

**JILL TO AL AUGUST 17, 1942**

Darling --

It seems like a long time since I have written to you, for which I am duly sorry. But I was so busy this weekend, and furthermore, so removed from writing materials, that I just couldn't ...

Saturday afternoon I went out to Flossmoor, to visit Mac. We had an awfully nice quiet time of it, went bike riding Saturday night until it got too dark, and then we sat around and chewed cokes with Fay Horton, Cal Sawyer's girl. Fay and I naturally have something in common, being enamored of political scientists. I guess she's going to marry Cal, and her family are very much opposed. They are very society -- Mr. H. is president of Chicago Bridge and Iron -- and feel Fay, who is really beautiful as well as bright -- could do better. She doesn't think so, however. Incidentally, Cal is about to go to work for Naval Intelligence, which leads me to conclude that six months ago, when you, I believe, spoke to navy officers, their personnel and administrative set-up wasn't as well organized as it is now, since you're even better trained than Cal for that kind of work.

Sunday we drove over to the Dunes with Mac's parents, which is about an hour from Flossmoor. Her grandparents have a very nice place over there, with chickens and doves and five infant guinea hens. And a half chow, half police dog that was the most energetic unrestrained animal I've ever seen. Mac and I drove over to the beach and swam some, although we both agreed that swimming off Waverley was one of the duller experiences, compared to the rocks at 55 St. We got back to F. about nine and I left for work this morning on the businessman's special, a train with more than the usual portion of Tribune readers.

I guess I told you, I stayed with your family Friday night. I got away with that gag about going to the library, and got up north about 2. Your ma and I, both playing hooky from the rigors of everyday life, went over to the rocks. The water was just about perfect, very calm and somewhat cool. I overslept Saturday morning, so didn't go to work again, calling up with some feeble

excuse that I had a cold. Then I went South and by the time I had had a brief swish in the waters off 55th, it was time to meet Mac.

I feel sort of sleepy and relaxed today after all the exercise and sleep over the weekend, and have a profound wish that my work wouldn't keep me indoors. It certainly is stupid, sitting here and goldbricking at this typewriter or over the morning papers when I could be outside getting a tan. I never can get one over a weekend because there just isn't enough time to sit in the sun long enough for same. Maybe, in the fullness of time, if you are stationed somewhere in the country, I will be able to live on a farm and help out in the farm work, as I hear they need help and I am sure that I am strong enough. However, I wouldn't feel justified in living in the country and not doing anything. This is no time for a healthy girl to be retiring to a life of contemplation. There'll be plenty of time after the war for getting a sunburn per se and for thinking the good thoughts.

That ghastly secretary to our department, Sonnie, is away on her vacation, and so is Bernie, so things are relatively quiet today. I haven't done anything except go through the weekend papers looking for relevant news items and marking them. I have only my dark glasses with me, having left the others at home, so things have taken on rather a dreary tinge.

When do you think you'll be coming home? I am sort of losing track of time. Here it is almost the end of August and it doesn't seem as if there's been any summer at all. I guess that's the effect of working during the summer and also of the cool weather we've been having. My last Red Cross lesson is on September 9th, which is the only way time is really ticked off around here. However, the 7th is this Wednesday, and that is the last of the elementary course. The teacher is asking us to stay on for the advanced lessons, numbering three. In other words, if, please God, you do come home before then, I'll get a certificate for having passed the seven lesson course. If I pass the ten-lesson one, I can get an advanced certificate.

Well, darling, I guess I had better close. I don't feel very peppy

right now and I'm afraid it's communicating to this letter, the soporific tone of which is probably sending you to sleep. Besides, I have to get back to work on the Herald-Examiner puzzle contest.

Much love to you, dear,

Jill

***JILL TO AL AUGUST 18, 1942***

Darling darling --

The dual greeting is because I am so pleased and proud that you are passing all your courses and that you really may be home on Sept. 4. That is a very fine day, because it is Labor Day weekend and I won't feel like such a heel asking for all five days off, only four and a half. But in reading your letters that came yesterday, I noticed, on and between the lines, a tendency to scoff at and ignore the virtues of frequent baths. Hah, I said to myself, all that will change when he gets home. For two years now I have put up with your indifference to all I hold sacred, and it comes to an end. You are going to have to take a bath every day just as I do when you get home, and baths twice a day for the first three days, as penance.

I had to rummage through your photographs and other junk last night because I needed the box they were in to take something back to Field's. (That slack suit I bought there a month ago dry-cleaned miserably so I took it back and they are going to investigate, whatever that means.) Anyway, you certainly have a lot of rubbish there, as well as some nice pictures, and I don't know what to do with it all, so I just shoved it all on top of the closet, and get beamed with a letter or a notebook now every time I reach for an article of well-worn clothing.

I did my first press release today, a statement by McK. for the Chicago Defender. I guess Rubin didn't think he ought to waste his talent on a Negro newspaper. It was very high-flown and I suffered much agony in getting it out. He said it was pretty

good, whatever that means.

I am wheeling over to Betz's tonight after supper as she is going to New York tomorrow. She may get a transfer to the Esquire office there, which she desires very much, but which her family would have a fit at. Betz's guy is that designer, Lanz (of collegiate clothing) and he is about 40, which disturbs her family no end. He acts like a kid, though.

Last night I ate smelts and stayed home and read a silly book called *Low Man on a Totem Pole* by H. Allen Smith, the author of a column by the same name in the Sun. It's just a series of interviews of strip teaser dancers and busty girls, so far as I can see. For men only. I also got Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* out of the library because I remembered reading somewhere that it is a classic, and I am all for classics. I also have Horney's new book at home, *Self-Analysis*, I believe, which I am supposed to return to Ruth Shills for Bussy. I skipped through that one night but don't think I'll read it seriously, since it isn't supposed to be any good anyway and will just give me visions.

Oh, Uncle Sig who is the husband of my deceased Aunt Lillie who [*was*] mother's sister out of a clear blue sent us a check for \$25. I deposited it and thanked him in our bad name. We now have a lot of money in the bank but I don't know how much.

Everything is falling off my bike and I can't get parts to replace them, which makes me very sad indeed. It rattles like an old Ford, a sad comedown from its suave imported state of six months ago. The rubber pads on the brakes are dropping off one by one and I have to stop it now by putting my feet down on the ground or not at all. Luckily I have a loud horn.

Give my regards to Erlich when you see him.

Oh, I ran into Liz Johns on the street, 60th St., to be exact the other evening. She was going somewhere to have her thesis typed, I think. She is all through but for that. She looked sort of badly and says she isn't working right now, just resting somewhere on the West side with her sister, Idy, who is going

to medical school out there.

Well, sweetheart, I must close with some feeble excuse or other. Not much new, I guess.

Lots of love to you,

Jill

***JILL TO AL AUGUST 19, 1942***

Darling -

My machine is cluttered up with a half-typed ms. and I am waiting for Rubin to finish the rest of it, which is why I am writing to you in pen and ink. I really much prefer to type my letters, since my handwriting is very shaky after much disuse. I know you don't care much for typed missives but, to return to my old wail, it is so much easier to type, both physically and mentally.

I guess I told you, that hideous secretary is on her vacation (2 weeks) so I am doing Rubin's typing. I don't mind. It gives me something to do & probably improves the calibre of my typing.

Betz, whom I called on last night, is going to New York permanently to work on Esquire. She's going to do that column on stores-about-town they have, at a boost to \$40 from the 22.50 she was getting. That's wonderful. Bets is the perfect New York career gal - beautiful and superficially sophisticated and with an infallible clothes sense. She'll be editor of Vogue or Mademoiselle at 35, I bet. Also, she's sufficiently cold-hearted & indifferent to men, i.e., she views them as means to get along. Her father doesn't know she's left for good -- thinks it is a vacation - and when he finds out he'll raise hell, I'm sure. I hope he lets her stay. I'm whole-heartedly and altruistically in favor of at least one of my friends making good. God knows the rest of us - Joan, Maxine, Marion - even Ethel - are shoddy, watered-down examples of career women.

Rosable, that most foolish of girls, is taking her master's exam tomorrow. Buster has been tutoring her - God, what a

combination.

We're having another test in first aid tonight and I've got to read for it. It's funny, having to sit down & read something carefully, which is my definition of studying. It seems so long since I've done it, & I must say it's a lot more interesting reading the 1st aid handbook than sociology. Do you find that to be the case? I find it easier to remember things that are diagrammed & sort of tangible, like math or bandages, than social science stuff. I guess that makes me a moron.

Gosh, my hand hurts from writing. I wish to hell I could use the typewriter.

I'll write more tomorrow.

Much love, dearest

Jill

***AL TO JILL AUGUST 17, 1942***

Dear Love,

Sunday

Since I was routed out of bed by Mills this morn before I had written a word to you, I've slipped away from him at the Service Club here to commune with you. Sunday (if I were asked for 25 words describing "Why I like Sunday") means about the only time I can write you in peace, the longest time of the week I have to think of how much I love you. All with the scratchiest pen on earth, too.

You certainly have entrenched yourself in the cockles of your boss' heart, if I may mix a metaphor. A pat on the head, good stationery, and a week off to make love to your husband. What more can a man ask of his wife's job? That Glen Park scheme is une idée magnifique. We'll borrow a phonograph with select records, eat wonderful steaks and play fine games, -- such as bikeending. I won't fall off in a million years, given the reward - I always did better in the face of rewards rather than punishment. I was quite a progressive child. Just to make double sure,

however, if I [*do*], I'll give you a kiss for every block I don't cycle, a hug for every mile and the ultimatum if you don't get me out of bed to go cycling.

You certainly show great tenacity (what a pen) in learning first aid. It can't help but be useful some day, and it shows a degree of preparedness I'm afraid most civilians aren't conscious of lacking, I feel that if the Germans or Japs ever strike America by land or air, it will be in the Great Lakes Region which is unprepared, vulnerable, valuable, and relatively indifferent to the war.

Jumping a few thousand miles, it seems that the Germans are slowing down in the Caucasus, that the Russians are attacking all along the Northern line and that the U.S. forces are doing a fine job in the Solomons. I'll still wager that the German breakdown will be rapid and unexpected.

Yesterday was a big day in my dental history. I walked over to the dental clinic here to have the sources of a toothache rooted out (joke!) and the dentist proceeded to remove one of my extra teeth. He kept shooting gas into my jaw by sticking his fist in my mouth and saying "Does it still hurt?" Naturally I was speechless, and, bang! went another dose of gas. Anyhow it came out neat as a whistle but for the rest of yesterday, I couldn't feel a thing on that part of my face. Today everything is fine and to all intents and purposes I appear to have had no tooth pulled, i.e. no gaping space, no tooth missing, a luxury only we in God's super-grace can afford.

This next week will be spent on the beach and on a range, firing 30 and 50 cal. machine guns and 37 and 40 mm cannon. The 50 fires around 600 shots a minute when it gets excited and has adjustments that can bring it down to a lackadaisical poop a second. The 37 mm throws a pretty good shell over a hundred times per minute. So there'll be a lot of pretty tracers to watch this week.

It makes me feel good to know that you are being appreciated for your peculiarly wonderful qualities at work. What if you don't

spend as much time working? They should want results, not boondoggling. Furthermore, you get so much inspiration from writing your husband that your work is considerably improved thereby.

I didn't understand why you were all blacked out the other night. Can't you have lights behind closed shutters or blinds? That's what they do everywhere else.

I agree with you about Wiggins et pals. He grows burdensome with time. If I were you, I wouldn't encourage their coming up the house at all. A reputation as a "good-time Charlie or Mary" isn't so hot. They are liable to think of our place as a sort of headquarters, given a couple of welcome visits.

The news from Paul & Ann was very swell. In a month I guess we'll start having nephews. We ought to send a nice gift for the purchase of which you are hereby deputized. All I could send from here would be sea shells. Glad to hear about the boat too. I like to think we'll be able to make some nice foursomes as soon as the baby gets old enough to romp around. Just tie him on Uncle Al's back and he'll swim before he walks, and tie a bowline before he can say "poppa".

Surprise package this is you know. An authentic beach picture of your favorite matinee idol, decked in borrowed trunks and itching with Carolina sand. And mostly just coveting you. Hope you like the sand, anyway.

Love and kisses,

Al

***JILL TO AL AUGUST 20, 1942***

Hon. Alfred DeGrazia

Thursday

Kitchen Police

Camp Davis, N.C.



My dear Mr. DeGrazia:

This is just a dodge because the head of the Torts division is wandering around our department this afternoon and a letter with Darling or with no head at all looks funny, don't you think? I mean, in a business office. Anyway, you should know by now that you are my darling, and no buts or ifs about it.

That picture you sent is very good, although I could do with a little less sand and more you. Who is that oaf you are with? He looks like an Aristotelian. The sensitive stupid type. You really look very good to these old eyes, and I bethought myself that you are at the very least a likely-looking lad.

The loss of your tooth moved me not at all, since it caused you no pain evidently. However, your mother greeted the news with "What, they pulled a tooth from my boy's mouth," in the outraged tone of a mother who has sent her boy to a disappointing prep school and is about to take steps to remove him from same. And back to your tooth: since I must weekly submit to the boredom and worry of going to a dentist, who is constantly finding more holes to probe and fret about, I positively envy the finality with which your dental care is administered. That dull old dentist of mine says it will be many moons before he can finish re-capping and re-treading that broken tooth in the front, and indeed, he has not even started it yet. I am going to him tonight, to get the results of an X-Ray he took last week of some tooth with an apparently gargantuan cavity in it.

First aid was as usual last night, only a little more raucous than before, since much of the time we were left to work out practical problems on one another. I had a ruptured varicose vein and my partner, a girl of about my age and weight, nearly caused gangrene to set in, so earnestly did she go about the stoppage of bleeding. Coincidentally, she had a dislocated shoulder. The recommended first aid treatment, which I peeked in the book for and followed, was to put the arm in a loose sling (passing one end of the sling under instead of over the shoulder) and placing cold compresses (simulated, of course) on the affected part.

And wait for the M.C. to come. They don't re-trying [?] to reduce the dislocation at home.

Maxine is coming over for dinner tonight, this being her Mother's night out. I would have sort of liked to have gone swimming, the weather taking a turn for the hotter, but I guess I won't be able to. She's not the athletic type. Tomorrow night, at my behest, the seven little DeGrazia's (and how they grew) are packing a picnic supper and going over to the rocks. I think it's a fine idea, even though it's mine. What this world needs is more picnics, preferably with you. I think I'd rather eat a liver sausage sandwich (my idea, though not yours, of the nadir of human diet) outside than a steak in.



Summer of the year before: Al & Jill

Egad, I am reading another frivolous book, despite my good intentions towards that old master, Mark Twain. This time it's Ilka Chase's *Past Imperfect*, borrowed from Betz. Miss Chase is a very good legit actress, for the most part a portrayer of bitchy women. She is also the best-dressed actress, probably of either stage or screen. That is not as hard an accomplishment as one might think, considering such dowdy specimens as Lana Turner (of the screen) or Helen Hayes of the stage. Or that old favorite of sensitive young men, Madeline Carroll, who in my mind is an insult to the sex, so dowdy and plump as she is. Anyway, this book is Chase's biography, or rather autobiography, and it's funny though strictly for females. You know, gossipy and tritely sophisticated.

Yes, I'll get working on the problem of a gift for Paul and Ann. I'll be damned if I know what to give them, since Ann has a

bedjacket. From what I've heard, an infant's needs are few. Just milk, which I am not equipped right now to supply, and sea shells, to suck on. So your shell idea wasn't so bad after all. Maybe something for the boat would be more appropriate, like a nursery icebox, which would double for both boat and baby, or a high-grade compass, which the baby could use when it got older to find its way around. I still don't know.

God, it's 4:10 and I sure don't want to start working on anything right now and I've performed the typing duties of the day. It's fun to see me type. Naturally I make mistakes, although you'd never know it from reading my letters, would you, and then I have to erase through three carbons. Much girlish swearing, such as darn, gosh, shit and f--k ensues, depending on who is in the room. I don't know why I blanked out the last epithet. I swear I can't remember if you disapproved of my cursing, and if so, of what words. Kindly inform.

So, darling, off and away I must be, to busy my little hands for the benefit of the taxpayers and the Democratic Party.

Your best wife,

Jill

***AL TO JILL AUGUST 18, 1942***

Greetings gate,

Monday

No more air mail stamps have I, the P.O. is a mile away, I have no time to talk there the next several days, wherefore my missiles of cherished love must fly on leaden wings.

Lucky girl Mac. She probably doesn't realize what a splendid bed partner she had, warm as a stove, soft as a cushion and lovely to kiss.

Last night Mills and I saw a fine show with William Powell and Hedy Lamarr. It was very different and very exciting in a quiet sort of way. It had also very unexpected angles which I won't reveal. However, I'll go with you if you don't see it before we're

together. Then I can reveal the plot before it unfolds and you'll properly punish me by refusing to prepare breakfast.

But generally Sunday nights are as dismal as the petrified forest. The long week lies ahead. The laundry, dirty laundry, must be sorted, the barracks cleaned, the discipline begins with Sunday night study hall. All of a sudden everyone feels tired. It's astounding how such a number of men can get along together under such conditions as exist. Now and then there is a little spat. I don't like some of the men. I suppose some don't like me. One man in particular has crossed with several men. But he's nervous, out of his element, and not doing so well. You can hardly blame him for having a quick temper.

Otherwise the men hold themselves back remarkably well. They are mostly politically stupid, a thing which exasperates me no end - but we have little time for argument and I would never waste time on that anyway.

My present arrangements, made according to your wishes and my own for that matter, are as follows: Bus to Washington or perhaps cab (relative costs of \$8.50 and \$15.00), some sleep at Buzz' Friday night, conference in morning with this "person" from the Adjutant General's office about the transfer (I'm awaiting more news of what it's all about and whether the conference is OK that morning), and then a plane to Chicago which should arrive early Saturday evening. Then, blackout, bells ringing, scotch whiskey and an all-around honeymoon with the trimmings.

My only desire is to get to see you muy pronto, so if there is no conference in Washington, I'll not stop at all in Washington, but come home via Richmond. All I ask is some huge driving wheels [*rest of letter missing*]

**JILL TO AL AUGUST 21, 1942**

Massa DeGrazia  
Goldenrod Manor

Nawth Cah-linah

Dear Sir:

Your devoted old servant greets you once more, moodily crooning old ballads of her race between lips lined and roughened by years of selfless toil.

Sorry, let's start over again:

Dear Suh:

There, now we're in the groove -- that old corn pone, magnolia and pellagra groove. How the hell do you like the south, anyway? Or, to put it another way, how in the hell do you stand the South?

I was about to pen a querulous note in re heat and toiling in an office in the afternoon, but this southern mood has quite dispelled all that. When I think of Chicago and then think of North Carolina ... Oh well, I'll leave early today, I hope I hope. I'm supposed to go on the picnic with your family, which I anticipate with great joy.

But gad the afts. are long, especially when you don't have much to do. I just tried passing a few minutes away by drinking an orange drink, and it is I and not the minutes who will pass away, if anybody does in the near future. Ugh.

That old dentist found many more cavities in my mouth, some of such magnitude that next time he will inject me with novocaine to drill. Dreadful, ain't it?

According to my calendar, which is unreliable, you will be home in approximately two weeks. I spoke to Rubin again about my taking the preceding [*proceeding ?*] week off, and he hemmed and hawed and said we'll see. Yes, we'll see in what portion of Barnet Hodes anatomy they'll find my job if I don't get the week

off.

I hope these mails aren't censored. Wouldn't that be awful?

Gosh we'll have fun, though. You do think I'm right about our not getting all tired out by going to New York and/or my going to Washington? At least, I don't think we ought to tire ourselves out at the beginning of your furlough. Podden, leave. You know how ghastly we get towards one another, i.e., I to you, when we are sleepless.

The only thing wrong with our lovely plans is that those awful brothers of yours start school immediately after Labor Day and probably won't be able to come to Glen Park with us. Darn. They are fun, and I don't subscribe to the theory of no relatives on a honeymoon. After all, baby, our honeymoon started a long time ago.

Well, some man is looking over my shoulder and probably reading every word I say. He is Jennings or Jenson, the creator of the Col. McCosmic cartoons. A very undistinguished looking character.

Best love to you, dearest,

Jill

***JILL TO AL AUGUST 22, 1942***

Darling--

I'm really getting quite spoiled, having the opportunity to write you every day at the office; probably when the time comes for me to write you at home, I won't be able to do it, scorning my defective little typewriter and rickety desk.

But gosh, there just isn't very much for me to do down at the office, and it seems a shame that I have to spend this lovely Saturday morning in the dank City Hall. I think when I finish this I'll tell the girl at the desk I have to work at the library and depart. Besides, the paper promises thunder showers this

afternoon, and I want to get my swimming in before that unhappy event.

We had lots of fun last night on the picnic, although it took rather a long time to get under way. Eddie and I cycled over to the lake about six -- he rather reluctantly, since he had been in swimming twice already that day. We swam and whooped around in delicious calm water, and then, about 45 minutes later, your mom and dad showed up with Cooney and the picnic basket. Your mom took the bus, and dad walked with the dog, meeting at Sheridan Road. We ate large quantities of ham sandwiches, hardboiled eggs, which you know I have a passion for, tomatoes, hot corn, celery, and cookies and plums. Sounds good, doesn't it? It was, except for the million flies that joined us. August is such a funny month, so lush and full of life even in the north. The upper air was black with starlings and swallows, arguing angrily. The flies and mosquitoes, of course, were thick about us. And a little above were the big dragonflies, swooping about officiously and not doing much good, I think, in decreasing the numbers of small insect life. And then, when it started to get dark, a couple of bats came out and rattled about the horizon. Bats are so funny, the way they fly. Jerky is the word.

We came back about 8:30, unable to stand up against all these other phenomena of Mother Nature. I guess I must have been tired, because after shifting my weight about for a couple more hours, I went to sleep. I woke up early, about 7, and as no one else was up, Cooney and I took a walk in the lovely morning air. Quite a south wind is blowing today, and it's one of those days that I just want to hold hands with you on and inhale deeply. And swim.

Your dad and mom had a large mock argument last night. A fly was biting Al on his ankle, so, he claimed, he was lifting it up very gently to get it in position to swat the fly. Just then your mother, espying the fly, shooed it away, incidentally saving its life. This made your dad very angry indeed. As he put it, that fly bit him and didn't deserve to live. He bawled out your mother at

great length for this tactical error, and even this morning brought up the subject again. Of course, Eddie and I were reduced to hysterics and practically lost our dinners over it.

Vic was working, which was why he wasn't along.

Gosh, only two weeks from today. Ed got a card from Bussie saying that you had a plane reservation and would arrive here about five. Is that our time, and what airport? Or rather airline. I naturally want to meet you. I can take the 63rd car line out if it's the city airport, and go back with you in their fancy little bus. Jeepers, the thought of it!

Your momma is going to get from Ward's an electric washing machine for diapers, which we'll send to Ann. It's about 6.50. I thought it was the right touch -- relevant to the occasion, more or less practical, the lessness giving it an air of whimsicality which presents from younger siblings must necessarily have. I know Paul and Ann would be distressed if I were to send them a large washing machine or a layette. Oh, what makes this machine silly is that it's only about six inches high and can wash about four diapers or five handkerchiefs at a time.

I'll also send them some records, if I ever get around to it. I'd thought they'd like that sexy Artie Shaw one, and also some vocals by an original fellow named Danny Kaye, a sort of male Bea Lillie.

I think you'll get a terrific kick out of going by plane, and I only wish I could be with you. However, you make notes on your sensations and what you eat and what you don't eat, which is more likely, and present me with an engraved bound copy of same.

Does your appointment with that guy from the A.G. office mean you are trying to get a transfer to that office, or do you have to see that office about any transfer, no matter to what branch. I am still so leery about your getting stuck in a dull desk job. The war is going so well all of a sudden that I think now it won't last forever and that you might as well be in a branch where you'll get the most action, at the risk of some intellectual stagnation



along the way.

Hell, it's hot and now I have to wait here for some artist to deliver a layout to Rubin. Naturally, Rubin isn't here this morning.

All my love to you, baby,

Jill

***AL TO JILL AUGUST 19, 1942 (A)***

Dearest,

Only Tuesday

Today seemed mighty long, mighty, mostly, I suppose because we spent a lot of time keeping out of the rain down at the ocean. We saw a training film this morning and then rode down to the firing point in deluxe horse cars, fitted now with wooden benches holding only 65 men since we're in our tenth week instead of our seventh. We were supposed to have fired the 40 mms. but the rain kept us under a frame skeleton of a house abuilding. So most of the time was spent doing nothing, examining some 37 mm., and taking apart a 50 cal. machine gun.

I had a nice chat with Harvey last night about everything. I always give him choice bits of your letters. Reading them to anyone else I wouldn't do, of course, because that would be tossing pearls to the swine.

It's study hall now and I should be memorizing parts of cannon or getting prepared for an infantry drill test which comes next week. There'll be time for all that later, I'm sure. Competent sources claim, incidentally, that all barrage balloon men will be sent back to Tyson and the BBB. A fellow sure doesn't have much choice about his assignment. I feel fairly certain, however, that something is cooking for me in Washington this time. It's the old story, otherwise; once you're stuck in an army niche, a transfer is impossible, a thing I wrote you about several months ago when at Tyson. Well, I don't give a damn how they have me

fight the war, since the more I follow the path of least resistance, the more we'll be together. Where did I ever get the idea that I ought to contribute something significant to the victory anyway? That's so un-army like.

This broken pen of mine is about out of ink again. I must get it fixed when I get home or cop yours.

I didn't get any letter from you today, a fact that begets a certain pleasant anticipation for tomorrow.

Unless I find out unofficially from Washington, I won't know until two days before graduation where I'll be stationed. At that time, I'll telegraph you. Latest odds favor Tyson and Washington.

Did I tell you we had a big battery picture taken with myself sitting among the sea of faces. I'll bring it home with me of course. Everyone in it seemed to be wearing a corset, but that's the custom here, you know. You'd get a bang out of watching the drill every day. You've never seen such puffing and stiffness in your life. I hope I don't see the likes for the rest of mine.

Back to the pencil only to say I love you and wish I could kiss you many, many times right now.

Al

***AL TO JILL AUGUST 19, 1942 (B)***

Dear love,

The imminence of graduation is here, unbelievable and soul-stirring. Smiles are more frequent on some faces, others are a little more drawn. Every day someone thinks of something else to measure Der Tag in terms of. - Fifteen more bottles of milk, two weekends, six more double-timing exercises in the morning, one more dirty laundry list, etc.



Graduation class at Camp Davis, N. Carolina. Al is in the first row, second from the right.

I still can't say anything for sure, nor can anyone else. The chances are good that I'll light out of here like a scared jackrabbit come the morning of the fourth.

It kept raining today from yesterday but no one cared very much. The best thing that's ever happened here to us happened because of the rain for this morning we didn't have to run our half-mile. You never saw such a joyous and sleepy crew as there was when the rain kept pouring down at 6 this morning. Everyone fell back in bed for a precious extra twenty minutes of repose.

The day, as a result, seemed much shorter. Down at the firing point we shot the 35 mms at a sleeve towed by a plane. I was a gunner and every time I kicked the pedal there was a great bang, a whistle, and a nice red tracer shooting out into space. The sighting was being done from 15 feet away at the Director and the loading from the side. The gun platform is rotated by remote control. The whole set-up is very accurate. The sleeve was very small and still was well-peppered.

The things you get away with at your job are simply astounding to the well-disciplined army man. I think it's wonderful, giving you a place to rest after your mobile weekends at the dunes and Flossmoor. Cal Sawyer deserves his girl, I think, without even knowing her. He's a well-rounded, smart guy, and very nice, to boot. I suppose Naval Intelligence has changed since I enquired. All I was interested in was a commission at the time and the Lieut-Commander in charge assured me that that couldn't be for one so young unless I had had several years of

legal experience. Cal may be making a mistake if he goes in without getting a commission off the bat, because, tho the first months may be nice, one can never tell where he'll wind up; a guy may be better off starting off in the dark as a buck private. Lew Olson, whom Cal will undoubtedly meet (they must know each other, come to think of it, fellow Alpha Delts) was with that Naval Intell. for some months and found the work pretty dull & clerical. It seems that the men who are old line Navy men are given the saboteur & intelligence cases, & the qualified men get the dull, legal cases. I hope things have changed and that Cal went in with a pretty good idea of it all. I keep agreeing with Bill Evers that the old military cheese is the same no matter how you slice it -- Army, Navy or Marine.

The study hour is drawing to an end and I must cease this eternal patter. I really should write someone else, but I guess I've become eternally confined to your mail-box. Remember, however, to give my love to my mother, father and brothers. I think it would be swell if Dad could spend a day in the country with us - but, after all, that can wait until I get home.

I just got the news of the big Commando raid. Very interesting but too early to analyze its significance. It's hard to believe that tanks would be risked in a transient skirmish. Perhaps the feints are beginning.

Many, many kisses to you, sweetheart.

Al

***AL TO JILL AUGUST 21, 1942 (A)***

Dearest,

Thursday

There isn't much to say but I can't resist writing you to say hello anyway. I didn't get any letter from you today, the second time this week. You get, therefore, an unsatisfactory for the week in attention to Detail. The U.S. Postal service has already flunked out in my estimation.

There is an exam on materiel of the automatic weapons tomorrow, another good reason for not writing diffusely. Today we were down at the ocean again and did a lot of firing. I got off a beautiful blast in my turn on the machine gun, Browning 30 cal., 250 rounds at a towed sleeve without a pause. That's more firing than most men ever get in the army. It's one complete ammunition belt. Usually the guns stick or jam for a second after a few rounds & goodbye airplane.

Later on, we switched to the 40 mms. and again potted at the sleeve with the heavier gun. It was like all hell breaking loose. There were a whole row of 40s, 37s and machine guns shooting away at the same time, and some bigwig got the ingenious idea of making everything hyper-realistic, so a big sound truck parked in the middle and blared forth choice phonograph records of dive bombers, bomb whistles, and sundry explosions.

About that time I was on the director of the 40 mm, with my eyes glued to the telescope, tracking the target and I could see all the tracers converging on the target. But it was hard keeping my attention on the eyepiece when it seemed as if the ground were being blasted away beneath my feet. Tracking is a delicate operation, you see, the slightest jerk of the hand and a big rate is set in which will take the gun off the target completely.

Tomorrow we are firing on the anti-tank range about 50 miles away, reached by our favorite conveyance, the horse car, *soixante hommes et no chevaux*. That should be fun too.

The general of the school was out today to watch us, and expressed an unfavorable comment on the state of our knowledge of the innards of the 37 mm, with only a couple hundred pieces to learn in four days together with the other guns we have to learn. Unhappily, the instructor asked questions of a guy who has slept through most of the last ten weeks. The poor fellow is just yearning to get back to Alaska where he can cool off.

Someone just shoved a copy of "The Yan", the official army gag mag into my hands. I must read it later because it looks very

interesting.

Are you saying hellow to all my old pals, that you never see?  
That's nice, and it adds another sentence to the letter.

I hardly dare let my mind run along on the theme of my happiness when I'll be able to join you again. It's a strong, thundering undercurrent that could easily crumple my emotional barriers, given a leak. You know how it is. I've expressed myself unduly often in the past to the tune of how wonderful I think you are and how much I like to be with you. You can just bet your soul that I regard everything, every step, everyone and every layer of clothing that comes between us with a malice second to none.

Enough of this banality. Army life is making me repetitious, a very bad thing for such a variegated spark-plug as you. I must take down Stekel's tomes when I return and recoup a bit of the diversity of it all. Which is not to say that I won't be horrified by finding thumbprints on all the pages.

Love con brio,

Al

***AL TO JILL AUGUST 21, 1942 (B)***

Dear love,

Study hall has come as it comes every night, two hours in a hot room with fine technical manuals full of feed trays, carrier cams, and bolt mechanisms, all drawn out for the edification of people like yourself who can't read or comprehend the abstract.

Tonight is different. Our exam was this morning and no one is studying now for the fear is gone. All I have to do for a while is to read your letters, read PM (which I've done), and write you this letter. Such incredible leisure!

Today went with a fast bang, starting with the exam at 8 and finishing with a long, weary truck ride home from Fort Fisher,

where the range for horizontal fire is located.

On the way out, we passed through Wilmington and Carolina Beach, where gather incongruously a host of beach addicts and a number of gun positions, camouflaged carefully from the air. The journey through Wilmington was a big thrill for me, seeing people in careless apparel and cars and stores with window displays, paved streets and lots and lots of trees that have shunned our camp. It filled me with a great anticipation of coming home again and walking along the Midway and watching people whose every minute of life cannot be accounted for under the Tables of Organization, the National Army Menu, and the Schedule of Training.

The tank course was swell. We got there barely in time for noon chow which was just fine. I ate four heavy sandwiches, two cups of lemonade, an apple, an orange, and some cookies. That filled me up pretty well, and I crawled into the shade of the truck beneath the chassis for a nice nap.

After a few minutes of cool slumber, I dragged myself out, and the firing commenced. The make-believe tanks were rigged out very ingeniously on a system of cables across a rough field about 1000 yds. square. They scuttled here and there, turning quickly and maintaining speeds between 20 and 30 miles an hour. Knocking them off was duck soup. If we didn't hit them on the first shot or the second, the sights could be easily adjusted according to the patch of the tracers. The moral of all this effectiveness is none other than the old banality of superior mass firing power. That's what wins the battle. If they were heavy trucks, our chances of knocking them out first would be slim, but with a couple of 90 mms. in back of us, we could take on anything that crawls, given numerical equality. The disposition of weapons, the planning of the battle thus become all important. This is without denying the importance of good gunnery, that is, gunnery as good as the tank gunners. It is very important, too, that everyone sticks to his post & that isn't so easy to do with an iron monster lumbering at you or a bomber coming right at you at 200 yds/sec. A strong devil inside says

jump into the nearest slit trench and start reading the latest letter from home.

Coming back to camp was an infinitely tiring journey. The benches were never so hard or so crowded. We'd sleep in fits and wake up to a sort of unreality. I nodded for a few moments and awakened again. There was nothing to do except smoke. No one felt like talking. The landscape wasn't very nice, though it was getting somewhat subdued with the twilight. I was somewhat startled once to be looking at a blank stretch of trees and a road and see a little pickaninny scuttling across the field of vision away off. I don't know why it seemed strange. It just did.

That's all for now except for an acknowledgement of two of your nice letters with the intriguing lipstick lick on the corners. The wedding gift is very nice and surprising, too. Poor Liz, I wish she could get set somewhere with someone. I hope you gave her my regards.

My love to you darling, as always sub specie eternitatis.

Al

***JILL TO AL AUGUST 25, 1942 (A)***

Honeybunny -

Not one, not two, but three (3) letters from you came today! Let me compliment you on the prodigiousness of your literary effort. I would rejoice, but for my prescience that no letters will be forthcoming tomorrow, due to the vagaries of you or the postal system, most likely the latter.

It's been cold in Chicago, stark steely cold. You'd never believe it, and it probably irritates you. But since Saturday, when a cloying hot spell was broken in the forenoon by a whopper of a storm, the mercury has dropped to the fifties, and it smells and feels outside like the most delicious of autumns. I guess I am a slave of both the weather and love. Always my life goal appears



to be walking or lying outside in the company of Alf. DeG. (Jr.).

There's lots to tell, so at the bottom of the page I'll revert to the typewriter - a much better means to convey news of my girlish pranks.

First, the weekend was fine and fun. I left the office early Saturday morning to go swimming (it was still warm then). Got home & was in the middle of your letter and a mild attack of dysentery when Rosable arrived to borrow a flannel shirt off me. She was going to Wyoming the next day with Buster. I don't know how long she'll be gone. If ever a girl made her bed, etc., it is she.

So-oo, I finally went swimming, and the water was fine. I swam way out and floated there in the calm, in a fine frenzy of megalomania. After a while, however, I got tired of soaking, and found that talking on the rocks to adolescent boys wasn't all it should be, so I returned home and fortunately got inside just as the storm broke. That was about two or three. Using that old Oppenheim thinkpot, I promptly ate and went to sleep til supper time. After supper, that dull tool Wiggins came over and took me to the flicks -- Roxie Hart for the second time and a perfect scream of a picture called My Favorite Blonde, with Bob Hope. Don't miss it, if you can help it. It really is funny.

Got home about 12:20, giving Mr. W. the brush-off as soon as the movies were ended. I must have made it very clear to him by now that I do not enjoy his company, for his company's sake. However, I think he is very thick-skinned.

Next day I got up early and cycled out to Joan's, to carry out our plans for a picnic on the 79th St. beach, which incidentally, is a ratty little stretch of gravel, a half a block long, sandwiched in between the Mayor's unfinished filtration plant and Carnegie. Though it was cool, we went anyway -- Joan by streetcar, Vesta and I on the bike. That little girl certainly is a heroic little character, riding along for a mile on the bar the way she did. Funny part of it was that nobody, least of all Joan, seemed the least bit worried that she would get hurt, a tribute indeed to the

callousness or maybe progressiveness of modern motherhood. The water was so rough that the lifeguards wouldn't let us go in, and I was secretly relieved, since the air was so cool. We ate our lunch and beat off the indomitable flies for a while, then took a walk down to the 76th Street beach, which really is a beauty, and then home, to make and eat dinner. Tom came home from work about four, and incredible as it may seem, we talked and ate our way right through til 10:30, when it appeared to me high time to go home. Which I did. But we really had lots of fun, even though Vesta got bitchy and hysterical somewhere along the line, and Joan and I took turns spanking her -- I first because Joan was trying to sleep, and then Joan, because I apparently didn't hit her hard enough.

Today I had a lot of typing to do, and it was a great burden, because I am such a lousy typist, and erasing four carbons is very trying indeed. I thought if you ever asked me to do any typing again I would hurl the machine at you. You see what hostilities I build up at work.

Pete Cavallo was in the office for a while. He has dreadful hayfever and sneezed all over the place.

Tonight I continued my nightly routine which will endure until you get home, namely, cleaning the house. It's gotten a little seedy these past few month -- not so you would notice but enough to give me a bad conscience. Anyway, I resolved to clean one thing a night for the next two weeks. Saturday it was the bureau drawers, tonight it was the breadbox. I think you were right when you said once that if I didn't have you or a reasonable facsimile around, I would rapidly go to seed. Well, I'm making repairs so you won't be able to say it again.

Darling, I'd like to buy a sporty winter topcoat, on the order of the one I have but better looking, I hope. I loathe that one. May I wait until you get home, and have you go with me? There'll probably be at least one day when you'll have to go downtown for clothes, and we could do it all together. Or had I better get it now? Whatever you say. We have a lot of money -- about 470 bananas in the bank.

Oh yes, bossy female that I am, I have your whole leave accounted for already. The weekend in town en famille, with probably one night with the Kelleys. We thought it would be fun for them to come up north for the eats, and then to Riverview. I love amusement parks but don't recall your feelings on the subject. And then part of the next week and weekend in Glen Park with your mom and dad, the kids coming out on the weekend (they have school right after Labor Day). But of course, it'll be entirely up to you ....

Your letters sound so cheerful now, as well as technical. I really enjoy hearing about the guns and everything, and the way you tell it makes it sound as if you were having a mild high time with them. There's no doubt about it -- it is fun learning something new, even if the knowledge is of a destructive nature and doesn't contribute to the enduring products of one's life. I think now that you're practicing a lot, and it's towards the end of the course, it's not so bad as before.

I took that Horney book over to Ruth Shils tonight and we chatted for a while and made a date for dinner next Monday night. She seems to be a nice person. I also took half my wardrobe to the dressmaker, for the bi-monthly raising and lowering of hems.

Gnus from the office. Hodes is probably resigning to go into private practice. The papers have it the Mayor has already accepted his resignation. He came in today, and in between poking me in the ribs, said that (strictly confidentially, of course) our work will go on, not only through this election, but through the mayoralty of 1942. Yip, yip, I'm indispensable. In a sow's ear. He's going into the firm of Epstein, McInerney and Arvey. Yip yip again.

Ruth Shils sends her regards to you of course; Liz did last week I forgot to tell you.

I'm going to buy a blue sweater tomorrow, to match my nose.

Gosh, I've gained weight again. I really think I'm in better physical condition now than I've ever been in my life. I can bike

the five miles to the Kelly's in about 15 or 20 minutes, without batting a lash. I can swim a block without getting winded (of course, the minute I do get winded I stop, which is not the right technique, I guess), which is better than I've ever been able to do. In general I feel pretty good, eat a lot, and am sleeping better than before. It doesn't take so long most nights as it used to, to get to sleep. And Sunday I noticed I had muscles under my arms, the way you do. I lost them today, I also noticed.

I just hope it keeps up til you get home. Daddy, I want the best for you...

You look cute in that picture you sent. I have it before me now. A big kiss for you, you cute thing.

Well, love anyway --

And all of it

Jill

***JILL TO AL AUGUST 25, 1942 (B)***

Darling--

I just started to walk out of the office, having nought to do, but it proved to be embarrassingly early, so I thought I had better wait a while for the sake of decorum. And write you this letter instead. I'm going up north tonight to your family.

I wrote you so late and long last night, and it is so early today, not much has happened in the interim to make good telling. Had lunch with Maxine and bought a pretty blue sweater, which is uncomfortable now because it has suddenly turned hot. Also went to the library, in search of more dirt about Brooks. Gosh research is a bore and a nuisance. I never can find anything, anyway.

Oh yes, I got a letter from Daisy and Walter today. Walter pens a note at the end, and I quote directly. "Had hoped to write you a long letter yesterday, but it was a case of 12 Army planes

being completed on schedule or you, and while I love you dearly, the Army brass hats are an insistent bunch." Such shit! Is it possible that Day doesn't see through him?

I was also annoyed to hear that the boat is not en route to Cal., as it should be, probably due to some incredible bungling by Day and Walter. Day writes that some shipping company promised and signed a contract to ship it for \$8 per hundred pounds, and at the last minutes said the I.C.C. wouldn't allow it to go for under \$12, and so Walter blew up and sent the whole matter to his lawyer, to the effect that they couldn't break the contract. Well, if I know Paul, he'll want the boat even if it costs a hundred dollars a hundred pounds, and honestly, I would give him the money just to get that nice old crate away from my dopey eastern siblings and into the hand of my lovely western dittoes. I'm going to write him so, too.

And I wrote Mir and Buss today, too -- just gossip and also the portentous announcement that I had taken the book to Ruth Shils.

Gosh, I'm shamed to have such stupid members in my family. Well, I guess the fairness, grace and intelligence, or anyhow, humor of Paul and Ann makes up for those two (Daisy and Walter).

I am already planning what I'll wear to the airport. I think I'll look collegiate, so all the people will say, that competent looking lieutenant over there, what a charming young thing his wife is. So fresh-looking and youthful, my dear.

A big kiss for you, honeybunch. More tomorrow.

Your

Jill

**AL TO JILL AUGUST 24, 1942**

Dearest,

Sunday

Saturday dawned and with it inspection, AW firing, and just a wretched life in general. We shot at rockets, though, which was fun, rockets which were speeding along at 400 miles an hour over the ocean. They go off like great Roman candles with a startling hiss and make a deep trajectory which, if you want to analyze it for AAA purposes, consists of a climbing, a diving, accelerating, & decelerating target with the concomitant problems. By dint of picking a lucky number, I was able to fire a machine gun at one flight. My trajectory amounted to dropping to my knees and getting back up in the space of the few seconds of flight in order to aim the gun, all the while pressing the trigger. No telling whether there were any hits. That's just another of Davy Jones' secrets, but I doubt if there were, since the target was so small and the experience so novel.

When the afternoon came and I was free, I tucked your letter in my shirt pocket with all its flattering references to me and the sand, and, along with Mills, headed into Wilmington. It's a task trying to get to town from camp. A huge line is waiting for the bus always.

However, we found an old Negro who had a little old tin Ford truck and for 50¢ we could perch precariously on the back while he drove breakneck into town. God willing, we got there, and after crossing ourselves in the name of the Father, Son & Holy Ghost, we walked around the streets for a while. Then we saw Mrs. Miniver on the screen. The movie was swell, Pidgeon (Walter) playing his part nobly and Greer Garson her superb self. If ever a face besides yours shows an inner beauty it is hers. The whole thing was very moving, except for a few snide remarks about people with social consciousness (which were hard to account for in the play anyhow).

After the show Mills and I, joined by Ehrlich and Lehman (who had turned out to be quite a pain and insensitive to my pointed remarks to that effect) had a good dinner. We had steak & potatoes, peach cobbler & ice cream and everything nice. From

there, Mills and I went to the VSO club where a dull dance was in progress, and with scarcely a pause, proceeded to see a cheap (not in money terms) vaudeville show. After that was over I talked backstage with a couple of the musicians and a couple of girls from the show. With little left to do in the barren city, we had a beer and stood up in a crowded bus for the 40-mile ride back to camp. All of it wasn't my idea of a good time, nor Mills' but what else could we do? He wanted to get away from Davis and I couldn't suggest much else.

Today I saw another good show, *Pride of the Yankees* (Gary Cooper as Lou Gehrig), with Harvey and two other lieutenants. After that, I made out my laundry slips for tomorrow and now am in study hall, facing another dull week of the old grind.

Next week we get paid, but I could use a little money very well until then. Do you think you could slip another fiver in the recesses of some letter paper and send it to the one you love?

I saw Bill Prendergast again a couple of days ago. Ehrlich saw him too and was astounded at Bill's appearance and abstractedness. The army, I guess, has made him even more inward and absent-minded than he was before. He appears quite beaten down, though I know he still has an irrepressible freedom of mind and belief.

Just now, Hanrahan, the Fordham flash, sitting next to me, is talking me into seeing some show with Betty Grable and Vic Mature in it tonight. I'll probably go if only to kill off a couple of the hours remaining between us.

Once again, darling, I love you always and desire so much to see you and hold you in my arms. Not even smeary lipstick would keep me from giving you many, many kisses full on your lips.

So there,

Al

**JILL TO AL AUGUST 26, 1942**

Hi sweetheart--

This is the special engraved paper of Hodes, to be signed only by him, but since it has been kicking around in my desk these many moons, I don't think he'd want to affix his esteemed name to it. Incidentally, his resignation is still up in the air, but one of the political columnists today said that he has taken a lease on Hyde Park Blvd., which means that he is moving out of the 7th into the 5th, which may mean that he will be the new committeeman in lieu of Eichner. Goody, goody. We'll be eating humming birds on 60th street.

I felt kind of embarrassed today. The other day I did some typing for Mr. Rubin and Pete Cavallo, a script that they had gotten up (very confidential; everything is in this office). Peter was in the office today when I got back from lunch, and Mr. R. said for me to look under my telephone, there was a message for me. It was two bucks, for the typing job, which they had originally planned to hand out to a professional typist. I said to Mr. Rubin he shouldn't have done it, and later, after Peter had left, I told him I wanted to give the money back, but he said don't be silly, and I didn't want to be boorish and insistent. But Al, what should have I done? As I said to him, after all, I don't have much to do all day long, and he shouldn't have any compunctions about giving me his personal typing to do. That's what other bosses do (I didn't tell him that, but that is what they do). Yet it was difficult for me to hand him back the money, once it was in my possession. So I just kept it. But I do feel funny. I know he doesn't make so much as a newspaperman. I doubt if any but the best make more than 75 or 100 a week, and besides, two dollars is a lot of dough for a rotten, non-professional job. Oh well..

Guess what! We have and electric roaster, so you might as well retire and I might as well get unmarried, since the sine qua non of our marriage has been achieved. Your mom got it at the bargain room in Ward's for us, and also a lovely iron, for a wedding present. Isn't that fine? She also said that she was



going to try to pick up an electric broiler and toaster when they appeared at bargain prices. Of course I told her not to, but I sure am pleased with the things she got us. Gadgets like that make housekeeping a lot easier. Oh, and cousin Junior, my Aunt Lillie's son, sent us a gorgeous steak carving set, of stainless steel, and sterling silver handles. We are doing very well, all of a sudden.

I have first aid again tonight. The last class will be on the Wednesday you'll be home, so I'll have to make it up some other time. I'll be glad when it's over. The weather is getting hot again, and I'd much prefer to go swimming tonight. Last night we just sat around up north, and I tried to do an impossible crossword puzzle in the News. Eddie and I put flea powder on Cooney, which is a tedious job, and we didn't do it very effectively I guess, because ten minutes later he was scratching again.

Mr. R. has that I've-got-some-typing-for-you look in his eye again so I guess I'd better stop. All my love to you, darling. Gosh -- only ten more days ...

Jill

Just got home & got your letter. Don't have five on hand & assume you don't want a check. I don't have time to cash a check on account of 1st aid so here's three. I'll send a check for 10 in a day or two.

My God. I always thought Greer Garson a ladylike prig, a Daisy with an English accent. And you like her! Haven't seen Mrs. Minnie yet - still prefer dog, detective & Marx Bro. pitchers. I hope you've seen your fill at camp 'cause apparently our tastes conflict in part.

But I still love you.

**JILL TO AL AUGUST 27, 1942**

Hi chub--

This is a long, hot, humid, wasted day, on which I got the curse and on which nothing has happened or bids fair to happen ere it is o'er. However, I did write a letter to the Sun, a carbon of which is enclosed. This is my maiden effort in the field, an obvious bid for the Sun's five-dollar daily award, and a blotch on the fair name of DeGrazia. Oh well, I had to do something. I've filed my nails to the quick.

I did spend the day in search of a piece of Kotex, of which there is none in any of the five washrooms (girls) in the City Hall. Finally a beautiful girl in our office named Mildred gave me one, amidst many girlish titters. Assailed with vague pains in the abdomen and a general sense of malaise, I must nevertheless keep a supper engagement with three giggling girls from Esquire -- Gerson, Sylvia, and one you don't know named Eileen. We were going to go swimming, but the weather is not conducive.

I got "A very good paper" on my first aid quiz of a week ago. Aren't you proud? Last night we didn't do much. I was a victim again in artificial respiration. Also I had severe arterial bleeding in the temple. Your poor itchy-bitsy darling was all fucked up.

It rained last night too, so after first aid and after a refreshing chocolate soda at Stineway's, in which I acquired the intelligence that the Hart's (John and Polly) are moving into Goff House, I had to spend a goodly time wiping off and oiling my bike. However, I still dove into bed in time to get my nightly ration of eight and one half hours sleep. Early to bed and late to rise is the formula for a dull-witted Jill.

Gosh, there have been more people wandering in here all day, interrupting my train of thoughts. It took me all morning to write to Paul and Ann. It's getting so a girl can't find peace at work any more. There's a man in here now who is distracting me mightily.

So g'bye. And all my love --

Jill

***JILL TO CHICAGO SUN***

*Letter to the Sun Department*

THE CHICAGO SUN

Chicago, Illinois

Dear Sirs:

Like Hitler, Senator Brooks apparently thinks that the bigger the lie, the better the chance of its being believed. Even the most desperate schoolboy would shrink from putting his name on another's paper and handing it in as his own. But not our Curley! In the Senate the other day, he blandly crossed out Senator Pepper's name from the Floridan's own anti-poll tax amendment and substituted his own.

It seems that Curley has been well schooled in the Tribune Tower method of handling the truth, starting in the 1920's with his dubious prosecution of Leo V. Brothers, alleged murderer of Trib reporter Jack Lingle, whose sideline was fixing for the big racketeers.

And the admitted fakery of the Midway battle story, in which a piece that came right out of Stanley Johnson's head was given a Washington dateline and ascribed to naval authorities, lends further credence to the sentiment behind that arch query, "Is it the truth or did you read it in the Tribune?"

Berchtesgaden or the Tribune Tower? Which would make the better school for liars?

Very truly yours,

J. O. DeGrazia

1413 East 60 St., Chicago ILL

**JILL TO AL AUGUST 28, 1942**

Hi darling--

Friday

Have a new ribbon on the typewriter and must try it out on you.

I haven't been home since yesterday morning, so I don't know what you have to say, ergo what to say back to you. I stayed at Sylvia's light [sic] night -- she has a furnished apartment on Ceder St. or maybe it was Belleview Place just west of Michigan. It stormed like fury most of the night, and I stayed up til two or maybe later reading a harrowing tale of life in the 7th Ave. (New York) wholesale clothing market -- Jerome Weidman's *I Can Get It For You Wholesale* -- a tale of the immoralities of a young Jewish boy who gets ahead. A pretty good book, though. I read it from 11:30 on, which sets quite a record for fast, and probably careless reading.

Anyway, I am very tired today and wish I were home in bed. It is muggy out.

Us four gals had dinner at a place the name of which I don't remember. It was air-conditioned though. By the time dinner was ended I was quite depressed by the company of my wage-slave Esquire confreres. Then we went to Sylvia's house, and sat around and talked about politics and Esquire some more, and by the end of the evening, I had vowed never to see either girls from Esquire or more than one girl at a time again. In re first point, I guess my ego is still quite bruised from being fired from there; obviously I was fired because somebody didn't like me, because they've hired lots of people since. So naturally, I don't take to office gossip, which is endless with those gals. Secondly, these gals have such a beaten air about them. They just don't have the vitality of such smug and beautiful creatures as Betz or Mac; while I appreciate good political attitudes in my friends, it would also be nice if they had some muscles. I don't know where you can find the combination, except in me, of

course. Most girls are such sissies, it would seem, except the staunchly upper-class ones like Mac. Hell, good talk comes to an end very rapidly, especially in the relatively bird-brained class of women of which I am a member, and at that point, I like to do things. Only everybody else gets tired, or at least more tired than I get.

Nobody had any money in the office today, including me, and I had to borrow a buck from the oafish boy in the library, and then give half to Rubin. I had lunch with the library boy, and it was a great bore. He is a precinct captain.

There isn't any more to write about. Maybe I'll write you at home tonight only I have to go to the dentist. All my love, honey.

***AL TO JILL AUGUST 25, 1942***

Dearest love,

Monday

I'm the spoiled one, by all your letter writing. But I'm spoiled humbly to receive such magnificent prose. Again to your deaf ears I must denounce your literary self-effacement and proclaim you as the greatest letter writer since De Farge dropped a stitch. Your letters are monuments of wit which go to show clearly the good effects of sexual repression on the mind. You can be assured of becoming entirely dull-witted after a few days in my amorous company. I plan, furthermore, to spend many an hour sitting on your stomach and reciting your great epistles back to you, thumping you vigorously on your back (I'll have to turn you over for that) to drive home the fine jokes they contain.

I can't even think of things to write, so bent is my whole mind on praising your delightful wonders. And I haven't time either. For I have a test to study for tomorrow, and some studying to do for another test Wednesday. Most painfully, too, I can't promise yet to be with you on the 5th. There is still the possibility of two extra weeks or of an extra week. However it goes, and I'll telegraph you all about it this coming Sat. eve or Sunday, we'll be together for a good long while after that, - forever I hope.

How many times must I tell you that the AG office arranges transfers?

That diaper contraption is a ludicrous and highly intelligent gift. Just the thing! By all means send the records, too, especially the Artie Shaw for people who know what the vastness of a mountain feels like.

I'm down to one sheet of paper, tonight, darling, I don't really need that to express my love, for you're the only person in the world I've ever said I loved and when I say it, I mean it.

Al

***AL TO JILL AUGUST 26, 1942***

My love,

Tuesday

I've taken a bath (!!!?), donned a clean shirt, puffed out and strutted a few blocks and here I am in study hall, ready to write but with little to write of.

Oh, yes. This morning, during our exercises, I and several others were called out as being men from the Barrage Balloon, and our names & military history taken. That means, with fair certainty, that we'll be going back to the Barrage Balloon for our first tour of duty as officers, barring intervention from Washington or Camp Tyson is as good a bet as any for our next home. We were asked for our choices the other day and I put down the 90mm battery or the automatic weapons battery, but that won't influence the master minds too much I guess. I don't care much any way, feeling that we'll have a great deal of fun wherever we go. No fooling, butch, life with you is a riot which I wouldn't miss for anything.

If I get stationed at Tyson, I'll telegraph Hank for his car in N.Y. Then you can meet me there or in Washington and we'll drive West. On weekends, some of them, we can go to St. Louis very easily or to Memphis, which is a swell old river town with a mixture of Twain and Murky Creoles. Or in Washington we can

have a swell time persecuting draft dodgers, hearing the latest inside dope on the war from dem what knows, spending the weekends on the Evers plantation near Quantico and dining on Broadway now and then. Best of all, we can sleep together at great length and I can drag you out for pre-breakfast exercises to show you that war is hell.

Has Cooney filed his application for WAACS or whatever the canine militia is called? He would make a fine Feldmarshal.

This week's studies I ought to save as a pistol in the small of your shapely back, but I'll reveal them anyway. The first part of it, we are spending on battery administration, the second on mess management. During the latter, we are learning all about foods. We are taught all the meat cuts, how to tell good meats, to tell a haunch from a jowl, and to cook pork properly. Now we can get tough with the 55th St. merchants with the full potentia of scientia.

I saw a silly but worthwhile movie last night, Sun Valley Serenade. The skiing shots were wonderful, making me wonder how such a clumsy creature as yourself could ever become proficient in such a graceful sport (until I remembered that you were a good swimmer too). A colored tap dancing trio were simply superb too and worth the price of admission any day. And of course, Glenn Miller's music just sent us poor waifs of civilization into the throes of wishfulness, delight and frustrated joy.

The time has come to revert to administration, sweet one. It is getting dark already, for summer is showing signs of languishing even here. Last night, I actually had a blanket over me (Gone for at least another week is my quick thermostat adjustment of pulling you in to me) the dawn is late now and we exercise in the dark, a break in that our lightening [?] slaps at mosquitoes are scarcely distinguishable in the gloom.

Much love and many kisses. Be sure to give my family a lot of affection for me.

Al

**AL TO JILL AUGUST 27, 1942 (A)**

Dearest,

Wednesday night

A big kiss for you, too, you cute thing. Your incredibly long letter made my three look rather weak, and, of course, besides your whirl of social activities, my poor horizons seem quite tiny. It seems, though, that the more restricted the body, the more fantastic the mind, and that I'm continually fleeting over mountain tops and carousing with great abandon, the first stages, I'm sure, of the "megalomania that produced Hitler, Morgen, die ganz Welt," you know.

I got a letter from Hank tonight. He's getting a furlough on September 1st and plans to get married in Binghamton, N.Y. around the 5th. He'd like us to be there and me to be best man but realizes the difficulties involved. I would like very much to do so, but considering all the uncertainties, I wrote him advising against counting on me. I asked him, though, to stop off at Chi on his way back for a day or so with his wife. I believe she's a nurse. If we're at Tyson, we'll see a lot of each other; perhaps the four of us can take over a farmhouse near the camp. Well, there's no sense discussing all that yet.

Chicken Little, the sky is falling! This morning, for the second time, we didn't have to double time before breakfast. Instead, we had a short arm inspection, which didn't appeal very much, apparently, to the inspecting medical major who had to examine 150 penises before breakfast. I can say, though, that that's the easiest test I've ever had in this school.

Today we had an exam in administration which I feel fairly certain of passing. We had a lot of tough drill, too, this afternoon, which left our voices rough & hoarse. Tonight, I signed a release for my savings bond allotment. I guess therefore that I have about a \$10 credit towards an \$18.25 bond.

Your plans for my leave are OK subject to the conditions of my assignment, except that I'll prefer a little more time with you and a little less with the family. You know how fragile the walls of the



cottages in Glen Park are. Or perhaps they can get hold of two cottages.

When we got up this morning, it was dark and the full moon was hanging very low across the field. It all looked sort of eerie. The full moon belongs in the evening, not in the dawn.

Glancing through PM tonight, I see that they've come out for the ALP candidate, Dean Alfange, who is Greek-born incidentally. There are certainly two stinking candidates in the major parties. In fact, the isolationists are just not getting their just desserts in these primaries. I hardly know what to think. I guess the voting public hates to admit it might have been wrong.

I must dash down to shave now before the latrine gets too crowded. The classroom latrines are really a sight, lines of men at all the bowls and the rest of the room crowded with men smoking & drinking cokes until you can move around at all. I shall probably expire from delight in the quiet seclusion of a tiled bathroom.

Don't bother about the tidiness of the house, Darling. I'll automatically rise at 5 and sweep, mop, dust, shine all the shoes, arrange the closet, fold the blankets and sheets and turn out in the hallway for reveille.

Bye-bye for now, sweet.

I love you.

Al

***AL TO JILL AUGUST 27, 1942 (B)***

Dear love,

Thurs.

I have a small dilemma tonight, one of whose horns is going to see a movie, *The Gray Sisters* which I've heard is swell, and the other horn of which is returning to the barracks to shine my shoes and fill out a lengthy form on a dependency allotment. The odds are heavily weighted for the former.

I've culled several bits from the Army Cook Book to send you. The New Yorker had similar selections from the same source not so long ago, I recall. Army Technical Manuals (TM) are usually such rigid and unfeeling things, it's amusing to see what happens when the army breaks down and emotes about the joys of life. Since food is the one generally accepted dissipation the army affords, it is unique among army knowledge and teaching. The writing is the gushiest I've ever seen without rhyme or love. Toffanetti would do well to inscribe it on his walls (an idea for a free meal there some day!). I thought the gripping, realistic description of fish in various stages of death would also move you and included that also.

Incidentally, if our plans change and we go to N.Y. on my leave there will be several rip-snorting parties in progress. I promised to drop in on one today that a couple of fellows in the 2nd Platoon are holding at the New Yorker. Whenever we talk of letting our libido go around here we almost shudder with excitement.

Walter's note to you sent me reeling off my bunk. What is he now, production czar in the aircraft industry? I guess he had to stick around to get the zippers fastened on the air-cushions in the planes, which is not begrudging Walter's bit for victory.

By all means, wait to buy the coat until I can lend a helping hand. My legs are somewhat toughened & that will help.

I love you, gate

Al

*[end of possibly a different letter: Both attached to an envelope dated Aug.31]*

Yesterday, I moved into a room in the barracks, taking the place of one man who was set back for a couple of weeks. There is plenty of space in here and a lot of good air so that I expect to get a couple of nights of good sleep before leaving. I hope I haven't forgotten how to sleep. I remember that I used to enjoy it.

Also yesterday, I learned that officially the reason the Americans surrendered on Bataan was because of disease, that they could have held out much longer but for lack of proper food and pills. That almost everyone had scurvy or malaria or severe dysentery or combinations thereof and that the men simply couldn't coordinate their movements because of a lack of vitamin B, and suffered night blindness because of lack of vit A; they couldn't see more than 150 yds away any time.

There is little more to say dearest. Some day this week. I'll ship home a barracks bag full of my belongings. So don't be surprised to receive them if they arrive before me.

I'll telegraph the plane time to you. It's around 4:30 or 5, since I leave Washington at 1:30 p.m. Be sure to be there and don't stick your fingers in a propeller to see if it's there.

Much love, darling, as you'll soon find out.

Al

*[these pages are supposed to be enclosed with Aug. 27 letter, but were attached separately to an envelope dated Aug. 28]*

"The Army Cook" TM 2100-152 *[Enclosed Aug. 28]*

p.2

"Every healthy man is highly pleased with a dish prepared by a master hand & is quick to praise the man who made it. As the cook gains experience & uses his imagination, he is able to produce each day culinary triumphs surpassing those of the day before. The same old dishes served in the same old way day after day may be entirely wholesome at all times, but they fail to arouse the interest of those who meet them at the table. New & delightful combinations of colors, odors, and flavors are to be had in cooking & should be used to break the monotony of a lifetime of 3 meals a day.

The competent cook who tickles with new delights the palates of those whom he blesses with his culinary skill, will win and hold their confidence & esteem. In so doing he can demonstrate that

savory dishes are truly economical, all manner of inexpensive yet wholesome foodstuffs being turned into lordly viands by the magic of his hands, & the leftovers of former meals being transformed into tasty & marvelous dishes.

Mess Management TM 10-205

"10. Meats.- a. Beef. - (1) a beef carcass contains 2 types of meat - tender and less tender."

Fish p. 25 AC "(1) Fresh fish have a bright appearance; the scales are firmly adherent & glittering; the natural slime, if present, is that common to the species; the eyes are outstanding & full; gills & mouth closed; blood in abdomen bright with no off odor; abdominal walls firm & elastic with no discoloration; flesh firm, elastic & tight on the bones; when placed horizontally across the hand the fish does not bend; when placed in water, it sinks.

(2) Stale fish have a duller appearance than fresh; scales are more or less easily removable & slightly slimy or smeary or may be abnormally dry; eyes red bordered; surface of eyeball cloudy; [*note in margin*: or it may just be suffering from a hangover] gills pale yellow, dirty or grayish red & covered with slime of disagreeable odor; abdominal walls becoming soft & flabby; body bony & bends easily especially at the tail end; finger impressions easily made and remain; meat somewhat soft & more easily discolored; when placed in water a stale fish floats.

(3) Putrid fish - all the brightness gone; dull lifeless color; scales very loose & covered with a smeary slimelike mass of disagreeable odor; eyes breaking down or gone; all bright color gone from the gills which have an extremely offensive odor; body withered & flabby; abdominal walls soft & pulpy with apple-jelly-like appearance & discolored; meat soft; abdomen bloated; body blood dirty brown in color & with offensive odor. A putrid fish floats when placed in water.

That's as exhaustive a description as even the army goes into.

Do you think you could recognize a putrid fish now if you met it in the dark?

*End of August 1942 letters*

