



The Historical  
Society of  
Pennsylvania

Collection 3123

**Corporal Edward A. Psulkowski Letters**

**Creator: Psulkowski, Edward A.**

**1939 – 1968**

**5 boxes, 1.8 linear feet**

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**Restrictions:** None

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### **Abstract**

This collection consists primarily of a series of love letters between Edward Psulkowski and Gladys Kramer. The letters narrate the story of two pen pals who fell in love during World War II and married in 1946. The correspondence and greeting cards from relatives and friends reflect the married life of Gladys and Edward in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania.

### **Background and scope note**

Edward Psulkowski (1922-2010) and Gladys Kramer began corresponding in December 5, 1942 when Edward, a 19-year-old Army Air Corps recruit, stationed in Amarillo, Texas, requested the mailing address of Gladys from a fellow barrack mate. Edward wrote to Gladys, “I guess that you are wondering who in the world is writing to you. I doubt very much if you ever saw me or know who I am. But we seem to be even on that score up until Tommy got [your] picture. That started it all, I just could not figure out [how] a lovely female like you[r]self hadn’t meet [sic] any of the fellows I know in Philadelphia . . . that fair city.” Eventually he explains the reason for sending the letter—to obtain a picture of Gladys similar to the one that she had previously sent Tommy.

Gladys replied with a Christmas card, which Edward mentions in his letter of January 4, 1943, “. . . thanks a million for the swell Christmas card and also for answering my letter. I just did it to see what would happen, and I was quite [surprised] to [receive] a reply and I must add also very glad. I’m almost willing to bet that you never saw a name like mine, they just picked out a mess of letter[s], mixed them up and you have seen the results.” In these letters they share with each other the day-to-day: what they ate, what they did, who they met, etc. Their daily summaries are filled with other musings and observations. They often amused each other in the openings and closing of their letters and suggested that they were “haunting” each other, which precisely described Edward’s initial desire to reach out to Gladys through letter.

It was not until Edward’s leave a year later, during the Christmas of 1943, that the couple first met face to face. When Gladys found out that he would be coming home she wrote

about their first anticipated meeting in every letter. On November 14, 1943 she wrote, "Honestly, I have been dreaming so much about the first time we meet, and the swell times we will have together that my dreams almost seem real. It is wonderful to be able to think that very soon all of our dreams will be coming true." On December 5, 1943 (the anniversary), she wrote more extensively, "Just think, exactly one year ago today, your first letter was being sent to me, and when I received it I never thought for one tiny-winy second that you would ever come to mean as much to me as you do now. I'll always cherish that letter cause if it hadn't been for that very first letter I would never have known you and honestly Eddy, that is a horrible thought."

Throughout the course of their "courtship" – through letters – they managed to sustain and develop a loving and committed relationship. Edward was stationed in many parts of the country for training including Wendover Field in Utah; San Francisco, California; Brooksville Air Base in Florida; Amarillo Field in Texas; Mt. Home Army Airfield in Idaho; and Orlando, Florida. He was also stationed abroad; however, the letters from overseas do not contain locations. This information was deemed a threat to national security at the time and the letters written to and from military personnel during the war were censored by the Army examiner. The evidence of such intrusion is revealed in the empty spaces that were cut out of Edward's letters.

Edward became a member of the 494 Bombardment Group (H), 864<sup>th</sup> Squadron, and flew 37 successful missions "without abort." In July of 1945 Edward was recommended by Colonel Laurence B. Kelley for the Bronze Star for his service in air battles. Other members of the squadron would also speak of their success:

Then came the peace. First, that wild hilarious celebration the night of 10 August 1945, when word first was flashed from "Radio Tokyo" that Japan desired to surrender; then the waiting period--three weeks long--until finally V-J Day, 2 September 1945, was announced. We of the 494<sup>th</sup> knew we had completed a task and felt that we had done our part very well. We were ready to go home.<sup>1</sup>

While the country celebrated the close of World War II, Psulkowski received notice of his rejection for the Bronze Star Medal. The notification was sent by H. P. Bonnewitz from the command of Brigadier General M. C. Daniel that Psulkowski was "Not favorably considered." Although this may have been a shock to Psulkowski, his letters to Gladys do not indicate in any way what he thought about the rejection or even the recommendation. His letters took on the same style and sentiments, expressing his love to her and discussing daily affairs. However, in later years, other squadron members petitioned the United States military for proper recognition for having served.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From <http://raysestak.com/494bga/494history/written.htm>, accessed June 16, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> According to The 494<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group "Kelley's Kobras" website, they have received some kind of recognition since then. See the following link: <http://raysestak.com/494bga/>

At the close of World War II Edward returned to Philadelphia to marry Gladys. The ceremony was held at the St. Ambroses Church in Philadelphia on June 1, 1946. Letters from family and friends mention their son, Raymond, as well as other family affairs. The bulk of the letters from family members are from Gladys's mother and father during their travels and from their home in Texas.

**Separation report**

None.

**Related materials**

None.

**Bibliography**

None.

**Subjects**

World War II, 1939-1945

Wendover Army Air Field (Utah)

Psulkowski, Edward A.

United States. Army. Air Corps

United States. Army Air Forces. Bombardment Group (H), 494th

## **Administrative Information**

### **Restrictions**

The collection is open for research.

### **Acquisition information**

Purchased, 2004.

Accession # 2004.103

### **Preferred citation**

Cite as: [Indicate cited item or series here], Corporal Edward Psulkowski letters (Collection 3123), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

### **Processing note**

Due to time constraints, this collection was not rearranged. The letters, which arrived folded and in bundles, were re-housed in acid free folders and box as there were originally found. The box and folder list reflects this arrangement. Researchers may need to search in several boxes for letters from the same senders.

## Box and folder listing

Folder title	Date	Box	Folder
Bronze Star Medal Award	1945	1	1
Wedding Invitations & Guest List	1946 and 1954	1	2
From Reynolds, Philip A. to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1951	1	3
From Kramer, Arthur R. to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1952 – 1954	1	4-5
From Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Kramer to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1955 – 1956	1	6
From Reynolds, Bonnie to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1956	1	7
St. Francis Purgatorial Society Certificate	1968	1	8
Spiritual Enrollment Card	n.d.	1	9
From Kramer, Gladys to Edward Psulkowski	1943 – 1944	2	1-3
“Two Way Minute Mail” – newspaper clippings	1944	2	4
From Kramer, Gladys to Edward Psulkowski	1944 – 1945	2	5
From Joseph, Marie to Mrs. Psulkowski	1952	2	6
From Westlin, Ellen to Mrs. Psulkowski	1952	2	7
From Springer, Dottie to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1952 – 1956	2	8
From Mr. and Mrs. Kramer to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1952 – 1957	2	9
From Flora to Mrs. Psulkowski	1955 and 1957	2	10
From Unknown (Miami, FL) to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1955	2	11
From Torols, Catherine to Mrs. Psulkowski	1956	2	12
Birthday Cards	n.d.	2	13
Greeting Cards to Gladys Kramer	1939 – 1952	3	1
From Various Senders to Gladys Kramer	1939 – 1952	3	2
From Various Senders to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1943 – 1957	3	3
From Psulkowski, Edward to Gladys Kramer	1944 – 1945	3	4-5

From Mr. and Mrs. Kramer to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1950 – 1956	3	6
From Reynolds, P. A. to Mr. and Mrs. Psulkowski	1951 and 1954	3	7
From Psulkowski, Edward to Gladys Kramer	1942 – 1945	4	1-6
From Psulkowski, Edward to Gladys Kramer	1943 – 1945	5	1-5, 7
From Psulkowski, Edward to Mrs. Alvira Kramer	1944 – 1945	5	6