

World War II: A Love Story

By Richard Yehle

My father, Casimir Yehle, was sitting at home in St. Paul, Minnesota on December 7, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He, along with thousands of other young men enlisted in the U.S. Military (in his case the Army Air Corps) later that same month. My dad, however, was aged 31, which wasn't all that young.

He did something that was valuable nearly 70 years later: he kept a diary for the entire year of 1942. The existence of the diary was kept a secret by him and his sister, my aunt, until my aunt's death in 2000 in Trenton Missouri. It took me until May 2004 to find the time to visit Trenton where I took away three large boxes of materials including the diary. When I came home and unloaded the materials, I discovered the diary.

It took another couple of years to transcribe it – using the built-in Microsoft Vista Voice Recognition program. The entire first year consisted in training, drills, supply room duty, guard duty, and generally being bored. My father wasn't the best student, but he did complete his studies and ended up in North Africa around the first of 1943, more than a year after he enlisted.

Below I've copied a variety of diary entrees, as written, tracing the meeting, courtship and engagement to my mother, Lois Krause, a USO worker at McClellan field near Sacramento.

Monday, July 27, 1942

Hurray! Going for sure! McClelland field, California and that isn't all assigned, too. Wonderful I call it. Usual day, everything as usual. To the show I went and one was good but the other wasn't. Fooey! To bed at 10:00. Had some beer with Bill Johnston and he insisted that I take \$5.00 with me. What a buddy.

Tuesday, July 28, 1942

Here she is, ladies and gentlemen. The day we leave Scott field. We did at 5:57 not one minute sooner. So now we are on the train bound for California. Had supper in St. Louis. Good one, too. Went to bed. Hope we can sleep.

Friday, July 31, 1942

Got up to 5:30 and still on the train. Got our first taste of blackout. Supposed to get in Sacramento at 8:30. Will the train make it? Here we are in the depot at 8:40 and GI trucks waiting for us. Ye! Gads! Colder than a mother in law's kiss. 8 miles to go in trucks to our new home. Assigned, too. OK. Went to town and saw some of these sites. No pass needed. To bed at 11:00 so good night and sweet dreams.

Sunday, August 2, 1942

Got up at 7:30 and went to town again and ended up in church. Walk downtown and waited for a ride. Still isn't a bad town and they have some very beautiful churches and buildings. I do know one thing, I sure miss mom and the rest. Came back to camp the same way. I've got two find a different way to get back to camp. Too hard walking. Got to bed at 9:30 so good night and sweet dreams.

Saturday August 15, 1942

*Went to town with Bernie and Tim. Bowled and played pool –too late to pick up watch, school all day. 20 of the boys leaving for Fresno. Good luck to them. I wonder where I'm headed for? Not much excitement outside of that. No date with **Lois** because she was up at the lake. Got to bed at 12:00 o'clock the so good night and sweet dreams. [First reference to Lois Krause]*

Tuesday, August 25, 1942

*When Thursday the rolls around I hope to have **Lois's** telephone number. All day to school today had two tests on clearances and got 100% so far on both of these. Got back at 4:20 from school had chow and went over to the CT. Crowley was there and learn something about it. Got back at 9:00 and went to bed at 10:00 so good night and sweet dreams.*

Thursday, August 27, 1942

*All day to school and not bad this time. Got back to camp at 4:30 and had chow. Got cleaned up and went to town to the USO with Al. After we were there for a while and Adele said the Kay was throwing a party for us. So we went. A quart of whiskey and a gallon of beer the only thing that wasn't quite [right] was that **Lois** wasn't there. Like tough luck. Ah! But one of these days I'll get a chance to really get to know her and that will be something. My only hope is that I'll get the chance I want either officers training or control tower work. May the Lord make my will come true. To bed at 10:00 so good night and sweet dreams.*

Sunday, September 13, 1942

*Went to church at 10:00. Bought a puzzle book and sat in the USO until 12:00 then went to see **Lois** and stayed with the sweetest girl I know until 9:20. Ah! Me! Could kick myself for letting anything like that get away. Nuts. So I got in at 10:05 and read about her and was happy for the first time since I've been in the army. I'm not kidding myself.*

Monday, September 14, 1942

*Went to school all day and got credit with 12 WPM [Typing speed]. There was a sheet on the wall of the school so that we could put our preference down as to the field we wanted to go too. March [Field] was mine. Went to the show in town and saw "The Pied Piper"! Darned good show. Went with Slater and Baggez. Got back at 1:00 so went to bed and Goodnight to dream about **Lois** (Bunny).*

Tuesday, September 15, 1942

*Wrote some letters this evening and as usual went to school all day. Went swimming after words. Double-crossed. Went into town in a mixed uniform. So had to get back to camp in a hurry. Got back at 11:00 so went to bed and here I go again dreaming of **Lois** (Bunny). My appetite isn't what it should be. Can it be love at last?*

Wednesday, September 16, 1942

*Went to school in got excused at 3:00 so went down and had a haircut finally. Went to town with the boys and stopped to see **Lois** and stayed till 10:10. Got back to camp at 10:45 dreaming again of Bunny. So here I go again. Good night and sweet dreams bunny. Why can't I have her in peace too? Please God give me this!!!*

Thursday, September 17, 1942

*No school! Hooray! We go on our way soon. P OC also. Hope I have a good time on the way. Going to see **Lois** once more. 146 – 143 – 164. Did I see her? Oh! Boy! And how! An old broke my heart that I went with other standing that she would come down to LA and sometime*

soon. Am I in love? I think Yes –got to bed at 2:00 but who cares. I don't. Good night and sweet dreams.

Tuesday, September 22, 1942

Got going again today and got 17 Wpm on typing so that isn't so bad. Got to do better that is all there is to it got a letter from home and one from Al and Bubbles. Got them answered so that is that. Wish bunny were here. Not much doing. Got papers to fill out for OTS first of got to find out if the papers I filled at Scott got to me or not. Going to bed soon so good night and sweet dreams. I wonder if **Lois** feels the same way as I do? I wonder. Good night and again sweet dreams.

Sunday, October 11, 1942

Meet **Lois** at the depot at 12:20 only 3 hours late. Oh! Well she is here. Do I love her. Yes! But differently than the one in St. Louis [Bubbles referenced above]. What a girl. All never give up the fun and good time I had with her. Drake so much that I was sober when we went back to the hotel. I don't know what it is but I'm never the same unless she's there by my side. Could lift the world. With one hand. Went to bed 11:00 and got orders to wake her up which I did only she was awake. So got a beautiful kiss that will stay with me as long as I live. Hasta luego.

Tuesday, October 13, 1942

After Sunday and Monday I have and been worth a damn. Ball with luck I'll make to 20 WPM. Today I learned I was to be assistant to Jacobell –at the code school. Perhaps that will help. I know it will. No letters from anybody. I wonder if **Lois** feels the same way I do? I think she does. Tired but the happiest guy this side of heaven. I wouldn't give one million dollars for that short time. Where will she right or something? Perhaps she is waiting for that picture to be made.

Wednesday, October 14, 1942

Got up extra early to take gas mask drill. Not bad but not good. Took over my duties as assistant and didn't do bad so far. Work late but not too late. 9:00 tonight we went to the club and had lunch. Not much to write about. Everything is still easy. To guess **Lois** is a busy girl. No letters yet. Can it be that nobody wants to write to me? Bowled last night in after taking two games lost the third and the match. What a life. Hope to make OCS soon. Won't that be something? Yeah!

Saturday, October 17, 1942

Didn't even make an attempt to get out of school. Nothing to do no time on pass so that is that. Practically ate my heart out wondering if **Lois** was going to write. Haven't had any thing so far. So went to the show and got back to barracks about 11:00 to 11:30 went to bed so good night and sweet dreams. How I love that girl. It gets worse all the time.

Monday, October 19, 1942

Got a letter from **Lois** in the world is once more rosy! Answered her letter and waiting for reply. Darn it! Among other words to write to her. The course is almost from whipped and so that will be taken care of in time. Got a lecture in jamming and how to take care of it. Got to bed 11:00 read a good book "You Can't Do Business With Hitler." Not bad for that type of book. Good night and dream.

Wednesday, October 21, 1942

Supposed to take gas mask drill today but didn't. Today I'm going to pass 20 WPM or all they really pissed off. I've got to pass no ??? yes or no about so today is the day. Hope I get a letter from **Lois**. Gosh! Do I miss her. Yes I miss her! Got 4 letters from her today! Woopper!!! Life is once more wonderful. Well, she says wait so I guess wait it is. Wrote a letter to mom explaining some things. Tomorrow I'm making out a pass to go to town so that I can get a ring for her. Will get the best one can for 10 or 11 bucks. Going to bed at 9:30 so good night and sweet dreams. Wonderful woman.

Thursday, October 22, 1942

Another day so here we go again. I've got two pass 20 WPM that is all there is to it no alibis this time. Well, nothing else happened except that tomorrow is my birthday. Funny don't feel any difference. Sergeant M. Albrecht has his on the same day. Most important got a letter from **Lois** and a very nice present from her. What more can a man ask for from this world. A house and a family. Of course, the material wealth to reap them thus. To bed at 11:00 went during and bowling still very rotten on these alleys here. No news of shipment yet.

Friday, October 23, 1942

Have a pass good for 12 hours so went to town and broke myself getting a ring (engagement) for **Lois**. Got one, a Zircon for \$14.00. That cost \$22.50 so the jeweler said. Fooled around in town for awhile. At the USO packed the ring and sent it to her. Came back to camp bed 4:00 stop by for mail and got in the letter from Lois. Good news. So just laid around. Then went up to the beer joint on the field and consumed 4 bottles of beer. Got to bed at 10:30 so good night and sweet dreams.

Sunday, October 25, 1942

Open school today. Only two of us there. Jake is on pass and we just fooled around. Had a letter from Aunt Clara. Answered it. Went to church and felt a bit better from the experience. Went to the show and saw "The Major In The Minor" which was a good picture at that. Got some beer that some of the Fellows from Shepp and got back to the barracks at 10:00 so that is that. A bug a letter from **Lois** tell me how much she likes the ring I sent to her. What a wonderful girl! And she is all mine. Wonderful world. To bed so good night and sweet dreams.

Thursday, October 29, 1942

Well, we know for sure who was going on this trip. So just fooled around. Got a letter from **Lois** and she was tickled pink with the ring. Thank God that she got the ring anyway. Not much of anything has happened. We've just got to the point where we don't care what happens. Went down to the Service Club and had some sandwich is with Ed. Boys is he a pissed off young man and I can't say that I blame him very much. He couldn't do much about it so I'm going anyway. Got to bed at 10:30 so good night and sweet dreams.

Saturday, October 31, 1942

A full day for packing and getting things fixed up. We waited for pay and waited for chow. Say goodbye to all. So that is the end of this stay in March Field. Boy! Do I hate to leave. Got a telegram from **Lois** and there is the reason! Any more to be said? Held at the Airport in Burbank waiting for the plane to take this east. Damn such luck! Or no way at 12:40 so there we go. Good night - - etc?