

FINE old military stations like the Presidio of San Francisco sufficed to prepare an Army for battle against Sioux Indians. But the many great wartime camps needed to ready onslaughts against the Hordes of World Fascism had to be jerry-built upon ever more drab stretches of land, promoted by local Congressmen: such was Camp Tyson, Tennessee. The troop train from Camp Grant rumbled into a village next to the Camp, named by its deluded pioneers "Paris", now redesignated from behind the train's grimy windows unequivocally, "Asshole of the World."

Futile jerky attempts to chug the train in close to the mud flats of the Camp proper ended amid a disordered collectivity of shacks and houses. The soldiers, for that's what they now were, obeyed various shouts to detrain, under the impassive eyes of lolling blacks and whites, probably unemployed, else hired to camouflage a Hi-tech War Machine, or retained to freeze an image of the Unreconstructed South.

The soldiers clambered into buses, colored olive-drab, of course, like the total Army down to the soil upon which it dwelt, and were driven to a vast expanse of mud crisscrossed by roads, connecting rows of barracks of raw lumber painted white (so much for over-generalizing about the Army's color scheme), though some were not yet painted and others were windowless and some were still only slabs of concrete. A glum sky glowered, damp, cold -- a treasure trove of bronchitis.

They tramped hither and yon, chilly above, muddy below the knees, dropping off contingents randomly. Then suddenly you arrived home: "From here on down the line, this is your barracks. Take your Bag and go on in and find a bunk." Typical of 100,000 across the Nation, the barracks might be of one or two stories, with entrances front and back, stoops as well, for they were lifted to air their bottoms above the elements, well-windowed; inside two rows of beds were footed upon a center aisle running the length of the building; at the front end you passed a large washroom where everyone might shower, shave and shit together. A man steeled himself each morning against finding his name on the list of latrine orderlies, or, missing this assignment, on the list of kitchen police, the next worst job. A small room housed the sergeant in charge.

JILL TO AL MARCH 3, 1942

My only darling -
Your ignoble assignment, i.e., K.P., is the source of the greatest sympathy on my part and - don't beat me, honey - a very small ironic smile. You, my darling, who



KP, the "ignoble assignment."



KP, the "ignoble assignment."



KP, the "ignoble assignment." With Hank Dannenberg.

always had to study at the precise moment that dinner was finished, are now wrassling with supper-pots and presumably supper-pans. I hope your torture won't last a minute longer than it has to but -- I also hope they teach you to darn socks and bake cookies. And I wish I were there, to play the trumpet while you worked -- if they wouldn't permit us to shift positions.

It was wonderful hearing your voice last night, even if I had to undergo the affront (?) of having a Tennessee phone operator call me honey.

I wish you'd tell me more about what a BBB does. I've been going around telling everybody that you are learning to hold a balloon over your shoulder, and that it is very dangerous since you are in imminent hazard of being lifted off your feet and wafted out to sea. Is this correct?



Camp Tyson. Hoisting the barrage balloon.



Camp Tyson

I've been seeing just loads of people, because my bicycle increases my mobility so. Yesterday before you called I rode all over the South Side - covered Jackson Park & Kenwood like a surveyor - and ended up at Gordon's. Halls are all very well & send love. Chas. was there & we all had dinner & then I biked home. Guess what's at Ellis & 48th! I couldn't. A concentration camp, or rather house, for aliens! I saw this huge house with lights all over it on the outside, & a big fence & a man (in civilian night watchman dress) with a big cannon on his shoulder. I asked him what he was doing -- nothing loathe -- & he wouldn't tell me. So I asked Marion this morning - her brother is in the 6th Corps office - & she told me. Exciting what? I'm going to bike there again Saturday & throw chocolate kisses at the aliens.

I got this paper just for you. Flashy, isn't it?

Saturday I biked down to Rose's house. She comes in on Friday so I never get to see her. I know if you were here you'd raise hell with me & say I don't have anything better to do than risk my life and/or reputation visiting my maid, but I had a good time. Nobody bothered me on the way down or back except that I inadvertently ran down 2 colored men at 47th and State. However, I said excuse me in my best Smith accent and thereby averted a race riot. I fussed around her place for a couple of hours -- chatted, drank a coke & flew a model airplane with her younger son who is just darling - quite light and very pert looking - the Cab Calloway type -- and then came home via Washington Park. Still nobody bothered me.

The house is always full of girls, like a dorm. There just aren't any men around, apparently, & all these friendless (male-less, rather) girls congregate over here. Mostly friends of Diana's, but they eat as much as if they were my friends.

Except for the fact that it's you I'm missing, I don't mind the quiet life one bit. Even before you left, I had conceived a great loathing for parties and liquor - I don't think I ever emphasized those aversions, particularly the former, clearly enough to you, which might have been the source of some minor conflict between us - I can't remember. Anyway, my job keeps me busy - too damn busy, if you ask me - & I get more rebellious every day, no doubt in part attributable to my new-found independence as an engaged girl (Did you ever think that Jill would come to the day when she considered independence a function of the marital ties ... I didn't).

Anyway, to stop free-associating, I am keeping very busy & not at all bored or disorganized, & think that I could adapt to most anything, including working - strike out that word & substitute living - in a remote section of the land. Providing I could bring my bike & Truman.

Honestly Al, I just love her. She's gotten so plump & pretty, & yet is quite small for her age. When did we get her? Do you recall? I think she's 3 1/2 mos. but I'm not sure. She sits on the edge of the bathtub now while I bathe & puts her feet in the water. That's

what makes me think I could teach her to swim.

Johnny Durham was just over with your trumpet & send his best. He says why don't you try to get in the Black Horse Troop? I thought you might add that to your list of "why don't you's" to send you into a purple rage.

I hope that when we see each other again we will never get mad or fight or yell as long as we live. It seems to me that two people who know each other as well as we do & who are, withal, as much in love & yet rational (sic!) should get along beautifully. Particularly, since both of us are grown up enough to ignore this question of Other People and Other Diversions. Now that I think of it, most of our fights centered around a division of labor. Now if, in the future, you just take care of everything & let me sit & just be pleasant, everything will be fine. I should hang by my thumbs until then...

Seriously, darling, I can't wait till we can be together again - if only on weekends or at night or whenever you're not soldiering.

As for being a soldier's wife - well - for all I care, you can be a buck private the rest of your life if being that & having me is all you need for happiness. Personally, I'm just as proud of you as a private than? as? if you were head of a Washington bureau. I know you're bright & competent - I don't need any further proof for the rest of our days. I'm sick of climbing and ambitions and goals that may prove to be false. I'd rather have nothing than a world of dust. When I see how much dignity and love the little people have, and how cruel and grasping are the big people -- well, I'm more sure than ever whose side I want to be on. And all this is not strictly from Marx. More off the cob, if you ask me -- and if you ever give me this letter to read again.

Jeepers - that Civil Service exam is on Saturday & I haven't started studying yet. Should I take it or should I just resign myself to living on \$54.33 (our combined incomes) a month for the rest of my days.

Eddie called & says why haven't you written? Well, why haven't you?

Sternly, and with my everlasting love,

Jill

Truman sends greetings.

AL TO JILL MARCH 2, 1942

My only love,

I want you to get this by Tuesday which is as early as the sloppy handling around here permits. Imagine, if you can, my writing a letter of unbounded love at 6:45 A.M. But I am and the other 49 men are hacking and coughing and fixing their bunks, and cursing each other. Three have found their shoe laces tied in knots. I know who the culprit is. He is the funniest little runt in the barracks. But he started shouting right away about somebody tying his shoe laces & isn't suspected.

I would really like to call you again and again, but, of course, that isn't very sensible, is it? I'll try to make the succeeding calls whenever you suggest & for the length of time you desire.

But please know that call or no call, laughs or no, work or no, I am always thinking that one thing would always make everything better and that is to have you with me. I am sure at times that I am more in love with you than you with me, because you don't relapse into a complete state of inertia & apathy when I am gone.

And, mostly, I am glad of that. I want so much to see you, and find out empirically whether you are as thin as a rail, I think it wonderful that you have gotten around to riding your bike. I had some doubts about how long your interest would linger, as usual. How true to form, eh. Dubio ergo sum. In the army or in the home, On the land, sea ...

Every once in the while I think of something I need from home but I can't seem to express anything, except the more basic love symbolisms in my letters. How sad & how frugal my life without you.

It snowed after I talked to you last night & today we look like a vignette from the retreat from Moscow. These barracks are like cardboard. What with several typhoid, yellow fever & tetanus shots, the resistance of quite a few of the men has been lowered. Colds are frequent. Three of our men are in the hospital, but I am locked in your heart forever. Kiss Truman for me.

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 6, 1942

Coronet Magazine

Chicago Thursday

Darling--

I cannot write much because this is still working time and you know what happens to girls who abuse the privilege of working in a great publishing house. And I can't write you when I get home because then I must study for that abominable statistic exam and try to recapture some of the sleep that has been stolen from me by Truman's wails, Diana's arguments with her mother via the phone and drunks calling up and asking if this is Dorchester 7806 late at night. (The latter happened four times last night: the same guy kept calling until Diana and I were so hysterical with rage we called the company supervisor and damned near called the police).

That last paragraph looked as if it were going to be a non-stop.

Saturday after the exam I am taking Diana's car and driving up to your mother's, whence I shall collect the boys and bring them down for the weekend. Why don't you call about seven Saturday night, if you can. Then you can speak to them as well as to me, which we should all enjoy very much.

You're an angel to write to me so much, and I feel very guilty that I haven't been able to do likewise.

(I'd have a nervous breakdown if I kept this in the typewriter a minute longer. All I do is clutch the letterhead every time somebody walks by, lest they see ...)

Phooey on you with your cry that I can't love you very much 'cause I'm not utterly inert. If you had as many people hounding you as I do (whee - I'm a paranoic) you wouldn't love anybody. (I'm good - I love you). All you've got is a sergeant & 1 billion bushels of potatoes to annoy you daily. I've got the boss, the phone company (we're still twisted on bills), statistics, Diana, Truman & all the employees of the I.C. who insist on pulling their trains out of the station as soon as I arrive on the platform.

Not much else new, sweetheart. Be talking to you Saturday, non? And loads of love.

Jill

JILL TO AL MARCH 9, 1942

Sunday

Dearest-

I had expected you to call tonight, but so far no ting-a-ling. The reason for the wire is very complicated. I had planned to take Diana's car to the civil service exam yesterday, then drive to your family, get the boys & their bike, & bring them down for the weekend. Unfortunately - at least for me if not for Diana - Ollie arrived Thursday & for some reason they needed the car yesterday. So I reversed plans & stayed at your family's house last night. I didn't get there til 6 - the exam lasted from 8:30 to 3:30 (very exhausting, I must say), & then I went shopping. I didn't do anything last night but today I took the boys to see Humphrey Bogart in "All Through the Night" at the Garrick. A swell thriller - I guess he's the most wonderful man in the world next to you. The same type, as I solemnly assured some of my female colleagues at the office at one luncheon session.

Soo-oo-o, I got home about 7 & I have been waiting for your call ever since. Ollie is here now - he is staying til tomorrow, at which

time he's going back to N.Y., probably to go into the Army in a few days, a prospect over which he is pleasantly - & surprisingly - elated. I think it'll be swell for him.

The exam was reasonably hard and, as I said before - extremely wearing. I had studied for it about 3 nights - an hour or so each night, and I think I knew enough to pass. However, that's just my opinion. In the application, I didn't specify or limit in any way the location I would accept. That means I can go any place, contingent upon your location.

Darling, I wish you'd write more about what you're doing and whom you've met & everything. The general consensus seems to be that your letters have been most uninformative - but oh so welcome. But I am interested in you dear, as well as in how much & what you think of me.

Incidentally, I got a letter from my cousin Ed - the one whose mother thinks Sam goes with - & he's a first class petty officer in the Coast Guard and commands his own boat - a 50 foot patrol boat of which he's very proud. He's just gotten engaged, which was the reason for the exchange of letters between us.

John's address is (Put. etc) Hq. & Hq Co, 3rd Arm'd Div., Camp Polli, La. Juliet says that he & Tony will be transferred to Officers School at Fort Knox very soon, so you'd better write quick. Send him my love - I owe him a letter for just months.

Ollie sends you his love, & says he will write. Did you get Vera's letter? She said she wrote you. Ollie's stuff is all over the place here, a source of minor irritation to me.

In fact, everybody send their love, most of all me. I miss you an unbelievable amount and spend my time pleasantly fantasizing over the day we will be together again.

Take care of yourself, darling, and rest assured in my love for you.

Jill

You received a book from the Book of the Month Club which wasn't very good & which I returned. They sent a letter asking

where you were, that the book had been returned with addressant unknown on it (my little touch) so I sent them a card saying you were in the Army of the United States but not specifying where. O.K.?

Truman has taken to crapping in the bathtub when nobody's home.

JILL TO AL MARCH 10, 1942

Tuesday

Al dearest--

Enclosed are two forms for the income tax thing. I would suggest using the simplified form--at least that's what I'm using--unless you have any deduction worth mentioning. However, you can play around with both.

Vic read me your letter to the family over the phone last night and it was very interesting. You'd think they'd give you something more than rifles to defend our coastline with, though. It sounds like a good outfit, though, in general.

Not much new here. We have taken to filling the bathtub with water all day long to discourage Truman from her loathsome habits of using it as a latrine. Last night at 12 she jumped in. The splash was heard for miles around. She got out all right by herself but was nervous and had to be comforted.

Take care of yourself and I shall write more when Mr. Smart isn't peering over my shoulder.

Lots of love,

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 8, 1942

Dearest Jill,

Here is your regular army reporter, coming to you directly on a sun beam. I have just written George Steinbrecher, informing him about the army as a likely career for the talented young man and inevitably slipping into a Requiescat on my happy years at the U. of C. Neither Proust nor Wolfe has anything on me when it comes to visualizing past pleasures. I claim no material difference from the ordinary old grad, perhaps a qualitative difference in the scenes I conjure up, mostly deserted scenes with no caroling boys & girls, just the buildings, the grounds and the atmospheric conditions.

It is not only the school that I have been thinking of. Last night I thought of ourselves that summer and of how intangibly beautiful it was. It is most excruciating to feel those moments again, to think of the nights on the beaches, our mutual, untold expectations of meeting the other at dinner time, and our complete, heartfelt understanding from the very first. You admit it before I did but you cannot deny me the right to admit it now. When we conflicted and competed, I think we were just trying to show each other how much we were able to offer the other. And how we conspired against people we didn't like and poked fun at others and analyzed others and how often we would agree perfectly on matters of all kinds. That summer was the greatest of my life. It was a honeymoon of incomparable sweetness and poignancy. Only my blind drive could make me cut out my heart and go to New York. This life now is no comparison at all. I tried to convince myself to forget you then. But you were not only in my heart, but in my mind and my fingers and in everything that possibly recalled to me that I had lived a beautiful summer with the girl I loved.

I am not unhappy now. I am waiting. Though the world be as confused as it never has been since its first molten creation, I am as confident as complete determination & strength can make a man, that our life together shall be many of those summers.

I have been thinking of trying to call you this evening, but may

not be able to manage it from the hospital phone. The ward is quiet now. Most of the men who line up in beds along both of its narrow walls are napping.

Outside it is raining, again. Rain and more rain. The fellows from my barracks brought in your letter & telegram last night, along with a letter from Buss, who is trying hard to do something for me in Washington. Underneath his Roman sternness, he is quite sentimental and I know he was very sad when I had to leave Washington. He is much like Ed in many respects.

It is nice to hear that your household is running along peacefully in Chicago. I like to have you relatively stabilized in habitat. Bad enough that my address is constantly changing. At this distance, even I love Truman, the little lactic-lapper (and I'm not very far away).

The local Nashville & Memphis papers are as moth-eaten moral pieces as are to be found anywhere. Read em and puke. But I'm enclosing a couple of non-controversial cut-ups for your amusement, culled and chipped from my l'hospital bed, where, by the way, I am lying, as healthy as a blooming flower and no way of getting out since they took all our clothing away. A wise idea; the army always knows how to anticipate violations tho it doesn't do so well on the positive side.

Love from down under,

Al

Dearest Jill, Part II

I have found 2 pieces of paper & can write you again. This hospital provides absolutely nothing besides pills.

It might interest you if I recounted a few of the events which have occurred since I kissed you good-bye that Thursday morning. My father and I walked down to the draft board where a number of other men were standing around, some very noisy, some quite still. There were several women, wives and sisters and a few fathers and brothers. When everyone arrived, we piled onto a streetcar and I waved good-bye to my father. We boarded an IC

train which took us in several jerky steps to Camp Grant, where we marched into a couple of lectures, inoculations and movies. The same day we arrived there, we took the tests, though it seemed as if we had been in the camp a week. Taking the tests was one of my students from Indiana U. A week before that, I had told the class I didn't expect to be back. Giving the test was one of my home-study students, a very bright fellow who has been at Camp Grant for a year and is a corporal. After taking the test, we marched to our barracks, and one of the KPs yelled "Hey, Rookie" as we passed the kitchen. It was Tom Stauffer who has been there doing nothing for weeks (except for reading Proust) while waiting assignment to the Cryptographic School.

He was still clumsy and inept Tom, looking very much at home among the table refuse. He is in love with the taller of the Stephenson sisters, and told me that the smaller and less likeable one married a good friend of his. I pity the poor fellow.

The next day came our classification. Some went to the Infantry, some to the armored forces, some to the Quartermaster Corps, etc. I was classified as BI, Branch Immaterial, because it was figured that as soon as my basic training was over, and it is supposed to be the same everywhere, I would be put in an officers' training camp. So my card went into the shuffle & came out at Camp Tyson, with the BBB.

That Saturday a number of us men were put on a train and again with many stops and much slow motion we rode to Camp Tyson, staying for an hour in shrouding darkness somewhere in Chicago. I spent my time sleeping in an upper berth, playing poker & reading Mission to Moscow, borrowed from the Corporal. We transferred trains at Milan, Tenn. & rode the last few miles in ancient coaches.

We arrived here and we ate. Some Texans had joined the Chicagoans at Milan but everyone was split up when we were assigned to barracks. I told you in part of the types of men in my barrack. We must have cut a pretty sight the other evening when a group of us were sitting together making conversation and cleaning our rifles. The blend of the cowboys & Indians and the

city toughs was one for the books.

(One of them just brought me a couple of my possessions & now I can write in ink.)

The variety of [*myphake?*] expression in American slang is certainly astounding. The Westerners have their special kind of similies, "As happy as a dead hog a lyin' in the sunshine," etc. Many are unprintable. To overwork yourself or someone else is to "break your hump" according to one Mike Riskin of N.Y.C., the DRO, Dining Room Orderly, and he is continually assuring everyone that he'll break their humps if they get out of line & that he is always breaking his hump holding his end of the World War II in a fit manner.

My fellows KPs are a regular lot. They are all ex-army men and are surprisingly normal despite the fact that they enlisted once before in peace time. The fact is that now they are all draftees, unwillingly in the army again. One broad-faced, blond named Mokolke is always on the verge of killing the cooks. Every time we get a dirty job, he yells, "Give me a cleaver, I'll cut the b--d in two."

There is plenty to gripe about in the army, especially at this camp, and a potato-peeling bee is as bad as the revolutionary coffee-houses. The deep and abiding hatred which most men here feel for the army is quite illuminating to those who say that man is naturally war-like. That may be true, but I'm sure that drive can be satisfied most perfectly on a purely personal level. Very little thought is wasted by the men here on the war in general. The role of the individual is so ridiculous that to think in terms of the whole would result in many cases in complete disintegration of the morale.

This letter is long enough. Going back to my favorite phrase, I will love you forever.

Al

Next morning

Guess where I am now. Right. In the Post Hospital. And, like

Oscar Wilde, I must write on any paper I can find in goal. Whenever anyone enters the place, there is a great clamor of "let me out of this damn hole." It is clean but barren of diversion. There is a rumor of a nurse coming in Monday.

Oh, my ailment. I have la grippe & have had it since three days ago when I got 3 shots in my right arm for tetanus, typhoid, & yellow fever and then went back to work in the kitchen. Since all the men around me had colds, I was fit prey. It isn't bad & I wish I hadn't gone on sick call this morning. But now I'm stuck here, they say, until thoroughly cured -- a matter of several days I hope. I hope your letters get here all right, but nothing goes along as it should in the army. I also hope, & this is that worries me, that you will get this letter before the awaited Sun. nite call. I couldn't call now, if I wanted to.

Back to my former thread, I started out to write a long letter but see what happened. As soon as one of my friends visits me tonight, I'll get more writing paper & write a lot while I am imprisoned here.

I think I should be able to get a weekend pass as soon as 4 wks. basic are over, i.e. in 2 weeks. It is better that I take that bus ride over Friday nite than you. You have that job. I'll have more fun in Chicago. The bus ride will wear you out. I want to root around a few of my documents, & I'll be able to see the family, for a while, tho of course you have exclusive rts to my time.

Many, many kisses and all my love. See you soon.

Yours, Al

P.S. Don't tell family of cold. Please send Johnny's address.

It would be much better if I could go to Chi, rather than you come here. This is a hole. Everyone admits it, nay, it is the chief point of vituperation around here. I can't say "bitching" in a letter. We would have a little trouble moving between town & camp, arranging my leave, taking baths, wearing clothes, and so forth. I would like to lounge around my home, for you are in my home, and bathe and have you pass your fingers thru my military hair-cut. (It doesn't look bad, sweetheart, tho no girl has seen it yet.)

JILL TO AL MARCH 11, 1942

Darling -

Your letter was just wonderful, even if it wasn't written on the super-swank letterheads provided by the Service Clubs in other camps and the Royal Canadian Air Force. (I have to read a lot of the fan mail from soldiers, and I must say some of them write on spectacular stationery). But I am worried about your grippe--and am awfully glad that they do make you stay in the hospital until you're absolutely well. Even if you are bored to death. It's better than pneumonia, and considering how dull-witted they are about dosing you full of toxins and then making you work under the most oppressive conditions, you might very well get a bad case of something or other. Oh--that's enough about your health. I know how fretful you get when you're home and I suddenly assume a maternal role. It must be just as bad via the mails. But a last word anyway--do take care of yourself in such mundane situations as exposure to colds.

I hope you'll be able to call me this Saturday night--how about 7 or 7*30. I'm not sure that you get through eating and can get to a phone by 7. On the other hand, 8 may be too late if you have Saturday night off and want to go to a movie. But anyway you like it, darling, I'd love to talk to you.

My job is dull; I have a million books to read for it, which wouldn't be bad if I could lie down and do so. But I'm tired and sleepless and bored with sitting up in one position and generally in a foul humor, this being 4:30 P.M. and my wishing it were 5:15.

I really shouldn't write you under these circumstances. I should reserve my sweetest and happiest moments for you, so that you could have a sort of distillation of our love, not all the little scratches and bites that go with being part of another person. But I'm afraid you wouldn't get as many letters from me that way--I'm still not very sweet or happy a good part of the time.

However, I'm going to have dinner with your family tomorrow night--one of the better moments of the week. It's so much fun being with them all, even if Vic [*Al's younger brother Victor de*

Grazia, a future Deputy Governor of Illinois] is a pain in the neck a good part of the time. He gets fresher all the time, which may be no surprise to you, yet more personable at the same time. They've broken the neck of their bicycle, that thing that holds the handle-bars, and I don't know whether I should just give Vic three dollars in cash for his birthday so he can get it fixed or give him a book. What do you think? I got the trumpet from Johnny and your father picked it up at the house last week, as he was playing at the Catholic school around the corner. And I am bringing your father your Finchley hat as he thinks he may be able to wear it. Which just about covers the news of the family from my unique point of view.

The prospect -- even tho I know it is rather tentative--of your coming home in a couple of weeks or a month maybe -- makes me jumpy with joy. Yet at the same time, I feel very calm most of the time, thinking of the peace that will ultimately be ours.

Well, the office is no place to write a love letter. But you know how I feel about you. In code xxxooo.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 15?, 1942

Dearest Jill,

Have you noticed how precious a letter is, after all. It can be read and reread, and when you want to relive a specific thrill from a line, you can do so. Whereas a phone call leaves only a very diffuse satisfaction, a general aura that can hardly be recalled in its details. I tried last night to think of every little thing you said, of any words that may not have conveyed to you how deeply I love you. I thought to myself, for example, that I should not have said that I would love you more if you took your pills because nothing like that makes any difference,--as you probably know (and sometimes take advantage of). And I don't have to tell you that I miss you unmeasurably in order to explain why I said that the days are passing swiftly in a way. They are because in your very words there is a calm expectancy of a future together. You may

feel the present harder, I thought later, because you are living where we both lived and my hands are visible about the home. But that very fact also gives some stability to both your life and mine. I can't wait to step across our doorstep again.

Yours are my most dear letters but I get others. Even the arrival of a radio was accepted stonily because there was no letter from you along with it. Perhaps you might be interested in excerpts from the other letters.

Gosnell, on March 12, wrote: "How is the gay Paree? In accordance with your suggestion, I called Sam Stouffer and he said that the War Department does not call anyone to Washington who is not a commissioned officer. As soon as you have your commission he will be glad to consider the matter."

The National Roster wrote: "You will be interested to know that on February 16, 1942, we sent to the War Department appropriate information about your specialized training and skills. Although no promises can be made that any preferred assignment will necessarily result, this information may be of value in connection with your assignment to duties."

Lasswell wrote: "Your new assignment sounds very active, and your pals seem to be quite diversified. At this stage of the game I am somewhat pessimistic about the prospect of transfer, yet I'll see what can be done. I should be glad if you would issue official communiques from the Front from time to time."

Bill Evans, who is in the Marine Officers' Training at Quantico, Va., had a few pertinent remarks. "And it would be the Army! Well, chum, I don't care how you cut the military slice--it still is the same old crap. As you say, "It's healthy, but is it life?".. You should have joined the Marines with the rest of us Draft dodgers--it is a penance that really purges you of your sins.

And Morris Cohen tells me that he is going into the army any day, and that several other fellows are too. I know that I won't mind the army as much as they will--if I could carry you around in my barracks bag.

No doubt, Joan will give you a good lecture while you are visiting

her, about keeping windows and doors locked while you are out or sleeping now that you are completely alone, for a while, so I won't think twice about the situation.

I shall certainly try to get home this week-end and can hardly wait to see the Battery Commander about it. We must try to see each other once a month. It is a foregone conclusion that time only makes my desire to be with you stronger. Give a longer time apart, I fear for your sense of bodily and spiritual integrity when I get to see you.

Until the next time we meet, *semper fidelis* and all my love.

Your Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 16, 1942(A)

Dearest Al -

I am overjoyed that you've decided to come Saturday. I hope you won't miss out on your work too much. Naturally, I would never ask you to do anything you felt was wrong to do. Or that you wouldn't want to do.

Having delivered myself of such transparent goodies, I shall now proceed to tell you what to do. Namely, pulease don't forget to get off at Englewood. I'll meet you there, & maybe Buss [Al's older brother *Sebastian de Grazia*, the future Pulitzer-Prize-winning author of *Machiavelli in Hell*] will drive us thither & from (I assume you'd like to see your brother at the station).

I also assume you're taking the Pacemaker [*all-coach express-train between new York and Chicago*], or are you?

Generally, you had better work yourself into a docile frame of mind, since I am feeling very tough these days, & will brook no insolence from man and/or beast.

Really, darling, I don't see how I'm going to eat, sleep & work with my usual dull calm between now & Saturday. I guess I'll manage, tho.

Love, as always

Jill

(over)

I went down yesterday to buy gifts for you & Paul & got myself a hat instead. You'll just have to be satisfied with what really is the greatest gift any man can receive -- a date from me on Saturday night.

JILL TO AL MARCH 16, 1942(B)

Dearest--

I don't know exactly what I said over the phone last night. All I remember is that wonderful misty feeling that comes just after I've talked to you. The reason for the mistiness during the conversation is of another order. I had just gotten up from one of those deadening afternoon slumbers, and although I had been awake for an hour, I still felt like I had been hit on the head. Ergo my dopiness over the phone, like my repeated "how are you's". And what I wanted to talk to you about completely escaped me.

The burning topic of the moment, which should have been the topic of conversation last night, is, namely and to wit: what should I do about the lease? Diana came home one night and announced that not only was she through with school and sick of it, but she was going to New York, to live the life of an heiress of moderate means. She is tired of Chicago and the people she knows and her mother -- I am sure the latter is the principal reason for her decision -- and is going to live in New York, commencing May 1st. Meanwhile, she left tonight for a token trip to New York. She will be back in two weeks or whenever her month's allowance runs out.

I really have no reason to bother you with the details of this matter. After all, you are in no better position to predict the future than I am, viz., in no position at all. Yet there must be some abstract principles to be invoked in determining whether I should tie myself down to a lease through September. On the pro side --

I like the apartment and feel it is our home. On the no side -- where will you be for the next six months, where I shall be, the burden of paying for an apartment without a roommate, etc., etc. Also, the chances for a sublet. Do you think I should keep the apartment, with the chance of staying in it only a month or so, in which case I should be only too glad to pay the full month's rent for the privilege of being without a roommate, and then subletting it, possibly at a profit, while I go to live with you or near you? Your mother doesn't think I should keep the place. Of course, she doesn't know what my income is. I'm on the side of taking a chance and keeping it, which is probably foolish and just indicative of my basic conservatism, i.e., an unwillingness to move. Tell me what you think, honey. And soon. I read and re-read your letters and also show the impersonal portion of them to your family and friends. They are really wonderful. As Joan says, your attitude is so good.

I am having a helluva time writing this letter. Vesta is screaming as if she were being raped. I believe her hair is being washed although I haven't taken the trouble to investigate. Joan is screaming, "Oh Vesta, you're so uncooperative!" and Joan's mother, Mrs. Walter, a very sweet and pretty white-haired elderly lady, is saying soothing things. I drove down about four this afternoon after having spent the better part of the day in bed, reading the papers and writing my sister. My driving is getting better. Maybe I'll be able to get a license soon. We'll drive in town tomorrow early, so Joan can get to work at 8:30 and I at 8:45. It's certainly wonderful to have a car. And if you can get home next weekend, having the car will make it just perfect -- no time wasted in street cars. Do you really think you can get away? Maybe I could drive down, say a hundred miles out of Chicago (I wouldn't want to drive much more since I don't want to take advantage of Diana's good nature and tires) and meet you.

I'll send you some magazines and reprints of nudes for your friends tomorrow. Incidentally, I've clipped a page out of this week's New Yorker that I'm sending, but don't worry, it's not censorship. Just a flannel suit from a New York store that I covet. I bought a navy blue suit at Carson's last week -- only 20

dollars and it's quite cute in a demure sort of way. I figure it was a nice neutral article of clothing, suitable for weddings, funerals, and work.

I wrote my sister a long letter today, telling her of our Plans. She had written me, asking me what of mother's good silver and crystal I wanted, so it seemed an appropriate time to tell her about us. Incidentally, I told her all I wanted was mother's everyday china, which is very attractive and could be used by us, no matter how low our standard of living. Stuff like gold plated dinner plates and a solid silver coffee set I can't imagine myself using, so I told her Paul could have it. (It all started with Paul writing for some of the stuff, and Daisy deciding I should get in my licks, even if I wasn't married). I also told her that Paul could have the good glassware conditionally, but I reserved the right to remove some of the cocktail glasses in the events of my setting up house. I guess that sort of thing bores you, and I really don't take it as seriously as the amount of space I devote to it might indicate. And don't think, darling, that I have any roseate and false visions of love in a cottage with sterling silver flatware. I know that being married for the next few years will be, in its physical aspects, very much like not being married. Except for the one wonderful difference, I'll be your wife.

I take my pills regularly and will probably be very energetic by the next time I see you. I still don't sleep too hot, except during the day, but the doc says that will come when I have enough vitamin something in my system.

Truman is fine. Diana's hand is infected nastily in two places from her. Today Truman stepped in a dish of applesauce and trailed it all over the floor. I really got sore then. After all, as I told her, I pay the bills and I have a right to expect her at least to not walk in my food. Oh well, everytime I gag on my daily dish of liver, I have the consolation that Truman will eat it if I don't, and so no waste.

And so to bed, with all my love (Joan and Tom and Vesta send theirs too).

AL TO JILL MARCH 16, 1942

My dearest love,

War is depressing and to me that banality will never lose its force. Please do not be angry or sad because I can't come home again this weekend. It is not mere red-tape or foolishness of the military mind which prevents me from getting a week-end leave. I spoke with the captain and first lieutenant at some length today and the captain would have given me leave if it were not for the fact that I still have some vaccines to take. They must be taken at regular intervals you know in order to be effective. I can't very well leave on any week-end on which I am in lose for a dose. This week I have a typhoid and tetanus shot to get.

All in all, the captain was very nice. He was very encouraging about my getting an officership as soon as possible (i.e. after the next two months of basic training) followed by officers' training. He would like to have me stay in a line outfit, i.e. a fighting branch, and I don't mind that suggestion as much as I ought, considering how well qualified I am for a job in the adjutant's office, quartermaster corps, etc. I've been thinking quite seriously of joining the air corps and would probably do so if it weren't that I want to be with you at any cost, and they will not take married men as flying cadets. Don't tell me that you'll wait as a single girl, because I'm very adamant about marrying you. As long as I know that I'll be valuable to the war wherever I am in the army, I'm satisfied that we can be married as soon as we desire.

The setup is this. If you can come down on any week-end, I can spend most of Saturday and all of Sunday with you. I can get an overnight pass to spend in Paris with you and we'll be together constantly. I can show you the camp and what few beauties one can find in this desolate spot. Most probably, all I shall want to do is to sit in a secluded corner and talk to you -- among other things. So name the day and I'll be waiting with open arms. Then, in about three weeks, I'll be able to get off on a weekend to spend in Chicago with you. And so on. With you coming here a couple of times, and my coming to Chicago a couple of times,

dependent on how often we desire such visits, the two months should go rather quickly. After that, if you have a long-range mind, if I go to an Off. Tr. Camp near a city we can be together permanently, or if this outfit goes to a large city, I'll stay with it, forget the officer business and you can live with me anyway. We can be married in a few weeks if you desire it, either here or at the U. of C. chapel (I like the latter idea). I'll spend one weekend home arranging matters and another in connubium. So much the captain felt he could do. All that stands between your mother's ring on your right and on your left hand are several tetanus shots and typhoid injections.

The above programme is not too hard to take, is it, darling. And, in fact, circumstances may even be better. There is still a good chance of my being pulled out of here soon for such a place as Camp Grant or Washington, D.C. Without congenital optimism making me irrational, I think that we have little to fear from a lengthy separation. First I mean that we won't have lengthy separations. Second I mean that even such a separation would mean little to me. I would love you even if I didn't see you ever again--and love you forever. But such a thing is unthinkable.

Enough said about that. If you want to come down even this weekend, telegraph me and I'll clean up Paris for your arrival.

Tomorrow we go on very short maneuvers. We spent the evening packing our very complicated haversacks, cleaning our rifles (it goes on ad infinitum), and hooking our bayonets, canteens, first aid kits, and assorted impedimenta to our cartridge belts. You see how busy we are. But every now and then, when the command to "rest" is given, I can dream of you. I worry because you are possibly in low spirits and feel conscience-stricken because I am the cause of it. But I know you can take it as well as I can and am vastly relieved because we see the world and our relationship with the same eyes--and, if I may inject a boastful note, we are such an inseparable pair, so irrepressible and incorrigible and so much in love.

It is late and we must get up early tomorrow for the foray. With humble expectations of being in love with you forever, I am still

your man,

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 18, 1942(A)

Darling--

The palmier days, when I could find my fountain pen and could write you in my own delicate passionate script, are over with. Now I must return to my typewriter, which, incidentally (note uneven left-hand margin) the years are telling on.

My trip to Gary was uneventful. I found my way down there all right -- a moron couldn't do worse -- and we talked for a good part of the night. Unfortunately, we didn't hear the alarm in the morning and had to race out of the house at 8, with only a half hour to get to Joan's office. The weather was awful -- a heavy mist on the road and rain -- so I lost my way thrice and at one time found myself speeding at 60 due south to Indianapolis. However, we were only a half hour late to our respective offices, and I made up some fantastic story about running off the road, which the employment office believed.

My driving, incidentally, has taken a sudden turn for the better. I no longer have a deadly fear of sideswiping people, although I am still absent-minded about left turns.

In answer to Mrs. Winston's urgent and mysterious pleas, I went over to her house this evening after work. She had the temerity to tell me she didn't want me to drive Diana's car -- after Diana had specifically entrusted it in my hands. I got sort of fresh to her, but finally agreed to bring it around tomorrow night. After all, she can't drive and it's no possible use to her, and all this shit about wearing down the tires and my responsibility and all that doesn't hold much water. If I bang a fender (the one that isn't dented already) I can easily pay for it, so she doesn't have to worry about being stuck with repair charges and an uncooperative insurance company. And as for the tire--well, the little driving I do back and forth from work doesn't make that

much difference. Furthermore, she got me mad by telling me, while I was in the process of being polite to her, that she would like it back peacefully so that she wouldn't have to go to her lawyer. So I have decided not to bring it back tomorrow night and she can just yell for it until Diana sends her decision. The only thing I am afraid of is that she will send the police after me. After all, I don't have the registration papers or a license. Oh well.

I just spoke to your mother and she agreed with me.

How is your radio?

Sweetheart, I have to dash off to the dentist now. I will take my pills, I will, I will! Wire me if you can come -- I hope I hope.

All my love,

Jill

I got a letter from John - he's still not at Officers School, & Tony & Harvey Karlin went. He's furious, justifiably, I think. A dirty deal.

JILL TO AL MARCH 18, 1942(B)

Dearest--

I just got your letter saying that you couldn't come this weekend, and I am so sorry. However, I am less disappointed that I would have been had not my natural pessimism prevailed during the period I was waiting to hear from you. It's funny how different we are that way. You are always--apparently--so high-hearted, so self-confident, so full of hope. I on the other hand, while I don't exactly expect the worst to happen, don't expect anything at all to happen, and thereby plot my monotonous way through life.

Sometimes I resent your self-confidence, your high expectations of people and things. I don't know why I do this. I can't say that you expect more than you deserve, because who is to measure how much one deserves? I can't say that you expect a lot and then sulk when you don't get it, because as far as I can see, you take your lot, good or bad, with amazing equanimity and

sportsmanship. Maybe I am jealous of you--but why should I be? I haven't exactly had a hard life, and seem to be more than usually equipped with the gifts of men and God. I'll be damned if I can figure out my attitude. But then, it isn't very important, I guess.

I guess I am sort of depressed right now, although again, I don't know why. My job bothers me no more than usual. I am full of Vitamin B1 to the gills. I miss you, but it isn't that. The times when I miss you most, I feel most secure--in the warm anticipation of the pleasure I shall have when I see you again. It's probably something I ate.

I don't see how I'll be able to come down this weekend. I won't be able to get to the bank until Saturday to get the money, for one thing. That in itself is an insuperable barrier, because I don't dare take another morning off, having done so last week to go to the doctor, and having been late Monday on account of driving in from Gary. And then, I'd sort of like to be able to plan, for a few days ahead, such a momentous journey.

Bill Cates, the history teacher whose wife is in my office, went to the Army a couple of days ago. He did well in the tests and they wanted to send him too into the Air Corps, but he didn't want to be in the ground crew, and I guess they won't accept married or over-age men as pilots.

Truman just fell into the typewriter and was having a violent battle with the letter n. I wish she would get off.

Darling, I feel as you do--I'd like to get married as soon as we can. But if, for any reason, it stands in the way of your getting the sort of position you want in the Army, I'd gladly wait. After all, we've waited this long.g--Truman made that g. Isn't she clever? I've been trying to organize my thoughts on the subject of getting married--the mechanics of same--without avail. Since I know you'd rather have me speak utter nonsense on the subject than nothing at all (or maybe you wouldn't) can I just let go with a few disconnected sentences? Perhaps tomorrow I'll change my mind--ergo I outlined my present frame of mind earlier in this letter so that you can exercise your prerogatives of editing and

discounting what I say. If I went to see you in Tennessee, I'd like to get married then, although I wouldn't like to get married in Tennessee. I am worried about that marriage test business here. Would we have time, and would you have enough sense to get a Wassermann and a certificate of same a couple of days before you left camp to come to Chicago? I'd like to get married where at least one of our families can witness the solemn occasion, but I feel squeamish about a chapel or the Chapel, whichever it is. If you have a chapel, that means you have to fill it up with people, and with whom would we fill it? Your family are the only people in Chicago I would care to have at my wedding, if we can call it such, and your family consists of your father and mother and Eddie [*Al's younger brother Edward de Grazia, a future First Amendment and lawyer and expert on censorship*] and Victor, who are not enough to fill up even a small-sized parlor. While I have friends, and so do you. I can't think of any I wouldn't feel like a dam fool inviting to my marriage. In fact, the idea of sending out invitations appalls me. I have no feeling at all about the denomination of the person who functions at these things--civil, Catholic, Jewish, High Church, it makes no difference to me. Finally, can I wear a suit if it is a dressy one? I look awful in a floppy hat and a tea gown.

Please don't be angry at me for speaking my mind, possibly in a tone of levity, about such a serious matter. But those are my prejudices. Now it's your turn.

I saw Janice Saturday for a short while -- Castleman and I went up there to collect some money she owed us separately, and she says that she and Bill are planning to get married if he isn't drafted. Can you imagine that? She wouldn't marry a man unless he could support and comfort her 24 hours a day.

Sweetheart, I have to mail this before 10. All my love to you, please believe me.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 18, 1942

Dearest Jill,

I've tried since yesterday evening to get time to write. We were out in the field yesterday, as I wrote you, and there is plenty of nonsense to relate.

We got into full packs yesterday morning, - blanket roll, toilet articles, canteens, mess kits and pup tents, etc., and struck out cross country, our gas masks flopping against our side, bayonets chafing and tripping us and the old Enfield rifles across our shoulders. The plan was to proceed to a prescribed area, erect a hasty encampment, construct foxholes and mechanized machine road-blocks, and finally to attack enemy positions.

The center of resistance was a group of farm buildings atop a hill, and minor fortifications such as foxholes and barns provided impedimenta along the lines of approach.

The hike to the area was long and the packs heavy, so that you can imagine we were tired when we began the attack. Along the way, we were subject to simulated gas and aerial attack. Very fortunate, this simulation of gas. Regular procedure for gas defense is to stop breathing on the order of "gas" and the whistle, Adjust the mask in a few seconds and continue until the "all-clear" signal. We were quite a ghoulish sight, walking along the road, the whole troop in gas-masks. And it was all wearying, because, somehow, gas-mask air is nothing like the real thing. As usual, there were funny boners -- some men took a few deep breaths just before donning the mask, forgetting for the moment that a whiff of mustard will set you on your head. And one man had never tried his on before, so someone had to cut the strings on his. As for the aircraft, I lit across the field away from the road with the Chief (Margho) high-tailing alongside me and we both dived into the same mud-hole. When I came up, I looked like a member of the tribe. The opposite half of the battery were pinioned on a barbed wire fence on the other side of the road.

The "danger" past we shuffled along to our positions from where we were to launch our attack. The battery was divided into a

number of squads. Our platoon, the "terrible" third (in a bad sense) was divided into 4 squads, I being in the second which somehow seemed to contain the most undisciplined elements in the battery. The 1st squad advanced near the crest of a ridge, the 2nd on the lower plain, the third in a gully, and the fourth along the top of the next ridge. So you can see how all four of the squads were converging on the group of buildings from the same southerly direction.

For an hour we ran, ducked, dodged, climbed over fences of all sizes and descriptions and wormed along on our bellies,--all with full packs on our backs. It was hot and the sweat began to pour down from our faces. Up would go the squad leader's hand and we would dash across a stretch of ground, down with the hand and we flopped like dead pigeons (most of our squad would really have been, too). There we lay, the canteen lodged between two ribs, the gas mark cutting into the most vital of our organs, and the pack disrupting all sense of equilibrium, pressing us down to the dirt with deliberate intent to never let us rise. The bayonet facilitated in the execution of any who had thoughts of hara-kiri and many did.

The briars and thorns! They deserve a separate paragraph. They were camouflaged and deceiving. They were tough as nails. And they were as numerous as the sands of time. I dived, time after time, into them and fear and hate them worse than barb-wire. My hands were bleeding in a dozen places and my friend Jester's nose had a vicious cut from one of the monster varieties. He wriggled around and yelled "DeGrazia, I'm beginning to see red," and I yelled back, "Stick it in the mouth of your canteen." And we resumed firing. The attack had just started.

I had a choice position on the extreme right flank. That meant that I was next to the third squad in the shallow gully. Half the time I was jumping down and the other half jumping up -- and again those hateful words -- with a full pack. It was here that the briars find their most congenial habitat. To my left was Tommaso, a tough little guy and a boy from N.Y.C. they call "Junior" for obvious reasons.

Well, Jr. wandered into my territory and fell in the gully. So Tomas hollered out, "Hold everything, Hold 'er up someone's been hurt." I laughed so hard that my canteen played Reveille against my floating rib.

Minutes later, my canteen dropped off my belt as I started to rush again and I never saw it again. I felt like retrieving it but did not want to fall back.

The weary line kept going forward, the men dragging themselves up on the command to charge, and thankfully dropping when ordered to do so. The Platoon lieutenant was snaking along in front and gave the signal for the final assault. We got up and ran, needing no warning to bend low. No one wanted to get more than two feet above the ground anyway. We felt more like the British at Charlestown and Dunkirk than conquering heroes then. A little reserve strength came from somewhere and I flopped over the last two fences, trusting to luck to get me up again on the other side. But I made it in good time. There was no other man from my platoon near me and I ran towards the top. I dropped down once more, crawled in over a small mound and looked over straight into the eyes of the lieut. who was on the opposite side peering over. "Let's go," he cried and we went. We entered the buildings and looked down at the men as they came scrambling up the hill. Everyone was deservedly tired. It wasn't only the lack of training. But we covered quite a distance, and under real war conditions it would have taken days to cover the ground.

I asked an officer to let me leave the battery, which was preparing to strike out in marching order, in order to look for my canteen. Permission granted, I trekked back along the route we had followed, and here begins the story of the One Man Lost Battalion. The battery changed positions and I hiked back to where the skirmish had started, scaring up rabbits, civilians, and other harmless denizens of the countryside en route. I got back to the field and no battery was to be seen. I walked along, and bumped into a group of officers who were somewhat taken aback by my appearance. I asked one, "Did you see A-battery anywhere," and he hadn't.

Then they gathered around and, suffering from ennui as they were, poor men, began to ask questions and discuss the new arrival. One examined my rifle and that excited some comment. Most had never fired an Enfield of the type. Unfortunately, one also commented on some sand in the bolt -- (A Rifle Should Always Be Spotless - Army Regulation 4-391-23ABCX). I was prepared to let the matter ride with some muttered description of mud and lying prone, but they were not to be daunted. "Here is the way to do it," says one, and he neatly dropped, holding the gun over him so that it wouldn't get the least dirt on it. "That's swell," I replied, "for the first fifty times; it's the 51st that get the first speck," and trudged away looking for A-Battery, hoping that they wouldn't try to extend the conversation. By that time I was feeling like violating Army Reg. 2-149-631ax against drinking water from an unknown source.

Away I went, over hill and dale, in pursuit of my unit, spurred on by a rumor given me by a truck driver as to its whereabouts. Eons later, across the breeze wafted the heavenly tones of a familiar bark. "Sergeant Baretta," I thought happily and lifted by head until it was fully two & a half feet from the ground.

My luck held. The battery had just rested and was ready to return home. My lieutenant said that I could get another canteen without charge, since it was not lost through carelessness. I had, however, found one man's raincoat in the bottom of a ravine, and he was very happy to get it back. The return hike was nightmarish. The ranks were ragged and were constantly reforming as men dropped to the rear. One nice, old, bearish-looking Swede from Minnesota was stumbling along in front of me, and every now & then I would give him a push to give him some momentum. After the night came day and we laughed ourselves sick over the misfortunes of the day with much cursing and lurid description. I really liked the whole thing, though it was terribly exhausting. Somehow, the contact with the war was a little closer.

Today, we shot 55 rounds on the rifle range and I'll tell you about that later. This letter is assuming tome-like proportions, and I still haven't spoken my mind on the matter of your residence.

You have the final say, and perhaps I should not even give an opinion. I do have a few preferences. For one thing, I would not like to see you living alone for as long as a month. Rather than that, I would ask you to stay at the Richardsons for that time, or perhaps with my family. I know that you have the same objections to both as I have. But perhaps if you went away on weekends it would make little difference to live with the family during the week. The expense item is prominent, too. I don't think you should spend more than a minimum of money on the idea that you may have to spend unexpected sums in the next few months. How soon do you have to decide? Don't you have Diane around until the 1st of May? Check me on these points, honey, (with permission of Tenn. Bell Tele. Co.) and let me know how you feel.

With this masterpiece of indecision, I close the letter. Rest assured that there is no indecision about loving you infinitely & forever.

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH ? 1942?

Dearest--

The end of a busy day - or something. And I still didn't achieve my original objective for the day, i.e., see you.

Last night after I wrote to you that I might come down, I had a strange visitation. I didn't tell you this before, for fear that it wouldn't work out, I guess, but about two weeks ago I had an interview with a young man named Bern Lundy, formerly of the U. of C. publicity office, now with the research department of the Corporation Counsel of the City of Chicago. Miss Larsh sent me -- she's with the U. of C. vocational bureau. Anyway, not much came of the interview -- he told me to send him a letter, which I did.

Last night, while I was sitting amid my boxes and ruins in 5479, came a knock at the door, and who should it be but Mr. Lundy.

He said he had been looking all over for me -- he had even gone into the U.T. (he's a former student), where Jane Tallman, with whom I had had a beer there earlier in the evening, told him that I was probably home. Well, comes the short part of a long story, I went down to see his boss, Barnet Hodes whom you may or may not know, this morning, and I got the job. The pay: around \$40 a week. The duties: primarily political although the city law department presumably should be non-partisan. I think the first thing I have to do is write a seething diatribe against Curley Brooks, although neither Lundy or I have much idea of what Hodes has in mind for us. Oh, in summary, the job is research and writing, like speeches and so forth for the politicians. I think it sounds swell, don't you? Anyway, I am preparing to give my all for the Democratic Party and am relieved that I voted for Mc'Keough.

So that is why I didn't start to hitch hike or drive to Paris today. I gave up the New York idea shortly after I had it. I wasn't feeling very happy, which was the original idea for going to New York, but then I figured I wouldn't be much happier in New York than in Chicago, so why not go to Paris?

The rest of the day I spent tearing around the South Side, disposing of my property, including Truman whom I gave back to Rose. I'm not sure where I'm going to live. I'm exercising considerable caution in the choice of a place; the last few days have been an unpleasant reminder of how hot it can get in Chicago. I gave up the Goff idea because of that. Perhaps the Harvard Hotel -- they have one room with windows on two sides in front. Despite my new found wealth, I don't have much desire to take one of those one-room kitchenette apartments in buildings with service. They're too damn conventional.

About your new position in the army. Will your

That last sentence read: Tell me about your new position in the army. Will your regiment go out soon?

Your mom says that the family has been very busy, which is the chief reason why she hasn't written. You can imagine how it's been for her.. what with your stuff, my stuff and her original

for you; get myself a permanent pass which will let me be with you every evening until reveille early each morning; register for the room under your name but arrange for both of us to be undisturbed. I'll be with you from 5 or earlier in the evening to 5 in the morning and most of Sat. & all of Sunday. Again, I'll try to meet your bus but don't know for sure. If not, I'll telegraph the hotel where I've reserved rooms for you.

Forget about Esquire, darling. I know how you feel and can't wait to console you. Both the magazines are an insult to your intelligence anyway.

I'm in a rush. Goodbye my love,

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 23, 1942

Darling - Sunday night late

I'm afraid telephone conversation aren't much of a substitute for the real thing -- a fact which I can admit freely, now that the Real Thing is at hand. The prospects of seeing you have made me sleepless, overjoyed, over-affectionate towards Truman (a state which in itself is worthy of notice), hyperstimulated, warm-all-over and very happy. When I drove over to the Greyhound Bus Terminal at 63rd & Stony tonight, I offered a cigarette to two strange & extraordinarily unattractive men. I was polite to the bus man -- an unprecedented even in my long & unpleasant experience with employees of transportation companies.

The facts -- to get down to facts, are these: I can leave at 8:20 Tuesday night & arrive in Paris at 8:45 Wednesday morning, changing at Paducah, Kan. en route (that brought a big laugh from the uncomely pair). I must get a reservation tomorrow A.M. since that is an express bus. So -- so far as I know & I will wire you if I don't -- I shall arrive early Wed. A.M. I'll call your barracks as soon as I get in & let you know where I am staying, i.e. I'll leave a message to that effect. Your part in this affair is to leave a message in re at what time you will call for me or where you

want me to call for you.

And I am going to buy a new hat tomorrow, just in case!

My sweetheart -- I can't wait. I hope you're as excited and happy as I am. No, you couldn't be. You'd bust.

Busting,

Jill.

Monday morn: just got the reservation so will arrive as scheduled.

AL TO JILL MARCH 30, 1942

Dearest love,

When you left, the skies darkened and the air grew as cold as a witch's teat. I'm glad you're not around to shiver with me, though I know I'd be as warm as sunshine inside with you around.

The "shoddy stumble" recommenced today. We learned about ropes and rigging and staked out a couple of balloon beds. We ate, smoked, and swore. During a lively interlude I had my third typhoid shot. So ended the day.

I got in late this morning, paid the cab driver \$3.00, and missed roll-call. But the corporal didn't send my name in and I felt relieved at that crumb of grace. After a hasty breakfast, I called you but you had gone, or so the woman said. I felt much better then. I hope you had a quiet, restful ride home, and that you were too tired to feel blue. It was such a happy visit, that I hate to think there might be any melancholic hangover. But you know how happy we both feel over our futuristic blueprints. We certainly have a minimum disagreement about the happy & good life, albeit a terminological quibble over religion.

You have now full power to select the kind of a ceremony you would like. All I ask is that you find out from Jerry Kerwin or someone the requirements of the Catholic Church -- and, say, if those requirements can't be met in less than an hour of our

precious time together, we'll take our business elsewhere.

You remember Curtis, the laughing boy who talked to us on the veranda of the Service Club. He has been proffered a medical discharge several times already. He is very sick and tonight he looked like a dead man when I met him. He could hardly walk or talk but still refuses to accept a discharge. Something about "gold-bricking" and guts, he muttered. He is most obdurate and I really think the kid is going to die if something isn't done. What a pure case of mind over matter - or, should I say, of blind, unreasoning pride over reason & right.

I saw Zeigler today and the prof is very unhappy. I can't blame him. Everything is so different and harsh. He is prone to a frequent army neurosis - the verbalization of convictions that one is being thought of in high quarters and that one has free will if only he minded to utilize it. He can't see himself as a balloon chief atop the Chrysler Building, though I get quite a lot of satisfaction from the imagery. I don't see very much of him. He isn't sufficiently oriented to talk about political science, but continually harks back to wishful thinking about getting better placed and discussing his symptoms of maladjustment -- not very amusing after a while. Anyhow, I'm not much interested in his type.

I'm more interested in the general run of men, for, after all, they are life's flood, and he only its trickle. Not that the norm is all-good, but that it is all-important.

You are excluded, of course, and placed on your proper throne among my values and interests. My selfish joy at seeing you did not at all blind me to the swell spirit in which you took your journey here -- high courage and initiative which I always try to think of with reference to you though you wear them so becomingly and unassumingly. Especially did I feel silly talking you out of an immediate betrothal - after chasing you merrily over hill and dale for the better part of a year or two. If you don't marry me the next time I see you, I'll spend the rest of my life deliberately exposing my head from the top of my foxhole.

JILL TO AL MARCH 31, 1942

Darling --

First, to relieve any anxieties you may have about my safe journey home -- well, I did arrive last night in Chicago, little the worse for wear except for a very stiff gluteus maximus and a profound distaste for the Ethenic peasant in the United States. After you left yesterday morning, I hung around for another half hour and the Koguts or whatever their name was, finally got up. They were all in a little room in that main house--and when I say all I mean all. There were five of them--not four. Mr. Kogut, who is sort of a nice and quite good-looking Joe, three women--his wife, an enormously unattractive, prim woman of indeterminate age; his brother's girl friend, a very long raw-boned girl who looked as if she hadn't been given much milk as a child; and Mr. Kogut's older sister, a giant of a woman, at least three yards wide, with a mustache. And her six-year-old daughter, a profoundly precocious child familiar with every soap opera on the air and the techniques of working a slot machine. (Later, in a beer joint in Kankakee, this mite actually won a dollar from a very fancy one-armed bandit.)

Their car was superb, but even the best of back seats has its limitations when filled with the physical counterparts of Greta Garbo, Kate Smith and, sandwiched in between, a normal, if long-legged Typical American Girl. I shouldn't be ungrateful, I know, but somehow I think I would have been a little more diffident about accepting the ride had I known that my presence would have created such a tight fit in the car. I slept a good part of the time--except for the intervals in which they were stopping to taste of the goodies offered by Paducah and southern Illinois restaurants. We must have been in Paducah at least two hours. There we ate breakfast and they did the town, which consisted of visiting the local Woolworth's, Kresge's and Sears stores. They adjudged Paducah a very adequate town because of the size and color of those three stores, where they purchased a number of comic books for the little girl and three enormous climbing roses which didn't exactly add to the comfort of the ride. Then I slept some more, until lunch, which they ate somewhere in

Southern Illinois--a huge lunch I judge, since they were absent for another hour and a half. I stayed in the car and slept. Then we more or less high-tailed for home, except for the stop outside of Kankakee. What scenery I saw from my position under Mr. Kogut's sister was moderately interesting--some oil wells and pumps in one area. That section of Illinois is genuinely spectacular, since next to every pump they have a pipe leading out of the ground, with a big gas fire burning cheerfully at the top. I guess that is natural gas escaping, and they light it to prevent it from polluting the atmosphere.

From a distance, the oil fields look like a meadow full of poppies, with all those big orange gas flames.

We reached Cicero Ave. and 63rd about 8, where they left me off. I took a streetcar to Cottage Grove, and then a cab home. Now that it's all over, it wasn't such a bad ride--certainly very tolerable compared to yours to Salt Lake City. But the people--jeepers, Al, it makes one despair of the great melting pot theory. The women, particularly, are so damned ignorant, so completely untouched by any of the benign and broadening effects of American culture. To them America is big cars and soap operas and Sears Roebuck. They are patriotic enough, in the conventional way, but it would be impossible to teach them what democracy means in terms other than theirs--their ability to get big cars and fancy kitchen equipment. They'd fall for any philosophy that just offered them a guarantee, however fraudulent, of a life like the way they live in the movies. And what makes me mad, pettily enough, is that while people like you spend a good part of their lives getting the education that presumably makes one a fit citizen of a democracy, people like Mr. Kogut, egged on by his awful women folk, are earning the coin that gets the Chryslers. Oh well, it's nice in a way that they can do it. I just object to their stupidity.

I don't know why I took up so much room expounding on the Koguts when I should be telling you how marvelous it was to be with you. Except that I can only say so in so many words--it was marvelous. I just wish that we didn't have to be separated at all, and that you didn't have a single moment in which you were

bored or unhappy or dissatisfied. However, I am very optimistic about our being together very soon, and as permanently as we can under the circumstances.

I sent that book off to your friend this morning and am returning his address to you. I'm going to your mother's tonight, with all details. And other than that, I am relaxing mightily. I'm going to register at the Unemployment Compensation Bureau today or tomorrow. If I get a job, I'll take it. But I am not going to kill myself looking for one, this week at least. My opinions on the joys and satisfactions of a career have changed a good deal in the past few months, as you know. At least, my approach to life is both too satirical and too non-competitive to allow me any roseate visions of Jill Oppenheim: Editor and Career Woman.

Please buy that little medal for marksmanship and have a closeup picture taken. It will be a great joy to your family to see you thus--and I want a picture of you just in general.

Will write more tomorrow.

Love--all of it.

Jill

[Letter from Harold Gosnell, Office of Price Administration, Washington, D.C.]

Dr. Gosnell, Al's boss, who left his professorship and office to Al to join the war effort, died in 1997, at the age of 100]

March 31, 1942

Dear Al:

How does the ground look from your balloon? I thought you were in the air when you were in Washington, but I suppose that you are now really in the clouds.

The draft board sent a copy of your induction paper so now your records are complete. As soon as you finish off the Nazis and the Japs, then you can return to your job with the Division of Field Operations.

Enclosed is an extra sheet of paper and a blank envelope for a return reply.

Yours cordially

\signed\

Harold Gosnell

P.S. Miriam [*Miriam Carlson de Grazia, Brother Sebastian's wife*] is doing some work for me on the Democracy material.

End of March 1942 letters

