

McLean County Museum of History

**Blair Family WWII Letters
Collection**

Processed by
Robert Bradley
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Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1943-2024
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

Brief History

This collection primarily consists of letters written by Blair family members and friends of the family during World War II. The letters in the collection came from the Appanoose County Historical Society in Centerville, Iowa. Harold Blair, who was a recipient of most of the letters, had retired to Centerville where he subsequently passed away. Harold was born in Ellsworth, Illinois, and graduated from Bloomington High School. The letters were sent to Harold and his wife when they lived in Cooksville, Illinois. This is why the Historical Society thought the McLean County Museum of History would be an appropriate site to house the collection.

The letters provide glimpses of the conditions that soldiers endured during WWII. The letters also demonstrate the impact of technology on war correspondence. To save cargo space WWII soldiers wrote their letters on special 7 x 9-inch sheets of papers that were photographed and reduced to thumb-nail size negative images on microfilm. About arrival in the United States, the images were developed and printed as 4 ¼ x 5 ¼ inch cards that were called Victory Mail or more commonly V-Mail. Once printed, the cards were delivered to their intended recipients.

Scope

The collection includes introductory material, consisting of a letter from the Appanoose County Historical Society, a general description of the correspondence, brief biographical sketches of letter authors and recipients, and a Pantagraph article about the collection. Then there are several folders of actual letters and envelopes, which are arranged by sender.

Folder Inventory

Folder 1: General Information

- 1.1 Letter to museum colleagues from Lisa Eddy, curator Appanoose County Historical Society, 2024, 1 p.
- 1.2 “Blair Family World War II Correspondence vertical file,” 1 pp.
- 1.3 Steven K. Blair, January 5, 1944 and March 2, 1944), and on back side brief information on Glenn Francis Blair, 2 pp.
- 1.4 Lonnie Joseph Blair, brief information (includes a copy of a newspaper story from August 21, 1942), a brief note on his marriage, and on back side a copy of a newspaper story of December 25, 1944, and a brief note dated January 2, 1974, 2 pp.
- 1.5 Joseph Blair, brief information including spouse, children, website to his grave, a brief biography, and on back side brief information on Goldie (Bean) Blair with short biography, 2 pp.
- 1.6 Harold Ivan Blair, brief information and short biography drawn from Pantagraph article from April 10, 1984, and on back side is an obituary in the Pantagraph that is two pages, 3 pp.
- 1.7 Copy of “WWII soldiers’ letters come home,” [The Pantagraph](#), November 17, 2024, 1 pp.

Folder 2: Blair, Steven letters

- 2.1 V-Mail from Steven K. Blair to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair, February 7, 1945, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail was from New Guinea where Steven was waiting for his next assignment and wonders about conditions back home)
- 2.2 V-Mail for Steven K. Blair to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair, April 1, 1945, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail was from the Philippine Islands where Steven wrote about his new duties, missing his son, the weather conditions, and expresses sympathy for the Weed family)
- 2.3 V-Mail from Steven K. Blair to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair, July 1, 1945, 1 pp. (v-mail was from the Philippine Islands where Steven wrote about the slowness of the mail, the high price of meat back home, hearing about Emery Weed going through tough battles, and conditions where he is stationed and that he can't provide more details due to the military censors)
- 2.4 Two typed poems, "Somewhere" and "A Sailor's Life", 2 pp. along with an envelope, April 26, 1945.

Folder 3: Blair, L.J. letters

- 3.1 V-Mail from L.J. Blair to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair, January 4, 1945, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail was from France where L.J. wrote about fudge that he received, snow in France and that the beer and wine there is not good, that he gets the same news about the war effort that they do back home, and his inability to get perfume)
- 3.2 V-Mail from L.J. Blair to Mr. Harold Blair, July 8, 1945, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail was from France where L.J. wrote about leaving Germany and being in France where the weather was terrible, about the point system for returning home, about Marseille, and about the lack of entertainment)

Folder 4: Jackson, Floyd letters

- 4.1 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and family, June 8, 1943, 1 pp. (v-mail where Floyd wrote greetings to the family and expressed how much he missed being home)
- 4.2 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and family, June 26, 1943, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote about things he misses about home and that he has a big job coming up)
- 4.3 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, August 23, 1943, 1 pp. (v-mail where Floyd wrote how happy he was to know that the Blairs received his cablegram, and he is in Sicily.)
- 4.4 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, August 26, 1943, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote how much he misses everyone and that he is in Sicily but can't write where in Sicily).
- 4.5 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, September 27, 1943, 1 pp. (v-mail where Floyd wrote that he can't tell them what he is doing or about the souvenirs he is collecting and asks for some candy).
- 4.6 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, October 2, 1943, 1 pp. (v-mail where Floyd wrote that he is in North Africa but can't reveal where he has been, and asks for a fountain pen and chocolate candy like Milky Way bars).

- 4.7 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, October 10, 1943, 1 pp. (v-mail where Floyd wrote about family matters and that he was happy that the Blairs visited his mother).
- 4.8 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, October 19, 1943, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote about missing them and wishing he could have some of Mrs. Blair's fried chicken).
- 4.9 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, October 27, 1943, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote about hoping to get some Christmas packages with popcorn in them, and he has a sergeant and corporal from Arizona).
- 4.10 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, November 7, 1943, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote about family matters and wished them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year).
- 4.11 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, December 1, 1943, 1 pp. (v-mail where Floyd wrote he received several Christmas packages and is now in England).
- 4.12 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, December 18, 1943, 1 pp. along with envelope (v-mail where Floyd wrote about the Blairs getting chicken pox, that Lonnie is doing alright, and that a lot of soldiers are being sent abroad).
- 4.13 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, December 26, 1943, 1 pp. (v-mail where Floyd wrote about getting a letter and package from them, and that the mail is a little messed up).
- 4.14 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, January 16, 1944, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote about them feeding chickens, fox hunting and bike riding, and misses Illinois).
- 4.15 Handwritten letter to Dear Dorothy, Harold & Jerry from somewhere in England, January 23, 1945, 4 pp. along with envelope. (Floyd wrote how much he missed being back home and that he has been overseas for a year).
- 4.16 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair and Jerry, January 30, 1944, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote thanks for Dorothy's letter and about things he missed from back home).
- 4.17 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair & Jerry, February 4, 1944, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd thanked them for a letter and discussed a dance the Blairs went to).
- 4.18 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair & Jerry, February 20, 1944, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd thanked them for a letter and talked about the speed of the mail).
- 4.19 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair & Jerry, February 27, 1944, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd thanked them for sending candy and talked about past winter activities).
- 4.20 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair & Jerry, March 6, 1944, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote about wishing he could go to Chicago with them and that there are pretty things to see in England).
- 4.21 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair & Jerry, March 16, 1944, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd thanked them for a package of candy and wrote that he had been to London).

- 4.22 Handwritten letter to Dear Dorothy, Harold & Jerry, March 23, 1944, 4 pp. along with envelope. (Floyd wrote about being abroad 14 months and sending photos of himself to them)
- 4.23 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair & Jerry, March 30, 1944, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote that he was happy that Harold was deferred, and wishes he was back home).
- 4.24 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair & Jerry, April 14, 1944, 1 pp. along with envelope. (v-mail where Floyd wrote he had not received package of candy and hoped that they received the photos of himself).
- 4.25 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair & Jerry, May 12, 1944, 1 pp. (v-mail where Floyd wrote about chickens, rain, and that he has been away for so long).
- 4.26 V-Mail from Floyd Jackson to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair & Jerry, June 25, 1944, 1 pp. (v-mail where Floyd wrote he was glad that they received his photo, that they are giving them hell there, and can't wait to get home).

Folder 5: Sinnott, Thomas letters

- 2.1 Handwritten letter to Dear Harold & Dorothy, January 20, 1944, 2 pp. with envelope. (Tom wrote that they have been shelled heavily by the 'Jerries' for the last three days and have to stay close to their foxholes, and about trading fruit juices for alcoholic drinks).
- 2.2 Handwritten letter to Dear Dorothy & Harold, April 11, 1944, 2 pp. with envelope. (Tom thanked them for Easter card, said he lives in a cave about 20 ft. underground, and wondered whether some friends back home had enlisted).
- 2.3 V-Mail from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, April 19, 1944, 1 pp. with envelope. (v-mail where he wrote about pulling guard duty and ducking shells, getting fresh meat from cows and sheep that they kill, and telling Harold to avoid getting in the Army because it is very tough).
- 2.4 V-Mail from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, April 28, 1944, 1 pp. with envelope. (v-mail where he wrote that he is at Anzio Beachhead, that he has seen all the sites around Naples Salerno, and that he hasn't had beer since leaving N. Africa)
- 2.5 V-Mail from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, September 30, 1944, 1 pp. with envelope. (v-mail where he wrote thanks for a package of a pipe, tobacco, and candy but had not received it yet, asked for some cigarettes, and said he was sending a v-mail because he didn't have any paper).
- 2.6 V-Mail from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, November 1, 1944, 1 pp. (v-mail where he wrote that a letter sent to him on October 16 took 15 days to arrive, and thanked them for cake and candy).
- 2.7 V-Mail from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, December 2, 1944, 1 pp. with envelope. (v-mail where he wrote that he had not received a letter from Thomas Kinsella and that he had visited his girlfriend).
- 2.8 V-Mail from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, April 12, 1945, 1 pp. (v-mail where he wrote he was in the hospital for a while, has a new address where he can shower every day, decided not to get married there, and lost his watch).
- 2.9 V-Mail from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, April 14, 1945, 1 pp. (v-mail where he wrote he called off marriage and sold ring for \$100, saw Roger Doyle, and aunt informed him that her son had been killed in action in Germany),

- 2.10 V-Mail from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, April 26, 1945, 1 pp. with envelope. (v-mail where he wrote that he is still in Italy and that wine and gin don't mix well).
- 2.11 Handwritten letter on V-Mail form from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, May 31, 1945, 1 pp. (he wrote he knew Rex Larkin and Wilber Ben, that he is stationed near Naples, and hopes to get home before Christmas).
- 2.12 Handwritten letter on V-Mail form from Thomas Sinnott to Mrs. Harold Blair, June 20, 1945, 1 pp. (he wrote that he heard from Tommy Kinsella who is stationed only 50 miles away, and that he has been in Italy for two years and is sick of it).

Folder 6: Kinsella, Thomas letters

- 6.1 V-Mail from Thomas Kinsella to Mr. & Mrs. John O'Daniel, April 22, 1945, 1 pp. with envelope. (v-mail where he wrote that he received mail from friends and family, heard that Roosevelt died, and likes where he is stationed rather than where he was in the states).
- 6.2 Handwritten letter on V-Mail form from Thomas Kinsella to Harold Blair, June 12, 1945, 1 pp. with envelope. (he wrote about the point system used to send troops home, and desperately hopes he is not included in the army of occupation).

Folder 7: Weed letters

- 7.1 Handwritten letter from Emery Weed to Mr. & Mrs. Harold Blair, March 11, 1944, 2 pp. with envelope. (he wrote about how close he came to getting hit in the field).
- 7.2 V-Mail from Merle Weed to Mrs. Harold Blair, March 21, 1944, 1 pp. with envelope. (v-mail where he wrote that if he gets back to the states he will never leave again).

Folder 8: Miscellaneous

- 8.1 V-Mail-from a Best Friend "Walt" to Mr. Harold Blair, 1 pp. "Greetings from 103rd Fleet Hospital, Father's Day.
- 8.2 Postcard booklet "Greetings from Camp Joseph T. Robinson" Souvenir of Little Rock, Arkansas to Master Jerry Blair.
- 8.3 Postcard on Glenn L, Martin Co, Aircraft Plant near Baltimore, Md., largest unit aircraft plant in U.S.A.