Hunter Field, GA on Wednesday, October 4, 1944. With his crew they flew a B-17 to Wales, flying up the east coast of the U.S. and over Wilmington on their way to England. They arrived at Rattlesden Army Air Force Base, England, on October 13, 1944 as a replacement crew for the 447th bomb group.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday, October 7 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
This letter is full of excitement, love and longing as Lee flew low and dipped over the fields of the Ferris School on his way to Bangor, ME. Details of family and friends. Edna expresses her dissatisfaction with her son having to be engaged in war.			
Names: Professor Russell Thompson [Dickinson College]			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] October 10, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
First V-Mail, asks if typing can be read. Talks about his girlfriend, Julia [Taylor] and his savings account. Reports that Wendell Wilkie died.			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] October 11, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Short reports on everything at home: the World Series, Bernice's studies, the United War Fund Campaign. Hoping to hear from him.			
Names: Francis McEnery [in France]			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] October 13, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Ralph Sr. is in NYC, the Ferry Command goes to Paris daily in 20 hours. Report of United War Fund, and next War Bond drive. Asks which air force he is in so they can follow his operations.			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Saturday] October 14, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Having difficulty printing in the small space of the V-Mail. News of his sister's activities.			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] October 17, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
News of the Ferris School. Saw Julia [Taylor] in church. No letters from Lee.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday, October 19, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Relieved to have received his cable on Tuesday that he arrived, waiting for first letter. Asks about his crew replacements of co-pilot and a gunner. Reports of three friends with sons in the service. Discusses the war in Europe and the Pacific. Tells him the sports news, Shirley's activities, and asks if he has named his plane.			
Names: Howell Wilkins			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] October 20, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Describes the damage from the [Category 4 Cuba-Florida] hurricane that swept up the east coast. Cheered by the report of MacArthur landing in the Philippines. Unprecedented numbers have registered to vote in the election. She is in a quandary as to who to vote for. More reports of friends with a son overseas, eager to learn more about where he is.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] October 25, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Shirley received good marks, concerned about Bernice's grades. News of the garden, wonders what weather he is enjoying.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] October 26, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Sent pictures of the pup, Pilot. Heartened by the news of the sinking of the Japanese Fleet [Battle of Leyte Gulf]. Spoke with Julia [Taylor]. Having difficulty finding staff for the [Ferris] school. Anxious to hear from him.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday, October 28 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received his V-Mail with change of address. The President [Roosevelt] was in town, as was [boxer] Joe Lewis. She is alone in the office continually interrupted with problems.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, October 30, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
She is concerned about Ben Johns who had dated Shirley, now going into the Merchant Marines. The pup Pilot is getting a dog house. Edna observes the beautiful fall weather and stoically comments on the beauty that is being destroyed.			
Drs. Edgar and Elizabeth Miller, Ben Johns			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] November 3, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The polls are giving Roosevelt only a few points over Dewey. The United War Fund Drive went over the goal. Edna recognizes all the agencies that took part and the growing need for social welfare. Still no letters from Lee, they are reading about air raids over Holland and Germany and wondering if he is involved. The closing lines are full of love and support.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday morning, November 6 [1944]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Lee's bank account has grown to \$1000. An evening with friends leads to an argument about capitalism.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday, November 9, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Results of the presidential and local elections. Prescient thought about Roosevelt's health and Truman as president. Report in the paper about several airmen that included Lt. Ralph Minker, but still no letters from him. Visit from a serviceman. Daddy preparing for next war bond drive.			
Names: Adkins, Robert Hocker, S. Bancroft Parkway [Army Air Forces], Ed Wojszewski			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
Date Nov 11 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is heartfelt in letting Lee know that his first letter arrived. Two minutes of silence on Armistice Day to recognize losses of WWI and now those fighting again. Wally Wroten, first boy from Grace Church to die.			
Names: Sgt. Wallace Wroten [Killed in action, Oct. 24, 1944]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] November 14, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
News of the weather, the family, sports scores and bond drives. Sinking of the <i>Tirpitz</i> with news of local servicemen.			
Names: 2 nd Lt. Hugh Figgett, Jr., Wm Tapie			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] November 17, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Had a card that Julia [Taylor] had heard from him on the 14 th . Edna describes a Methodist Church project to raise funds for overseas relief and rebuilding. Sends addresses of family/friends who are overseas. News of a new offensive in Europe, hopeful war would be over by Christmas.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] November 20, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Excited to receive 2 nd letter from Lee. Interested to know that Lee named his plane <i>Blue Hen Chick</i> . Will send information for the crew about significance of the name. Sports and family news. Will be baking for Thanksgiving, Ralph Sr. birthday [Nov. 22, 1897] and Bernice's birthday [Nov. 24, 1928].			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday, November 22, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Sun is shining for her, 3 letters from Lee. Describes plans for Thanksgiving, thinking of him. Cannot send pictures of the pup due to shortage of film. Thankful that Lee is well, praises him.			
Names: Alfred H. Carey, Jr. [Army]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday, November 25, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received his escapee photo, hopes he doesn't have to use it. [See scrapbook p. 36] Edna writes a lovely description of Thanksgiving Day to connect him with home. Received four letters from him this week, but not in order.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] November 27, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Enclosing front page of the paper with write-up of both Ralph Sr. and Ralph Jr. State archives would like a photo of the plane. His check arrived for the growing savings account, sports news.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] November 30, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Recalling that last year at this time they thought the war would be over by this time. Churchill warns war may last through the summer. High rate of venereal disease reported in Wilmington. No letters for a week, knows he will write when he can. Deposited his checks, there is a limit of \$200 a month for deposits so she bought bonds.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Saturday] December 2, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Uncle Marion got tickets for the Army-Navy game. Includes a quote from MacArthur from the book she bought Ralph Sr. The Army is going to purchase all the chickens raised in Delaware. Another boy from Ferris went on pass and did not return.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, December 4, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received his letter written November 8 [commenting on the election]. Comments on his cousin, Marion Jr. News of the [Grace] church, social life, soldiers in church.			
Names: Randy Clark, Ross Pillsborough			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday, December 5, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Enjoyed Lee's description of visit to London. Reports on shake-up in the State Dept. reflecting their continuing interest in the future and the economy. Bernice is to attend the launching of a ship in the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Asks about his rank.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] December 7, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Remembering Pearl Harbor on the 3 rd anniversary, Shirley turns 19. Edna's awareness of world politics is reflected in concern about future role of Russia. Bond rally and other social activities.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday, December 9, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Compares time V-Mail and air mail takes to get to them. Plans for Christmas trip to NYC, thinks he may be home on furlough by the spring.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] December 11, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The family's political mindfulness is reflected as Edna sends Lee the <i>NY Times Overseas Weekly</i> . The church [Grace Methodist] remembers those in service every week.			
Names: Mason Robertson, U.S. Navy			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] December 13, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is pleased she found the perfect gift for his girlfriend [Julia Taylor]. Describes the details of the death of Wallie Wroten [from Grace Church] who was awarded the Silver Star. Report of Bernice's experience at Tower Hill H.S. and a play put on at Ferris School.			
Names: Wallie Wroten			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] December 15, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
When Edna went to Philadelphia by train, she sat with a Marine; trains are full of soldiers going home for Christmas. Bernice is the first girl to sing in a Ferris School show. Bought daddy a Christmas present from him, have their packages arrived?			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] December 18, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Christmas is not the same for Edna with Lee away and thousands fighting. Attending the Messiah at church[Grace Methodist] is another occasion to miss her son.			
Names: Clifford Diver, Richard Ackart, Army Medical Corps			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] December 21, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
<p>News of all the Christmas events, Shirley is home, she is making a gown for Bernice for a dance. They are going to the Met[Metropolitan Opera] to hear <i>Rigoletto</i>. The family is not complete for Edna, each family event brings a wish for Lee to be with them. News of the German offensive [Battle of the Bulge] has them worried he will have to go out on a mission on Christmas but there is a news blackout.</p>			
Names: Lawrence Tibbet			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] December 25, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
<p>This is the most poignant and moving letter in the collection as Edna's heartfelt description of their Christmas is combined with imagining Lee's day and the promise of peace in the new year.</p>			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] December 27, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
<p>Lee had sent Christmas greetings to many friends in Wilmington, all called Edna. A mother's pride recognizes his hard work at now being a 1st Lt. and commander of a six-plane group. Reports on more difficulties of staffing at the [Ferris] school and the hearings on the Family Court Bill which they are trying to pass.</p>			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] December 29, 1944	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
<p>Edna is now filing his letters in the special box Ralph Sr. gave her for Christmas. Letter continues on January 2, 1945. Brings Lee into home life with description of holiday visits including a sailor who stayed with them. Paper reported that 1600 bombers were over the continent on New Year's Day [Lee was among them, his 15th mission]. The FBI arrested 2 men who were landed by sub on a Maine beach in November. Ralph Sr. is working on the passage of the Family Court Bill. Wonders how his Christmas was. Their pride in Lee's accomplishments is mixed with the hope that the war will soon be over.</p>			
Names: Mason Robertson			