

Folder 3: Ralph L. "Lee" Minker, Jr., July – September 1943

Minker is stationed at one of the major classification centers, Santa Ana Army Air Forces Base, California, for classification and pre-flight training.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday night July 1, 1943	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Anxious about classification, lectures on disease and military intelligence. News of [General Douglas] MacArthur's new offensive. Letters and packages received.			
Names: Col. Robertson (base commander)			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday morning July 4, 1943	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Let-down in morale over classification and prospect of CT D [College Training Detachment]. Shirley singing in Brandywiners. Makes suggestions for dad to supplement his staff at Ferris Industrial School for Boys.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday noon July 6, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Good news! Classified as PILOT. Comment on washouts, eager to get to pre-flight, training being speeded up. Loved PX specials for 20 cents. "Wings to Victory" is broadcast from Santa Ana. Picture taken in cadet uniform. Detail of daily schedule.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday July 12, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Starting six week pre-flight course, will leave little time for letter writing.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday afternoon July 22, 1943	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Struggles with classes in aircraft identification, gunnery practice and PT Over 500,000 servicemen in a 100 mile radius of LA.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday afternoon July 30, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Expecting more intensified training, anxiety about washing out. Received 87 on test, Paramount Studios and Douglas Aircraft providing dates for their graduation party.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday afternoon August 1, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Not much news, questions about home.			
Names: Saw a boy from Dickinson, Rae deMatis [MIA March 22, 1945 – Dickinson College Archives]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday afternoon August 3, 1943	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Writing from altitude chamber to test eardrums, climbing fast to 38,000 feet. Lectures on high altitude flying. Rule to use oxygen masks above 10,000 feet. Took five minutes to come down, feeling fine, eager to take a B-25 up.			

Several boys went on pass to Los Angeles and the Hollywood Canteen, Lee sent a package home with autographs and other memorabilia.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening August 8, 1943	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
The trip to LA on first weekend pass – 3 pages of detail. Heard Jimmy Dorsey at the Palladium, saw Gene Tierney and George Raft at the Brown Derby. Went on to the floor show at Hollywood Canteen. Kay Kaiser and his band, danced with Hedy Lamarr. Mailed insurance policy. [Autographs are in the scrapbook.]			
Names: Jimmy Dorsey, Gene Tierney, George Raft, Kay Kaiser, Patricia Morrison, Hedy Lamarr, Ish Kabibble, Grauman's Chinese Theatre			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday morning August 11, 1943	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Pistol, rifle, machine gun practice at the beach. Received dog tags. Bearing down on discipline. Asks for wallet and about the Blue Rocks.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening August 15, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Pre-flight exams to start, worried about code, physics, and aircraft identification. Cadet discipline, pilot glamour, comment on growth of major cities.			
Names: Frank Sinatra at the Hollywood Bowl			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday afternoon August 21, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Final exams, anxiety about passing aircraft identification. Speculation about future assignments, will be sending pictures and old letters home. Report of basketball championship game that included All Americans and Big Ten stars.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday evening August 25, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Complaints that after 6 months they have had no furlough and are just beginning actual training with 50% washout rate. Asks for package from home.			
Names: Governor Warren, Major General Yost, Major General Cousins.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday afternoon August 27, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Shipping orders to Thunderbird Field II, best primary training in the country. Will fly Stearmans, graduation ceremonies for class 64 today.			
Names: Colonel Hans Adamsun, [Eddie] Rickenbacker			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening August 29, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
Preparations for leaving for Thunderbird, saw movie of the same name.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday evening August 31, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Santa Ana AAB, CA
New address, food and accommodations improved, impressions of Phoenix, AZ and the desert. Acclimating to new base, Monday we fly.			

Promoted to the rank of Army Air Cadet, Lee Minker is stationed at Thunderbird Field II, Scottsdale, Arizona.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday noon September 2, 1943	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Class 44-C settling in to the heat and dust. Detailed schedule, lecture topics. Must have 65 hours in the air and make 103 landings in two months. Details of physical training. Report on pay, not able to write to everyone. Questions about home.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday evening September 6, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Details of first flight in the Stearman, compares to training in the Ryan. Reasons why 40% of class will washout. Tried to call home. Ground school topics, attended Protestant service.			
Names: Ray Newton – flight instructor, Jim Gist –roommate			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday evening September 8, 1943	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Shirley's college choice, answers questions from her letters.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday afternoon September 9, 1943	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Received snapshot of his sisters, Bernice is in the AWVS [American Women's Volunteer Services]. Having problems with take offs and landings.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening September 12, 1943	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Tried to call home, package arrived, four hours of flying, nervous about precision and take offs. Studies pointing them to Asia Theatre.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday evening September 14, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Sent \$50 home. Trolley strike in Wilmington. Answers her questions. Phoenix is overcrowded-only 50% can go in on weekends.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday evening September 16, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Analysis of impact of air development on the future. Questions about the future of airlines and air sovereignty. Has seven hours of flying, worried that he does not get the feel of it.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening September 19, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Trouble getting a phone call through to Wilmington, family saw the movie <i>Thunderbird</i> . Wedding announcements of friends. List of people he is writing to. Questions about Wilmington sport teams.			
Names: Mr. Yingst [high school football coach], Bill Virgin [Dickinson], Howell Finn [Dickinson], Ralph Lower [Dickinson], Leland Inscho, Mike Zographone, Mr. Boykins, Julia [Taylor], Henry Good and Billy Jim Tawes.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday morning September 23, 1943	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Got a call through on Monday night. Hoping to solo, schedule of flying time between solo and dual controls.			
Names: Howell Wilkins [Dickinson]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday evening September 29, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Concern about being washed out of flight training. Passed solo checks, has fourteen hours flying time, sixty five regular landings. Sent package of cactus to mother. Discusses various sports.			
Names: Bill Hyde [Dickinson], Howell Finn [Dickinson]			