

Folder 15: Edna Minker, January-April 1945

Lee Minker was promoted to 1st lieutenant in early January. With the crew of his B-17 named *Blue Hen Chick*, he flew missions 13 missions in January providing tactical support during the Battle of the Bulge. Consequently he wrote few letters home.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday, January 9, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Much to their surprise, Lee's picture appeared in the morning paper. Edna has an ongoing struggle with pride in his accomplishments and frustration that his talent is being used for war. She updates him on events at the [Ferris] School and friends who have been sent overseas. Asks what the air medal means.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday, January 13, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is elected president of Peninsula Conference of a women's group but fears she will not have the time to devote to it. Going to the inauguration of Gov. Bacon. Documentary movie <i>Memphis Belle</i> will be shown at the school. Hoping for a long letter from him.			
Names: Billie Jim Tawes [POW in Germany?], Governor Walter W. Bacon			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] January 15, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Writes about his tax return, although servicemen can delay filing. An article in the <i>NY Times</i> about the "lost generation" inspires to think about the future and the role Lee will play in the future of the country.			
Names: Ben Johns			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] January 17, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Delivery of mail from overseas is uneven. Report on a snow storm. Asks what he meant by "stand down."			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] January 19, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Everyone in the family has received a letter from Lee. Remembering good times when he went sledding. Apologies for complaining about not hearing from him, recognizing the pressure he is under.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] January 22, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
The family is so relieved and appreciative to have received his cablegram letting them know he is OK. Bernice and a friend spotted a boy from the school who was escaping, they gave chase and she fell out of the car. The movie <i>Winged Victory</i> increases Edna's admiration for what her son has been through in training and now in combat. Asks about his crew.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] January 25, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna tries to understand what her son is experiencing, comments on flying through icy clouds. Family news of grandmothers, church meetings, Shirley and Bernice each will be graduating. She wrote letters to parents or wives of crew members.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] January 29, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Atlantic City, N.J.
Report of weather, Shirley's weekend at home, grandmothers. Edna comments on the situation in Europe with the Russians advancing and hopes Germany will collapse soon.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Tuesday] January 30, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Atlantic City, NJ
A quick note from her trip to Atlantic City. Would like the whole family to visit there together.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] February 1, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received a letter from the mother of Lee's navigator, Wesley Pitts. Problems with runaways at [Ferris] School. Included a prayer/hymn written for boys away.			
Names: Dr. William Stidger, Boston University [School of Theology], Wesley Pitts			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, February 5, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is heartened by the progress of the war in Germany and troops in Manila. Looking forward to Lee coming home as his tour must be nearly complete. More letters from family of the crew. Impact of the war on the homefront: limited travel, coal shortage. Recognizes he is taking part in the final offensive against Germany.			
Names: Justin Kaiser			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] February 7, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is proud but doesn't understand the military awards; the newspaper reported that Lee has added an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal. Commentary on Catholic priest reaction to giving high school students information about venereal disease. Recommends a movie to see in London.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, February 9, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Shirley sent home his letter of Jan. 21. News of Ralph Sr., Shirley, Bernice, Grandmother Minker. Their puppy, Pilot, is quite wild and destructive.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] February 12, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received clippings from him on his trip to London. Uncertain news about basketball and baseball due to limits on travel. Ralph Sr. going to draft board to help send off 300 men. Shortage of help at the [Ferris] School continues.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] February 14, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Sent clippings about boys who were in his high school class. Looking ahead to the future, Edna comments on the Crimean Conference. Frustration with politics that are preventing passage of the Family Court Bill. Signed Your Valentine.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday, February 16, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received a letter from wife of radio operator, Olaf Larsen. Did not want to upset him with report of friend who was missing in action, now a German POW. Charming anecdote about boys at [Ferris School] being taught to dance. Edna's belief in the role of a higher power is conveyed in a quote as women gather for a World Day of Prayer.			
Names: [Corrine] Larsen, Leland Inscho [prisoner of war]			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] February 19, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Electricity is rationed, no lights or signs. No baseball this summer. Discussion of local politics. Gives her son unconditional support for what he is doing, praying for the crew.			
Names: David Lake [U.S. Army]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] February 21, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Celebrating their wedding anniversary [March 31, 1923], wishing that Shirley and Lee could be there as it is also Easter. She is typing up the article from the paper about the <i>Blue Hen Chick</i> to send to the crew members' families.			
Names: Jack Harayda, Francis McEnery [boys from Ferris School in the service], David Lake, Billie Jim Tawes			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] February 26, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Puzzled over the uneven delivery of mail from overseas, doesn't think airmail stamps make any difference. The school showed <i>Combat America</i> , a film about the B-17. Responds to Lee's tales of a trip to London and plays he has seen. Shirley is at home. Neighbors have a nephew named McCall [in the Lee's bomb group] who is a POW. Still cannot get film. Received a letter from mother of ball turret gunner, Max Shepherd.			
Names: [Keith W.] McCall, [co-pilot in the 447 th BG shot down Oct. 6 1944], Max Shepherd			

On February 27, 1945, the crew of the *Blue Hen Chick* flew their 35th mission, completing their tour of duty and qualifying for membership in the Lucky Bastards Club. 1st Lt. Ralph L. Minker signed on for a second tour, was on leave for several weeks.

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] February 28, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Still looking for film, wants a picture of his plane, named the <i>Blue Hen Chick</i> . Reports on the school and sports events.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] March 2, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Lee sent propaganda leaflets home [see scrapbook p. 46], Bernice took them to school for translation. Plans for the future include building veterans hospital and a General Motors plant.			
Names: Rabbi Tavel, Col. Irving Carpenter [chaplain]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Saturday] March 10, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Disappointment in Lee's news that he signed on for a second tour while still supporting his decision. Asks about a new crew. Pleased he met up with an old friend in London. Her heart reaches out to him as the war is coming to a close.			
Names: Bob Cassel, Jack Warren, Tom Warren			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] March 12, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Shirley starred in a show on campus, Bernice had a great time seeing her. Article in the paper that 200 boys from Ferris were in the service. Reaches out to her son in sharing their love of gardening with notes from home.			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
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[Wednesday] March 14, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna prepared his taxes, contains report of his pay. Finally found film, sent to him on March 13. Asks if he has a new assignment.			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
March 16, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Relieved that she has completed taxes; discusses Lee's taxes. Uncle Marion and family will come this weekend; Bernice's schedule. Difficulties about sending him packages. Asks whether he has seen Chaplain Irving Carpenter.			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] March 18 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
With Lee's most recent letter and a promised visit from Chaplain Carpenter, Edna begins to be reassured that her son is returning to normal. Edna keeps up with the political issues affecting the [Ferris] school in discussion of the Family Court Bill. Encourages him to worship during the Lenten season.			
Names: Howell Finn, [Col. Irving] Carpenter, Dr. Prettyman			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] March 21, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Wishes he were home to hear his sister sing a lead role. She is pleased with the good news in the Pacific. Reports of members of the family.			
Names: Dr. Prettyman [Dickinson College president]			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] March 23, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Bernice did a wonderful job singing. Talks about Easter vacations for Shirley and Bernice. Haven't anyone on the staff who can coach basketball for the boys.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] March 26, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Received a package of letters from Lee. Report on the garden. Looking for the end of the war in April as there are reports that Germany is disintegrating. The Family Court Bill may be defeated again. Wishing he was going to be with them on Easter Sunday. Plaintive hope that he will be next to here on Easter, 1946.			
Names: Meredith Ballard			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] March 29, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Describes spring at home for her son, she contrasts the beauty with the destruction going on elsewhere. President of Dickinson is still in a coma. Did not get a letter from him last week. [Lee was on leave in England.]			
Names: Dr. Prettyman			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, April 2, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna brings the family Easter celebration to Lee with detailed description and longing that he was not part of it. Shirley's plans for after her medical course. Comments on Lee's letter of March 19 in which he describes a "typical mission." Celebrated their 22 nd wedding anniversary on Saturday. Shirley and Bernice are each graduating, will he be home for the celebrations?			
Names: Lt. Layton, Jimmie Cooper			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] April 4, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Family problems with some cousins causes Edna to comment on the pain of ingratitude from children. Wonders if he is still flying.			
Names: Dr. Stidger [friend from Concord, MA]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] April 6, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
She is preparing Lee's room for his return. Russia denounced the [1941 Neutrality] Pact with Japan, a sign of shortening the war in the Pacific. Family Court Bill still has not passed.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] April 9, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Have not heard from Lee since March 19. Shirley is in the May Queen court at school. Describes the Dickinson dinner. She knows the war will soon be over, but not fast enough with a son in the service.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Thursday] April 12, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Edna is depressed when she has not heard from, wishing he could call as Shirley can. The Family Court Bill did not pass as each party is looking for their own gain rather than the bigger picture. More of the ongoing description of the garden and what is in bloom, a love of gardening shared with her son. Bernice is busy with senior class activities.			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday] April 18, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
News of President Roosevelt's death, prayers for Truman. The Family Court Bill was finally passed. Going to Raleigh, NC to pick up a boy from [Ferris] School. Shirley's graduation activities, trying to decide on a school for Bernice. Still no word from him since March 19.			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Monday] April 23, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Gives Lee a detailed description of the trip to NC Stayed overnight in Richmond with a minister as the hotels are full on the weekends with servicemen and their families. Received an envelope from him with money order but no letter. Thinks he has earned 5 oak leaf clusters.			

Date V-Mail	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Wednesday, April 25, 1945]	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Historic day – opening of the San Francisco Conference, Edna recognizes the need for international cooperation to sustain peace. She is fearful for the current generation of German youth with reports of atrocities. Sports news.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday] April 27, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Shirley is bringing six girls home for the weekend. Reports on the San Francisco Conference. Daddy busy with the next war bond drive. Did he get his Easter box?			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday, April 30, 1945	Edna Minker	Lee Minker	Wilmington, DE
Their effort to beautify the grounds. Relief at finally receiving a cablegram from Lee, rumors of peace, expecting news any hour. Four boys left the grounds. Ralph Sr. is stressed with the lack of personnel and problems of the boys. Hoping he will be home for his sisters' commencements.			
Names: Dick Rhoades [headed for the Pacific]			