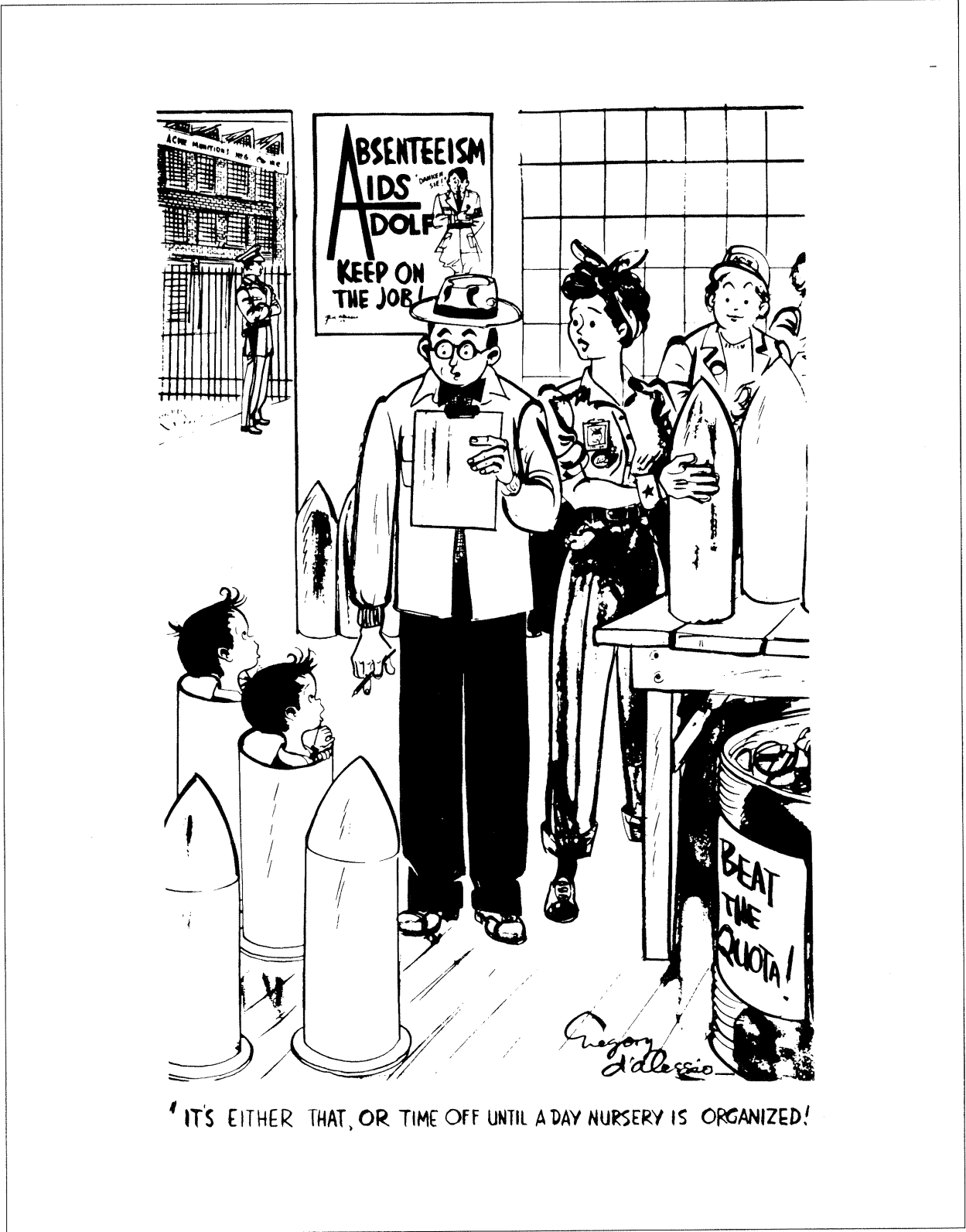


B. New Workers Create New Problems, ca. 1943



*25-8 Barbara Wooddall and
Charles Taylor, Letters To And From
the Front, 1941-1944*

Barbara Wooddall and Charles Taylor, like many thousands of other couples, had to fit their romance, marriage, and family in between the demands of wartime. In August, 1941, they met on a blind date while Charles was in basic training. A year later they married. For the next two years they moved from base to base, and in 1943 they had a baby girl, Sandra. In June 1944 Charles left for combat in Europe; he did not return until November 1945. Through it all they corresponded regularly, leaving a detailed account of how the war deeply shaped a generation's personal lives.

SOURCE: From Miss You: The World War II Letters of Barbara Wooddall Taylor and Charles E. Taylor by J. Linff, D. Smith, B. Taylor, and C. Taylor. Copyright © 1990 by the University of Georgia Press. Letter of Barbara Wooddall Taylor and Charles E. Taylor copyright © by Taylor Thomas Lawson.

Fairburn, Georgia

December 11, 1941

Dearest Charlie,

. . . . Well, what about this WAR business. Oh, Charlie, will you still get your Christmas leave? You must get it because I'm counting big on being with you again. I hope I feel just the way I did the first night I had a date with you, remember? We had such a good time and I've never been so knocked for a loop. I remember exactly what I thought about you and I wonder if I will think it again when you come. We must be sure and we will be sure. . . .

A man here in the office just said that Italy had declared WAR on the USA. What's going to happen to us? There is no doubt in my mind as to whom shall win this WAR, but how long will it take us? It makes you feel like getting the best of everything before it's all gone. Now I know that isn't the right way to feel, is it Charlie ? ? ? ?

Charlie, please don't threaten me. I just want to

wait until I see you and I already know what I'll say and do. I can hardly wait.

Must close now,
Sincerely,

Barbara

Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri
Dear Mr. Wooddall:

14 July 1942

Perhaps this letter from me will come as a surprise to you, but it seems to me that even in these extraordinary circumstances in which we find ourselves today, formalities should still be observed.

I realize that you are completely aware that Barbara and I have plans for marriage upon her arrival in St. Louis, but before we go any further in our plans, I would like to have your consent. I already have the consent of my family, they are very proud to add such a wonderful person as Barbara to their family.

Sir, I am sorry that we are in War, which does not afford Barbara and I time, under the circumstances, to have the luxury of a normal peace-time wedding. However, there could be nothing about a big formal wedding that could have any effect upon the life and beauty of Barbara's and my life as husband and wife. . . .

Needless to say, I am looking forward to the day when I shall become a member of your happy family.

Respectfully yours, Charles E. Taylor

Evansville, Indiana

August 16, 1942

My dearest sweetheart,

I am now in Evansville and it is 3:10 p.m. Guess you are well on your way to Ft. Leonard Wood and I would give all I have to be with you. Darling, how will I ever do without you—even for a day! . . .

I was so proud of you when the train started moving in St. Louis. There you were smiling at me and waving, and, darling, it just made me feel good to know that you were my husband and I was your wife. When I couldn't see you any longer, well, I cried *just a little bit* and the lady sitting with me started crying. Jimminy cricket! say I, everything happens to me! Soon I found out that she had been to see her husband at Jefferson Barracks for the weekend. There were two girls across the aisle from me whose husbands are at Jefferson Barracks and Ft. Leonard Wood. . . .

I'm here with a girl from Kansas who is going to see her boy friend at Macon, Georgia. She's rather cute and I'm glad she's here. At least it's nice having someone to talk with.

You know, we have the most beautiful love in the whole wide world. These last two weeks mean a lot more to me than happiness at the moment—they mean that I have a husband who loves me just as much as I do him—they mean that I don't have to live from day-to-

day any longer, but that *we* can live for the future when the WAR is over and we are together forevermore.

You certainly did more than your part to make our honeymoon a success and I love you for everything.

I love you,

Your loving wife,

Barbara

P.S. A conductor just called a St. Louis train and it took all the self-control and will-power I have not to jump up and run to train that would take me back to you.

Fairburn, Georgia

July 22, 1943

My dearest sweetheart,

Well, this time next month, you will be a "papa", we hope, eh? Won't that be simply grand! Honestly, I can't even imagine what it's going to be like to have a little ole baby, of our very own! . . .

Just Your Barbie

At Sea

21 June 1944

My Dearest Darling,

I haven't written you a letter for two days but it is the same for there is nothing much for me to write except the same old things. I was just lying there on my bunk last night trying to visualize you and Sandra Lee [their daughter]. Gee, it would be a wonderful thing just to see you two. My Barbie, you are so brave and good and oh, so nice to have as a wife. Darling, you must send me some kodak pictures and also some pictures of everything. Gee, I'd give a lot to see you all. . . . By the way, send my mail Air Mail or "V-Mail" so it will come in record time: Also check the addresses on your letters and see that you have the correct address on them. . . .

You know me and my feelings, well, they are still with me and now instead of just feeling I am coming back, I know I will be back. I'll keep up the war front—you keep up the home front. o.k.?

Barbie, listen to the news as often as you can. See if you can sorta keep up with the people I have soldiered with or the people we know. Write things to me so I'll not be too dumb about the people I used to know.

Darling, you must love me now and forever for we really are matched for this life on earth. The longer I live the surer I become of it, don't you? We may have a lot of things to look forward to that we can't see so live on the theory of today and don't worry about tomorrow—let the engineers build your bridges as you need them. Just be happy and think about all the things you and I have and will have as the years go by. . . .

Live on my love and my regard for your purity and be as good to Sandra Lee as possible. She is good enough to be spoiled so that you can. Give her a hug and kiss from me and save a million for yourself.

Lovingly forever,

Charlie

Fairburn, Georgia

May 23, 1945

My dearest sweetheart,

. . . . I liked your letter very much. It was nice and long—just what I needed. Sure I want you to get out of the Army as soon as possible—and I don't think it's the wrong way to feel at all. You've done more than your share already—so it's time someone else stepped in your place—in my opinion.

I agree with you about the diaphragm—but, may I be so bold as to ask where you learned so much about the article! After all, Charlie. Anyway, it's a great idea—and although I do want *several* children—not just two, if you please—I would like to plan for the next ones. So, with a diaphragm it would be better, of course. Do you mean that you want me to get a diaphragm *now*? You once said to wait until you were sure of coming home—so let me know, I mean ans. this pronto! I do think they're well worth the money. No, I wouldn't feel funny getting pregnant on my second honeymoon—but, frankly, I'd rather not. Just re-read the above sentence “you were sure of coming home”—I don't mean it that way—for I'm sure you're coming home *someday*—I meant until you were really on the way home, see?

The only disadvantage of a diaphragm—if I am capable of explaining what I mean—anyhow, well, most sensible people (from what I hear) only have one sexual intercourse in one evening—but some others (me, for instance, when I really get excited—and I'm sure I will when I see you again—for it gives me goose-pimples to even think about your coming home!!). Anyway, as I started to say—well, in the case of more than one SI in an evening—it isn't satisfactory, on account of—well, guess you know what I mean. Therefore, *one* has to be good—therefore, you, my friend, will have to control your feelings, in order to make it good. See? So, it's all up to you, as usual. . . .

Write as often as possible and remember I love you.

Always,

Your Barbie

France

9 August 1945

My Dearest Darling:

. . . . What do you think of this new bomb? Wow, it is really a new and bad thing for the Jap[anese], isn't it? I do hope that it is kept in the right hands for even a

little nation could surely harness the world with a destructive weapon as that. I feel sure that if it is as powerful as the papers state it is then the War with Japan will be short from here on. They will surely give up soon with a weapon like that against them—plus Russia declaring war on them, all within 48 hours. They will be extremely foolish if they don't give up, eh? . . .

Say, I'll just bet that you are getting to be a good cook. From the things you talk about you must have really learned a lot about the kitchen business, haven't you. And truly I do love vegetables alone, honest!

Lovingly,

Your Charlie

Fairburn, Georgia,

August 16, 1945

My dearest sweetheart,

THE WAR IS OVER—oh, Charlie baby, this is what we waited for so long. Even yet, I can't believe it. I'm so grateful to God. Let's be humble and live such a life that we can show Him how thankful we are. Mother and I were listening to the radio when the news first came on—and we were laughing and crying together. I kept saying, “I want to go to Paris”—meaning, I wanted to go on the air by radio—and sure enough—we did go to Paris—and I felt as if we were there together. I've been wondering if you did go into Paris.

We could hardly settle down to eat—and Mother wanted me to go to the Community Meeting at the church. So, I quickly took a bath and dressed, listening to the radio all the time. . . .

Well, I sat in the choir at church and felt good all over singing “My country 'Tis of Thee” etc. . . .

Everyone has a holiday today of course—so we're going swimming this afternoon. And, gasoline is NOT rationed—man, that's wonderful. Honestly, things are happening so fast, well, I just can't grasp it all.

Always,

Your Barbie

1. *How do the letters of Barbara and Charles differ in tone and subject? What do they suggest about the different strains of wartime upon men and women?*

2. *How does the correspondence evolve over time? Does it become more intimate?*