

## War Era Story Project 2012

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Current home town: Columbus

Age: Not given

I am the daughter of a World War II veteran who died in 2001. However, my mother, saved every single letter that my father, David A. Davis, ever sent her while he was in the service. Also part of the archive are a few letters from friends and other family members that my father returned to my mother via his letters. All of these people are now deceased; however, these are their words and their stories (in part).

I am in the midst of transcribing all of the letters that my mother saved. Each of the letters I am sending are transcriptions of handwritten letters that I am archiving. I have yet to even begin the letters of my father's European deployment. I have two and a half years' worth of letters to get to. What I have transcribed (with my daughter's help) are the letters from my father's year at Camp Blanding in Florida. He spent the entire year of 1941 there. Early 1942 through May 1943 he was able to be with my mother in Fort Sill, OK and in Hattiesburg, MS, where my sister was born.

The first two letters (dated Dec. 7 and Dec. 8, 1941) were written by my dad to my mother in response to Pearl Harbor. I found these two letters quite descriptive of the response at the time. My father had been anticipating the end of his year of service at Camp Blanding for over a month throughout the letters to my mom. This year of service had been frustrating in many ways, and he was definitely looking forward to returning to regular life, but it was not to be (as the letter tells).

The third (dated Dec. 19, 1941) is a letter written to my dad from a good friend of his, Marion Boyer. I knew this man and his wife quite well. They remained good friends throughout the rest of their lives.

The final letter was written by my grandmother, Ada Louise English, in about March, 1942 while my mother (her daughter) was working in New Orleans at some sort of social worker convention. The new baby she writes of is my mother's niece who was born in New Jersey. I thought the letter would be interesting as it describes how life continued, albeit with giant holes in their lives.

I hope you find these interesting. My original thought was that I would try to self-publish my dad's letters; however, I have already filled three three-inch notebooks without any of the actual war letters, so I may only be serving to preserve them. I have always been my daddy's girl, but transcribing these letters has given me a whole new insight into my dad and my parents' relationship. In addition, seeing my grandmother's handwriting (she died before I was two years old) has been very special.

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December 7, 1941

Dear Sweetheart;

Well here we are on a Sunday night once again spent separated. I had hoped for a letter from you today, but I didn't get it. However, Friday night there were two letters here for me and I will answer them a little later in this letter.

We had an uneventful trip back here to camp. It was a two-day job and a bit boring, but no accidents. We arrived here about 5:50 p.m. Friday and spent the next two or three hours getting organized. It was a grand feeling to sleep on our army cots once again. Of course, Florida had to turn a bit chilly when we arrived, but we are used to that by this time. Anyway, I was glad to get back to clean sheets and a shower each day. We have a week of cleaning up to do, but we are all glad to do that now that we are back.

I supposed that you will be interested in knowing my status at the present time and the future.

As the present is concerned, my leave has been granted to start Dec. 22 for a period of 15 days. Of course this is subject to change, and from what we hear today there will be a change. The result will be a cancelation. However we will wait for the results. Capt. Bill King and I have arranged for a ride home for the holidays. This was quite by accident, as we were talking with another officer and he suggested we ride with him. We thought that was grand.

Mrs. King will call you in the next few days to arrange your trip to Cinci. to meet us. We will arrive in Cinci some time Sunday afternoon, Dec. 21. We plan to \_\_\_\_\_ you as to the approximate time to meet us. This is the final plan until we receive further orders. I sincerely hope we get to spend Christmas together this year.

As for the future, I have been advised that I will be on duty for the coming year. That is final also. It is a bit hard to take, but I guess we can take it.

This afternoon, Jack, Ed and I went to Jax to look for homes for our angels. After looking around for a few houses, we stopped out at Fisher's house. Well, that was the shock of our lives. Fisher announced as we walked in the door that we were at war with Japan. We were a pretty sorry party after that. Jack was about ready to break down, but didn't because of too much company. I was about ready to quit house hunting, but we did look at the apartments. We are going back Wed. afternoon.

Louise Fisher (wife) was out talking to a Colonel's wife in the yard as we arrived. She said the old man was already packing and was all up in the air. They sure get excited for regular army officers.

Well sweet, here we are again with the good old "David luck" holding out on us again. This evening, I have come to my wits end as to when and how to have you with me. We have apparently made a mistake in being separated this year. We still love each other, but nothing can take your place beside me.

At present, it seems to me you had better just keep on with your present set up. It will be the greatest blow of my life, but if it has to be, that is all there is to it. Perhaps the tide will change in a few days. So let's wait and see what happens. I wish you were here, as life means so little when we are separate. Will write you any information I can on next year's arrangement.

Your birthday must have been a grand affair and I am so glad for you. It does my heart good to know that you are being taken care of so well. The gifts sound grand and I know they must have been. I would love to see you in your new robe. That would be my heaven once again.

As far as the kids are concerned, I think it would be nice if you would buy them each a gift. However, if you are pressed for time, you can put a couple of dollar bills in an envelope as a present. I think I will sent (sic) a check to mother to do as she sees fit. The other presents will have to up to you (sic). Darling I wish I could help you. We always have had such fun at Christmas time. At least I hope I get home to decorate the house a little.

Thank you, sweet, for taking care of my cards for me. I will send you the plant list under separate cover. Seems a bit useless but we had better go ahead with it. Just send cards to those on the list. Don't bother to check it.

I am so sorry that the telegram was so misleading. Sweetheart, you shouldn't have felt so bad about not being there at that time. I didn't call at the time specified, but if I had and had gotten no answer, you know I would have waited until later. I would have tried for another week if I hadn't gotten my call thru so don't feel at all bad.

The Woodruffs haven't showed up around here. At least I haven't seen them and really don't expect to. I am glad you didn't send my civilian suit as I really won't need it. That is unless you come down.

Darling, I love you more than all the world. You are all I have and a home with you is all I ask from this old world. I hope someday that we can live a normal life again. Our life when we were together was the happiest part of my life. You are a grand little angel and I hope to hear from you tomorrow.

Love and Kisses

Dave

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December 8, 1941

Dear Sweet;

Today being a historical day in our lives, I feel I must chat a little with you. I usually feel a little better in spirits after I have had a talk with you. You are such an angel and I will always look up to you.

Today at 11:45 a.m. we had a short talk by the general of our brigade. The main purpose of the talk was to thank us for our part in the Carolina maneuvers. In bringing his short talk to a close he brought forth the subject of the war and our entrance into it. He stated that he was sorry he had no direct information. He also stated that this brigade was ready for action and also if the leaves were revoked, we should take it and tear into the work at hand.

While having dinner, we listened to F.D.R. delivering his speech to the joint sessions of Congress. Of course the dinner went off with very few words spoken and very little comment afterward. No one seems particularly worried. The reaction is exactly as one would expect; most people are ready to go after them.

This world is a crazy place to exist in. I have wished and prayed more than once that all would end and we could live a normal life. However, I guess that just isn't for us for some time to come. We were getting along so nicely and had so much from just living together. In any event, we still have our memories.

For some reason or other, I have been expecting you to walk in here tonight. I suspect it is only wishfull (sic) thinking. I do wish you were here with me at the time because it does seem such a short time before we have to part. I have no information to give you about my leave. I can tell you this much: in the light of the events just passed we all expect the leaves to be cancelled.

If I don't get to come to you for Xmas, I guess the only thing for you to do is to come down here as soon as you can. The time will be entirely up to you. I hate to have you make the trip alone, but on the other hand, I would hate terribly to leave without you at my side for just a little while. Darling, we have missed so much in the last year. I sincerely hope that when we are together again after this spasm we will be just like love birds. However I am still hoping that the leaves will go thru.

There are a few little gossip items I have been forgetting to tell you. Beverly and Dan are expecting. I thought as much before maneuvers, but didn't say a word to anybody. He didn't tell me, but a word dropped by a friend of his proved I was right. I think it must be about March or April.

The Markel affair is about to take a head long spill. Bruce said tonight under these circumstances he wouldn't marry any girl, nor would he become engaged to anyone. So that is his answer.

Jack is all upset. He was just in and ask (sic) me what to do. It is a bit sad for some of the boys.

Quite a few of the boys received their orders for next year. I suppose my orders will come thru tomorrow. At least I expect them to. I doubt very much if any officers are relieved.

Ted's state is perhaps the saddest of all. He received his orders today for another year. He has no leave coming for Xmas or New Year, and Ginney is too far along to come down here. I feel sorry for him especially when he starts to break down.

I understand I am to be transferred to a firing battery sometime this week.

I feel better now, sweet. Will answer your letter I received today in my next letter. I love you angel and will let you know any news quickly.

Love Kisses

Dave

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December 19, 1941 (A letter addressed to Dave from Columbus friend Marion Boyer)

Dear Dave—

It seems that things are taking shape and soon you'll have a wife and home close enough to make life seem a great deal more enjoyable. I should think this would be the best Christmas present for which you could ask. We were very happy for both you and Louise when we learned that you would be together. Naturally, we will miss Louise, but this is so insignificant as compared to what you and Louise have gone through during the past year.

Well you think that you are making news by setting up housekeeping there in Florida, etc. but we are making news, yes, even history here at 453 Linwood Ave. Can you stand a shock? We're being babied in July!

You should feel extra-special to get the news already, as there is no one here in Columbus who has been told except our parents and Alice's sister. No one else, although we are going to tell Louise and her mother soon, perhaps by the time you get this.

We had been saving this news to "spring on you" while you were here for Christmas, but since this isn't working out, we're passing it on to you via letter.

So likely we won't be touring down your way toward spring as we had mentioned to you last summer, but will do our touring in Baby Departments. We probably won't be doing lots of things as we have done them, but we don't care as we're very thrilled over this baby news.

I won't boor you further with this, but you'll be somewhat excited when it happens to you, I'll bet'cha.

We had a nice visit with Elnora and Ralph the other evening. Louise came over for part of the time that they were here. They felt that you were doing exactly the right thing by having Louise with you.

I imagine that Christmas day itself will be a little dull for you, but the anticipation of the week following should see you through.

Well, Dave, we did want you to know our news, and also to let you know how glad we are about your new setup.

We'll promise to do our best to keep Mother English from getting any more lonesome than necessary.

My best Christmas Wishes to you.

Papa-to-be Boyer

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Letter to Dad from "Mother"—Ada English

Sunday PM (March, 1942)

My Dear David

You would say "time to go to bed," but I just thought you might like to see my handwriting. I am home again, I am no nearer liking living alone, than I ever was. However I spent the day with the family. Went to church, and I really think Mc's sermons are improving.

Lots of folks asked about you and Louise, and of course the new baby. Mr and Mrs. Innis were there. They seem quite pleased at the prospect of having a grandchild. We went to the Faculty Club for dinner, then went out to Cassingham, sewed some buttons on for Marian, and looked at the new things she got. They are looking forward to a happy time with you and Louise. Polly counted 91 tulips in bloom. We have about a dozen out, I picked a few to put with 2 bunches of lilacs. We haven't very many but you know I love 'em on the mantle.

I sat in your chair to listen to "one man's family," and enjoy the living room a little. Gert and Dick told me about the enclosed clipping. Thot (sic) you might like it. I didn't get to read Friday's paper very well, as Alice and Marion came. They are fine. I was glad to see them. They were quite surprised to hear about Louise. I expect if you went home you missed her terribly. I hope you don't mind too much. I think it will be a good experience, beside the money she will earn. She didn't tell me how much, but she seemed satisfied.

Listening to "Charm Hour"—Maxene is singing. I wish you [could] see part of my Mother's Day gift of last year. The Colius (sic) reaches almost to the floor—I have it in my room. I put a piece of ivy and a slip from that tall plant in the crock, sure is pretty. I am going to have Quigly do some work on the front yard, and some new shrubs around the porch, maybe you will come to see some time.

Must say Goodnight and lots of love.

Mother