

Folder 1: Ralph L. "Lee" Minker, Jr., February – April 9, 1943

Basic Training, Miami Beach

The first six weeks of letters have days of the week but no date. They have been arranged in the most probable sequence based on the content and comments in the family's letters. Dates in brackets are the most likely, given the exchange of content. A few of the dates differ from those in the book, *An American Family in World War II*, which was written in 2005.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday noon [February 28, 1943]	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Minker's first impressions of Army life. Saw Glenn L. Martin airplane plant and airfield outside of Baltimore en route to basic training in Miami. Picking up gear, assignment to hotels, six in a room.			
Names: Stowell and Springer, Michels [Dickinson College]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday evening [March 2, 1943]	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Lee is trying to quickly adapt to army life, but complains about the lack of preparation. First review, in the boiling sun. Has first GI haircut [see scrapbook photo, p. 4]. Asks mother to rush him some basic articles.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday night [March 3, 1943]	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Lee is lonely and frustrated with training and the news that basic training will be 8 weeks instead of 4. Reports on trouble with his leg after marching. [Football injury from high school.] New program will have them spend 5 months in college after basic.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday evening [March 5, 1943]	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Beginning to toughen up after all the drilling. Describes marching, the songs they sing. Comments on the many colleges and part of the US represented by the soldiers he is with.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday night [March 7, 1943]	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Moved from the Coral Reef Hotel to the well-appointed Atlantis Hotel. Had their first free time, meet several boys from Dickinson. Had pictures taken [see p. 4 of scrapbook].			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday night [March 9, 1943]	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Miami Beach, FL
His sister's letter cheered him up, he had received only a few letters while writing over twenty. Describes their sergeant who was in Corregidor, pleased with the leadership. Grappling with loneliness as expressed by efforts to stay connected with friends and family..."hoping for a deluge of letters soon."			
Names: Master Sergeant Ross			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday evening [March 13, 1943]	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Description of army life covers physical training, KP duty, swimming, and an insipid talk by Quentin Reynolds. For the first time is impressed with the army when secretary of war and Air Corps chief reviewed their parade.			
Names: Secretary of War Harold Stimson, General "Hap" Arnold.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday noon [March 14, 1943]	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Disgusted with army inefficiency as they had to move hotels after only 3 hours sleep. Pleased with the officers. Found KP monotonous. Everyone is feeling homesick.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday [March 16, 1943]	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Asks for addresses, lists all the people he is writing to. Cookies arrived. Will probably leave in 8 days. Found it good to be together with all the Dickinson boys during PT.			
Names: Bill Virgin [Dickinson], Harold Stowell [Dickinson]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday night [March 17, 1943]	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Complains about mail delivery largely because of changes in address. Reports of more tests, pictures, washing clothes. Admonishes Shirley to review his algebra book.			

On Friday, March 20 Lee Minker was stricken with an unknown illness.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday morning [March 22, 1943]	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Lee reports he is in the hospital with a temperature and a rash. Has concern for his mother, asks dad not to tell her. Does not want to be delayed, hopes he will be able to rejoin his squadron.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday night [March 31, 1943]	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Returning to duty after stay in the hospital. Aware that his letters may be upsetting to the family. Reports back on letters from friends and events she shared. Once again, he is bored and concerned about getting back to his flight unit. Will be shipping out soon.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday night [April 1, 1943]	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Shares news of friends he has heard from. Asks for some good jokes to lighten their mood.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday night [April 1, 1943]	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Lee's flight [class], #629 was shipped out. Lets the family know he won't be able to write during shipping. Realizes that he is complaining and criticizing, assures the family he is OK. Reports on pay arrangements and letters he has received. Unsure of why he got sick.			
Names: Billy Jim Tawes, Bill Hyde [Dickinson]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening [April 4, 1943]	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Gives mother a report of his illness and being in the hospital, downplaying the symptoms. In a waiting phase for new shipping. Congratulates his parents on their wedding anniversary [March 31].			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
[Friday April 9, 1943]	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Miami Beach, FL
Scrawled, hurried note to let the family know he was leaving for a new assignment, further basic training either at U. of Nebraska or Creighton. They have not been paid, asks for \$10.			