

Charles Burleigh Papers

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1939-1945

Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

MS 00224

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/7733

Unit Date

1939-1945

Language

English

Creator

Burleigh, Charles

Extent

0.25 Linear Feet

Repository

Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

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Gift of Gary Barranger, class of '73 Law '76.

Biographical / Historical

Twenty-three of the letters (1939-1944) were written by Charles A. Burleigh to his schoolgirl cousin Betty Jean Burleigh, who was living with her family in Hampden, Massachusetts. Burleigh's first letter (1939) was from college in Durham, New Hampshire; three (1941) were from Oklahoma and Colorado during his training to be an aircraft armaments officer in the Army Air Forces; and the remainder (1943-1944) were from air bases in North Africa and Italy. Burleigh was commissioned as a First Lieutenant and assigned to the 353rd Bombardment Squadron of the 301st Bombardment Group. He was promoted to Captain in 1943. The 353rd was a B-17 Flying Fortress squadron. Burleigh was a ground-based officer who serviced the bombs, guns, and other armaments that the bombers carried.

Content Description

Twenty-six letters written by four U. S. servicemen during World War II, plus fifty-two photographs and four artifacts.

Charles Burleigh's letters are short and chatty. He wrote about his work in general, with frequent references to being tired, but he never mentioned the B-17s or their missions. He commented on living conditions, the dearth of comforts, camels, Arabs, and the relatively better situation in Italy. He wrote about activities during breaks, including day trips into Tunis and sightseeing in Italy. He spent three weeks in a hospital with yellow jaundice. He was engaged to be married when he returned to the U. S., which, as of his last letter in December 1944, he expected to be in February 1945. In response to letters and photos he received from Betty Jean, Burleigh sometimes mentioned her interests in horses, flying, and boys. A torn fragment of an unfinished letter was in the envelope with Charles Burleigh's letter postmarked 1941 November 14; it possibly was the start of a reply from Betty Jean.

Three letters in this collection were written by three other servicemen. Two brothers, L. E. "Lew" Loyd and Cpl. Jimmy W. Loyd, wrote to their parents in Springfield, Massachusetts. Lew Loyd wrote from the USS Arkansas (1943 May 8); his letter is in the form of a poem about the restraints imposed by wartime censorship. Jimmy Loyd was a petroleum distribution officer based in South Asia (789th Engineer Petroleum Distribution Company); he wrote (1944 September 4) about managing a warehouse and his pending divorce. Pete Podner[?] served on the USS Ricketts, a convoy escort vessel; in his letter to Betty Jean Burleigh (1945 February 28), he mentioned having visited her in Massachusetts just before Christmas.

Keywords

World War, 1939-1945

Description of Subordinate Components

Series 1: Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449240

Unit Date 1939 April 17 - 1945 February 28

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Language English

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/268190

Unit Date 1939 April 17

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 1 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Charlie B[urleigh] to Betty, on roommate's stationery (Franklin Mullan [Moon], S.A.E. House, Durham, NH) [Univ of New Hampshire?]

"Went sailing w/Moon & another boy; boat tipped over; rescued; was very cold; should have worn rubbers; bet Aunt Dot makes you wear yours when wet out. How are your kittens? How is Barbara & "Mush-face"? How did operetta come out? Well, "Little one", I must get to work or will never become a forester & ride a big white horse. Thank your Mom & Dad for taking good care of me. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449213

Unit Date 1941 August 18

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 2 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Charlie B, to Miss Betty Jean B, Hampden, Mass. Return: C.A.B. Jr., SACTD, Box 2649, Barracks #10, Tulsa, Okla.

"Have seen cowboys, not as goodlooking as in movies; wear tall hats & high boots, but otherwise kind of dirty; their horses are smaller than riding horses in east, but kept in better condition, healthier, happier. Not doing any more flying; to be transferred to Airplane Armament; may get leave for couple wks, or may go directly to Lowry Field, Denver. You asked who was my girl; have one in Main, last June; she may be waiting for me to come east, but can't be sure; in the Army, especially the air corps, you can't worry about girls, for too many things come first. In the Armament branch I'll be in charge of all the bombs, machine guns & 37mm guns on the plane; have to have 7 mos training; hope to enter Sept 15 class; if not will get couple wks leave to come home."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449214

Unit Date 1941 November 14

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 3 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Charlie B to Betty Jean, Hampden. Air Corps Technical School, Lowry Field, CO; A/C Charles A. Burleigh

"Sorry haven't written; been very busy; Armament school gets more complicated, so more studying. Take weekends off to go hunting & see the country. Met a few cowboys; some are illiterate. Got letter from Aunt Ester. Sent the Breck boys a picture of me like the one you have. Things looking good now, so might be commissioned Jan or Feb; just finished wk of machine gunning & now working w/airplane bombing. Beautiful weather last couple wks, and beautiful view of mts. Get up 3am & go to school to 12:30pm; grunts & groans of 150 men trying to pull selves out of bed. Give my regards to your sister & your Mom & Dad. Love, Charlie B."

Enclosed[?]: A torn page of the beginning of a letter to "Junior", dated 1941-11-17, from Chapin Road, Hampden, MA: Wish you could be here for Thanksgiving. [Stops halfway down page in mid-sentence.]

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449215

Unit Date 1941 December 3

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 4 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Denver, to Betty Jean B, Hampden, on Lowry Field stationery

"Rec'd your letter; am interested in Westover[?] field & the bombing practice you have had. Food here very good, but miss home cooking. Just about finished w/class; all are pleased to be getting commissions early; can hardly wait to get into an officer's uniform. Weekends off, go into Denver to big Cadet Club w/lots of activities. The mts are beautiful at Sunrise. Might see you this Christmas if I get up near Hampden. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449216

Unit Date 1943 April 2

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 5 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

To BJB, Chapin Rd, Hampden, from 1st Lt. Charles A. Burleigh 0-434810[?], 353 Bomb Sqd., A.P.O. 520 c/o Postmaster, NY

"Been years since I last wrote, though I dropped you a card in England; it is this war, that keeps us moving day & night. I hear things have happened to Burleigh family; Aunt Louise wrote that Molly is married. Yes, there are camels in Africia [sic]; we have them here & lots of little burros. The Arabs look like in books, only more ragged & dirty; head of the town is old dignified Arab w/beautiful white flowing robes; all the townsmen kiss his turban & then shake hands w/him. Enclosing picture I took [not present] Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449217

Unit Date 1943 May 8

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 6 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

L. E. Loyd, S 2/c, Div L, U.S.S. Arkansas, c/o Fleet P.O., NY, NY; to Mr & Mrs Wm B Loyd, Sr, 41 Fairview St., Springfield, Mass. ; on Lewis E. Loyd, A.S., stationery w/monogram & US Navy, & printed address: Co. 556, U.S.N.T.S., Newport, R.I. Passed by. . .Censor stamp on env.

"Dear Folks, I'm censored, Can't write a thing, Just say that I'm well And sign my name. . . In form of a poem, mentioning kinds of things can't do or write about. Love, Lew."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449218

Unit Date 1943 May 13

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 7 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Charles Jr. to Betty Jean, Chapin Rd, Hampden. 353 Bomb Sqd, 301st Bomb Gp, APO 520 NY; on Desert Hotel stationery, Spokane, Wash. Passed by US Army Examiner stamp on env.

"Nice to hear from you; letters much appreciated over here. It's 8:15pm, just finished work; nice to sit down & write w/bottle of fairly good wine; we all work long hrs, but if you could see our result you'd

understand why everyone is so eager to do a good job. Ray is stationed in NJ; I'm glad he gets to see Mom every once in a while, for she gets quite lonesome. Tell me more about this Navy man of yours. Tell your Dad to be sure those engines are made right, for it's difference betw live or dead over here. [Writes lyric of an English marching song: "Bless 'em All".] Love, Charles Jr."

[Two paragraphs are circled w/red crayon, perhaps by censor.]

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449219

Unit Date 1943 May 18

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 8 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Charles Jr. to Betty Jean, Chapin Rd, Hampden. 353 Bomb Sqd, 301st Bomb Gp, APO 520 NY, not on DH stationery.

"Afraid I can't jam a camel in my bag; they're huge & smell like a back house on a hot summer day; we have very cute 'Burros", 3 feet from hoof to shoulder & covered w/thick fur; the Arabs put a ton of hay on them w/a rug on top & then climb up on them; looks like a moving haystack w/Mahatma Gandhi sitting on top. I smoke a pipe here, much to disgust of my tent mates; if you find one w/a large hole, I'd much appreciate; we get Am. tobacco here. Can't write about most interesting parts of the war; life here dull, monotonous, except for the work; sit around in evening & read or tell stories; after 10 mos of this, very tiresome. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449220

Unit Date 1943 August 21

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 9 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Charles Jr. to Betty Jean, and BJB's address is Box 104, Hampden, MA. On Desert Hotel stationery.

"Hurry along w/the picture for me; want to see what you look like now that you're grown up. Thanks for the letter from my Dad to yours [not present]; interesting that 20, 40, & 60 yrs ago people lived, played, & fought wars the same as now. Have not heard of "The Constant Nymph" w/ Charles Boyer over here; personally I think Ch Boyer's brand of love is a bit windy & awfully sticky; I prefer the direct attack & the short answer system, just yes! or no! Anyway I haven't rec'd any complaints on that sys and it works for me. Who says you were gawky the last time I saw you; anyone not nearsighted would have seen you'll be darn cute if not beautiful, like your mother. Time for me to get back to fighting the war, so I'll sign off; been overseas more than a year now: no fresh milk, doughnuts, Am beer, ice cream, or coca cola. Give my best to all the folks. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449221

Unit Date 1943 October 9

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 10 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Burleigh is Captain now; Betty Jean Burleigh's address is Glendale Rd, Hampden.

"Got your long letter & the pic today; pic like that is what this Army needs to keep up morale; been 14 mos since I saw a pretty girl in shorts. Writes of 3 small photos he encloses: Arab girl in robes and head cover, male Arab beggar, & CB in front of his Armament shop [a tent]. Here's a little dope on the philosophy of a Soldier; eat, drink, and play now for tomorrow you will have moved on; has no past and no hopes for the future; was never born & will never die; always happy for has a full stomach; if you want a good time, date a soldier, but don't take him seriously; have met many girls, but only two I've bothered to write to; wish I was going to that dance w/you; haven't danced since I left England. Work here goes

along, until I hate the sight of airplanes; wonder if I should have joined infantry; things are pretty smooth[?] w/the jump in rank; more paper signing, less physical work, so caught up on sleep and get into town once or twice a week. Ever thought of going to college when you finish High School? It's a great life, fun, 4 yrs of thrills. Over here after lights out, you lie in bed and daydream of things you miss [a list], until you pass into a sweet sleep w/pleasant dreams. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449222

Unit Date 1943 November 2

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 11 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Same addresses on a V-Mail, 3 ½ x 4[?]; looks like a photographic copy; envelope is postmarked New York, 1943-12-10 [sic], War & Navy Depts, V-Mail Service; Official business.

"Wishing you a Merry Xmas & a Happy New Year; my early Christmas greeting to you & all the folks in Hampden; so busy here, not possible to write to all; you will have to give my wishes to others. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449223

Unit Date 1943 November 5

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 12 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

"Was in Tunis other day for first time in several wks, w/Capt. Katz, wandering about town, in & out of Bars; found nothing we needed at Officers' PX; ice cream & sandwiches at the Red Cross; ate dinner and supper at the Tunisian Palace Hotel; home by truck at 8:30, for the town is closed a 9pm.

Go to bed early; get up at 4 or 5 every other morning, 6:30 other days & Sunday You're hereby invited to Boston for a wedding when I get to the States; we'll have several evenings of parties, & fix you up with a date, making the best shows & dinner dances; sleep all day, play all night. Best regards to all. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449224

Unit Date 1943 November 19

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 13 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

"Another Merry Christmas wish to you.

Now I'm a very much engaged man even though I do not act it; supposed to be married (Boy I'm henpecked already) as soon as I hit the States; I hope you'll be present as one of the chief mourners; you can come up to Boston w/my Mom; will be some great times. Work here slowing up for the winter: fixing up our tent & getting ready for a big spring; still fight the war but has slacked off & we can get some sleep. About this country: a hell hole of filth & disease; once I get back in States, I'll stay there, probably in New England.

Wish you luck on your flying; lot of fun in a small place; these large ships are very monotonous, much like riding a train without the click of the rails; to be a good pilot, must know your engines. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/449225**Unit Date** 1944 January 5**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 14 (Folder)**Language** English**Scope and Contents**

"Plans for a big time in Boston include you; will be very well chaperoned by myself, & escorted by a date, arranged by my girl.

You asked about my Army job: I'm Squadron Armament Officer; I take care of and repair all guns, bombs, ammo, gun turrets, bombsights, gun cameras, flares, flare pistols, and all small arms; also I'm Chemical Warfare & Base Defense Officer; have to check out all bombardiers & gunners, explain how to use equipment for best results ; supervise loading all bombs & ammo;

I do not fly in combat; my only flying is checking men & equipment in the air. Work itself is not hard, but changes, modifications, & little inventions we add for better performance make a lot of work & long hours.

Please send another picture of yourself. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/449226**Unit Date** 1944 February 13**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 15 (Folder)**Language** English**Scope and Contents**

Envelope is postmarked U.S.Postal Service No. 1, 1944-2-25 [sic], War & Navy Depts, V-Mail Service; Official business.

"I've been 3 wks in the hospital w/yellow jaundice; doc says I'll be out of here in 3 or 4 days; I'm feeling fine.

A Sgt Thomas here is going on medical leave & may get to visit his folks in Westfield, Mass; I gave him Aunt Louise's & Aunt Ester's addresses so he can phone them and tell what goes on here & how I am; picked them 'cause they have phones, but told him to ask how he could call you. Write your very best cousin ASAP. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival_objects/449227**Unit Date** 1944 February 22**Mixed Materials** 1 (Box)**Container** 16 (Folder)**Language** English**Scope and Contents**

"Opened by U. S. Army Examiner" tape detached from env.

"So you want my girl's address: Miss Marcia Weatherill, 35 Temple Street, Arlington, Mass. Drop Marci a line; I've told her to put you on the list as an extra special house guest for the wedding.

I'm out of the 'butcher shop', all well, back in action, raring to go. I can hardly keep up with you, for the rate you change boyfriends; good work: keep 'em on the run; I thought I had one on the run, but if it wasn't for 5000 miles of water I'd be a married man.

Sounds like you have an interesting course to follow at Tec High; when I get home I'll tell you how they fly & fight them over here.

Keeping busy here; it's now 19 mos of combat work for me; we work w/speed and at all hours; if not finished, work by flashlight at night. Love, Charlies B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449228

Unit Date 1944 March 21

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 17 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

"Got your letter about your operation; it's good you had them out, for a flying person gets into some awful places; I'm still waiting for the letter you sent w/the pictures. Been seeing the sights of Italy for two wks; just back to the outfit last night; traveling over here is fun & easy; go to an Officers' mess & eat all you want; I've covered most of England, Africa, and parts of Italy that way, & it works.

My chances of going home soon seem quite slim; kind of used to this life now and will be nicer w/warm weather coming, except for mosquitoes, malaria, flies & dysentery [about 'sirocco', wind & sand storm] Love, Charlie B.

P.S. Sgt Thomas didn't get home; he was sent back here."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449229

Unit Date 1944 April 12

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 18 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

On personal stationery w/his name & address printed on env & paper: Capt. Charles A. Burleigh, 0-434810 / 353 Bomb. Sqdn. 301 Bomb. Group. (H) A.A.F. / A. P. O. 520 c/o Postmaster / New York City, New York. Image of a red plane on paper. [Had printed by an Italian in town.]

"Sorry the pics you sent have never arrived. School out soon & you'll have summer ahead; plans? I have mighty large plans, but probably delayed 'cause so much work to do; enjoying life here but would trade it for a chicken dinner, Am beer, & a good dance orchestra.

Wonderful weather, but we work most evenings; get up betw 2 & 6am; take turns lighting fire, then back in bed until tent warms up; usually midday we get a slack period & can rest up for the afternoon & evening work. Write me soon. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449230

Unit Date 1944 May 16

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 19 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

"Glad to get your letter after such a long time; "your [you're?] a Wolf": in all these letters you have a new man on the line or angling for one.

Keeping busy over here, and probably all summer; nothing new concerning me going home. Drew all kinds of rations in town today: 6 choc bars, 11 packs of tobacco, cigars and soap, and stuff; not the same war as in Africa [consistently spells it 'Africia']: if we got the soap, we couldn't get the water. Life here pretty good, but looking forward to the States and all you "Beautiful Female Wolves"."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449231

Unit Date 1944 July 2

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 20 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

"Just finished long trip getting supplies I needed very badly.

According to latest rumors, I may be seeing you soon; 'soon' in Army means in next 3 mos. Have an unmounted cameo I'll bring to you; Italy is original home of cameos. Made another trip to rest camp last wk and did horse back riding and fishing, without much luck in either. Work here a little rough at times, but we lead a pretty good life. Hoping to see you soon.. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449232

Unit Date 1944 July 23

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 21 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

"Got letter w/the 3 pics yesterday, and what a cousin I've got; very easy on the eyes; the extra 20 lbs seems to be in the right spots.

Hoping to be home in Sept; will stop in to see you on way to Boston; might feel lost among all the Eng-speaking people. Tell your Dad we have the war in the bag; only a matter of time before we make the kill. Sgt. Thomas is on way home; has promised to stop in and see you; if you have time, fix him a chicken dinner. I hope Aunt Dot is coming along all right. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449233

Unit Date 1944 September 4

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 22 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449234

Unit Date 1944 November 17

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 23 (Folder)

Language English

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449235

Unit Date 1944 December 12

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 24 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Charlie B. to Betty Jean. Capt. CAB, Headquarters 301 Bomb Gp (H) AAF, APO 520 c/o Postmaster N.Y., to Betty Jean Burleigh, Glendale Road, Hampden, Mass.

"Been long time since I've written, but as you can see I've moved; lot of work to get used to has kept me busy. Gave your address to a favorite Sgt to write you, a damned good looking man.

Have things well under control here & getting along fine; hope soon can go home, maybe Dec or Jan. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449236

Unit Date 1944 December 28

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 25 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

On U.S. Air Forces stationery. No censor stamp on env.

"Very glad to get your letter.

Will try to give you the dope on Sgt. Joe: he's around 23yo, about 5'7" or 8", 160 lbs, mostly well placed muscle; good looking, though his shoulders are too wide for his height; as smart as they come, full of hell & fun, a good man to have around for a party or a fight, but usually quiet spoken & a real gentleman.

Hope to be home early Feb if all goes well, though still nothing definite about it. Give my best to all the folks & write soon. Love, Charlie B."

Correspondence

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449237

Unit Date 1945 February 28

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 26 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

A V-Mail. From Pete Podner[?] C.M. 3/c, U. S. S. Ricketts D. E. 254, c/o Fleet P.O. N.Y.C., to Miss Betty Burleigh, Glendale Road, Hampden, Mass.

"Hi "Lucky Strike"; to stay on friendly side, thought I'd better answer your letters. I'm tops & so are all the rest of the gang; too bad we didn't have that snow-ball duel when I was in Mass. Night life isn't good for you; you saw what happened to Dude Xmas Eve; Dude sends you his deepest love; he's got it pretty bad, and you are the cause; just kidding, but he does want me to say Hello for him.

If you see Peterson family, say Hello for me. Always Pete."

Series 2: Photographs

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449241

Unit Date 1942-1952, and undated

Graphic Materials 1 (Box)

Language English

Photographs

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449238

Unit Date 1942-1952 and undated

Graphic Materials 1 (Box)

Container 27 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

Three small photographs were enclosed with Charles Burleigh's letter dated 1943 October 9; these three have annotations indicating "Arab Woman of Better Type, July 1943", "Arab Begger [sic], July 1943", and "Charles A, Burleigh, Capt. A. C., Sept. 1943".

The remaining forty-nine photographs are of varying sizes and have either brief annotations or no annotations. Subjects are mainly military personnel and war zone sights. Names appear on only one photograph of "Corpsmen of Marine Fighter Squadron 311".

Series 3: Artifacts

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449242

Unit Date undated

Language English

Artifacts, undated

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/449239

Mixed Materials 1 (Box)

Container 28 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

One is a good conduct medal with ribbon, in addition to three gold-colored metal disks. One disk is embossed with 'U.S.', and two have images of a triple-turreted castle, which is associated with U. S. Army engineers.