

FOLDER 8: Ralph L. "Lee" Minker, Jr., October – December 1944

Rattlesden Army Air Force Base, England

2nd Lt. Ralph Lee Minker and his crew arrived at Rattlesden AAFB on October 16, 1944, as a replacement crew in the Eighth Air Force, 447th Bomb Group 709th Air Squadron stationed at Rattlesden Army Air Forces Base.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday evening October 18, 1944	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Excited to convey first impressions of England, the countryside and the air field. Assessment of the impact of air travel in the future. Asks the family not to worry, recognizes the job he has to do.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Saturday evening October 21, 1944	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Details of ground school classes. Eager to start flying again, phases in being checked out and becoming a combat crew. Look forward to their letters.			

Note: On October 26, 1944 Lt. Minker, had his first break-in mission flying co-pilot on *Big Ass Bird* to the oil plant at Hannover, Germany.

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening October 29, 1944	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Contrasts the air field in England with air fields at home. Housing is adequate. Plans for visiting in England.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Monday evening October 30, 1944	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Spent a wonderful two hours reading the mail from the States which finally caught up with him. Recommends V-mail or airmail, asks for clipping and news to stay connected with home.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday evening November 3, 1944	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
<p>Unsure if they have received his letters. Questions about the homefront: United War Fund, dad's role in war bond drive, the Ferris School for Boys and his sisters. Attempts to reconcile the work of combat with the need for world peace.</p>			
<p>Note: On Thursday, November 2, Lt. Minker flew his second mission as co-pilot in <i>Dixie Marie</i>, bombing the synthetic oil plant at Merceburg, one of the most dangerous targets in Germany.</p>			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening November 5, 1944	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
<p>Has been assigned a B-17 and named it <i>Blue Hen Chick</i>. Nostalgic description of football, importance of sports to the army. Limits of the available newspapers.</p>			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday evening November 8, 1944	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
<p>Political assessment of the 1944 presidential election which is distant from the life he is now living. Details of the English monetary system which he finds complicated.</p>			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday evening November 8, 1944	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
<p>Recognizes they are fighting to preserve free elections. He is paid in English currency, repeat of description he sent his mother. Report of letters he has received.</p>			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Thursday evening November 14, 1944	Lee Minker	Shirley Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
<p>Details of travel and the sites of war-torn London, Officers' Mess at Grovesnor House. Reflective about ravages of five years of war on a great city.</p>			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Wednesday evening November 22, 1944	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Importance of letters from home. Wishing dad happy birthday. Mourns the death in action of Wally Wroten. Will fly practice missions, hit tactical targets to support ground troops. Reassures that they are all fine.			
Names: [Wallace S.] Wroten [KIA]			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday evening, November 28, 1944	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Happy birthday to his sister. Connecting to his younger sister's life and activities with questions. Answers to the questions she sent about food, living quarters, the crew and censoring the mail.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
November 28 1944 (V-Mail)	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Using V-mail to compare delivery of airmail letter to Bernice. Asks her to purchase Christmas gifts for the family and girlfriend Julia [Taylor]. Received Christmas packages from Bernice and Grandmother Jones.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday evening December 8 1944	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Frustrated with slow mail delivery, reassures her not to worry when she doesn't get a letter and that he thinks of them continuously. Describes how he spends his time. Reports that he indicated an interest in an Air Force career on a recent survey. Analyzes how the military air forces may be organized after the war, particularly the young Air Force. Sending money home.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Tuesday evening December 19 1944	Lee Minker	Edna Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Hoping the fog does not keep them from supporting ground troops in German counter-offensive. Visited London, report on food and restaurants including a Horn and Hardart. New policy on passes. Puzzled by the mail which is slow, but has received Christmas packages. Recognizes that Germany is continuing the fight, feels he should stay until they are defeated.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Friday evening December 22 1944	Lee Minker	Ralph Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Still grounded by weather when they are needed to help with the German attack. Recognizes that the war is not yet won, anti-aircraft defenses and the weather making the air war rough. News of Arthur Lovelace of New Castle. Extensive comments on sports, esp. Wilmington teams.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Western Union December 23, 1944	Lee Minker	Family	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Sends telegram to let the family know that he is OK. Christmas wishes.			

Date	Writer	Recipient	Place
Sunday evening December 31 1944	Lee Minker	Bernice Minker	Rattlesden AAFB, England
Neglecting letters due to missions, <i>Blue Hen Chick</i> out for repair. Received 15 letters, decorated barracks Christmas tree.			
Names: Johnny Curlett, Chuck Bossert, Howell Wilkins, Walt Biddle			