

Folder 4: Ralph L. "Lee" Minker, Jr., October-December 1943

Thunderbird Field II and Pecos Army Air Base

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening October 3, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Passed twenty hour check, working hard, pay of cadet, anxious during surprise check ride, received five packages, report of hours in the air. Spent time in Link trainer. Includes detailed drawing of basic maneuvers he is learning for the check ride.			
Names: LeFriece [instructor]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday afternoon October 10, 1943	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Concern about forty hour progress check ride, drawings of solo landings.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday evening October 13, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Reasons why maneuvers are getting worse, homesick after eight months, explanation of finances, purchased war bonds, questions about events at home.			
Names: Mike Zographone			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday afternoon October 17, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Report of flying time, civilian progress check, learning to fly cross country, description of Scottsdale, Japanese relocation camps. Enclosed picture of flying group [see scrapbook].			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening October 31, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Thunderbird Field II, AZ
Has completed another phase of training. Feels he is more mature, recognizes how training will help with the "job to do." Rumors of future training; single and two engine fighters, list of choices of ship. Tries to ease parents' concern, assures that flight training is safe. Compares flying the Stearman with the Ryan.			
Names: Mr. Newton [civilian flight instructor], Bill Virgin [Dickinson College]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday morning November 1, 1943	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Summary of his 8 months of military training. Scheduled to move again on Wednesday. Description of future training, and assignments. Has not heard from Julia.			
Names: Julia [Taylor]			

Pecos Field November 1943

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday noon November 7, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Arrived at Pecos, analysis of Air Force training, limitations of Pecos Field, flight line with BT-13 and AT-17 planes, cadet allowances have been cut, athletics are fine, disappointed in his flying, transferred to single engine.			
Note: comments written on letter were made in 1990s by Minker, may not be accurate.			
Names: Lieutenant Nolan			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday evening November 11, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Detailed schedule, took parachute jump, flying the BT-13, asks for cookies, lonely for home at Thanksgiving, needs a flying wrist watch.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday noon November 18, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Happy birthday to dad, progress on flying hours, classes in instrument, communications, radio code, aircraft identification. Dentist removing wisdom teeth. Developments in army aviation, growth in power of Air Corps. Questions about the Ferris School.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday evening November 26, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Instrument flying practice with instructor, possible future assignments and furlough by March 15, 1944.			
Names: Lt. Nolan			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday morning November 28, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Pecos to become advanced flying school for twin engine training, expects to have wings by March. News of Blue Rocks and Blue Bombers.			
Names: Professor [Russell] Thompson, [Dickinson College]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday afternoon December 5, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Pearl Harbor day at Dickinson in 1941, how his life has changed. Advanced training in BT-13, rumor is for instructor or air transport. Directions to get gifts for Shirley, Julia, Grandmother Minker. Letters received from friends.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday evening December 9, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Thirty-two hours of flying, six hours of Link trainer, first cross country on Saturday, night flying to begin. Lonely for the family at the holiday, Will try to get phone call through Christmas week.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday evening December 15, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Class 44-C at Pecos, three hour cross country, trip marked out in navigation class, passed Hellcats and a C-46. Requirements for night flying, passed basic instrument check, will soon enter advanced flight training. Enjoys night flying. Took Diazine pills to ward off flu.			
Names: Leland Inscho, Howell Finn [Dickinson College]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday evening December 20, 1943	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Basis of assignment choices, asked for B-26, B-25, Air Transport. Has fifty-four hours in Basic. Formation flying is exacting. Book he is reading, hoping to get to El Paso on pass, List of Christmas cards received. Will try to call on Sunday.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
December 23, 1943 Western Union telegram from Ralph L. Minker, Sr., with times for him to call home.	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Christmas greetings to family. Notes on the back reminding him of what he wanted to say.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Christmas Day, 1943	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Heartfelt expression of loneliness and the importance of the job at hand. Opened his gifts from various friends, their gifts had not arrived. Sending photographs as gifts.			
Names: Howell Finn [Dickinson College]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday evening December 28, 1943	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Pecos Field, Pecos TX
Yearning for Christmas at home, difficulty in placing phone calls [got through on Dec. 27]. Welcome package of cookies arrived, the watch from mom and dad is favorite gift. Wishes he could personally thank everyone. Finished formation flying, firing range for Colt 45 and sub-machine gun.			