ABSTRACT
Born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1919, George Millman attended Massachusetts State College briefly, but was forced to drop out after his freshman year due to financial hardship. After attending a three-month intensive training course, Millman was employed by the War Department in 1941 as a civilian inspector in the munitions plant in New London, Connecticut. In the months that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor, he felt it was his patriotic duty to join the armed forces and enlisted on May 28, 1942. Called to active duty six months later, Millman was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps on April 29, 1943. Already dating his soon-to-be-bride Lillian, the couple decided to marry immediately before he could be sent overseas. Assigned to a class on the theoretical aspects of radar at Harvard University, Millman was ordered to report to the Army Air Force Technical School in Boca Raton in late 1943. On June 24, 1944, he received secret travel orders assigning him to the 5th Air Force Service Command in Brisbane, Australia. There he began training fighter pilots on the use and operation of the newly developed airborne radar, AN/APS-4. Throughout his tour in the Pacific, which ended in early 1946, Millman traveled throughout the region, including time in Australia, the Netherlands East Indies, the Netherlands New Guinea, and the Philippines.

BACKGROUND ON CREATOR:
George Millman, born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1919, was one of five children. Two of Millman’s siblings died young and as a result he grew up the oldest of three boys. His family was severely affected by the Depression. After high school, Millman worked for a year to earn enough money to attend Massachusetts State College, but had to withdraw after only a year due to insufficient funds. After withdrawing from Mass State, Millman attended an intensive, three month, full time course on Materials Engineering during the summer of 1941 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was subsequently employed as a civilian inspector in a munitions plant located in New London, Connecticut. In May of 1942, Millman enlisted in the Army Aviation Cadet program and was placed in the Army Air Force Reserve. That following November he was called to active duty and instructed to report to the Air Force Training Detachment at Scott Field, Belleville, Illinois for classes in communications. Shortly after this cadet school, he was transferred to Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut in late December 1942. On April 29, 1943, Millman was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps. George Millman married his fiancee Lillian in May of 1943 so that they would be wed before he was sent overseas.

Millman’s first assignment as a commissioned officer required him to take a course at the Graduate School of Engineering at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This four-month course was followed by an intensive three-month course on the theoretical aspects of radar, a highly
Containing almost 400 letters written to his wife Lillian during World War II, Millman's papers detail nearly every aspect of life in the service during wartime. From chronicling extreme environmental conditions to his feelings of frustration while awaiting assignment, Millman's letters offer a personal perspective of the impact of war on an individual and his loved ones. While his letters carefully avoid any details about his work that could have been censored, they capture in extraordinary detail the day-to-day life of a serviceman in the Pacific theater during WWII. Millman published his letters to his wife in 2011 in a book entitled Letters to Lillian.

Access

The collection is open for research.

Language:

English

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classified subject at the time, offered at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology. These assignments were ideal for the newlyweds, George and Lillian, as it allowed them to spend some much needed quality time together.

Following Millman’s completion of the radar course in the year 1943 he was assigned to report to the Army Air Force Technical School at Boca Raton, Florida. There he continued to receive instruction on radar technology as well as the application, usage and performance of airborne radar equipment. Lillian did not join her husband in Boca Raton until December 30th, a month after he was stationed there, because she was recovering from an appendectomy.

Finally on June 24, 1944, Millman received secret travel orders assigning him to the 5th Air Force Service Command, in Brisbane, Australia. Millman was sent to the Pacific War Zone on a highly classified project to educate and train pilot officers on the use and operation of a recently established airborne radar, AN/APS-4. He first began writing his letters to Lillian from Hamilton Beach, California where he awaited military air transportation to Brisbane, Australia. Throughout Millman’s tour of duty in the Pacific he was constantly on the move between fighter and service groups in the 5th, 13th and Far East Air Force and thus wrote home from varying diverse locations in Australia, the Netherlands East Indies, the Netherlands New Guinea and the Philippines.

Millman’s description of his work during World War II is somewhat vague, a result of the government’s censure of letters from soldiers back to the United States during the war. Millman was stationed in Australia from July 18, 1944 until October 25, 1944 and while stationed there he worked primarily on the installation of AN/APS radars on two P-38 fighters and one B-25 medium bomber, as well as training soldiers on the use of these radars. He was assigned a team consisting of five corporals during his station in Australia.

Millman was then stationed in the Netherlands East Indies where his experience was drastically different than it was in Australia; there he found himself in the midst of combat. It was during these darker days that Millman felt the war would never end. The only thought that kept him going was the thought of returning home to the love of his life, Lillian.

Millman returned to the United States on a military transport ship entitled the USS General Omar Bundy. “The Bundy” departed from Manila on February 20, 1946, the ship crossed the international dateline on March 1, 1946 and finally arrived in San Francisco on March 17, 1946. He opted to travel by ship instead of fly for he had developed a severe aversion to flying after island hopping so much during the war. He then took a train from San Francisco to Boston to further avoid flying.

Back at home, Millman was extremely thin with a weakened immune system, and shortly after arriving in Boston he developed Malaria. He recovered and was classified inactive status on June 18, 1946.

Millman struggled to re-adjust to the life of a civilian. Military service changed him and because of this Lillian and George, like so many couples, needed to re-establish their relationship. Millman was not as carefree and relaxed as he was before he left for the war. A stammer that he had when he
was younger became progressively worse upon returning home. Additionally, his fear of flying
dramatically intensified. It is possible that Millman suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder,
however, it would have gone unrecognized and undiagnosed.

Millman took advantage of the opportunities provided to him through the GI Bill to further his
education. He received credit for the courses he took while in the military. Even though Millman had
only received one year of formal education he was given credit for his sophomore and junior years
of college. Millman had to take a sophomore public speaking course that put even more additional
strain on his marriage. His unease and speech impediment made that course an unbearable task to
complete; however he triumphed over this obstacle and in 1947 Millman graduated from the
University of Massachusetts Amherst with a Bachelor’s degree in physics. Millman and Lillian then
moved to State College, Pennsylvania where he obtained his Masters and Doctorate degrees in
Physics from Pennsylvania State University in 1949 and 1952. His education following World War
II still centered on atmospheric radio physics. Millman was involved in the development of radar
systems to help deter nuclear attacks from the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Millman and Lillian went on to have one son named Richard and two grandchildren named Ryan and
Christopher. Lillian passed away in 2010 from recurrent breast cancer but they were happily
married for 66 years prior to her death at age 90. Millman published his correspondences with

**Contents of Collection**

The Millman collection contains a series of letters from a soldier serving in World War II, George
Millman, home to his wife, Lillian Millman. George was stationed in the Pacific War Zone,
specifically Australia, the Netherlands East Indies, the Netherlands New Guinea and the Philippines,
from June 27, 1944 to February 20, 1946. These letters shed some light on the struggles,
hardships, anxieties and victories experienced by an American soldier fighting in the Pacific during
World War II.

Millman’s letters begin in Hamilton Beach, California where he was waiting to be sent to the Pacific
War Zone. His time in California was brief, not even a full month, and for the duration of his stay
Millman focused on entering the war after spending two years training for it. At this point in World
War II, the Japanese had captured the Philippines, Singapore, Burma, and ports of New Guinea
and the Solomon Islands. Shortly before Millman arrived in California, the Battle of Midway
occurred and proved to be a success for the United States military and a turning point of the war in
the Pacific. As a result of this victory, the United States gained ground in the Pacific including taking
back Guadalcanal and increasing attacks in New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the Gilbert Islands
and the Marshall Islands. During his station in Hamilton Beach, Millman was able to explore a great
deal of California with some of his fellow soldiers through "unexpected days off" and "overnight
passes." Millman was able to visit San Francisco, San Quentin Prison, Alcatraz, and rode over the
famous Golden Gate Bridge. He was able to view showings of various movies held in the officers’
quarters as well as experience some of what the California night life had to offer.
Following his short station in California, Millman was sent to Brisbane, Australia on July 18, 1944. He was stationed there for merely a day before the United States Marines invaded the island of Guam. The liberation of the islanders was completed shortly after his arrival on July 27, 1944. Millman served as a teacher in Australia, instructing young soldiers about the complexities of radars.

Millman was then transferred from Brisbane, Australia to Townsville, Australia on August 14, 1944, where he was "away from the war" for two more months. He was incredibly eager to be in the midst of the action in the Pacific War Zone. He installed an AN/APS-4 radar on two P-38 Fighters and on one B-25 medium bomber which was used as a flying instruction laboratory. In other parts of the Pacific War Zone, American troops invaded Mortai in the Netherlands East Indies and the Paulus on September 15th 1944. Then on October 11th 1944, air raids began against Okinawa. Fourteen B-29s based on the Marianas attacked the Japanese base at Turk on October 18th. The most significant military event of this time was that the U.S. Sixth army invaded Leyte in the Philippines on October 20, 1944.

In Millman's letters home to Lillian he describes in great detail his new lifestyle in Australia. These letters reflect Australian society through the eyes of a World War II American soldier. Millman saw the nation as twenty years behind the United States and considered the conditions to be far inferior to those back at home. His stay in Australia was relatively relaxed and he was able to try a variety of new activities including horseback riding and driving. Furthermore he was able to spend a great deal of time swimming and sunbathing. He lived relatively comfortably. Millman describes the food in the officer's mess as being excellent, better than the food in Hamilton Beach, California, and he frequents the free movies shown in the officer's club. His work day starts at 5:30 a.m. with wash, breakfast (served from 5:45 to 6:45 a.m.) and then work. He serves as his own boss at the field but he still has to conform to regular working hours (7 a.m.-5 p.m.). Lunch was served from noon to 12:45 p.m. and then supper from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Millman depicts his work day in Australia as long, and by the time he returns to his barracks, washes up and eats, he immediately falls asleep.

Millman was transferred to Owi, Schouten Islands, Netherlands East Indies on October 25, 1944. Finally, he was getting closer to what he considered to be the actual war in the Pacific Zone, where the combat was. The Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Philippines from October 23-26, 1944 resulted in a decisive American Naval victory. The first suicide kamikaze attack against U.S. warships occurred during that battle revealing the commitment of the enemy.

Millman was transferred over to Tacloban, Leyte, Philippines on November 10, 1944. Three weeks after Millman arrived, the United States Army invaded Leyte in the Philippines on October 20, 1944. At last, Millman was stationed right in the middle of the action. The Japanese were resistant to the American presence on the island and as a result the United States soldiers stationed there were subjected to numerous raids by the Japanese. The United States Navy attacked Iwo Jima on November 11 and November 24, 1944. During these raids twenty four B-29s bombed the
Nakajima aircraft factory in Tokyo, Japan. United States troops invaded the island of Mindoro in the Philippines on December 15, 1944. On January 3, 1945 General Douglass MacArthur was appointed the commander of all naval forces in preparation for invasions of Iwo Jima, Okinawa and Japan. Finally on January 9, 1945, the United States sixth army invaded Lingayen Gulf on the island of Luzon in the Philippines.

Millman then spent a short period of time in Mortai, Halmahera, Netherlands East Indies from January 14-17, 1944. After this brief stay Millman was assigned to the island of Sansapor, Netherlands New Guinea where he remained from January 17, 1945 through February 11, 1945. This is one of the more eventful periods during World War II in the Pacific War Zone. The Battle of Burma reached a turning point with the reopening of the Burma Road on January 28, 1945. The United States Sixth Army attacked the Japanese in Manila on February 3, 1944.

Millman returned to Mortai, Halmahera, Netherlands East Indies from February 11-March 12, 1945. Millman was stationed in Mortai longer than anticipated because soon after his arrival some United States troops recaptured Bataan in the Philippines on February 16, 1945. The marines then invaded Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945 and air borne troops recaptured Corregidor in the Philippines from the Japanese on March 2, 1945. A day later Manila fell to the American and Filipino troops March 20th. The United States Eighth Army invaded Mindanao in Burma. The United States Tenth Army invaded Okinawa on April 1, 1945 in the last amphibious landing of the war. On April 12, 1945, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died and on May 8, 1945 Vice President Truman takes over, soon after World War II ended in Europe.

Life in the East Indies was an "entirely new sort of life", different from that which Millman was used to in Australia. It rained constantly and Millman shared a tent with four other men and for some time had no working shower. The food, according to Millman, was vastly inferior to that of the food in Australia. His letters offer insight into the day-to-day lives of Filipinos during this time period as well as into the poor conditions that he endured. The letters also depict the ups and downs of a soldier's life from viewing nightly showings of various American films to undergoing air attacks from Japanese fighter pilots. Millman tracked his alcohol intake and commented on how much others drank. He assured Lillian he only drank for social reasons and that he was sticking "strictly to beer." He reflected on the poor quality of food served to the soldiers stationed in the Philippines, specifically complaining about the lack of variety for all he seems to eat are dehydrated foods including spam, bully beef and "hot cakes".

Millman describes the frustrations and struggles of an American soldier during World War II between always feeling as if he is waiting to be re-stationed elsewhere to the lack of consistent correspondence between himself and all of his loved ones back home. He expresses a great deal of anxiety surrounding how Lillian is doing at home. He gets incredibly disheartened when he does not receive mail, especially when he does not receive anything from his wife. Millman could go weeks without receiving any mail from her especially when he was reassigned to a new place.

Overall, Millman was an emotional writer: the letters he wrote to Lillian during this time period reflect the fear and terror that comes with coping with a military attack. As a result of the tropical
temperature of the Pacific, malaria and "scrub typhus", a form of bubonic plague, were common ailments amongst soldiers. Millman refers to the heat as "unbearable" stating that one cannot work outdoors between the hours of noon and 4 p.m. for the sun is too strong it would cause heatstroke. He describes his feelings of loneliness, insecurity and uncertainty to Lillian; he desperately wants to overcome them but struggles to do so.

Millman’s writings illustrate the priorities of the typical World War II soldier; he simply wants to return home to Lillian, save up for a home of their own and start a family. He gets through the war by looking forward to brighter days. He envisions his future life with a home, kids, and Lillian, and that keeps him going both mentally and physically.

On May 15, 1945, Millman was stationed to Biak, in the Schouten Islands, Netherlands East Indies. The war in the Pacific was clearly not over yet. On June 9 1945, Premier Suzuki announced that Japan would fight to the end rather than accept an unconditional surrender and it was generally felt that an invasion of Japan was indeed going to be necessary to end the war in the Pacific. Millman describes in his letters that the conditions in Biak were generally quite nice, detailing the polished wooden floors of the dining room, and citing the food as "fit for a king".

By July 5, 1945, Millman was stationed in Manila, Luzon, Philippines. He arrived in Manila the day the liberation of the Philippines was declared. One thousand bomber raids began against Japan on July 10th and naval bombardment began July 14th. Millman describes the new barracks in which he was being housed as one very large room in the "GI style" of living; there are no partitions and no privacy. The mess hall was approximately 1 mile from the living quarters, which Millman describes as inconvenient for those who lack transportation.

On July 17 1945, Millman was stationed in Tacloban, Leyte, Philippines. At this time, the U.S. wanted to end the war as soon as possible without further casualties; this desire led to the dropping of the Atomic bomb. The first Atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima from a B-29 flown by Colonel Charles Sweeney on August 6, 1945. Two days later the USSR declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria. On August 9th Major Charles Sweeney dropped a second atomic bomb from a B-29 onto the city of Nagasaki. The devastation that resulted was so severe that Emperor Hirohito and Prime Minister Suzuki decided to seek immediate peace with the allied forces.

Millman describes the process in which soldiers were sent home, first with the combat soldiers then with the service men. On August 14, 1945, the Japanese agreed to an unconditional surrender. The formal surrender took place on board the Missouri in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945. Millman, along with all of the soldiers still stationed in the Pacific, were eager to see when they would be released from the army. He references the point system used to determine who was allowed to return home. This system was based on rank length of service in the Pacific. It was difficult for Millman to watch as the higher ranking soldiers and military officials were permitted to return to their families in the United States.

With the war in the Pacific ending Millman was placed in charge of a radar maintenance field at Nichols Field in Manila. He continued to be distracted, though by though of returning home to Lillian.
At this point it was only as a matter of time until he accrued enough points to merit being sent back to the United States. There were some breaks from work given to soldiers and many soldiers were given recreational leaves. Millman spent some time relaxing at a club house in Baguio, Philippines. These recuperative months dragged on as Millman awaited his turn to go home. On January 29, 1946, Millman received the appropriate number of points to be sent home, his letters end with him waiting for the ship that will take him back to the U.S.

Millman’s letters are full of love for and devotion to Lillian, and it is evident that one of the most difficult challenges, if not the most difficult challenge, facing George while serving in the war was being away from his wife. His letters eloquently capture the routine, sometime monotonous, of a soldier in the Pacific War Zone. They also capture the loneliness of a homesick soldier and the guiding love that carried him through the war.

While the bulk of the collection consists of George Millman’s letters home to his wife, it also includes a few other items related to his service in the war. There are government issued guidebooks and language booklets, publications that document the history of Squadron V Air Service Area Command, photographs of radars and airplanes used for training purposes, and several AAF cloth maps.
Administrative information

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