

THE invaders look beyond the Fountain of Arethusa and its real water and thirsty people, no other tourists to be seen. No sounds of bombs or firing at the moment, a faint noise that might be artillery in the distance, but you cannot always hear well for noise of lorries being loaded and banging their way into and out of the Port area. There are few ships in the harbor, considering its presumed importance in the invasion. The men ashore tell the propaganda team that the enemy has withdrawn promptly to the North and is resisting pursuit on the roads to Catania and all along the Southern flanks of Mount Etna. The Yanks are somewhere off to the West.



Sgt. Myers; Sgt Guetta; Pvt. Camizzo; Corp. Laudando; Corp. Pathman; Pvt. Hillman; Sgt. Revley; Cpt. Robertson; Major Galsworthy; Cpt. Heycock; Ltd de Grazia; Sgt. Roberts; Pvt Morris; Pvt. Calvert; Pvt. Allen.

The port is wrecked, the train sheds in shambles, the ancient city by no means destroyed, the population not much in evidence -- where are they? -- *sfollati*, fled to the countryside and to the great quarries, beginning now to trickle back into town.

Once outside the old city, in the quarries and caves, and scattered over the hills and in cottages, you can view people by the thousands. Without binoculars and unless you got in close to their poverty, you would imagine a panoramic picnic, a county fair, a collective harvest. In these same ancient quarries had labored the surrendered army that Athens had sent to conquer Syracuse, soldiers of the Queen City of Antiquity, a myriad degraded to the status of slaves following their defeat. The Italian and German prisoners of the moment are much better treated. Half the Italians, who, it develops, are Sicilian, are simply dismissed or drop out and go home.

The region has been somewhat deforested, the springs less abundant, the population grossly swollen in numbers, the fish less plentiful, over the millennia. Syracuse has been become a backwater town with superlative monuments, a Cathedral of the greatest

architectural beauty, a castle of the most brilliant of medieval Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire and Sicily, Frederick II. A number of fine old Baroque apartments and town houses crowd the little ancient island of Ortygia, which is the oldest part of Syracuse and embraces the old Port. They are all damaged to some degree. Robbie and he take up two small apartments of a rather newer building; the rest of the advance party have gone forward to work with the artillery and interrogate German prisoners; they are trying to get surrender demands over to the enemy, without much success; their problem is their English exclusiveness; they want a small party, Colonel Head of G-2 agrees, indeed suggests that they hold off bringing in more professional people on the printing side. There are several good chances to fire leaflets or get them through by patrol. A loud-speaker would be dangerous but useful.

The Syracuse party gets some messages conveying a measure of what was happening. There is no plan, no scheme, no knowledge of the technology available; still, like muskrats going instinctively into a new swamp, Heycock and Galsworthy get busy with the Operations Staff and Robbie and Alfred set up shop in Syracuse. They find a printing shop, undamaged, with some paper, and begin to print what they call the *Corriere di Siracusa*. Robbie is Editor, the American is Co-Publisher, member of the Editorial Committee, and Production Manager. As they are about to go to press with the First Issue, a Capt. Charlton shows up: he is the cheerful fast-moving one-man (cum batman) publisher of the *Eighth Army News*; he had begun it just before the Battle of El Alamein. He has a good claim on the paper stock and press, and might beat them out for it, backed by his vain boss, who commands all the hardware and territory wrested from the enemy.

But Charlton is clever enough to see advantages in collaborating with people who know the lay of the land. Furthermore, he recognizes the need to get the civilian population lined up; too, he latches on to an additional source of news. And besides, he is a decent chap. So they make a deal to publish the two newspapers together and swap news. The Italian printers stand by during all of this negotiation; they are pleased to be part of something new. There has been no newspaper in Syracuse hitherto, and they are glad to know that an American is

involved, for where there is an American there is money. That's the way Charlton feels, too; there is a hint that a part of the small subsidy provided him by HQ, 8A, will be able to go into subsidizing his whiskey ration as well. No one bothers paying for the paper or presses or anything aside from the food and money needed by the Italian printers, who are more than pleased to put out the newspaper.

This is another "first," as they say: it is the first Free Newspaper of Europe since Mussolini, Franco, Stalin and Hitler turned out all the lights. Handset, and hand-turned on the old press by a youth on extra rations, Numero Uno of the *Corriere di Siracusa* appears on 14 Luglio 1943 from Via Minerva no.3, in one tabloid-sized sheet, Italian on the one side and English of the *Eighth Army News* on the other.

On the Italian side there is a stern warning against hoarding and hiding food supplies from the hungry populace. It recognizes the existing Italian money and also proclaims the legal tender of the new Allied bank notes being used by the troops and for civilian purchases by the army. It carries brief notices from the Sicilian fronts and reports a Russian advance near Kursk. (The greatest battle of the War is taking place in Russia, a battle from which the Wehrmacht cannot fully recover.) The *Eighth Army News* headlines that the roads to Augusta are cleared. It bears a snappy portrait of General Montgomery in his beret, Mussolini-sized, and highlights his visiting the troops; it reports as well the battle news from the American sector.

On the 26th of July the headline is "Mussolini has Fallen!". Both the Italian and the English sides of the page print word for word the latest BBC slow-speaking broadcast of the night before.

Next the paper splits and the Italian and English newspapers go their separate ways. The *Corriere* carries a great speech by Churchill to the Italians assuring them ultimately a secure role in the new Europe, if now they surrender unconditionally. (Obviously this is hardly an unconditional surrender.) A long editorial tells readers that Sicily has been partially destroyed, but it will rise again thanks to the hard work and willpower of the Sicilian people and the good will and assistance to be rendered by the Allies. Then the foreign coverage goes around the world from Kiska and New Guinea to Orel, USSR.

The people begin to trickle back into town but are still afraid of bombings, now by the Germans and Italian aircraft. Planes do come over, not too seriously. He is printing the paper when bombs start to fall and ack-ack go off and a crowd rushes the print shop for shelter -- or for comfort. He pushes the door shut to keep the shop from getting mobbed and messed-up and the presses going, and he is scolded reproachfully for his heartlessness by the people banging against the doors. He shouts at them that there is no danger, but they know better: odds on safety are subjective.

JILL TO AL AUGUST 1, 1943

Dearest,

Saturday 1

This is another one of the subterfuges I play on Teletype. It's Saturday afternoon, & it drags interminably. And since I know I won't have time to write you tonight, I'm glad for the chance to write you now & so pleasantly pass the time.

Tonight we are having "open house on Jo-Jo", a phrase coined by your mother. Mir is bringing him over, & all the "ladies" will come & admire. There will be cookies & root beer. Mom baked the cookies last night, & I slavered. I had just come from Dr. Greenhill, & he was simply furious at me for the 8 pounds I had gained this month. I don't blame him. I am properly ashamed of myself, tho it's really partly his fault for not giving me a diet to begin with. So now it's no cake, candy, bread, potatoes, fat - or anything, & I have to drink skim milk. I also take 3 vitamin B pills a day because I was getting cramps in my legs. I don't get the connection. Oh yes - I weight 127 1/2, so I'm really not fat yet. I don't think I'll mind my diet. Now I can press my objection against all the starchy food at home with some authority. Anyway, I really don't have much trouble giving up anything, viz. my battle against cigarettes.

Other than that, I feel fine. Cooney & I went swimming again last night before dinner. I'll probably go again tonight, after doing Mom's shopping for her. Swimming's another thing I'm not

supposed to do, but I'm not going to pay any attention to that.

I told them at work today I was pregnant. In fact, the only way I could get out of the building yesterday P.M. before 4:45 was because I told them I wanted to see my own doctor. I'll probably leave next week some time. They're awfully strict here about security. We have to show both a badge & a card every time we go in & out, & then we can only do so at fixed hours. They have a few signal corps officers, some ensigns & a mess of naval enlisted men here, studying the machines.

Last night Eddy came home all scratched up. Some drunk muttered at the boys in the street & Vic said "Drunkards should not be allowed on the street" (sic!) & the guy thought Ed had said it, & hit him & Ed jumped on him, followed by five of the Sabres, & in the ensuing melee, Ed got to the bottom of the pile & was scratched. The drunk is probably resting in the city morgue today.

I'll write more tomorrow from - are you bored - the beach.

All my love,
Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 1, 1943

Dearest Jill,

Life has its difficult moments but none as bad as a Sunday morning which is just like every other morning, without you, peace, a big, late breakfast, and the Sunday paper. If I were home I should probably have you on my lap, the paper before me, and be eating as well with my free hand. To forestall any queries as to how my preferences move, I might add that five months from now, if I were home, I should have you on my lap and damn the breakfast and newspaper.

John Whitaker livened the morning somewhat by turning up. He looks pretty badly worn out and yet his group hasn't had nearly the pasting of ours. He said that Lt. Patti has got malaria, but

the remainder aren't faring too badly.

How is life with you darling. I hope you aren't finding things too dull without your former chief preoccupation. Perhaps by now you have your apartment and are creating some sort of a home world. I would like to drop in on you Saturday night for a chat and so forth, but you know how the army is about such things, stiff-necked and full of duty and obligation.

I met a very nice fellow a couple of days ago, an American captain, doing public relations work in theory, but I suspect, really a newspaper man using any excuse to get to where things are happening. His name is Boor and he used to do the book reviews for the NY Times. He gave me a ride to the hospital where Hank was. Hank had felt ill, and I sent him off to the nearest doctor in the jeep, but they held him and the jeep, too, so I had to fetch it.

The Germans are still plenty tough nuts to crack. They are in such a state now that they feel death to be only as bad as all the rest of their alternatives. They are hopelessly at odds with the Italians now since the invasion, and the refusal of the Italians to fight against the invading army, and to make a Stalingrad out of Sicily. It is interesting to note the complete lack of antagonism on the part of the civilian population towards the Italian prisoners who gave up so readily the defense of Sicily.

The Badoglio business is still a great mystery, isn't it? (It sure won't be by the time you reach into the mail-box for this). I have a sneaking suspicion about the whole affair that won't bear repetition here.

Oh, by the way, I've meant to tell you for some time, that in all my peregrinations through foreign lands I've had some occasions to observe women in bathing suits. And it seems that, just as with men, many of the best look best in clothing, not in bathing suits. When the hips and shoulders are revealed, so is the disappointing, for me, hour glass. Thus after the evidence, the sample, comes the generalization. You have the best all around figure I've yet seen. This is not entirely new

research; it corroborates similar American studies. For example, Miriam's upper torso compares very unfavorably with yours.

Col. MacFarlane just dropped in so we must see what's up. How are all the girl friends - Joan, Diane, etc., and the family, and the school. How is Earl; have you seen him yet around? I should be getting a little mail any day now. All my love to you, darling. Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 2, 1943

Darling,

Monday

It's been a week since I've heard from you, but neither do I feel nor I worry. I guess I was just spoiled, getting so much mail before!

Egad, what a ghastly rushed weekend. Saturday night the "ladies" came in in droves to see Joe, who promptly developed a bad case of insomnia and heebie-geebies. Who can blame him? Ordinarily he is adorable, responsive & physically a dream among male children, despite his resemblance to Vic (sans blemishes).

Mamie Jamaboulaka (whose daughter, Dorothy, I like very much) immediately fell to making doughnuts and the temperature soared from a mild 88 to 100 in the shade. Howard and wife were over and from little groups on the porches came a murmuring like a coming storm. The ladies were discussing poor Mary, who was somewhat worse off than her lamb when they got finished. She really does have a dumb puss, though she's marvelous around the house. I always feel that invidious comparisons are being made when Mom says what a wonderful housekeeper is Mary, or Hernelle or somebody else. However, as I pointed out to her, none can swim as well as I.

Then Sunday who should pop in town but Naomi Epstein Cohen & family. She's the gal you met in the M.D.'s office in New York, so off I must hie to the S. Side to have a hunt breakfast with all the Epsteins, who had come to Chicago for the weekend to witness the marriage of their son. He's at the school for military

government there -- a p.f.c. -- and adores the place. He graduated from Harvard a couple of years ago and is therefore fitted by both experience and birth to appreciate the wonders of our school. After lunch, or breakfast (my second omelet in 4 hours -- it's all I can eat) Naomi & I went to the 53rd St. rocks and I swam till four. Ruth Brody Corcoran was there, looking marvelous (she really has gotten attractive, her figure is wonderful) with Joan in Africa too. We both agree that absence gets worse as it goes on. Then back to the Flamingo Hotel, to see Rosable. I had dinner with her at the Tropical Hut, which is horrid -- all I had was steak and it was \$1.25! I arose half-starved. However, the visit was profitable, because I bumped into Ruth Shils (Ed's still in England, and she looks sick) and Laura Berquist, both of whom are keeping their sharp and, in Laura's case, ubiquitous eyes open for apartments for me. You have no idea how tight the housing situation is South, but every trip I make there makes me more and more convinced it's the only place to be. Naturally, your mother doesn't agree. She thinks I ought to move into Hernelle's "darling" apt. after Otto leaves -- amidst all the North Side Swenska.

Gosh, I just got home from work, and there was your Algerian jewelry. Mom and I like it very much and both thank you very much. But still no letter, alas. You must be off on a tuna-fishing expedition. I wish you well.

Today was simply horrible, it was so hot and I so tired. And then I had to come home from work and walk my bike to the bike store at Halstead. I took the rear wheel off to fix a flat yesterday and couldn't get it back on there again. It's still bent from Washington.

I am going to quit at the end of the week, I am sure now. Added to my other little joys and troubles, *[Mike ?]* is beginning to rustle around like a beaver in my insides. It is the oddest sensation - literally like butterflies in your belly. I was very happy the first time I felt it. Of course, it's barely perceptible, he's still no size to be kicking like a mule.

It's just four months today. I remember the day. In another

couple of months he'll be an adequate individual, ready to brave the storm, even prematurely.

Fun, isn't it? Wish you were here. I'd let you feel my stomach bounce.

Darling, keep well. My love will always be with you.

Jill

JILL TO AL AUGUST 3, 1943

Darling,

Tuesday

It's quarter after four and a storm is gathering, so it ought to be nice and rainy when we leave the office. Anyway, it's cool for a change, and I could sleep fine these mornings if 1) I didn't have to get up; 2) Cooney did not persist in placing his nose against mine promptly at 7 A.M.

It'll be nice to go home and read for once, and be free, of necessity, from the compulsive urge to go down to the lake. I finished Silone's "The Seed beneath the Snow" quite a while ago and it turned out to be pretty awful. Very disjointed and episodic, and I find the self-martyred hero, Pietro de Spina, more of an ass than a Christ. It's probably my fault, though.

Now I'm reading an opus entitled "Babies are Human Beings". It's a short, semi-Freudian treatment of growth from birth to young childhood. It's sort of interesting, though it really doesn't tell you how to do anything. Its principal prescription for action is to let the kid alone, except for the affection and attending to its bodily needs.

The lady downstairs had a baby a couple of weeks ago which not only came out tail first, a very unusual position for a sober individual, but also, to date, only weighs 5 pounds. I saw her last night and was amazed at her smallness. I've never seen a kid younger than 2 months. You have no idea how little and deformed they look, even the best, apparently.

I gave formal notice today that I would leave Saturday, unless it was impossible for them to get someone else. Despite my pregnancy, they were reluctant to part with me. You can hardly blame them -- this is a heck of a time for leaving.

This would be a nice night to go to a movie with you. You know, I haven't been to a movie since I've been back in Chicago. It's a lot of trouble - anyway I guess I only viewed them as a social function with you - someplace to go and hold hands and afterwards down a fudge sundae. Drool, drool.

It's well nigh closing time, thank God.

All my love to you, dearest,

Jill

P.S. I came home and found your letter, the first, I guess.

P.P.S. What does PWB stand for?

[letter. First two pages missing. No date. Was in Aug. 43 batch]

written from your new headquarters. I wish I knew more about what you're doing (that old plaint) but will just resign myself to the end of the war. After all, I have some surprises you'll have to wait for, if you call the physiognomy of your future child a surprise. Tonight he was nourished by 3 plates of lentil soup, which I adore, and 2 hot dogs, so he ought to look like a beery old Dutchman.

Tom's been put in the Air Corps, which he didn't want, & sent to Mississippi. You'll think they had a large enuf ground force as it was, without cashiering our friends.

Now I really do have to go to help Mom with the dishes. She has a word to say about that too.

Your loving Jill.

-- *[In another handwriting]*

My dear Babe:

Don't blame me much for not writing you as I know Jill Ed & Vic

give you most of the news or all I should say, and Jill, I must insist on her doing dishes she's getting so fat and sassy. It's a good thing you're not here, she would beat you up like she does Cooney.

We are all well. Love from all

Mom

AL TO JILL AUGUST 3, 1943

Dearest Jill,

Here it is three months since last I saw you and I am as hopelessly in love as ever. I must say that the time has gone more rapidly than when I was sweating it out in other swamps and deserts without you. That's because there is so much to do. Each day is a history unto itself. I find it hard to realize, for example, that I am half a father, even now, and come Christmas, probably a full one. While you are helping to create a new generation, I am destroying the old one, fine cooperation, isn't it? But then, we always managed to get things done together, barring the repair of fountain pens. You must have known all the while that the pen could be fixed but were waiting for my back to be turned so that you could keep it. But I'm not losing any sleep over it; there are plenty of worse things happening to break that up.

Yesterday I drove Whitaker and Capt. Beauclerc to a nearby airdrome and saw them off. John was quite sick and leaned out from the jeep part of the time. Beau went to get some personnel and materiel and will be back shortly. Meanwhile I get up with the local asini and retire with the last howling drunkard, hoping for the arrival of some help and also for a return of law and order. The fact that Hank is probably in Africa now doesn't make me entirely happy. I have to watch the jeep like a hawk as well as drive the damn thing everywhere, and keep it up.

But I must admit that yesterday, despite its trials, did bring two very nice letters from you, one from Vic and one from Buzz.

Yours were dated the 28, and 3rd of July. I think you did very nicely to get yourself a job so rapidly so near to home. Congratulations. Don't feel too concerned about keeping it - the liberty to resign is the fifth liberty of the AC. The thought of you biking down Southport Ave. is a pleasant one, albeit anxious. Good idea of yours to get Greenhill. We should be well able to afford him. Too bad about Johnnie, but that's what happens in our delightfully different army. I wish I could get him over, but that's out. For all I know, Caskey may be back there by now - he certainly hasn't been able to find himself in Africa. I should hear soon from the expected arrivals. As for the accursed Ruml, I find myself losing my pristine affection for him. I hope he chokes on the bookstore cokes - my mouth feels like ancient parchment treated with acid at the moment. Good luck to Tom and better to Joan. She's the one who needs it. Oh, yes, and there is Rosable's brewer. Does she know what a great, wonderful thing a brewer is. He makes cold, foaming, tasty beer, beer, beer - vats and vats, swishing and swashing, to bathe in, to stomp in, to drown in - to gargle, to gulp, to sip. I would never sleep with a brewer. I would lock him up, take his keys, and drink his beer.

And I want all your sweet and sour meat balls. Just think of the great lamb roast we shall eat together, leaving nothing at all for the next day's lunch.

Our husky laborers are ready to stamp out today's paper, so I must read the proof. It is only a piddling affair, but quite an accomplishment under the circumstances, difficulties which are only not absurd when viewed thru the stereoscope of front conditions. For example, the only two brigands in the neighborhood who could mix paste were hired and proved to be utterly irresponsible. They were cowardly and dishonest in a natural, amoral sort of way. I finally had to throw them in prison each night and fetch them out to work during the day. Their behavior has improved of late and I have even acquired a sort of affection for one who looks like Charlie Chaplin.

I should know this island pretty well soon, seeing it from every angle and in all conditions. The 1st MRBC may not be here, but

I am still mobile.

Regards to all, sweetheart, and all my love to you.

Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 6, 1943 V-MAIL

Mon only darling -

Friday P.M.

I am writing this V-mail because I know you are probably beyond the limits where Air Mail can function effectively. I got your V-mail letter yesterday, the one dated July 22nd. I'm trying to imagine (to say "I can well imagine" would be presumptuous) what living must be like for you and your companions these days. I wish to hell you were out of this all and we could be together again, eating fudge sundaes (note the recurring theme of food: the blight of a diet) and doing the world of things we love to do together. But we both never wanted to see you sit this war out on your fanny, like so many men are doing. And even now, when your presence would be, if possible, a greater joy than it's ever been to me, I'll still stick to my guns - or rather your guns. We'll both be a lot happier in the new world after the war for the sacrifices you're making and, to a much lesser degree, the things I've had to give up - which all revolve around your person, of course. Mike gave me one of his shifty eyed nudges in agreement.

Cooney is lying on the bed looking up at me romantically. We had a lovely walk along the lake last night with Doris and another girl. It was too rough to swim. I am going again with her (Doris) and him (Cooney) tonight to work off some of my dinner. My diet is a little more under control now, though I have bad moments in the presence of soda fountains, Good Humor men and candy boxes. I'm still around 127 or 8, though I go up awfully fast in a day if I don't exercise. What a tragic self-denial! Darling, darling, I'll write more tomorrow, on Air Mail instead. This cramps me. I love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 6, 1943

Dearest Jill,

I must, devoted and obsequious though I be, give vent to a small squeak of reproof at certain melancholy phrases you injected into one of your very nice letters.

Unintelligible & ungrammatical as one sentence about 'enduring passion' was, I understood that at least for one minute of your long thought processes you wondered 1) whether I had actually done other than sightsee in the Casbah; 2) whether I 'was out to find your parallel in Europe, of similar size, shape, etc."; 3) or whether the cooling laws of planetary distances are related to and the same in personal relations at a distance. A plague on you, my darling wife, for doubting one minute the love on which my life is pivoted. What do I think of when the moon is high, when the sun is setting? For whom do I long when the sea is blue and immense, and the clouds are tumbling by and the breezes are fresh? Of whom do I think when dysenterial cramps grip my bowels, when mosquitoes swarm, when about me are the hopeless ruins of a civilization, when the cannon flash and roar? You. I must resort to your lovely phrase - "I don't want anyone else except you." I want your body and your thoughts. You are all of my pleasure and aspirations, my beliefs, ethical & economic, my feelings, racing, hovering, whimsical and profound. We fell in love, stayed in love and became one another in the hard way, and nothing I can conceive of can sear us asunder. Darling, the passing of time may make our next encounter seem strange. I shall probably have to romance you all over again, but I am determined that it shall be only you I shall romance and only you that I am in love with. And that determination has all the force that free, untrammelled, passionate will can put into it.

I have knocked about a lot and shall some more before I can get home. That is inevitable. But to see is not to touch. To experience is not to indulge. To describe is not to have participated. I can't help but see life. It is in my nature. But you know that I have developed a quasi-impermeable hide about my

morality and heart. I've been struck but once and then for good. You got me but I'm afraid you'll never get away. In short, the gentleman in question denies everything, stands upon his honor and is mildly shocked by your mild expression of distrust.

In my last letter (yesterday) I told you about the horde descending upon me, by land, by sea and by air. This morning, they vanished like the early dew and now I am indeed the lonely lord of the manor. I have this huge renaissance palazzo to myself, with its great reception hall, bedrooms and kitchens - great oaken gates, courtyard and ornate columns. I have a staff of several servants under the head of an incredible genius of a man named Gambo, formerly of the Hotel Royale and Grand Hotel - a great hulk of a man, lame but nimble, a scrounger deluxe, a magician of the cuisine & household. I felt as lonely as a dictator today for lunch, sitting alone at the great table in the lofty dining room, quiet as a tomb save for the signora & Gambo who wait on the table. I am seeking about for dinner companions. Col. Buck Weaver turned up with another two men and we had a jolly good dinner. This majestic solitude is very temporary and my next bed will undoubtedly be a stony earth in some field. This is what I mean by knocking about - a breathtaking, continuous changing of scenery and people. Even my men get the effect. One of my sergeants has been until now "governor" of the population of Lampeduza. One hour he was a mere puppet, the next the master of many hundreds of persons.

Your mention of Dunkin & Steine range a pleasant bell for me - despite all sympathy for your oppressed footsies. Too bad about Bill & Gert. I thought, though you disagreed, that they were a very nice couple. So both Buster & Oliver are down for the psychological count. A chill runs up our spines here when we hear of someone getting to America, no matter how. I remember how happy an armless British officer was at the thought of returning to Merrie England. But tell me a little more about Ollie. I hope it isn't too serious.

Your other news is interesting too. Howard marrying that girl, predictable, yet somehow unexpected, - Cooney's mating with

one of his own kind in violation of the old American tradition. - Your job, which seems to be about as good as we can expect under the circumstances (I hope you don't get the expediting fever - it leads to all sorts of horrible things - small rooms for quick movements, gadgets, tricks, accountaphilia and, yes, dictatorship!). I think your cash arrangement with Mom very generous and good. It's nice to know that they aren't badly pressed financially.

As for my income tax, I've forgotten what I exempted. But I remember, not so long ago, seeing a notice to the effect that Congress has exempted from payment of income taxes the salaries of the military forces. If so I've got a rebate coming. Your explanation of the tax, incidentally, drove me to drink. It betrayed, shall we say, if not a lack of comprehension on your part, or perforce if not a fundamental dislike of the subject matter, at least a slight disability in writing form.

It is late now and time to sleep. I shall close, therefore, with always a kiss for you and a happy feeling of loving you.

Al

AL TO JILL AUGUST 8, 1943

Dearest Jill,

Your next letter will meet me at still another new place. I am leaving for it tomorrow. I'm somewhat sorry to leave the old Manse but it can't be helped. Today I saw a medieval, hand-wrought topographical map which had this house marked on it.

Col. MacFarlane & Beauclerk breezed in today and we decided to bring Gambo, the great wizard, along with us as impromptu mess sergeant. No reason to waste army personnel when a civilian can do a bang-up Hotel Splendide job. You can see from little details like that what an extraordinary job we're doing. At one moment we're extremely military, spit and polish. Everyone goes into his act - Col. McFarlane spits out unintelligible commands, Heycock acts like a regular Indian

army officer should, the sergeants click their heels, & the privates grovel. Robertson lectures sternly on how, if he were Gen. Montgomery, he'd pin back the ears on the "undisciplined mob called the 8th Army." Then, presto, off come the helmets and on come the kid gloves.



Maj. Robertson (British Eighth Army).

Last night, Major Head & Col. Pye of the General Staff were up for dinner. Gambo was at his best and everyone loosened up considerably. One of the locals who used to be something at the British Consulate found me a couple of bottles of sparkling dry champagne for only five bob a bottle (\$1.00). Major Head is a very intelligent fellow, full of Old England, perhaps, Eton, Oxford, King & family. But he was very serious & had some very interesting ideas, which I would place very close to J. S. Mill. We finally got into a lengthy argument on the abdication of King Edward, whom he knew & detested greatly. I didn't defend Edward but said there were political implications in the abdication which the Major couldn't perceive. This the Major couldn't see because as a very typical member of the British ruling class he thought nothing that they did was selfish, motivated by ulterior reasons, or propagandistic. The same trait, and it evidences to the same conclusion, came out earlier when another officer urged that the British try to create a different national stereotype in America. The major stoutly refused saying that they wished to be nothing but straightforward in the presentation of their character and had nothing to hide.

The party broke up in a very friendly mood, despite the discussion.

You must be wondering, darling, why I haven't written more about the country and the people. I've been meaning to but I'm waiting for a chance to write a long letter on the subject. D. H. Lawrence, whom you quote, was clever & partly right, but there is more to Sicily & Italy than that. You must take Dad with a grain of salt too sometimes. He rarely reveals all he knows in his stories and views. And I dislike generally Saroyanish treatments for their childishness.

Too bad about ur not being able to find a decent apartment on the South side yet. I can't understand what with so many men in the army, why the housing situation is still so bad in Chi. But there is plenty of time yet. God knows that at least the crucial months you should spend in as great comfort and peace as possible. I don't feel too nice about missing the uncomfortable preliminaries, tho my usefulness would be in doubt. I suppose it is my great luck, if I were to admit it, to come back to find you a flowering virgin next spring, all signs of the great mystery of life vanished but for the bouncing baby.

After I finish my letter, I must take a couple of news dispatches to the airport for delivery. They belong to a couple of handsome Greek war correspondents who encountered me today and asked if I knew how to get them to Cairo. It happened that I did. Love, again, darling. As usual, I'm waiting impatiently for a letter from the next arrival from the dark continent. It would take tomes to describe how completely disorganized conditions are on any front, though a marked improvement is already present in those parts of the island we have occupied.

Sixteen great kisses. Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 9, 1943

Monday, August something or other

Sweetheart --

I started this letter an hour ago, and got sidetracked into sorting all your letters by date, so that I can read and store them with

more convenience. They now have a big thick rubber band around them, which is considerably more romantic than a pink ribbon, considering the premium on rubber bands.

Saturday I quit my job with absolutely no regrets. I earned about \$130 plus a bond in all, clear, excluding tax deductions. However, these are paper profits. I can find absolutely no trace of money around the house. I was glad to leave all those rural reactionary folk. I was getting awfully tired of political arguments, and I was by far the best-educated person in the plan, so there was not even the pleasure of exercising my mind in it.

Saturday night Mom and I went to see *Mission to Moscow* and also an opus called *Tennessee Johnson* (Andrew Johnson to the non-cognoscenti), which you and I fortunately escaped seeing together in Washington. It was certainly a heavy historical diet, somewhat reminiscent of eating dog biscuits (which I did earlier in life). Actually *Mission* practically sparkled, perhaps only in contrast to the first half of the double feature. It was of course fairly naive propaganda, judged by any absolute standard of propaganda technique one might use. However, it was an interesting, valiant attempt, and I did not find even their* [*Warner Brothers] interpretation of the Moscow trials, which God knows must have been garbled, offensive. I don't think anyone will know the truth about the trials for a generation to come, so why not use them for a little beneficent, pro-Allied propaganda? Incidentally, I bought (50 cents at a rental library - I'm carrying on your tradition) and am reading Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, a beautifully written novel about the trials, very anti-Stalin. I don't find it offensive either, which may dispel all doubts in your mind about my independence of the few Defenders of the Faith we know.

I guess I wrote you Tom was in the air corps.

Doris, my young friend on Addison, and I have been going down to the rocks fairly regularly. We met some Germans down there - a man and wife and two other men, with whom we now converse, the common bond being the dog they own and

Cooney. They are the fairly upper class type of German, though obviously no Jews; one can tell the former by their accents - I do it sort of instinctively, possibly using as a criterion the refugees I know. Anyway, I've gotten into discussions about the war with them, on purpose of course, and am amazed at the attitude of them, as well as the attitude of middle-western, rural office folk at our plant. The idea in common in both cases is that this war is just like any other, and is fought to no avail. These four Germans range in opinion from one (not a member of that particular beach group but one we talked to once_ who was pro-fascist, with a lot of silly ideas about the stages of history - it's a wonder he's out of the clink - to the most intelligent of the group, who simply considers this war too barbaric to talk about. Now anybody will agree that war is barbaric, but it seems to me that to say it about this war unqualifiedly or to wish for the end of this war without qualification smacks of some sort of propaganda. I think people who say we are going to be sold out are in reality softening us up for a sell-out, either deliberately or unintentionally, because they are little dimwits from the field and farms of Chicagoland. I don't see how anybody who has someone they love in service can believe that this war will end in the same old rat race. I'm beginning to see a very close correlation between political pessimism and political reaction. Or, to put it another way, the best type of liberals, like Grafton, seem to be cockeyedly optimistic; actually, of course, I don't think he is cockeyed.

We got a letter from George Peck. He's on his way to Washington, to work in the Italian section of the OSS. I'm very happy for him, aren't you? He's a good man, despite his wife. Chris is expecting a child at the end of August. George was, of course, disappointed you wouldn't be there, or I.

I also got a letter from Glen Chang today. Wah seems to be a little better from his operation. They'll try it again in a couple of months if the improvement isn't great enough. They send you their love, of course.

And I'm enclosing the clipping - a little dirt from the home front.

Fun, isn't it?

Yesterday I swam a good part of the day and went to the movies with Gerson at night. We saw Five Graves to Cairo, in which Eric von Stroheim out-Rommels Rommels. Tres amusant.

Today I started y session with the dentist, who was recommended to me by a friend of a friend of Joan. He's at Ashland and Chicago Ave., very inconvenient and therefore cheaper. My old flame Baim got drafted, did I tell you. Anyway, this dentist is a nice old man, very left, and we spend more time talking politics than getting my teeth fixed. I have to get three gold inlays, replacements of old fillings from when I was a kid that have gone to seed.

Oh yes, and I got another job, purely unintentionally. I had lunch with Maxine in the loop, and a friend of hers who works for the executive of some social work foundation, is going on her vacation. As it's just a two-horse office, she has to get somebody for the couple of weeks she's to be away, so I said I would. It's only a five-day week, nine to five, and he'll pay me twenty a week, so I'll earn enough for my teeth. I won't have to do anything but answer the phone. He's a nice man, too, and the office is at Madison and Michigan Avenue, which is a nice convenient location.

Mom is fooling around with the switches in the basement, and half the time I am writing this in total darkness, and the other half I am shouting down to her messages she can't hear. It's a goddam nuisance, and forcing me to end this letter on a very sour note indeed.

So, darling, take care of yourself. I wish we could share with each other the blackouts we are each undergoing. My blackout may not be as hazardous as yours, but it's a lot more annoying and I'm developing the lung power of a top kick, shouting my way through it.

All my love, Jill

JILL TO AL AUGUST 10, 1943

Darling,

Tuesday

I got your Air Mail today about fleas and longings for home and a wallet - the wallet I would have gotten yesterday when I was downtown but I didn't have enough cash or a check with me.

And the yearnings - I know what it's like, dreams and all. Last night I dreamt of you. I can't remember anything specific, just that it was pleasant and you were smiling. God, dearest, how I wish we were together. I never thought I could miss anyone like this. I so thankful I'm having your baby, so that at least I'll have part of you till you return. It was really the luckiest thing that ever happened to me. And of course I've never doubted for a minute that you'd be the best father on earth. That's one reason I fell in love with you. (I won't say "married" because I felt that way long before we married). I already have roseate visions of you diapering and messing about - for purely psychological reasons, of course - it's not that I want to get out of my work, so give up any notion of just viewing the kid from a keyhole. I'm writing this at the lake. The water is sort of dirty and soupy today and the sun is very hot. Today I went to the dentist again and got a gold inlay and another dose of Marx. He really is an interesting man, though.

I forgot to tell you yesterday - I don't start that little job until a week from Thursday, so I shall probably be a) sunning b) going to the dentist every day between now and then.

When we got your first V-mail from your new address last week, we naturally wondered what was the surprise you had for Dad. Next to the end of the war, the obvious guess was that you had seen Sister Frances.

Some men are taking a moving picture of Cooney. Can you imagine such a waste of good color film? They are trying to get a picture of him in the water but he won't go. I shall interrupt this narrative by being a good Samaritan and leaping in myself. He always goes in after me, usually clawing me to pieces in the meantime.

We have about \$900 in the bank and about \$470 in bonds now. Don't think that when I work it's because I think we're poor or anything. It's just that I know it will go fast when I start getting even a few essentials for apt. and baby.

I'm running out of ink.

All my love, Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 10?, 1943

Dearest Love,

Tuesday

Bless our happy home! After two days of travel & travail I arrived at this unmentionable place to find a room for me in a fine villa Major Galsworthy risked his life to requisition, overlooking the Mare & the city from a distance. After a flying visit to the press, I came here to enjoy a well-cooked meal, had a conference with Galsworthy & Heycock on a German newspaper we are shooting at them (and a good job of writing they did on it, too) and retired to my room from where I can see the moon peeping through the silken leaves and feel on my skin the cool night breeze blowing down on the darkened, curfewed city. Physically I am very tired, but nervously more relaxed than at any time since coming to the island, very long ago, it seems too.

Tomorrow I plunge into the role of newspaper editor again, with the establishment of a paper the size of the Chicago Times in its earlier days. Despite the lack of power at the moment, it is a much different set-up than the one at Siracusa, where there never was a paper. Again, as always, as soon as some semblance of normality is established, we relinquish control of the territory to the circus which is following slowly behind. As Charton was saying today, it is impossible for those who follow as well as for those who are at home to realize the pressure & chaos. He only has half of it, too, for we have likewise the job of creating chaos amongst the enemy. Charlton, the mad fellow, has almost completed a book in the last week in which he took pains, so he tells me, to enlighten people. One difficulty leads to

another. No power .. hand presses; no handpresses .. conversion necessary. Hand presses .. personnel needed. No civilian around strong enough to turn wheel .. feed 'em. Then air raids which the panicked populace can't face. And so on. He is a very entertaining & vain guy, bent on making a Time or Life for Britain après la guerre.

I don't think I have enough exhibitionism to write books on experiences. I like to conceal personal experiences in abstractions and indirect statements. And I find little enough thrilling. I felt much more pathos over starving refugees trodding the roads with their pathetic burdens when I was thousands of miles away. Everything, death, battle, disease, strange sights of all sorts register intellectually but don't strike a great emotional minor chord. One doesn't have time to reach down laboriously into his nervous system when he must actively live in the midst of everything. That is the reason, I think, - not because of the twisted mental weariness of the front soldier (something that is quite rare in the West in this war - and perhaps in the East). That type of soldier is quite rare in our armies & requires a) length of stay in a front position & b) the expectation and/or imminence of death or disability. a) was lacking in the desert warfare and b) in the French trench warfare of 1939-40. This soldier of Remarque is passé. A large number of Germans have the (b) feeling. Yet rather than excite pity in one, only hatred is aroused for the tough case that grows over them (grown over the Nazi shell) which makes them disgusting members of human society. I hope these letters get to you, dearest, and that they make sense. I know that in some cases I shall have to explain meanings long afterwards - the causes lie in censorship fears, caution, hints, rapid movements, lack of time, etc. But you are so intelligent that you probably get a fairly decent picture of your beloved Al trying to help win the war (like Private Schweik, perhaps).

Love & love alone,

Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 11, 1943 (A) V-MAIL

My sweetheart,

Thursday

Not an awful lot has happened since I wrote you Tuesday. The dentist confronted me with the news that I must have 3 gold inlays, as well as numberless fillings, so I am settling down to a summer in The Chair. I have a lot of fun, however, listening to his blistering criticism of his capitalistic co-professionals. I was down to the lake both today & yesterday with Cooney and Vic, the latter's working hours have been cut due to an economy drive in the National. He is certainly & self-confessedly the laziest bastard on the North Side. He never reads; just listens to swing and practices. He says he wants to be a musician! and of course, as ever, he is useless around the house. You tell him; I give up. Eddy is, of course, quite different and much like you, except that in too few leisure hours he socializes instead of reading. But neither of them think of college and are much influenced by their friends, who are stupider and have more money than they. But why bend your ear with this (except that you asked). What I really wanted to say was I love you.

I love you, I do

Jill

JILL TO AL AUGUST 11, 1943 (B)

[note: date 11 or 12 ?]

Darling, darling -

I just finished a V-mail to you but didn't feel like stopping and that was my last sheet. Besides, you've never seen my non-air mail, non V-mail stationery.

Uncle Bill is in the hospital. He had his kidney removed, & Mom suggested, in her mandatory way, that I go with her to see him tonite. So I must, damn it. Uncle Bill is one of the more unattractive of the species so far as I'm concerned.

It's very hot. This is supposed to be one of the hottest summers on record in Chicago. Gosh, I have to go. Well I wanted you to see the paper.

Here is a work from Cooney (transcribed)

Hi Babe,

Jill got me in the habit of swimming and now I can't stop. 3 1/2 million Chicagoans say I'm a goddam pest, but I think she loves me, and that is all that counts.\

Love -

Cooney

His mark --> *[paw print]*

AL TO JILL AUGUST 12, 1943 V-MAIL

Sweetheart,

I have just eaten an enormous lunch of bully beef, fried onions and melon. Therefore the chances of my turning out anything resembling a letter are remote. No greater hate hath any man than I have for bully beef and canned biscuits. I forgot to tell you in my last letter that Hank Danenberg wrote that he was a father. Hans Habe, I believe, is still stewing at the other end of the island for want of expected news.

I had my best sleep since debarking from the bowels of the beach-landing ship last night. Contrary to you, my sweet & beautiful young wife, it made be *[me?]* tremendously angry and sullen. I kicked my new office-boy, batman down the stairs, terrorized various civilians I just employed and fired one garrulous old coot. I worked up a fine frenzy at the enlisted men for taking away one of my maps with the very salutary effect of it turning up immediately. I then produced a fiery piece of journalism, took a shot of my NAAFI whiskey and ate that mess of bully beef. After lunch & after writing the first few lines I wrote a scathing report denouncing certain elements of an

unrevealing nature. So went a day of rage. It is extraordinary, though, I must add for your reassurance. Col. McFarlane gave me a commendation yesterday for good work & A in cooperation. (I think that when I first met them in Algiers they thought I was all critical & no cooperation). The British aren't too clever in judging Americans. Charlton got a citation for his work in the 8th Army News, lucky fellow.

I'm getting increasingly impatient at the progress of the war. I planned to be home next spring and I don't want anything to interfere. All my pleasures are rather [*jardy ?*] and pointless without you, dearest. Drive Ed on to greater heights. If I can't finish the war quickly, perhaps he can!

Love to the family, darling of

Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 14, 1943

Darling,

It's Saturday night about ten, and very peaceful with the boys out. Dad just got in from a concert and he and Mom are just settling down to a night on the back porch - of feasting and beer drinking. I've brought my pen & paper and am joining them, with my own private slab of watermelon. I really don't like beer very well - now that my date days are over.

As I told you, we went to see Uncle Bill in the hospital Thursday nite. He looked horrid, but then, he always does to me. I guess he won't die, though.

Gosh, I went to the dentist again Friday. I don't know how long this will keep up. Friday we fitted 2 gold inlays and covered the Moscow trials.

In the afternoon, the Coon and I hoofed it down to the Lake. Ditto today. I'm really getting a nice color. I've given up my bike, the initial cause being that it has two flat tires, the post facto rationalizations being that walking is really better for me (which

it is), being more exercise and subjecting me less to the hazards of muscular strain. And now that I'm getting less compulsive about my diet (what were my mealy-mouth hypocrisies about self-control?) I really need to walk it off... Just now I'm eating rye bread and drinking beer (I changed my mind about that fast - why husbands go crazy). Oh, hell, my legs are still OK, which is all that counts.

Tonight after supper I went for a drive with Marion and her parents, who, as you know, are definitely on the elderly side. They must have hired a car, because anyway, it was a big Cadillac with chauffeur. We drove up North as far as Hubbard Woods and then back again. Needless to say, I got car sick. Do you remember that drive to Baltimore in the command car? I believe we were both car sick then.

I am trying hard to ward an argument with Dad, who is mad at the British. Tribune talk, I says. I got a letter from Betty Zorthian. She and Jerry are still around Ritchie, and having a wonderful time. She says they're as untouched by the war as if they were civilians. Jerry has done some murals for the officers' club, and is doing a portrait of the general (sic!). I also got a letter from Liz Evers, whom I really miss very much. Bill is still on again off again maneuvers, and can't understand how the Sicilian invasion was accomplished without the U.S.M.C. The boys are going to Washington a week from Monday for their vacations. They ought to have a wonderful time and so shall I, not hearing the Two O'Clock Jump for a change.

You know, I tried sending those New Yorkers and the P.O. wouldn't accept them. They said the only way you could get publications was directly from the publisher. Isn't that a gyp? Has anybody ever gotten those magazines I procured for you in Norfolk? I am going to the Public Library and look up the name of that bookstore and write them an indignant letter. Does anybody have any receipts? I don't.

I'm going South tomorrow and look at an apartment Rosable told me about. I probably won't be able to find it, her directions were so garbled.

Mom sends you a kiss, in between watermelon halves. I send you a million of them. As always, I wish you were here, among other things, to ward off my impending belly-ache.

All my love, sweetheart.

Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 14, 1943 V-MAIL

Darling.

I meant to write you last night, but was so tired that I could only lie in bed and think of you. It was a good night for the purpose, too, with a full moon shining down on the sea and the city below was looking still and beautiful. You must explain to the family for me that I can't write them except very occasionally. Only my really great desire to write you enables me to get these letters off with frequency. I do like to write you, even though your letters come unevenly spaced. My last one from you was dated July 13, 1943. If some of those bastards from Africa would ever get over here, I might hear more. One gets tired of lacking everything. You get the feeling when your clothes begin to need mending and look worn, your "adequate" supply of cigarettes begins to dwindle, the jeeps blow tires on any pretext and knock like a model T, you lose this and that unavoidably, and no letters come for two weeks. Then there are big jobs to be done and the materials are somewhere else, hundreds or thousands of miles away. I remember the miles of nice, new Jeeps in America whereas in Africa & Sicily you must guard a jeep with your life, & when any type of car breaks down on the road, everyone in the vicinity gathers around like vultures, plucking vital pieces until within half an hour only the skeleton remains and it lays there or is pushed over the cliff. I remember great piles of news material and dispatches, overburdening files everywhere. And now that the Sicilian campaign is about over & I must get down seriously to putting out a paper - it must be done on a shoestring, with no news except BBC broadcasts & occasional dispatches that get through. Certainly, however,

things will get better. There is no possibility of less, anyway.

I hope these gripes don't upset you, darling. I'm not really having a bad time and I know I'm doing a lot of good work. I only wish I had enough hours in the day to do more, because there is an infinity to do. I do pray, though, that Italy get out soon, so we can put her out of her misery and get up to the German border. That's where I want to be in September, looking over the Rhine or the Alps on Germany. Every now & then here, we feel very humble & grateful to the Russians who are doing such a magnificent job of destroying the German army. And we find it difficult to appreciate the contribution which millions of people everywhere are not making. I know that most of them would do their duty if put in a position where they had to. That's the task in this war, to convince people that they should fight the war & not the petty annoyances in their lives, and secondly to put them in a position where they must carry out their duty.

I'm sending you under a separate envelope, a leaflet at the Germans and a copy of the new newspaper. Hope they get to you. Have you found a place to live yet? Send me your address in advance, so I can address these accordingly. Do you find Cooney fertile? I should love one of his children. Do you think Cooney will be jealous of our baby? I think he will. Best to everyone and all my love to you, sweetheart. Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 16, 1943

Darling,

Monday

Two whole letters from you today. What joy! They were dated August 1st and 3rd respectively. You can see what rapid service the mails give us, at least one way. I hope by now things have quieted down a bit and that you're getting sufficient rest. I still have very little idea of your collective set-up. Hank, I take it, is your jeep driver and not Hank Danenberg. Tell Mr. or Lt. or Captain Whitaker, whatever he may be, that I hear his book is very good and I had every intention of reading it, even before hearing about him from you.

We get a lot of feature stories emanating from out your way, the subjects of which are usually enlisted men. (Yesterday Private Pastafagioli met his grandmother, etc. etc.) I read them all, hoping in vain for some beautiful, funny and sad tale in which you are the principal (they are all very Saroyanish; he is an insidious influence, or at least, very pervasive).

I was misinformed about the package situation. I went to the post office today and they said if I brought your letters requesting the magazines and wallet, I could send them. So steel yourself for a deluge of New Yorkers. They've changed the regulations, Gott Sei Dank. I was getting pretty sore at the way Army folk were being discriminated against. I believe you can send anything short of a grand piano to our sea-going folk. I wish I could send you enough beer for you to bathe in, but the packages are limited to five pounds. Wait till you get home. We will have beer, beef, babies and much loving, although it doesn't start with a b.

Uncle Joe and our new Aunt Ivy were just over, to take Mom to see Bill in the hospital. Joe has a half interest in a black and tan club over west on Madison, and Ivy is working as a 26 girl there. They are getting another place and turning it into a black and tan club. Apparently the money is there; certainly not Ivy's sympathies, since she is a Texan.

I went South yesterday to look at an apartment I'd heard about, and had dinner with Maxine and her family. The apartment was an enormous five-room job over at 58th and Drexel. It was only 55 but I would be swamped in it, even if I brought in all my friends. I should have had to buy out the Stevens hotel for the furniture. We also went swimming and sunning, which is not exactly news, since I have been doing it every day since I stopped working. Today I took a prodigious walk with Cooney, it being cool. All around Montrose harbor, beach and jetty, and back through Montrose to the post office at Southport and Irving Park. We are both exhausted, though feeling very fit. The apartment situation is, incidentally, very tough, but I think I'll find a place ultimately. I may decide to take a five-room if I share it

with some other gal who has some furniture, specifically Laura Berquist, who wanted me to move into her four-room with her. Well, more of all that later. I'm having dinner with her Wednesday night to talk it over. Also, Mac is coming back from California to live and work around the University neighborhood, so I might work out something with her, too. The argument everyone is giving me is that I'll be very lonesome, all by myself and the baby. True, true, but if necessary, I'll get used to it. Anyway, it isn't sufficient reason for my living on the north side (which Mom thinks I should do) to be near Mom, since in a way I am lonelier up here, away from my friends and a certain amount of intellectuality, than I would be south, with an occasional smattering of University talk and of Mom, whom I'm sure would come stay with me on occasion. Either way, I'm not very worried at the present time. I worried so much about the mundane things of life this spring I am exhausted by it all. Everything pales into insignificance next to the thought and desire of you. If you were to come back for one day, I'd drop everything including the baby to be with you. Last night, while I was waiting on the 53rd St IC platform around nine, one of those long dingy southbound trains rushed by. Automatically, I thought of you and the many moments we spent together on station platforms, from the first train you took from central station back to camp in Tennessee, when I wept a little with Mom after you left, to those calm collected moments on the LA platform, when we could look at the other weeping or drunken people with great detachment, knowing that in a weekend or two, we would be together again. We seemed to have spent some of our most poignant moments on station platforms; perhaps they were unpleasant at the time. But I am jealous of those moments and of the people who have them now, for no matter how hard it is to say goodbye to a soldier who is about to be swallowed by the deep south, it is seldom the last goodbye. And I'm mad too - because I said so many goodbyes to you while you were in this country that when that last goodbye came, so early in the morning, I felt practically no pain at all. Not that it wasn't memorable. You had on your suntan cap and looked very handsome. But I guess that's the way when you miss somebody

so much - you want to relive every moment, even the goodbyes.

Anyway, by the time that Randolph St. Local Express (on Sundays) came, I was very weepy indeed.

I got home to find a brace of minnows swimming in the kitchen sink. Mom had gone fishing with Uncle Willie, who had come around to take me fishing, and collected this enormous catch - not only hers but also the people they were with. She showed me how to clean them, and we had them tonight for supper. I guess they were very small perch. Anyway, they tasted fine and I have been sick ever since. Oh well, I did learn something useful for our camping expeditions of the future, to wit, to clean fish and to let someone else eat them.

Vic took a couple of pictures of me today and I hope they come out for you. I was just about to take the dog for a walk, so I am dressed very pour le sport. The lady at the drugstore is going to try to get us some film, so if these don't come out (which I doubt, since Vic the Schlemiel took them), we can try, try again. Unfortunately, there seems to be a hereditary inability to take good pictures in your family.

I really ought to take a hand to the dishes and surprise Mom for when she gets home.

Darling, I love you so much that it's awful.

Your --Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 17, 1943 V-MAIL

Dearest love,

I love you more every day but I'll be damned if I can get off a real letter to you every day. I'm frightfully busy from seven to seven and we talk shop a good part of the evening. It looks as if, now that the last communique on Sicily is writ, that I shall be in my present home for some days anyway. It is very nice save that there is no running water or light. The required repairs to

the utilities are forthcoming. But we (at the moment Robbie, Brown Roberts, a US civilian - and a foppish, pleasant British captain named Alexander) found an extraordinary cook just yesterday who promptly took us off the bully beef twice a day diet and things aren't as bad as they might be.

It looks like there won't be any rest from now on unless I really need it. Just now I feel fine generally and am going great guns, actually handling the work of about three men. Take the newspaper - 20,000 circulation, and more written matter than any of the Algiers or Oran papers. It was built up from nothing in a few days from a rusting wreck and hadn't published since over a month ago. Now I must pick the right type of man to head one of the two biggest papers in an island as populated as Ohio. I'm not exaggerating a whit - PWB gave me this big baby or rather we found it and now I'm completely alone with it. Thank God its full brunt fell after the campaign was just about over so that other things wouldn't press so. Now just about the time when every problem of consequence is licked, I must drop it and run. Read your local newspaper for the date of the run.

I find much time to miss you though, darling, and even some time to think about your suggestions regarding the Rockies - pleasant thought. For your information, my mustache is short and bushy as per custom, not long and slender. And I thought the picture wasn't bad at all.

The country around here is beautiful. Wherever one wills, things grow in great profusion. The slopes of the grand and immense mountains are filled with rich vineyards and houses of all sorts, buried in the green. Everything shuffles slowly down to the sea which then moves out in a great expanse of blue in every direction.

Miracles of miracles. I got your August first letter on the 17th. I wish I could tell you everything. You know something about the political ferment in Italy. It's terrific! It is the same in Sicily except more informal since political parties are out during the occupation. There are all shades of people, people who were once laborists, socialists, rightists. Every day I get stories which

would knock the eyes out of Time.

All Love. Many kisses. Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 19, 1943

Darling -

Here I am ensconced in a fancy office at Michigan and Madison, with a good typewriter that arises out of the desk at the mere break of the wrist, with nothing to do except use it for my own purposes, with a ladies' room done in the latest furnishings, with the knowledge that I am being paid out of the treasury of a Good Cause, with funds honorably solicited from the Swifts and the Fields, and all in the Heart of Downtown Chicago. Can you imagine a more perfect set-up? I can't. Also, the boss, a social worker named Saul Alinsky, is supposed to be an excellent man and doesn't get in till one o'clock.

I arrive at nine and leave at five, with no Saturday work. Also, I get an hour off for lunch. Today I am going to waste it with Janice, whom I haven't seen for nearly a year. She is working somewhere around here, doing what I am not sure of.

I bought you a wallet at Wards since I was up there Tuesday ferreting myself out a bathrobe. (I expect to be deshabillée most of the winter). It was the largest of the billfold type they, or, as I discovered later, Marshall Field's has. However, yesterday, I did see a wallet at Field's which, on sleeping on the issue, I've decided to buy you although it might be the wrong shape for an officer who must always look his smartest, i.e., it might bulge in your pants. I'll buy it and send it to you. If it falls apart or isn't suitable, I'll send you the Wards one, which isn't as pretty but is guaranteed against falling apart because It Has No Stitches. Otherwise, I'll give it to the kids next Xmas. I sent the New Yorkers yesterday, or rather, Dad did.

Yesterday I went to the doctor, who informed me that I could eat anything I wanted, because I had lost a half of a pound. What a triumph of the will! I promptly went out and had a chocolate

sundae with peach ice cream. I also did some shopping for unattractive things like a panty girdle and rayon stockings (ugh) and looked bug-eyed at Marshall Field furniture, which is certainly handsome. I must give that much credit to an institution indigenous to a city which I always thought was notably lacking in good taste. (Well, it is. All it has is the lake, the University and you, and you know that.) I opened up a charge there, incidentally, because it's a convenient place to get household things and children's clothes, although I myself wouldn't don a kerchief from there. Strictly a Saks kid. Actually, I'm rather relieved at the freedom from buying a fall and winter outfit this year, although the clothes seem to be better-looking than last year, when they were still muddled at what to do with the WPB restrictions. Just give me an old laundry bag to wear until December, and after that I'll probably not get out of the house again till Spring. Then I went South and found an apartment in the building where Bea Neugarten lives, a building which I always liked because it's somewhat newer and better kept up than most, and very convenient to bank and supermarket. The only vacancy was a very cute four-room English basement affair. I immediately rushed off to the agent and put in an application, tossing them a sawbuck by way of a bribe, since someone else also has their application in for it. I don't know if I'll get it, but I hope so. The rooms are the right size for us who don't have much furniture and furthermore, don't want to buy much, and the fixtures are all modern, and there's a washing machine in the basement, which Mom and her girl friend assure me is essential to my well being. I think you'd like it despite the fact that it's an English basement. It's quite light. The people who are there now have a two-month old infant as well as a boy of two and a cocker spaniel, and none of them seem very pale or sickly. Anyway, I've abandoned the notion of living with anybody permanently - I'm having dinner with Laura tonight and shall inform her of my decision. It would be too much of a strain keeping out of her way when the baby comes. I would like Mac to live with me until December, however, if she'd like to. She hasn't come home yet so I haven't broached the subject to her.

I had dinner at the Commons last night with Vera and Peggy MacDonald and Ethel Shanas, which was fun. Peggy is now married to Phil. He is a Warrant Officer in the AA - he didn't get through Davis on account of the math, I guess, and is now on maneuvers in Oregon. Isn't it funny the way they put so many of the social scientists in the Coast Artillery? Do you think it was in the nature of a quarantine measure? It couldn't be training, because almost by definition, a social scientist is a little weak on the math side.

I'm so full of domesticity that I almost forgot to mention how happy we all are at the news that Sicily is ours, all ours. Dad got that Syracuse publication yesterday. I asked him if he thought it was written by natives, and he said yes, all except the news bulletins which had some mistakes and could have been written by foreigners.

I hope you're feeling well. There seems to be a lot of infirmity around your way. Even Ernie Pyle, the Sun reporter, narrates that he was stricken with some malaise or other. Of course, you're a lot hardier by nature and training than a lot of the transplanted civilians you're with, but I can't help being concerned about such inconsequentials as your sinuses and your intestines. The bombs are beyond the pale of my meager imagination, and besides, it scares the blank out of me, thinking about you in relation to them, or vice versa.

Cooney, out of more instinct than malice, chased a kitten up a tree yesterday, and out of nowhere, its mother appeared and jumped on him. I was still some distance off, and called him when I saw the fracas, which at the time I thought he had started. So I put the leash on him, and walked on. Again the big cat leaped out from behind the tree, and this time gave him a good pasting. For a minute there, cat, dog and Jill were one whirling mess, with dog and Jill ignominiously trying to get out of it as fast as possible. Cooney got a big scratch on the soft part of his nose, and consequently, blood all over my dress. As a matter of fact, we would still be there fighting if a lady had not come along and beat off the cat with a newspaper, and then

held her, hissing like an old boiler. Don't you think that was brave of the cat? Don't you think Cooney and I are cowards?

The boys are leaving for Washington Monday and are in a great dither about reservations, tickets et al. At least, Vic is. They plan to take their instruments and God knows what else with them. I shall have to step in and see that they keep their baggage down to a minimum, lest they give offense to the ODT.

Gosh, I shall have to mobilize family and friends to get your Xmas presents off to you. I believe we have till October 15, to send them, which isn't very far off. Maybe you'll be home by Christmas and will get a double set thereby.

Did I ever tell you that Greenhill said the baby would be born December 29th. Isn't that a coincidence, if it happens? Poor kid, no Christmas, or rather, no birthday, just like its unlucky dad.

And a million hugs and kisses for its unlucky dad, anyhow.

As ever, yours,

Jill

[arrow pointing to a smudge:] I just changed the typewriter ribbon for a helpless lady up the hall. I am not naturally this dirty.

JILL TO AL AUGUST 20, 1943 (A)

Darling -

Friday

I've changed my mind about this typewriter. It is of the noiseless variety, which means that it is neither noiseless nor very efficient. You have to have a touch like a dinosaur to make your thoughts legible on it.

After all these months, during which I fumed and furied, I finally got a letter from Paul and Ann. They said they had gotten a card from you in Tunisia. Little Paul is uttering a few words, like Cow-Cow and Boogie-Woogie, and they are all very well. Paul still

thinks about joining the merchant Marine and is very disgusted with the social implications of being an architect.

You know, I have gotten thoroughly sick of the first name Michael. Mom and Molina refer to the baby as Michael, and possibly it was a subtle propaganda campaign all along, because now I don't like the name. I think I would like Paul Stephen and Paul Michael (I still love Paul Joseph but he might get mad at us when he gets older, for being so unoriginal). After all, the likelihood of our seeing much of big and little Paul is small, and it's such a pretty name with DeGrazia. I like Paul Stephen too, but perhaps you don't like the middle name, ergo, the alternative. It's an awful problem. I still haven't changed my mind about Kathryn Michele if it's a girl. You can do so much with a name like Kathryn. How about Karen? Please, darling, don't get annoyed at my putting these questions up to you. I'd hate to give him or her a name you didn't like, although usually we harmonize in our preferences. And now is the time to decide these matters, the mail service being what it is, and Mike kicking as if he were ready to emerge into the light any minute now.

I had dinner with Laura last night and it was fun. She's an amusing, albeit addlepated and overrated girl. We sort of decided that if we can find a nice five-room we'll take it, or if I find a four-room or three room alone I'll take it. You don't have much choice these days.

Do you remember Emmet Deadman? He was first reported missing in action and now it appears that he is a prisoner of war in Germany, whence his fortress was shot down.

Laura also told me Stud was getting a divorce, or rather, Bobbe was getting a divorce from him. So far, I have heard no report that he has choked to death over a bookstore coke, but we can still hope.

I had lunch with Janice and she is writing some sort of reports for the Journal of Commerce and not showing up for work till afternoon. Her husband is 4F and over 38 and still participating in his mysterious investment business. He was with the

Ordnance Dept. for a while, but was organized out. What an incredible couple!

And Rosable, who was going to live in Cal. with Buster at the end of the month, has suddenly decided to go to New York to live and work, sans him. And she is completely distraught.

Diane rushed off to New York, I picked up by chance gossip, to meet Oliver who is home from England. I get no other details, so don't know how long he is staying.

What people we know! They are all nuts, if you ask me.

Well, there is your month's ration of gossip. I sent you your billfold yesterday and hope it's what you want. And if you should ask me what I want, why, it's you. All my love, dear --

Jill

JILL TO AL AUGUST 20, 1943 (B)

Darling -

I got your letter today, quote, mildly reproving me for my mild suspicions. Now I don't mind you scolding me for an error of judgement, but you hit below the belt when you attack my style of writing and to think you once compared me to a Bronte (see letter written in 1940). I do think that as I get more absorbed in this business of having a husband and child, I get less concerned with the literary niceties.

And to the question of being apart sometimes I think that if I don't see you within the minute, I shall die. Yet I know I have a lot to survive for, and am really quite happy in doing so - in going on from day to day, waiting and planning for the child. But it is the old conflict between the id and the ego or is it super-ego? between the wonderful impetuosity of the young child who will brook no frustrations, and the reasoning adult, who has adopted the philosophy that "life must go on." It seems a shame that all this longing must be bottled up. Obviously I'm not going to slash my wrists or go into a decline, so it has to be bottled up.

Do you think that after a while the adult gets in complete control, and I'll never feel this way any more? That would be awful.

It really is a marvel how my desire for you can grow every day, and yet I don't burst, go into a decline or subscribe to isolationist sentiments. The knowledge that one really loves is a wonderful thing, but it certainly is painful. But, as you said, our love came the hard way.

But I certainly resent your impugning my knowledge of the tax situation, which I assure you, is second only to B. Munil's after a hard night. A pox on your criticisms. I'll have you know I'm considered the head of the family by a person no less than the Treasurer of the United States of America, a very powerful government. And you, you can't even vote. But don't let them take the tax out of your salary. You don't have to pay till March 15. I think we get credited with the last half of the tax we paid last year (oh shit, I do get mixed up). I wrote and asked them for the money and they wrote back some doubletalk to the effect we wouldn't get it till '44 or '45.

Well, it is hard to understand.

Anyway, I am hanging on to all receipts, bank statements and cancelled checks, so nobody can blame me for throwing anything away.

Gosh, it's a quarter of one in the morning. I had coffee and cake at Molina's and can't sleep, I guess, as a result of it.

Good night, darling. I love you very much, which is redundant but true.

Jill

Oh, I'm sending you pitchers of Cooney and me under separate cover. They came out better than any others in the roll - of the rest of the famille.

Jill

JILL TO AL AUGUST 21, 1943

Sweetheart -

Saturday

Here are the pictures. I think one - conceived in form taken by Vic - is pretty good, i.e. the profile view of Cooney and me. Too bad, though, that he's standing in front of my legs. They're definitely my best feature now that I've lost the lean loins.

I'm also sending a column of Grafton's which I hope reaches you. I think it's the best statement yet in the popular press of our difficulty.

The boys are leaving for Washington Monday and I'm not exactly tearful. You are right - I feel about privacy just as you do. I wonder how we'll be with our own kinder. Oh, well - maybe they'll grow into a more attractive adolescence than Vic has. He still has all the intellectual keenness he ever had, but he's a loud-mouthed rude lout at this stage of his career.

Oh well, nothing to worry about.

Come home soon, darling. I love you with all my heart.

Jill

I am about to leap into a bubble bath. Jealous?

JILL TO AL AUGUST 23, 1943

My darling --

It's a bright blue Chicago Monday: it's rainy, hot, and the odor of the yards permeates even this office which, though dedicated to the spiritual uplift of that area, has managed to locate at a safe distance away from it.

I got a typing manual out of the library and am engaged in one of my annual attempts to improve the quality of my touch typing. I've been at it all morning and think I am living testimony to my belief that self-education is the crap.

Oh yes, I am just full of plans and schemes these days. I also

got a book out of the library entitled *Art in Everyday Life*. It is very elementary and, to me, very interesting - all about principles of form and composition and color, and I discovered that I've had some innate good taste about things like furniture and houses and clothes although I never knew why I liked the things I liked before. I'm awfully interested in this problem of making a place attractive on little money, and also incorporating awful-looking things like the chair and desk we already have into a snappy, bright modern apartment. I think it can be done, and besides, I think any desk that has drawers that slide out as easily as that desk we had deserves to be loved & kept - aside from the budgetary considerations.

Well, you know I love to read about anything - like my knowledge of cooking, which is strictly from the books. I guess that's the result of a good college education. It makes you develop an intellectual approach to anything you do, even though you never get around to doing it very well. I think that it's helpful in the case of everything but sports (that is, all sports but sailing, which really does require some theoretical knowledge if you wouldst[?] find your way in the dark and in landless stretches of water). I can't imagine any sport one could do any better in by reading about it.

And Mom got a photograph album out of the Bargain Room with a G. I. looking cover and some corny title about *Life in the Army*. Anyway, I've started sorting and putting all the pictures you've taken since you've been in the Army in it, and it really is a good idea, since it keeps the pictures neat and some of them are really interesting. Do you think you could take any more these days? I wish I could send you some film but we haven't been able to get any either. What number does your camera use, just in case? Anyway, that's how I spent Saturday night. You know how monumental a job like that can be. You start looking for the pictures, and then you come across old letters and start reading them, and finally you get started sorting the pictures into neat piles, and then the family comes in and one by one looks through all the pictures, with you sorting them back into neat piles in the intervals between family. Then you run out of Art

Corners and you have to go to the drugstore to get some more, taking the dog with you. Only the dog gets into a fight on the way back and you drop the Art Corners, and since it is quite dark out, it takes quite some time before you find them again. When you get back, you discover Mom has sorted out a pile of negatives to take to get positives on, and has mislaid the pile, out of which you want some positives yourself. Thereupon ensues an exasperated search for the envelope she was sure she put them in, and it finally turns up behind the ironing board. Then you sit down in front of the album again (meanwhile Vic has looked through the pictures and taken out the ones he wants to keep, so you have to get those back, though not before you hunt for the negatives and promise to have some copies made for him). Finally everybody goes to bed and Cooney starts scratching to get out again, so you let everything just lay on the table, in neat piles, and take him out. He gets into another fight, of course. In the morning, there is company, and in a rush to get things cleaned up, Mom throws everything into a drawer and next Saturday night you'll start all over again.

Do you think I'm fooling? I'm not.

But I did find Mike Homes' address in the melee and I'm sending it to you.

Yesterday was cloudy so I hung around and cleaned the house and read the papers till 3 and then went over to the beach with Cooney and Doris and swam a little and ate an elaborate sundae at Walgreen's with her, and then played some gin rummy. Thinking to avoid work and dishes, I stayed out till 8, and came home to find everybody ready to call the police. I had forgotten I had told them I would be back in an hour when I left. Anyway, I avoided nothing, because there was the boys' clothes to be packed, and since I am considered a seasoned traveller and packer in the family, I had to pack them. They leave at three today and Vic is terribly excited. I dug them up a couple of my cigarette cases to flash around on the train and they both have new wristwatches - from Uncle Joe who collects gold wristwatches, apparently. They are taking your leather bag,

which I don't think is possible for them to lose or mutilate. I guess it really is an occasion to travel when you've never done it before. It will be nice and quiet around the house the next couple of weeks. I only wish I weren't working so that I could be home to enjoy it. And perhaps Miriam will lose some of that Swedish equanimity of temper for a change. I'm afraid that so far, the two sisters-in-law are studies in contrasting types.

I'm very sleepy and can think of nothing nicer than an afternoon nap with you, although, as I recall now, those things usually ended up with me arising, after some time, and reading *The New Yorker*, while you took the nap.

Despite such bitter memories, you still have all my love. Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 23, 1943

Dearest Jill,

There's a moment's lull in my life, while waiting for the proofs to come up from below, so I'll indulge myself with a letter. As soon as I put the paper to bed, home I go to eat my late lunch (2 P.M). Fortunately, supper isn't until 7:30 P.M.

The last two days were really hectic. The "truth stranger than fiction" saw really came to life and we've had a merry time with an important case of double identity, fascist journalists, old factional rivalry between Socialists & Communists, denunciations, & security police. I'll write you the tale soon. It's a good one &, bless my soul, the results were a triumph.

I'm feeling very well except for smoking too much, which I shall try to tone down as soon as I go into the field again where there is more physical activity.

I'm sending you a couple of clippings from the 8th Army News which has blossomed into quart from pint size under Charlton over the past few days.

Sicily is very calm at the moment. The big thing is to clean up

the wreckage and get things functioning properly. Most of the big problems of the paper are licked too, and I am looking forward to relinquishing the assignment and to moving forward. Your guess is only slightly worse than mine as to where we'll go, but then your guess has always been slightly worse than mine, hasn't it, darling? - save for the location of personal articles perhaps.

I do wish I could see you now instead of several months from now. It'll be getting on to fall when there are all sorts of thunderstorms and gusty winds & where I would be extremely useful. I am thankful though, knowing you are safe and under the care of a good doctor, especially so when I see the conditions under which some women must bear children in our fine world.

Tell Dad I've been meaning to write him, even though I haven't. I like Sicily today better than I did on my former visit (which wasn't much, I admit) despite all its dislocations & destruction. From what I hear, the boys in Palermo are having a gay time. I have too much to do to go about looking for ways to pass time and yet the work is so interesting, I don't really mind.

Come another few moments & there shall be another letter. But here are the proofs and they finish this one.

With all love and a great desire to kiss you. Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 24, 1943

Darling --

Tuesday

I'm enclosing a letter I wrote last week, the result of an ill-fated attempt to use your new address. I hope you haven't given it out as the real McCoy to anyone else.

Three of your letters arrived yesterday - one containing Italian and Eighth Army newssheets, very interesting, too. The other was written the day after Musso's downfall, and then there was another letter written August 8th, the most recent

communication we have from you.

I guess most everyone missed the boat on the importance of his resignation, which was exactly zero, and the faith one could put in a non-democratic regime like Badoglio's and the Little King's. Everybody, that is, in the popular press but Grafton. Perhaps you heard of the great scandal of the OWI broadcast that next day, when, the OWI taking the line (without advice from the State Department) that later proved to be correct, referred to Victor Emanuel as "the moronic little king" in a quote from Grafton. President Roosevelt had to repudiate it publicly. Apparently the OWI tried to get in touch with high government officials that Sunday, and nobody was home, or, and this is the crux of the matter, the government was so unprepared to meet change of a political nature that, for all practical purposes, nobody was home. So the OWI went ahead on its own steam, as a result of which they are becoming even more disliked and hamstrung by officials of a conservative bent than they were before.

It seems to me that if the popular forces in Italy had been given free rein, you would be a hell of a lot closer to the Brenner Pass at this moment than you are by trying to deal with the representatives, and undemocratic ones at that, of "law and order." Can't we yet understand that we can't deal with the devil? Here a month has passed since the "great event" and we are still muttering about negotiations through the Vatican. Meanwhile Franco has the effrontery to ask us for arms; his request was, quote, favorably forwarded by Hay to our State Department but it will probably be turned down, though I don't know what attack of virtue inspired that prognosis. And Russia is sore as hell at us, with some reason, considering our behavior to her in Africa (where it appears we refused to let her envoys have entree) and our attitude on the French Committee.

If the war were to end tomorrow, I wouldn't be too happy about it bringing the prospects of a better world, although it's difficult to be objective when you want somebody as much as I do you. There was some criticism in the British press, as quoted here,

of Amgot, saying it contained many members of the ruling and incidentally appeasing class of both nations, particularly the British. I don't know how true that is.

I hope you don't mind this outburst. I realize that my opinions are not necessarily yours and should not reflect upon or influence your thoughts on these matters. It's just that we Americans still have a lot to learn about everything except writing constitutions, which we do impeccably, and winning wars, which we also have managed to do every time. I've been taking some dictation from the boss, and discover to my horror that I've forgotten the little I ever did know about the particularly virulent system of shorthand I matriculated in. However, I improvise, with some success, and my typing is not too bad. He just went out to lunch with Henri-Simon Bloch (roll those "r's", lift that bale, get a little drunk, etc.) and Walter Johnson, the last stand of the loquacious liberals. No, I haven't seen Earl yet. When and if I ever get to live South, I shall soak up the atmosphere and people like him as a sponge.

The boys got off in good order, Mom reported when I got home last night. Their trip is a swell idea from many angles, not the least of which is that there is quite an epidemic of infantile raging here, and it is a good idea for them, particularly Eddy, to get away from the city and the lake and insufficient sleep for a while. Eddy is so much like you in so many ways. He just works like a son of a bitch and even hurts himself sometimes - he had awful blisters on his hands from handling heavy stuff - and never complains. And he's very thoughtful and conscientious. Mom even says sometimes she thinks he is nicer than you! That was when she was mad at you for not writing. Now that she has a letter from you - she got a V-mail Saturday - she's irked because you didn't say enough and most of it was devoted to telling her to give me privacy and to saying she shouldn't feel too badly that she's overworked. For God's sake don't write her again and tell her I told you this - she'd be furious at me. I guess everybody gets into the habit of telling her off all the time, and forgets she really is pretty touchy at heart. Like she told me that on one occasion or other, Mir and Buss gave her some candy,

and then she went over to Sarah's, and there was a box of candy twice as expensive that they had given Mrs. C. (whose name I cannot print without shuddering at her abysmal dopeyness). Well, it's true that Mom is pretty easy-going most of the time, so much so that we all take advantage of her. I've gotten her pretty sore myself by losing my temper, a la Babe, at some piece of her forgetfulness. But she's easy to placate, although sometimes you never know what will make her mad and what won't.

Joan went down to Gulfport, Miss. to see Tom this weekend and from her description, it is the world's worst place. I can readily understand it. Weren't we lucky, in a way? Our worst times together were in Paris and Newport News, and there wasn't really so much of that. Oh, I realize you spent a full five months in Paris, but at least I wasn't there with you to gyp about the housing and the unavailable food. Anyway, she had a fine time and Tom apparently hates it, which he should have figured out beforehand, and would like to go to OCS!

I went to the dentist last night and then stopped off at Aunt Lil's on the way back. Uncle Bill is out of the hospital and looks a lot better, amazingly enough. Howard's wife does all the work around there, in fact, we are all convinced that is why he married her. He really is not very nice to her, although they are revoltingly mushy in public - not at all like us who only lean on each other's noses, with no hands. Anyway, he wouldn't buy her a fur coat that Aunt Lillie was trying to sell, and he certainly could afford it. He's an awful tightwad, really. Don't think I think a fur coat is the prerogative of every wife, but if you have the money and are not spending it on anything else, like him, it's something every female in Chicago should have. Me, I'm warmer-blooded than most and besides, I want so many other things. Mary is blonde, bleached, and completely dopey-looking. I think she has a slight cast which gives her that appearance. She also wears an ankle bracelet and a lot of flowers in her hair. Mean, aren't I?

Gosh, this is a long letter. I am deliberating whether to put this

and the other letter into one envelope, or to send them separately. From the point of view of which would be more fun for you - to open one envelope or two. To hell with all these hedonistic considerations. It all goes in one envelope. A penny saved is a penny saved, and there sure isn't much you can do with a penny. Besides, I use the firm's stamps, so what am I talking about.

All my love to you darling. I hope all my talking hasn't bored you.

Jill

Do you really think you'll be back this spring? I protest at your words that you'd probably be useless till then. With a little instruction you'd be a great help right after the baby came. And beforehand - well, the last month we'd probably have to be austere, but not otherwise. Gosh, none of my clothes fit me anymore. I have quite a bulge right below my waistline.

JILL TO AL AUGUST 25, 1943 V-MAIL

Dearest -

I just purchased a bottle of Skrip's V-Black ink, Photograph's Best by Every Test (do you think they should give me \$100 for that) and naturally, my anxious little soul would not rest until I tried it out. What do you, the ultimate consumer, think about it? Actually I have very little to write about, having exhausted the subjects of Politics & Passion, my two favorites, in my last letters to you. I did take a long walk with Doris & Cooney last night & ate another sundae. I have to go on a diet again because I have been living exclusively on sundaes since the doctor told me I could eat anything I want. I've gained a stone, I'm sure. What is a stone? Five bob? There was an awful storm in the middle of last night. It clapped so hard I nearly had a miscarriage. If I had who could I sue? I'm going to Janice's tonite for dinner.

Much love to you, my darling. Jill

JILL TO AL AUGUST 27, 1943

Darling,

Friday

I have been typing away like an old fool for days now and if there is any change in the quality, timbre, or melody of my typing, I would like to be the one to know it. However, now I can find the numbers without hunting for them, if you call writing 0842 for 1943 mastery of the art of statistical typing.

Well, Glatt and Price finally shyly whispered into my ear that the apartment was mine, once I signed the lease and paid them two months' rent. It's a wonder they didn't ask for it in silver, just to be sure I wouldn't gyp them. They said they had to make that kind of a financial arrangement because we were from out of town (I naively gave them out-of-town references because the two institutions that know most about our finances - my Unk and Riggs - are out of town) and you were in service. I acidly told them that I knew of no more reliable source of income than pay from the United States Army, and furthermore that you were subject to a general court martial if I skipped on them. However, it was only the secretary I talked to and she was sympathetic. How can I tell them to stick the apartment up their fannies with housing at the premium it is? I shall be glad when the war is over and, among other things, I can start telling off butchers and realtors. I am planning not to touch my great fortune which comes to pass in February, so that we can have one big splash when you come home and tell everybody to stick everything up etc.

I really think that with the rent I'll be paying - 42.50 - and the fact that the rooms are small and won't demand too great an outlay for furniture, I should be able to survive within the amount you give me and my approximate 600 coconuts a year from sub-standard dwellings in New York. Did you know that I get my money from cold water flats in Harlem - that 33.33 a month, I mean? Whenever I want to feel depressed, I think of that.

Income tax time rolls around September 15, but I don't want you to bother your pretty little head about it, just as I'm not going to bother mine. I'm going straight to Carter Harrison Jr. with my

problems. He can't refuse me, I'm a pregnant woman with a silver star upon my bosom. (I really don't wear one, though often I feel tempted to exploit the potential pathos of my situation, as when I have to stand in line at Harding's, or stand up in the Addison St. bus, or when I remember that your elder brother still hasn't sent those records to me.) I had dinner with Janice and her husband at the Windermere Wednesday night. They certainly are the most useless, anti-social pair on this earth, with the possible exception of the Ciano's. All they do is whiz back and forth between here and the East Coast, taking up a lot of room on trains, and visiting various places of pleasure. Bill still doesn't work, except for his mysterious investment business. He wasn't drafted because he has something wrong with his feet. He is a frightful jerk and an old lady, to boot. Like when he expressed horror at my desire to take the baby down to the lake next summer. (We were discussing buying used cars.) Apparently a large body of Chicagoans think lake bathing is just the most outré thing to do imaginable. Anyway, I am grateful to them for giving me a lot of cogent reasons against buying a car, the chief one being that I didn't need one to migrate back and forth between South and North sides with the Coon, because you can take dogs on the I.C. if you sit in the smoker (the reason for that being, no doubt, because dogs smoke so much). They also pointed out that if I took a taxi everyday for a year, it still would not cost as much as a car in time or money or trouble.

Anyway, I won't think about it until the baby comes and then see what the market is like (it's frightfully high now) and how much I really need one. As I said before, I'd rather not touch any of Dad's estate until the time for buying really satisfying things like a house, a farm or some decent furniture comes along. What I'll probably do is invest it in a variety of things, like government and private bonds, and some safe stock, if such a thing exists.

Speaking of finances, and I know you don't agree with me on this, I think your family is nuts to carry insurance on the boys. They each have 500 dollar policies, which are, in effect, burial policies. They cost a lot to keep up, and as I told Mom, are not

worth it because if anything ever happened to them, which is most unlikely, she has a wide enough circle of friends and family to borrow the money for burial expenses, not to mention getting it outright. And Dad has an expensive - because of his age - thousand-buck policy which in the end he is going to pay a lot more into than he ever gets out of it. Hell, what's a thousand bucks to a widow who has to live on for many years. She's going to have to turn to another source of income, anyway, and meanwhile, life insurance is a big, unprofitable drain on poor people's incomes. I never realized what a racket it was, having never had life insurance myself or discussed the matter with anybody before. It's too bad that people don't have the self-control to put a certain amount aside in the bank each month. Or rather, it's just too damn bad that life insurance isn't just another function of social security, instead of being reduced to the cheapest kind of a racket, i.e., one that preys on poor people, carried on by immensely powerful and prestige-bearing corporations. I think that poor people are the particular victims of life insurance because rich people don't need it. Take my Dad - he didn't have any insurance at all when he died, having borrowed on it all, but he still left a healthy estate even after all his debts were paid. (It would have been healthy if it hadn't been divided three ways).

Anyway, your family doesn't need so much because they have four or at least three economically independent sons in it, not to mention a backlog from such dough as I have.

I don't see why a forced savings plan wasn't instituted, incidentally, instead of all these heavy taxes, which are all right for people like us to pay, but work hell on people who are down to the bread-and-butter level of existence. And plenty of people still are, despite all that eternal talk about rich war workers. I'll bet Rose Ivey, our former maid, isn't riding around in any Buicks yet, although by comparison to the days when they were on relief, they may be better off.

I love the way each day I cover a new topic. It reminds me of when you were writing that silly encyclopaedia. Everyday you

would get through a new letter.

Last night everybody was out when I got home from work, which was sort of fun for a change. I took an enormous bubble bath and ate fried eggs, which I suddenly got a passion for, and half of the cherry pie Mom had left around, and then Cooney and I walked to Sheridan Road and the rental library near there. I got out Whitaker's book, which I'm about a third of the way through. It's interesting, but I keep forgetting that books like that bore me. They're so factual. I never did read *Mission to Moscow*, *Berlin Diary*, *A Thousand Shall Fall*, *I Saw France Fall*, *I Saw Poland Fall*, *The Bobbsy Twins in the Vatican*, etc. I figure I do my duty by reading the morning and evening papers from end to end (a habit I've only lately acquired - before I only read the funnies, political news and woman's page). I'd much rather read columnists of the Grafton and Lippman and Laski (he's in the Sun once a week) variety. It saves time and gives you the same stuff as those books. Anyway, Whitaker's book had me in dreamland by nine o'clock where I would still be now if it weren't for that oppressed bladder of mine. As it was, I got up at six this morning, surfeited by sleep, and took Cooney for a walk around Cubs Park in one of those insidious drizzles where you think you won't get wet and come home soaking.

Gosh, this is a long letter. I won't have anything to write tomorrow unless I stop.

All my love to you, darling. Tell them to hurry up up the boot so that you can get home soon. Incidentally, that fatuous remark in that long letter I wrote the other day about "I realize you don't necessarily agree with me" was strictly for the looks. You damn well better agree with me!

I repeat - all my love.

Jill

V-mail

Letter from Capt. Martin P. Herz to Jill:

Dear Jill:

I have just arrived here to more or less take over Al's work, and have seen him for couple of days before his departure. It was the first time we had seen each other since the Sicilian invasion started, for I had been up front with the Seventh most of the time.

Al has done a bang-up job here, and you can be very proud of him. He is, of course, or rather was - for he had to relinquish his robe of authority when he left - a regular bigshot, whom swarms of lesser shots would humbly approach at his office, to submit their business across a regular Mussolini desk...

You may be sure that wherever he goes he will (a) land most important and interesting jobs on the strength of his performance here, and despite the back-stabbing and back-biting that is a permanent feature, it seems, of our setup, and (b) that he will live in circumstances which should set your mind at ease - I don't mean your jealousies, of course, for there are plenty of attractive dark-haired beauties around who one might fully expect to hound so eminent a personage for favors, and I cannot quite credit Al's feigned attitude of being so busy he cannot attend to such interesting divertissement ... - but in any event aside from falling bombs, vendettas, Fascists whom he will have consigned to limbo - and of course, jealous husbands, he ought to be fairly sheltered.

I have failed - and should apologize for so doing - to thank you before for the most excellent, I should say superior manner in which you have discharged your Mission to New York. It was a difficult assignment carried out with vision, determination, perseverance and originality. You are to be congratulated on it. (I should not have put it that way, lest you think my orchids to Al as per above are of the same color; they are not.)_

Good luck to the 2 of you.

Love,

AL TO JILL AUGUST 28, 1943

Dear love,

I'm again in the field which means the end of a phase and the beginning of another. This morning I read through your last five or six letters from July 10 to August first for the first time in succession, and was able therefrom to reconstruct those days in your life with some little success. I can't make out from your description of my letter on the Sicilian landings whether the letter was written from Sicily or from Africa. The time has gone very rapidly these six or seven weeks past. I've had no day off at all. Even when the campaign ended there were a hundred new things to do. Yesterday I moved into the country on rush order after working like mad to dispose of the press problem properly and in short order. The story of those dealings is one which cannot be told without violating regulations, but I can tell you that it was a triumph for our beliefs in the reasons for waging war. The opposition wasn't much, an Italian Marchese and a British Lord and colonel. But we had on our side many forces, including good old Aristotelian logic, and Robbie, who, bless his soul, will let a junior officer belch fire & thunder, nay will encourage it.

One of the reasons your Alfred is not getting his proper share of lazy hours is because the 8th Army people think highly of him. I've got a top-notch assignment for the next show, something new & different, developed somewhat in the course of the Sicilian campaign. The British staff is a remarkably intelligent body of men. My General Staff Intelligence Chief (GSI) was at one time an Oxford Don. The whole group is mostly an old-tie sort of affair, which doesn't spoil them for hard work and great concern for winning the war. Perhaps their most annoying quality, or at least that of Major Galsworthy, whom I joined yesterday, is their gift for compliments. I like to see work appreciated but I dislike being told too often "Good work." But it's their way. Everything is "bully good", a "good show", a "fine effort". It's only a class habit, though. Their standards in reality are quite high.

Many in the 8th Army were perturbed about the rapid progress of the 7th Army all over the island. It got under their skin, I think, even though the German opposition around Catania and Bronte was really stiff. The famous Simeto bridgehead was a mass of great ruins and destroyed equipment when the battle was over. A thick film of fust from the military traffic conceals heaps of discarded gear, automatic rifles, guns, clothing and bodies. Paratroopers from both armies are hastily buried everywhere. A scarcely discernible stick may mark the grave of two or three men.

The Germans are so fiendishly clever and thorough about their mines, too. There is no really safe place for a long time afterwards, in fact not even now between Catania & Messina. At night when one needs to stop for rest, he begins to look longingly for a group of his fellow men. Together they huddle in a very small spot in a field, definitely proven clear. The lemon groves in that area are intolerable.

But otherwise there is peace in Sicily. Catania has changed remarkably since that grey morning when Galsworthy & Heycock crawled thru the streets to get at the radio and press machinery.



Officers of British Eighth Army in Sicily (AI is first from the right)

As it was, our little detachment almost went skyhigh. Beauclerk was out to find a house to live in. He went into a fine new building up towards the foothills of Etna overlooking the sea and decided that it was just what we needed. However, it lacked some articles of furniture and he went into a place a hundred and fifty yards down. There he found what we needed but this wasn't a bad place either, and Beauclerk being a lazy man, he thought we might stay there just as well. Two mornings later, at 4 A.M., a great explosion rent the fine new building in two, blew

half of it completely away. We used to smile at Charles after that when we passed by.

I did regret leaving Robbie and Alexander yesterday. Robbie is the best raconteur I've ever known - his stories of the trenches in the first World War out-Saroyan Saroyan. Alex is a swell guy too. He is young, good-looking with a dashing, big mustache. He has the delightful trait of combining complete superciliousness with a strong sense of social obligation. The latter never obtrudes in an annoying way. He likes to be pessimistic about the war, his wife who works in the American Embassy at London amongst well-paid American officers, and about his complete distaste for employment. I expect to see them both again before long.

We have little contact with that gang in Algiers, or even with people at the other end of the island. Herz showed up a couple of days ago, looking very emaciated but with some good work to his credit. He had a most amusing and fine letter from you and was trying to get a little free time to answer it. He, too, I expect to meet up with again in the not too distant future. The riff-raff of the 1st MR is still playing around back at base, from all we can gather, maneuvering, throat-slitting, etc. They are a disgusting lot. I am glad they are there, out of the way.

I was happy to see in your letters that life isn't too intolerable for you at home. I know that, as with me there are moments of frustration and futility, but I feel very proud at the magnificent manner you've displayed in this inevitable separation. It shan't happen again, I assure you, and as you so beautifully put it, there is a lot to wait for. Buzz Mir & nephew Joe & Uncle Joe must have provided some sort of a diversion for a time, Vic is sempre diverting, and Coonie is doing a dog-sized job of filling my shoes, a curse on his black soul. But no one can really do my job with you. My heart is in my work. All the influences of African moons, Sicilian stars and many climes to come have pressed and molded my thoughts and ways to that end. Hundreds of different beds cause infinitely varied impressions on the continual process of visualization and dreaming. A

plethora of tastes and smells and of sights must invariably trim my course towards you with a fantasy of tackings. I dare not, in addition, mention my practice in the past, since from your description of Coonie's philandering, he is doubtless a second Marquis de Sade.

I shall write Buzz about the linguaphone shortly. I saw my first copy of his joint press & radio analysis some time ago. It isn't bad. I wouldn't waste any pity on his being called back to Washington because Musso fell. I wish I were called back when that happened. As I recall, I wrote you a letter instead. The mystery of his whereabouts still persists. The Italians are anxious to know tho not as anxious as you might think. They really want to forget about the whole nightmare. That's the right attitude now. Anything else is useless. The Italians must cast themselves in a new mold so as not to allow it to happen again. They are undoubtedly very much to blame themselves.

Sorry about the pictures, darling, but I wasn't cut out to be a photographer. I still haven't any from home, I may add.

The new mail route works pretty well, apparently. Algiers sends our mail direct to 8th Army Hdqrs.

I can't help but be somewhat worried by your frequent moments of maternal illness & all your giving up of small pleasures. I think you're doing nobly as the self-sacrificing mother in the face of the temptations of gluttony at 1235. Perhaps you take some inspiration from me. All isn't well-prepared meals. I haven't had butter since leaving America. I haven't had coffee save once or twice since I've been with the British, a matter of months now. Arthur Galsworthy has a small package which we're reserving for the big day.

From the little I know, I should say that you're pretty healthy considering the Chicago heat which must be abominable, the work which but be likewise, and the difficulty tolerating all those people around. I'm doing pretty good with relation to the rest of the group. We've had more than our share of illness, - malaria, scabies, an auto accident during a blackout and the ever-

present dysentery. I guess I'll be all right on that score. But as my driver wisely declared today - "If you don't get one thing in a field, you get another." There is always that helpless feeling too, just as there is when cigarettes begin to get low - or when I notice that my one comb is beginning to lose its teeth. It's such a nuisance - toil and trouble.

But men are men and they hold on to their precious little objects - things that no one would ever bother to pick off the street at home, cans of odd sizes with annoying jagged edges, a piece of inferior cord, a pencil stub, a ragged blank V-letter form, a loose match with a non-matching scratcher, a broken glass gas lamp cover.

It's a sight to watch an old army on the march, all the pathetic evidences of men constructing a life around a gas engine. And the engines themselves, like old faithful horses, not coughing with their original uniform noise but with a variety, an individuality induced by age. There are bullet holes and cracked windshields, bent fenders, missing pieces of iron, added pieces of canvas, exposed parts gasping for air, makeshift upholstery of Arab cotton, Italian pillows and army canvas - a deadly procession of Okies.

And the men cling to their vehicles like children to their mothers' breasts. They look as if they might fall off easily but they can't. There is a magnetism about the body of their machine. And what queer, unorthodox gear - old helmets, some with camouflage netting, some without, shirts open at the first or the third button, with or without leggings, tams, berets, neckerchiefs. Each man, as if to demonstrate he is a man, not a machine, carries his particular loot, more tragic than condemnable, some bought some raided, a crate of ruffled chickens dangling from a gun barrel, a bad picture of a pastoral scene, a battered German helmet, odd implements not conceivably useful to anyone save a soldier, a pot or can to boil tea, & a mattress tucked into a crowded corner. Each has his own favorite piece of loot and the story behind it, a fat candle, a weird mug, an old fork, an atrocious undergarment, a cherished

book, an old magazine. I have an old Time mag from June which I can hardly wait to read. I shall probably remember the contents very well.

And then everyone worries about his little worthless possessions. They lose themselves as invariably as life itself. They fall off of crowded vehicles. They are left. They are borrowed. They must be left behind. They break. And yet one must hold on to them for they are essential.

Our victorious armies sweep on this way, not in fine, martial procession. Eggs are three for a can of bully. Wine is 7 or 10 or 20 lire for a bottle if you have a bottle in your vehicle with the rest of the no-good junk.

And a man in a cloud of dust, a din of airplane motors on a starry night, gets a startling clear perception, like that of the martyr for heaven, and realizes that it is his past and future and he falls in love with it, deeply and religiously. He is hardened by the days and the changes but he sees clearly and recognizes exactly, without logic or thought, the other world when some combination of events unlocks the shell.

I am glad that I've had time to write a fair-sized letter today. I do regret brief notes to you, darling. I can't talk much about my work, but that can wait, and I know you must understand. Any brevity is really because I am constantly head over heels in some job or on the move, or conditions make it impossible to write or dispatch a letter. You need no greater proof of love than my writing under circumstances when every one else has given up.

But here I give up, too, with as many kisses as I can plant on your open lips. Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 30, 1943

Darling -

I haven't written you all weekend, and I feel correspondingly

guilty, but I think I wrote you at such great length last week that I got all talked out. Anyway, I have been trying to finish Whitaker's book to avert high costs at the rental library. He really does have a very progressive sane interpretation, although, as I said before, I find whole books on the subjects somewhat tedious. I should have been an English major, viz, my passion for Jane Austin, and not a social scientist, or the wife of a practicing one.

I also got your pitchers all pasted up neatly in your album, which is so crummy that I'll probably start all over with a new one, with appropriate headings printed in white ink. How about sending us some more? You'd be surprised what an interesting little book you have already, considering the quality of the photography, which I always deplored. Or haven't you brought your camera this far?

I had to go down to work Saturday morning, which made me plenty sore. In the afternoon I walked around the lakefront with Cooney and slept, and at night we visited Uncle Bill who is home now. Two wives of some circus press agents were there (oh yes, the big show is in town till Labor Day) and it was the first time I ever went visiting with your mother that I wasn't bored. The ladies - one was enormous and weighed over 300 pounds, the other was a very chic good-looking brunette in her thirties with an enormous chest expansion which she got up to show everybody - were very amusing indeed. I hope I'll get to go to the circus this year; ordinarily, the trouble it takes to get there and the expense of the tickets makes me bog down. I really do enjoy it though, especially the animals.

Sunday I went swimming all afternoon and talked to the members of that little German colony that goes down to the rocks too, rain or shine. I've written to you about them before. They are the oddest people - most in fact all of them emigrés from the late 1920's. They're very attractive - this one gal has two of the cutest children I've seen - but goddam it, there is a German soul and I don't like it. I am really beginning to think that the Germans are undemocratic by nature, and that in the

allocation of war guilt that will come, they should have their full share. It's just little things these people say - droppings of anti-Semitism for one thing - the books they read or would like to read, like Houston Chamberlain - their utter unconcern and apparent non-participation in the war effort. I don't know much about them, or why they are here, but I just can tell that they are neither good liberals nor especially eager to participate in the ordinary streams of American life.

Kill a German for me, won't you, darling? But be nice to the Italians - they discovered olive oil.

I also have a friend-from-the-rocks that I occasionally chat with (these people, I regret to say, are all admirers of Cooney and not of me), a Jewish man from New York who is pleasant and hates the Tribune as much as I do. I've only talked to him once before, but Saturday, he was lying on the grass and called Cooney so I said hello to him and we started to chat about the weather or dogs, I forget which. Pretty soon, his lady friend arrives on the scene, with blanket and little purse. She puts her purse down while she is spreading her blanket, and Cooney picks up her purse and runs off. Naturally, everything fell out - make-up, change, dollar bills, strewn all over the lawn. The gentleman starts to pursue Cooney, who thinks it is a great game. Finally he gave up a somewhat chewed purse and I spent an embarrassing half hour on my knees, picking up the lady's belongings. She didn't take it in very good spirits. I guess she figured it was bad enough for me to be wolfing at her man, without my dog doing a little Oliver Twist-in for me on the side.

As you can see, wherever I am, I spread merriment and light. I really do have a good time, considering how much I am alone.

My sister sent me a whole mess of magazines on home decorating - I had asked her for her back copies - and I had a wonderful time going through them and trying to figure out how I could get a room to look like the ones in their color plates without spending any money. I guess the answer is no.

I'm saving up a new batch of New Yorkers to send you. I guess

six at a time isn't too much sophistication for you to take in one dose.

Do you really kick your helper bodily downstairs? Isn't that illegal? And don't give me any of the whisky-drinking pukkah-pukkah stuff when you get home. I remember you when you would cry for joy over a hot fudge sundae. And now don't say I'm always trying to drag you down to my level.

My stomach is round and I feel fine and I still have a waistline. Cooney has morning sickness, however.

All my love, dearest.

Jill

JILL TO AL AUGUST 31, 1943 V-MAIL

Darling:

It's very discouraging. I don't think I'll ever be a good secretary or anything else for that matter. This morning I got down to work my usual half hour late, because the boss is never in in the morning and I figure what he doesn't know, etc., and what happens but he arrives shortly after I do, demanding to know if so-and-so, who was just in Chicago in between trains, had called him at nine, at which time he had expected the call. I said callously that I had overslept and was ten minutes late, but alas, my conscience bothers me now. Also, I practice and practice, but still I don't type so good. Furthermore, I forget to lock doors, ask "who's calling" when the phone rings, and spend too much time in the ladies' room, which is more your child's fault than mine.

Aunt Lil gave Mom two free tickets to the Circus, so we are going tonight and I am very excited. Mom is going to pick me up at the office after work, so we'll get there early enough to shudder at Gargantua and marvel at the fat lady. You know, when I was about six, I went to the Circus in the Old Madison Square Garden, where the freaks were closer to the audience

than they are nowadays, and the Australian bushman leaned down and kissed me. My nurse was horrified, because he really was a dirty old little man, but I was thrilled and would have gone back for more had I been a free agent. You don't like circuses very much, do you? I know Mom doesn't but she'll go if the tickets are free. I like the freaks and sideshows, including the animals, best of all. I'm glad they're not shooting a Zucchinni out of a cannon this year, or whatever is the name of that fabulous family. All the Zucchinnis have been drafted I hear. Into the coast artillery, no doubt.

The boys are still away. We got a letter from Eddy, and they're having a fine time and a good rest. I still don't miss them so much, but this interlude is still short. I got a letter from Walter yesterday. They are just in the middle of moving into their new apartment at 76th and Park. It's a duplex and very nice, I hear. They have another bedroom now, just for me in case I visit, they say! They want me to come East in November for a visit. I'd like to go, because I really do have much fun with Daisy now, but I don't think the doctor would allow it.

Do they microfilm this stuff or send it to you as is? They've been microfilming yours lately. I just wondered. It's crummy stuff, but every once in a while I get the urge to use it. It's all right if you type. You really can get a lot on it then. Gosh, I'm thirsty. Here I go again.

All my love to you, my sweetheart. Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 31, 1943

[Postcard of Pierrot kissing Pierrette, dated August 31, 1943]

Darling,

Isn't there a delightful touch in this card? No difficult French words either. I got it in a small town in central Sicily. The afternoons here are turning into cool, cloudy affairs with sometimes a jigger of rain mixed in.

Love,

Al

Lt. A. J. De Grazia

1st MRBC APO 512 GOPM NY

ENEMY planes come at night and many people crowd the shelters, including British sailors. The American is abed, trying to kill fleas, or at least to calculate their trajectory, saying an occasional Paternoster and Ave Maria, for their soporific effect, and listening uneasily to the bombs and artillery. Robbie is in his own apartment, no lights, but sailors come up, arousing him and he comes across the hall to the Lieutenant and says, "Would you go down with these boys, like a good fellow, Alfred? There is some damned trouble, I don't know what, in the air raid shelter!" No use to say, "Call the police." Italian police and carabinieri retain their functions but cannot be expected to discipline the troops of their conquerors; fact is, the Military Police have a hard enough job doing so. The civilians have lost respect for their own uniformed authorities as well.

He draws on his trousers, slips a 7.65 cal. automatic he had confiscated into his pocket, takes up his flashlight and goes down with the sailors into the darkness where there is a lot of screaming and cursing. One or two inebriated sailors are beating up on people, mostly women and children, or that's what it seems like in the near blackness, and the one who is most disorderly won't budge and seems crazed, striking out in all directions with wild strength at the several buddies who are tugging at him, so the American raps him on the back of the head with his automatic, and the sailor who called him says, "You'll hurt him, Sir!", "No, it'll just stun him a bit," and the lug does roll his eyes perplexedly at his assailant and quiets down enough to be dragged off. The same sailor meets them the next day and apologizes; he says his head doesn't hurt at all.

Next night, another gang of sailors comes charging into the flat building where he is staying, intent upon taking over the building.

Again Robbie calls him to help, disappearing into the shadows, and he has to draw a gun on them -- which hardly impresses them, but they do sullenly depart.

He cannot but notice a shapely young woman in pumps and black dress, true, most are wearing black, which makes soldiers think they had heavy casualties but comes from very long mourning periods, and she has long black hair and is well-stacked, slender-legged, and pretty and her name is Nuccia; she gives him the eye, no more than that, but pauses also to give him the time of day; she is easy to talk to and friendly and even has an apartment of decent taste where they can cook up a passable pasta with a can of corned beef and some tomato sauce.

Thus he finds himself unthinking, unrepentant, and quite ready for sex in Syracuse, never mind the general state of affairs, or the ever-present longing for a love five thousand miles away. He passes a couple of hours with supple Nuccia. Her fine ivory skin is one thing. She fits to size immediately, without fumbling and jostling, not all elbows, knees and hipbones like some women. He is not so naive as to fail to bathe thoroughly, but, in his vanity, does not ask whether she needs compensation beyond food, drink, cigarettes and bedding down on his bedding roll unrolled. She asks for nothing, taking with her a pack of American cigarettes (worth three of Bengal Lancers, the British ration, which are so bad, says Robbie, grinning with his big teeth under his natty brush, "the Italian prisoners of war in India rioted against their distribution, invoking the Geneva Convention").

The two smile and say "*Buon Giorno, Come' stai*" in passing, and have another heavy date a couple of days later. Then, as he and his driver Hank are parking in the narrow street after a day's trip, he sees Nuccia in a cute flowery dress entering her doorway, a few steps away from his own, with a handsome British naval officer in tow; he is spruced up for a party, ruby-lipped and ruddy-cheeked, happy of expression and carrying a sizeable portion of his boat's larder, and the Lieutenant does then realize that Nuccia has a living to make and others who appreciate her more, and he had better get on with his mission in life -- as if other officers have none, but I suppose that he is much more of an ideologue than practically anybody in the war, let's say more than 99% of the combatants, wherever in the world they

were.

With a jeep and a driver, he decides that he can derive some useful intelligence in the neighborhood of the ancient village of Licodia-Eubea, birthplace of his father in 1882, and can discover, in the first place, how it had survived the battle raging around the Island. He had dropped in on the town several years earlier with his brother and Danny Phelan, piano-player and traps-drummer respectively, of his jazz combo that played aboard ships in the summer. It was only a couple of hours' drive from Syracuse, up through orange groves and vineyards. The tomatoes had ripened and been picked and were being dried in the hot sun on walls, patios and verandas everywhere.

He stops for the night at Vizzini, to examine the heavy damage done by the planes and close-in fighting there, and to visit with the Allied Military Government officer who has already moved in. He is an intelligent and diligent man, American, who is the political head of the town and its chief provider of goods from the outside, from wheat to medical supplies, for the time being. Recognized promptly by them as a super-podesta or sindaco or mayor, he gets excellent cooperation from the Italians. He has had a few instances of errant Allied soldiers, Canadians, who, under the influence of, or looking for, liquor, break into places, like bears. He has a great many Italian ex-soldiers foraging for food and beating about the bush, and is trying to get Eighth Army to feed them, whereas Eighth Army would like him to feed them. Take them prisoners, he says. Let them go free, Eighth Army says. Give us our daily bread, say the Italians, civilian and soldier alike.

He drives around the mountain and down the cypress-lined road to Licodia only several miles away. Practically no damage there. He knocks on the door of a little stone house on the quiet main street, and is greeted with astonishment by his aunt, Francesca, a Franciscan nun in dark brown gown with white coif, her bundle of large old keys clanking at her waist. She is a tiny woman, chirpy, cracking jokes, but businesslike, too. Long ago she paid for an authorization to "go secular," and since then has taught the children of the first two grades of elementary school and lived alone in her ancestral house. Townsfolk crowd into her living room; she chooses and regulates the sample that shall enter to sit upon the many little padded wicker chairs. But he

does not even stay the night. There is a lot of coming and going. At intervals he goes up to the second floor to look up and down the street from the jutting wrought-iron balcony. Hank is minding the jeep in the shade across the street, watched carefully in turn by several urchins.

The Lieutenant hears a string of stories in short order. An American soldier was killed, and given temporary burial. He was the only casualty. He was entering the town from the south, the road from Vittoria and the beaches beyond. A ruined castle at that end of the village looks down from a rock eminence upon the road. He was killed by a German sniper who had been the last of the German rearguard. Our men will come for him, he says.

A large landholder, a "*pezzo grosso*", enters the nun's little house. The farm tenants are in rebellion, he complains. They are refusing to pay rents or give up shares of the crops; they say that is the way the Americans want it. Is it true? Has communism now arrived? No, says the Lieutenant, it is not true, but I refuse to attend a meeting to tell the world that it is not true; the AMG (still called AMGOT) officer in Vizzini is in charge of such problems. He finds this landlord distasteful; he probably deserves his troubles; he looks greedy.

Everybody is happy, says a politician, because the real reason that the Americans (whom they assume, even in this zone, are in charge of the *Inglese*) have come to Sicily (instead of Italy) is to announce a separate Republic of Sicily; it was the Italians' fault that the war started and the Sicilians never wanted it. The Lieutenant reminded them that the Sicilian invasion and liberation were part of a Total World War for One World and Democracy: they should not think of dismembering Italy.

It doesn't take many experiences of this kind to teach a major lesson of warfare, that every soldier is a propaganda machine wherever he is in contact with civilians. The American troops are less experienced than the British in both warfare and civilian relations, but because they come from an ethnic melting pot (a significant percentage of the invading Americans were of Italian origin), and also because they had suffered less from the Italians and from the War generally, and, finally, because there had been a deliberate educational campaign by the American Army to prepare the soldier for contact with the

civilian population, the Americans are probably superior as "psychological warriors."

He returns to Syracuse feeling that he should do something about this strong separatist sentiment that may well bring on civil war, and he is, furthermore, of the opinion that most responsible Sicilians are in no wise persuaded of the value of independence. The sentiment is expressed in the Syracuse newspaper and again later on in an editorial in the *Corriere di Catania*. The editorial declares loudly: *Sicilia e' Piccola!* and then goes on to reproach all those who believe that if they could only free the great Island from the exploitation by the mainland Italians, they would prosper; it scolds the population for believing that somehow the whole World War is directed at liberating Sicily. It exhorts them to patience, to cooperation, to working for a unified world, because Sicily is small!

The battle is raging around Etna. Catania at the southeast slope incurred heavy damage. It is their next home. The newest arrival from Africa, Captain Beauclerk, goes into town to find them shelter. He finds an excellent villa down toward the City Center, but it lacks the furnishings required by the group and they move into a villa farther out. It is just as well, because the first one harbors a large time bomb that blows it away a day later. Little is made of the deadly near miss. Captain Beauclerk is embarrassed and more frightened than the others because of the decision he had almost made.

Sergeant Leone, erstwhile Philadelphia schoolteacher, takes charge of the new urban villa, with its typical lush Italian garden where one can walk at dawn. He comes down with fever and chills: malaria. Thousands of men had contracted the disease in North Africa just before embarking; here the number quadrupled; by the end of the campaign both armies had lost more men from malaria than from all casualties incident to battle. There went the equal of all replacements for all battle casualties: pouf! And many units landed without mosquito nets, tantamount to landing without anti-aircraft guns. Remember the AA Officer Training at Camp Davis, where endurance to mosquito bites was rewarded, but malaria was hardly mentioned. How to put it: the Ancient Myth that War is a Struggle between Armed Men Befogs All Sense and Reason in All Types of Behavior.

Leone will not go to the hospital; he is a Christian Scientist. So is Captain Heycock, who nevertheless orders him to go for treatment and sends him off in a jeep. Our Man is turning into the driveway of the villa the same evening when he sees Leone walking up the road: "Hey, Sergeant, what are you doing here? You're supposed to be in the Hospital" "It wasn't necessary. I am O.K. Lieutenant, I am well." The Officer felt his brow and pulse. No sweat. No shakes. The guy is cured. And he stays cured. Heycock has grit; a letter from England tells him that a downed German plane crashed into his garden in England. Later he hears that his little son has chopped off a finger with a scythe. Not a word of complaint; only mumbled phrases of sympathy accepted.

Captain Beauclerk, the type of the tall, bony, ruddy Englishman, complete with a slight royal lisp to emulate King George, wants to edit the newspaper that is to be recommenced in Catania. For his part, the American insists upon handling the job. Robbie supports Alfred, letting him lie about his experience, which had to be collapsed into a period when he must have been a student and, yes, he was active, which he was not, on the University daily paper that was the size of a typical English wartime daily.

Beauclerk, embarrassed at the pathetic wartime British newspapers, is nevertheless a bona fide English newspaperman and ranking Captain. He bides his time. He knows the American will leave as soon as the road to Messina is passable. And he will live there happily ever after. Only fools want to keep moving up, or men like Robbie who have an interest, a tuna factory on Elba.

The *Corriere di Catania* is named after the Syracuse paper, and is printed in the offices of the preexisting newspaper which shut down before the invasion and was, of course, of Fascist persuasion. Now how does he find nonfascist, if not anti-Fascist, journalists. Obviously there would be none, after many years of Fascist dictatorship and censorship. Once more, to begin with, Robbie is editor, Alfred publisher. They clean up the wreckage and litter of the plant. They look to see who is skulking about, printers, yes, and they will work well. A Seventh Day Adventist from Turin appears, named Palma, about as marginal a character-type as you can find in Catania, and he is

hired as an associate editor because he has been publishing religious tracts. Then an apparition appears in the form of a well-dressed well-set-up woman of a certain age and decorum, who says that she is a writer of features of all kinds and seeks work. The Lieutenant hires her, and Sicily has its first victory for Woman's Lib. "Fosca of Agrigento" she calls herself. She writes calmly about life on the eve of the invasion, on the problems of women, about attitudes toward war, and she helps fill the paper and gives it a little class, as they say, and a sense of warmth. Robbie, the misogynist, is amused; it offers him grounds for scornful remarks.

Next occurs a political crisis because there does show on scene a true journalist and editor, a Giuseppe Longhitano, and although the Lieutenant quizzes him about his prior life, he finds there no indication of fascistic activities or beliefs. He likes him. He is square-cut, has an Italo Balbo goatee, moves fast, about forty years old, quiet, low-voiced. He quickly reveals himself to be an excellent editor and publisher. The job of running the newspaper slips off the Lieutenant's back.

Then the American is told by informants that Longhitano is a former notorious Fascist journalist. He interrogates him again. He inquires about. After some days of investigation it develops that there was a Fascist newspaperman named Longhitano, not so uncommon a name as one might think. So far as he can discover, the two are different characters. He is left in charge when they leave. He runs the paper under an owner who has appeared and this Signor Ardizzone, it develops, also was not a committed Fascist and so could be brought back into the picture; the two of them get along; so, within a month or two, Catania, the most progressive of the Southern cities, has the best newspaper. Or at least, such rumors did come to the ears, and no one gainsaid them.

Mt. Etna presents major difficulties to envelopment. Both the Americans and the British are working their way over roadblocks and traps, through bottlenecks and ravines, beneath blasted bridges, avoiding mines. Under persistent fire. He goes up now and then and the desolation is pitiful. Corporal Ignatius Laudando is driving, and the jeep slides off one of the roads along a rib of Mt. Etna one twilight. No

serious harm done. He stands by the road watching the curl of smoke above Etna and smelling the renewed air of evening, pissing, then shifts position as he discerns emerging from the dusty debris the helmet and face of a German paratrooper. He mutters: "Excuse me!"

End of August 1943 letters

