

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 16, 1943 V-MAIL

Darling --

Thursday

This has certainly been a busy day. I'm really working like a madwoman now, as if every moment is my last. Mostly I arrange and re-arrange your books, have completed those bizarre new bookcases. It's an endless process, since you still have books in Washington, & my good sister informs me I have a couple of cartons of books in N. Y., which she'd be glad to send me. I should have been a librarian, with my compulsion for topical as well as aesthetic book compositions. But it's fun, & the house-setting-up is nearly over now. My home-made drapes (red) are up, & look very slap-happy & home-made. I trust B. will be in in the A.M. to fix all that.

So much for the house. I hope the above will be the last lines I ever devote to the subject, already worn thin over three months. The baby is getting very active. It has had one arm sticking visibly into and damn near out of my stomach all day. If he doesn't put it back where it belongs by bedtime I'm going to give him a good wallop. I took care of a neighbor's baby this afternoon, a 10-month old boy. I just let him crawl around & pull stuff down, and he was no trouble at all, except to Cooney, who fears and loathes crawling children. Babies that age are very much fun, I decided, if you don't have priceless Ming china around & don't mind a little spit, which I don't.

Ours will probably be taking long hikes at that age, if it's like its father, which I profoundly hope it will be. But you'd better see that it keeps his feet off my stomach then! Speaking of babies, & I do all the time these days, Liz Evers dropped me a line -- she thinks Bill will be going to San Diego this January & she'll follow him, by plane. I'm sorry that this has to happen to them now. I think she's about 6 months pregnant, & probably hasn't been so well. She was in bed the 1st 3 months. Furthermore, she'll have a problem too in setting up a home for herself & the kid, since her mother is a Republican & this is an election year.

Last time - in '40 - Liz had to move out because of ideological differences.

Aren't you glad you're slogging around in the mud, free from all domestic strife? I'm only fooling. If you feel anywhere near the way I do, you'd give up all your teeth & fillings too for us to be together. Sometimes I get mad at the kid because I think, if it weren't for him (all right, her) I could (1) take a more heroic attitude towards your being so close to scenes of strife, and (2) be closer to you, viz. Africa or England, as a Wac, perhaps. This way, it's not just the happiness of our person that depends on your staying well. Oh well, you'll be home soon and can [*walk ?*] the baby yourself.

All my love. J.

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 17, 1943

Darling --

A letter from you today, the first one in quite a while. The mails here too have been rather clogged up. This one was a brief V-mail dated Nov. 29. However, last week I got an Air Mail dated December 2. It makes one a bit dubious of the efficacy of V-mail, and makes me downright resentful, since I always find my mouthings even more pedestrian than usual when they are bounded by those awful red borders and writ with the knowledge that I must double, quadruple and even sextuple our respective names and addresses. And while yours is a beautiful name, in fitting with the rest of your person and character, it takes on a punitive quality when I must write it sixteen times -- like having to chalk up "I'm sorry I spit in teacher's eye" a hundred times every morning.

Well, today was fraught with excitement, at least for a pregnant woman whose level of life is low indeed -- I don't mean by that my spirits -- it's just that I don't do much so the little I do do is news, to me, anyway. Bernice got me a ticket for her

Convocation, and I went with Fritz and Helen Hawkins, to see the purple velvet draped on our Bea. There weren't many graduates, at any level, and half of the people whose names were on the program weren't there. Even Hutch-crutch didn't show up. Haydon of comparative religions was the speaker, and didn't say much, except for an optimistic reference to the Century of the Common Man. The only groups that showed up en masse were the medicos who got their doctors and their 1st lieutenancies or j.g.'s, as the case was, at the same time. One thing for military life -- it gets the crowd out and also makes them walk decently down the aisle. This was the first convocation I ever attended, and it was definitely second-string. However, it was nice and short, an hour and a half, which was considerably better than mine own at Smith, where everybody from Raymond Gram Swing to Margaret Mitchell got up and bent our dewy ears.

We all had dinner at Mortons and then came home just a little while ago. I just detached myself from the group to write this. However, I'll have to rejoin them after a while, because Helen is staying with me tonight. Rosable is coming in in the morning from New York, and we're all going to the station to meet her.

Everybody except me was full of dreams and premonitions that I would start having the baby in the middle of Convocation. I guess poor Bernice figured subconsciously that after waiting all these years for this day, somebody was sure to steal her thunder. However, our child was considerate, and so far shows no signs of appearing. I'm still positive it won't come before your birthday. I wish everybody else were that confident. Bernice's mother, who is also here, brought her a dress that didn't fit her, so she sold it to me, since it looked to be my size and style, and I could buy it at a wholesale price (now that we're spending for three, I'm getting very circumspect about my clothes budget). Anyway, for the first time really, I'm getting anxious to be rid of our little watermelon and almost think he would be less trouble outside than in. All my maternity clothes are getting dirty and damn boring, which I really think is the chief motivation for my present haste. And although I really haven't had much cause to

complain, I am getting good and tired of the petty malaises of pregnancy -- the back that itches in the middle of the night, with none to scratch it, the legs that cramp, the heart that burns (a feeling that doesn't come so much from what you eat as from where the baby decides to put his feet that day), the banging of the stomach against tables because you forget how big you really are.

Our narcissus plant is getting to be loathsomely big, but still no flowers. I am so afraid that I'll go to the hospital before it flowers, and then it will either flower while I'm not here, or die because nobody will water it. Either way I'll never get to see them. That happened once before to some petunias we raised in a neglectful sort of way. I went to California and was there when they burst into their brief season of glory. Anyway, you got to see them, and wrote me a very nice letter about it, too. Next time I have a baby I'm sure there won't be so many mental hazards surrounding the event, since you will be here to water the plants, feed the dog (all right, not Cooney, some other dog then) and scratch Jill's back.

Dr. Eve Balkan, another friend of Bea's, who is a psychiatrist, I think, said she had read my brother-in-law's article in *Psychiatry* -- Buss's one on Shostakovitch, that is, but couldn't make head nor tail out of it. I never did see it, and probably never will, and even if I did, I'm sure I wouldn't know what I was reading, since it presumes a knowledge of music. Have you seen it and what did you think?

Last night another pal of mine in the building who is married to an intern had a party. I brought her my ice cubes and they gave me a drink. They were all interns from Illinois Research there and all they talked about was medicine. I think medical students are very narrow, but their talk is more interesting than the narrow talk of other professionals, I think. This gal has a little boy who looks very much like Joey. I guess I wrote you yesterday about taking care of him for her. He's a swell little baby.

God I wish you were here to scratch me. I've got a kind of circulating itch which would allow free play to your talents. It starts with my ears and winds slowly down to my ankles. Somehow my feet escape the scourge. I wish you were here anyway, and occasionally think it's a big gyp that you're not. And if we're not in Rome by Christmas, you just come home and don't have anything more to do with those people.

But I wouldn't seriously urge you to acts of insubordination and dereliction of duty, for I honestly feel, as you do, that victory will be ours soon. And, as ever, I'm glad you'll have a part in it, even if I must go unscratched and unloved until the day.

All my love,

Jill

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 17, 1943

[In the top margin:]

Dear Santa: Please send me a baby for Christmas, any baby, & send Jill one too, 'cause she's nice. Your little friend and admirer. Alfred, 1st Lt., CAC.

P. S. Our stove pipe is too thin and besides it's hot. And if you try to crawl into the tent, you'll break your back, like we do. I don't really know what to tell you to do.

Dear Love,

I am relapsing slowly into my disgruntled mood of several days ago, before I had received those two letters from you. It is infuriating to think that that big package of your letters is still beating around between here and Sicily, somehow managing to avoid the local post office. Maybe they will be served up to me for Christmas by some well-meaning but stupid clerk.

Did you know that this is the orange-picking season in Italy? I

had that fact brought crudely to my attention when I heard the corporal say to a group of stooges, "an when yuh git tru wit dem tables, git out an plice up dem ornges." It seems that for lack of any locals to harvest, they being forbidden in the camp site, the fruit grows ripe and red and then just drops all over the place. Added dietary note: for breakfast I had two cups of American canned orange juice.

The roads are getting much better. I only slid a fraction of the way to my destination yesterday. My jeep is a terror. Part of the exhaust pipe is missing and it creates a great din when it is running. It sounds like a plane in a power dive. What is worse is its habit of back-firing. I met a guy with one just like it the other day and he deliberately cultivates the habit to see the cabs of the trucks in front open to spill out their occupants. The soldiers think they are being strafed and they dive into the ditch. Of course, he doesn't make many fast friends.

Galsworthy was telling some very amusing stories about Churchill last night at dinner. While he was Winnie's private secretary, he had practically to live with the man, and scarcely ever closed his eyes. The Prime Minister lights a fresh foot-long cigar the first thing in the morning, as soon as he opens his eyes. He apparently has the most amazing energy. As in the case of most men who really love their work, he never takes off a moment for "leisure". He is his most playful before going to bed around three in the morning. He takes a nap in the afternoon.

As if to sympathize with the news of your cold, I caught one myself immediately thereafter. It was put under control right away and is practically gone now. We had some watery mashed potatoes today for lunch. They weren't unwelcome. Potatoes of any sort are a treat overseas. The British put them in cans sometimes, but then they aren't very good either. However, their defects served to remind me of the fine mashed potatoes we used to prepare with butter and cream and always more butter and cream. Remember the winter evenings which we used to spend whipping ourselves and the potatoes into a frenzy. They

would take on a fine golden color and fluff up until they were no longer just potatoes or cream or anything save "mashed-potatoes", a separate entity in the eyes of God and our little family. And as the odors of the lamb chops and fresh peas spread and the coffee began to perk and I beat and beat the damned potatoes to my utter exhaustion, I grew frantic with a gnawing, painful hunger that made me wild-eyed and irascible beyond toleration until I could finally sit down to gorge and stuff myself. As the preparations went on from the initial stage and waxed more complex and feverish, and you became busier and more flushed, and I became more and more famished, there were times when we met or passed in the center of the room and I didn't kiss you. But those times were so few that I can't regret now to not have kissed you enough when I had the chance.

It is growing dark and chilly and it is time to make a batch of my Christmas poison special. Ray and Arthur just got back from questioning some new prisoners and they are enchanted with the idea. I shall, however, toast my first cup to you, darling, for you are my only love and a very fine one to have.

Your

Al

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 18, 1943 V-MAIL

Dear Love,

If this goes very fast, it might even get to you around Christmas and then you will know that I am very well at this late date, bored to death of the war (which is as mildly as I can express it), and spending an undiminished time in flattering thoughts of you. The mail situation is a stinking shame. Hardly any of your letters of the past two months have gotten to me. Today I got a very friendly letter from Howard and one from Charlton Beck of the U. Foc. Alumni group. Beck's was just a cheery note of

greetings, and had something in it about the Po River. I haven't thought of the Po since I had some rash of optimism a long time back. None of us are exactly breathless with the speed with which we are advancing. It is difficult for you to imagine how hopelessly optimistic are the newspapers and magazines at home. No matter what the date of any paper for the past months, one would gather that the end of the war is just a matter of days or weeks. An account in Time mag. of the effects of the Moscow declaration on the morale of the Austrians several weeks ago is fantastically incorrect. And the same things holds for most war news even in The New York Times. Howard assures me that you are very healthy, actually strapping is the impression conveyed. He also says that you struck it off well with his wife. It's just your innate kindness, I guess. I also said something about Uncle Bill sending me the Daily News as a Christmas present. Good enough. With great events unfolding even now in my fatherless household, I have initiated a be-kind-to-little-children-and-bambini week. That can't mean very much to me here save that the chewing gum and lifesavers which are our ration candies will be given out to the urchins instead of tossed about the tent. I detest the candies we get. Once a week we get a box of "chuckles" which I don't like either. The children about the countryside are getting to look more pathetic as the weather gets colder. I think Christmas falls at a very logical point in the year when the social instincts are climatically strongest. People are disgusting when the weather is very hot, but come a cold blast and human companionship takes on great value. Since we sleep five to the tent, I have full value, thank you.

I wish I could think of strange and exotic words which synonymize with love, so that I would not need to tell you it over and over again. I know some people use "revere" but that wouldn't be very true, and then they use "adore" which again isn't exact, or neither "worship" and there are hardly any others. I'm afraid you must bear the repetition and try to read into it my chagrin at not being able to use my lips, or eyes, or hands. All love to you forever. Al

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 19, 1943 (A)

My darling --

Saturday

The narcissus is bursting into flower, a phenomenon which I despaired of only yesterday. Though it's still half-in half-out of its green casing, I can see that it's beautifully white and papery-looking, and smells almost artificially sweet. Naturally I take it to be an omen of some sort of tremendous good luck for us -- like you're coming home soon or the little one being excessively lovely, healthy and (to please its Mom) masculine.

I'm using this fancy paper because it's the sort of stationery I'd use if it were my first letter to you. In that respect alone does familiarity breed indifference to the niceties of inter-personal relationships, so far as we are concerned, anyway. Writing you as often as I do, I could never (1) afford to use pretty white note paper (2) keep up this specious semblance of a neat Spencerian hand. Did I thus try to keep up appearances in my first letter to you? Probably not, since I was living at the Harvard Hotel and had probably abandoned all hope of ever seeing light, friends, and love again. Weren't we stinkers with one another then -- you for abandoning me for a career, and me for interfering with it. To make the understatement of the week, I think things worked out rather well in the end.

Rosable came in today. It was worth calling & going down to the train 20 times between the hours of 8 AM and 3 PM, until that awful Pennsy Trailblazer finally did get in, to hear the choice morsels of praise she habitually drops in your direction. I just came from dinner at the local YMCA with her and Helen Hawkins, and am very tired and glad to be alone. Helen and I must have been up until 2, practicing the occult arts of flood control. Some dope, namely me, emptied a crowded ashtray into the john, & we spent an anxious hour or two watching the waters rise perilously & recede slowly. Finally we got the bright idea of dumping a can of lye into the bowl. That must have worked, because now the gadget operates at its no-more-than-

usual level of inefficiency.

Helen also is a gal who is lots of fun and simple & healthy, when one gets to know her. And I have two more playmates, or rather, they are Cooney's friends -- two sisters of 4 & 8 years, respectively whose family live in the building. Their mother, who is that stark Californian married to a German designer, sent them over today to meet Cooney, since we both thought it would be nice for children and dog to play together outside after our baby comes. Now I can't decide whether I'd prefer one pestiferous nagging dog or two precocious children on my hand.

Of course, the main object of my writing should not be lost from view -- to tell you that I love you enormously, that I think of you, talk of you, or want to hear about you all the time, and that waiting for you is probably the hardest thing I'll ever have to do.

Always,

Jill

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 19, 1943 (B)

Sweetheart darling --

In lieu of my usual letter - or order - of the day, a Christmas card for you. Our baby will undoubtedly outshine that one in sweetness, beauty and an air of suppressed devilry.

Besides, I don't wish to write more because nothing but evil has befallen me this day. Cooney, in his gay abandoned way, nipped a boy on a sled on the Midway (the boy was in motion). Only this time he got the leg, not the Finchley pants. As a result (I didn't see this part) the boy told his father, the father told the police, & pretty soon a squad car accosts our Jill. They (the police) were very nice but Cooney has to go to the hospital now for 2 weeks for rabies observation. Can you beat it!

Woefully & insolvently yours,

Your ever-loving Jill

* * * *

[*Christmas card*: Bringing you the Season's Best Wishes]

and Jill's complete love, loyalty and faith.

- And the prayer that there'll never be another Christmas when wives must send their husbands Christmas cards!

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 19, 1943

Dear Love,

Another bright day is about over. Tomorrow morning, I must get up before dawn and will enjoy doubly the bright day if it finally dawns. Though today was Sunday it was exactly like every other day, except that there is a slightly slack feeling which everyone feels himself entitled to, because that was the way we were brought up. A Sunday is also an occasion for big things -- attacks, unusual activity and work, etc. which shows in an interesting way how two opposite behaviors come from the same basic group, observance of a tradition. The officers in our group, myself included, spent an hour today being soundly trounced by the enlisted men in a game of volley-ball. I found a special services officer the other day who gave me a net and a ball. The last time I played was in the California desert with my old outfit. Judging by the expertness of the others, their periods of disuse were much greater.

Speaking of the old desert rats, I met our twin battalion the other day not far from here. They've been over some time, first in Tunis but haven't had a very exciting time. I only remember one officer from the Texas days but had a good time messing with them one day. They had their mess "hall" cut into the side of a cliff and like everyone else have succeeded in acclimatizing to the Italian terrain and weather. I learnt with some awe that my

old bunch spent a good year in that God-forsaken desert before being shipped to a fairly static assignment in the East. I learnt too some time ago that they had lost a considerable number of the old officers by cadres, transfers, etc.

At dinner tonight, we got to discussing war books and the difference between this and the last war, regarding literary commentaries. I thought that it will be more difficult to get good books out of this one because so much of it is flashy, temporary, fitful and daring. A great novel needs a humdrum atmosphere to test universal personalities. It needs a period of time during which the war is related to life and the war must be such as to present a continuous stimulus to test emotions and ideals. Perhaps my imagination is limited, but I cannot see a great novel coming out of aviation, paratroopers, rangers or amphibious operations. And war on our part is so much fancy stuff up to now. There is the individual experience and it stands by itself, do or die, over and not to be repeated, an episode whose meaning is lost because of its brevity. Again we may look to the Russians for a contribution to war novels, for there the occasions for the experience are more commonly presented. Not that war doesn't affect us. Great novels on the social aspects of war may occur but they will have little to do with the new techniques of combat directly.

I dropped in the other day for a chat with a friend I just barely missed seeing in Cal a year ago. He's still full of his ideals and enthusiastic about his work, even if not too successful.

I would like to give you commentaries on the articles regarding Italy & the war in general. The little I do get to read seems to indicate very much a lack of realism in the news reporting. It is wonderful literally to see the sunny optimism that pervades all the periodicals & papers, unconsciously in many cases I know. Not that the war is going to be lost, far from that. The end is sure. But for example, to read all the rosy dispatches about our supplies and huge armies and about cracking German morale, Italian resistance, etc., one would think that we need only to walk up Italy. That is completely false. The German soldier and

the people he has coerced into fighting with him are still fighting like hell and he is a fine soldier despite all outward signs of collapse.

I am sorry to be writing these serious things when all the time you are vitally concerned with our infant. So am I but I'm sufficiently stupefied by the whole thing not to [be] able to write anything at all about it. I am thinking a great deal about you these days and wish there were ways of your knowing it truly. I often think that to write down a sentiment when it is really profound somehow cheapens it because it is so easy just to write down words. Any shallow person could do the same. You must believe me when I tell you simply that I ask no more of the world than just you and whatever we produce together, however inadequately it is put into words.

I had to stop to stoke the fire again. Wood is a fickle element. It burns in a great rush, a furor of heat and light. The tent becomes crisp and warm. One settles into his letter or book in cozy oblivion. Then suddenly a creeping cold assails him. The fire is down to two or three embers, huddled for warmth into a smoldering dark corner of the stove, whence they must be coaxed with a nourishing twig or old paper and splinters until they venture out in ruddy triumph, with friendly tentacles and a fattening stomach to a final leap and dance that knocks against their iron prison. Only then can I return to say I love you and send you some thousands of passionate kisses.

Your

Al

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 21, 1943 (A)

My dearest darling --

Tuesday

Yesterday was the first day in several weeks I missed writing you, and I'm properly ashamed, particularly when I received a

V-mail of yours, to my great delight. But as a man who missed 25 of his wife's letters and who bumped his head into a wall, you must know the depth of human woe, and therefore sympathize with me (even as I did with you when I read your letter).

My woes all center about the events of Sunday, to be known as Damned Dog Day in future history texts. As I already wrote you, Cooney bit a little boy on a sled over at the Midway. Moving objects, you know. The police quickly apprehended us and although the wound was not grave, told me Coon had to go under observation for rabies for two weeks. There wouldn't be any criminal charges, it was just a city health law. This I duly inscribed to you in my Sunday night letter (only this time it was in the back of a Christmas card) and went out to mail it. On the way back, Cooney ran across the street to smell a dog, and finding it to be a male, ran back. The other dog followed and was promptly run over by a yellow cab. I was the only person around -- the cab didn't so much as slow down -- if he had in the first place the accident wouldn't have happened -- and so, throwing my milk bottles on the ground and breaking both, I was witness to the last moments of a poor little yellow dog. His back was broken and so it didn't take him long to die. I put him on the edge of the grass plot next to the bank, and today he was gone, so I presume that finally somebody cleared him away. It was a very sad experience, really. I had never seen anything just die like that before.

No sooner did I get home and wash my face, because I was bawling copiously, than the doorbell rang and another policeman and another little boy confronted me. Apparently Cooney had bitten him too, while sledding. This kid had quite a bad bite, but since the dog was going under observation anyway, there wasn't much I could do except reassure the mother that so far as I knew, the dog was healthy.

Then Mom arrived with Mamie and Dorothy and a vast quantity of last-minute stuff, like little pads for the baby's basket. They were just as shattered by the events of the day as I was. So Cooney drove back with them that night and Dad took him over

to the vet in the morning, where he'll stay for the next two weeks. I feel sorry for the dog because he's never been away from home before and one really can't say he deserves it because he doesn't know what he's being so cruelly punished for. I'm the only one who will learn a lesson from all this -- to wit, keep the dog on the leash around children and moving objects, like your pants. And I miss him very much, even though I haven't been alone a minute since he left, and though I am more or less guarded by Uncle Joe's 38, which Mom brought. It's a rather nice gun incidentally, so I sent him a check for 15 for it. It isn't loaded naturally, and I probably won't load it until you come home and teach me how to use it. So it isn't fear or lack of company that makes me yearn for him -- it's just his ugly black puss. Yesterday I went out to Joan's to bring Vesta's Xmas present -- some records dressed down for little kids. She is sure her baby is coming any minute. In fact, we have a bet on, her fifty cents to my dollar that it won't be here by tomorrow. She's very uncomfortable. I'm not, as long as I get enough rest, which I haven't been. Then I came home and Rosable came over for dinner, and we talked until two this morning. It was lots of fun to have such an orgy of talk. It's been ages since I discussed anybody's sex life, principles of art criticism (Rosable had a class on that at the school where she's teaching in N.Y.) and various people's neuroses. Rosable is meeting all sorts of exotic, big-name people in New York, which gives her a lot of fun and satisfaction. Nevertheless, she is enchanted by all the domesticity and maternity I have swatched myself in, although she says that every time she looks at my stomach, she thinks that it is some sort of practical joke I'm playing on myself. I guess it would have been hard for me, who was at least three-quarters as vain about my body as Rosable, to understand how a woman could get that pregnant and still not hide in a closet before, but when it happens to oneself, one gets used to it. Similarly, if you had watched me all through, it wouldn't come as a shock to you to see the body beautiful disappear. You might even get to think, as I do, that stomach and all, I am still inconspicuously pregnant and have rather a good figure (the common delusion of women like Mir and me, who really never

think that they've lost their figures, or could ever do so, even when they get to be ninety in the shade).

Some neighbor, to my great indignation, woke us up at an unseemly hour this morning, inquiring how I felt. I certainly feel lousy, thank you, particularly after such expressions of solicitude. This woman, the Californian, has taken a great fancy to me, in which I suspect more than meets the Freudian eye. I think that yesterday I gave a good enough portrait of a woman in love with her husband by hauling out your pictures to show her. She's fairly intelligent, or anyway, neurotic enough to give the appearance of being interesting and intelligent, the way t.b. makes the crassest oaf, at some stage, look like one of the angels.

After writing you for months about how I was going to see Oklahoma, I just called Mac and told her to dispose of my ticket. We were supposed to go tomorrow night, but I honestly don't feel like dragging myself downtown. All I want to do is sleep and read, neither of which I do very much of, because of all the people that keep intruding. For really the first time I wish the baby would come right away, and no more dilly-dallying. I want to get going with it in the apartment -- with the feeding and the loving and all -- and sort of resent this period of suspended animation, when now I get too tired to carry on a normally active life, and when in the hospital I'll be confined to bed. Maybe after the baby is born and I stop taking vitamin B pills, I'll lose some of this drive, and get back to being the same old Jill, who oversleeps in the morning and healthily resents work.

I meant to clip you an item from one of the dispatches from Italy, about a soldier who, when interviewed, said "And I opened my Christmas package and there was a can of Spam, but I'd still like to go home."

Anyway, Christmas is nearly over with, thank goodness. Next year, we'll have one another, a passing fair gift in my eyes. Oh yes, and the baby -- already I'm overlooking the child in favor of the father. Poor kid -- he'll have more competition perhaps than

most for his mother's affection, or anyway, attention (I'm sure I'm capable of loving you, the baby, Cooney and a brace of tropical fish at the same time).

Take care of yourself, darling, and ignore all my complaints, because by the time you receive them, time will have healed all.

Except my desire for you.

I love you very much.

Jill

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 21, 1943 (B) V-MAIL

Darling -

Tuesday

I've already written you a fairly long Air Mail letter earlier this evening. But not trusting any form of mail these days, and wanting to talk to you anyway, I'll put off bedtime a little longer. I had some sewing to do tonight & tried to lighten the hateful task by listening to the radio, which dripped Xmas cheer all over the rug. As a result, I am cheerless in the exact proportions to which Bob Hope et al were full of holiday mirth. There is a peculiar psychology in missing someone you love -- the pain becomes greatest during the times you deviate from the ordinary, & to most people, distasteful, routine of living -- the Sundays, the feast days, the idle moments just before you go to bed. Last Christmas seemed incomplete because we had to spend it in an unfamiliar clime, away from any of our families. How ungrateful I was! This Christmas there'll be the family, but no you -- an infinitely less desirable state of affairs, even though I'll have the enviable role of playing Momma & hostess to the folks, because they'll be coming down here for dinner. But I almost wish the baby would start coming Christmas eve, so I could be preoccupied and therefore spared these poignant thoughts of you on Christmas day. However, I'm not forgetting that the pain I feel for your absence is yours many times over,

since your Christmas has all the disadvantages -- a strange country, no family, no Jill, and a natural apprehension about the baby. I almost wish you could have the baby (painlessly) so you wouldn't have to worry about me. It would be pleasant, anyway, to see the consternation of 5th Army medics if that were to happen.

Stay healthy, dear one.

All my love,

Jill

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 22, 1943 V-MAIL

My Love,

It rained all last night and continues this morning. I ducked into this tent to write you a note before running off on my job. I still have received practically none of your letters of the past two months and would strangle the cheerful villain who has filed them away somewhere. I expect to spend the night out probably in a room Patti discovered in a bombed-out town along the line. I don't need to tell you that the towns which are in the path of the action are more heaps of rubble than anything else. The only indestructible dwellings are the niches and caves cut into bluffs in washes and road sides, a few people generally remain around each town during practically all of the fighting, but most of the population just seems to disappear. I wrote Paul that an architect should be in great demand all over the world after this war. That goes for purveyors of house paint in Italy, too. Italy needs a good coat of paint as much as anything else. There seems to be no attempt or perhaps there are no resources left for keeping anything looking new. It may be a deep preference for ruins after all. There are some beautifully designed farmhouses in Campania, graceful, sturdy-looking things, with much of their beauty marred by lack of paint and windows. One, especially, that I pass often on the main road near Capua

strikes me as being almost ideally proportioned and functionally designed. The countryside itself is very beautiful, much like the rolling New England country or parts of Wisconsin. It is well worth seeing some day and again I offer myself as your guide. I'm sure that I will appreciate it much more with you as company. Just now the scenery has a sort of delicate mourning about it, like a beautiful, tubercular girl, with a freshness, but without robustness, with a sort of sweet languishing wherein there are patches of permanent green Spring and a weakening grip on life.

Brown Roberts, Galsworthy, Heycock and myself had a final evening together in Naples two nights ago, to celebrate their going away. I hope I see both of them someday again. I don't doubt but that I shall. We drank some bad types of wine and cognacs, and were able to find some very bad Martini cocktails. See if you can store up the makings of some of your really good martinis before I return. I haven't had a really good mixed drink since leaving America.

This is a frivolous way of talking, but we had cocktails after we got married and I guess I can think of them when I'm about to get a baby. I must get going, damn it.

Many kisses and all my love to you, darling.

Your,

Al

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 23, 1943

My darling Al --

Thursday

As the day draws nigh, you'd think I'd go around with the beam of a Virgin Mary in my eye, but no, instead, my natural irascibility has hit an all-time high. If they had court-martial trials for conduct unbecoming a mother, I would get twenty years. I

called a streetcar conductor a sonofabitch the other day -- he didn't stop the car sufficiently when I got off -- and have generally been telling everybody I know to go to hell. But look at my reasons:

1. Joan outfoxed me and also won a buck from your hard-earned pay by giving forth with a large son yesterday. I had bet her she wouldn't have her baby by Wednesday, and she did. Actually, I'm very excited about the whole thing, but am just too envious for words, because I still must wait, because she had a son and now I'm sure we'll have a girl, and because the whole thing took about four hours. I hope Tom is able to get up here by Christmas to see the little guy.

2. Well, that really was good news, but the rest isn't -- I mean, all the people who keep dropping in when my only wish is to be let alone so that I can read Jane Austin, pine for you and wince in comfort. The baby is just about jumping out of my skin. Last night no less than four people dropped in between the hours of eight and ten -- Janice, Rosable and date, and Virginia, that neighbor of mine. Of course, I hadn't eaten dinner and Rosable in particular embarked on a non-stop story while I pined and panted in hunger. I had spent a merry day doing the laundry, which consisted of dropping four clean sheets on the cellar floor so I had to start all over again, and causing the good bedspread and curtains to run all red and white all over. Jesus, was I sore. Then, when all these people arrived, I had started to paint something or other, having decided to drown my sorrow in red paint, and they interrupted things so that the paint job got all streaky. Oh yes, I remember what I was painting now. Flower pots. Mom expressed some admiration for my plants, so I made designs on three little pots and filled them up with plants for her. This is the first free-hand, or, for that matter, any kind of drawing I've ever done and it's lots of fun and very easy to do. It is on flower pots anyway, because all you do is go round and round with a simple line or stroke.

3. I miss Cooney and think every phone call is somebody's lawyer calling up to sue, or the police deciding that he had had

criminal intent.

4. Walter wrote me one of his fatuous flatulent letters, and being at an unusually low threshold of tolerance, it made me sore as hell. He's such an asshole he could be arrested for indecent exposure. I'd send it to you, but it would probably only annoy you. Full of platitudes and some very confused neurotic statements about parenthood. Both he and Daisy have mentioned -- and I thought I detected a querulous note -- that they hadn't heard from you since you went away. What the hell do they expect? You keep right on not writing them, unless you found their Christmas gift so overwhelmingly [*on a spot of ink: shit!*] alluring, which hardly seems likely since I think it was Spam, that you just can't help yourself. 5. Anyway, I am not mad at any DeGrazia, living or dead. And Unkie sent me a check for Christmas for ten dollars, so I am not mad at him.

6. But I am mad at all the stupid people who keep sending me Christmas cards, therefore filling up the mailbox and making me think I have a letter from you in it. I thought to send all of Mom's friends Christmas cards from us because I thought it would please her, but now I am paying the price by having to receive Christmas cards from them all. The Petersons sent me a card at least a yard square containing a large color print of old Glory wafting over Mt. Vernon, with suitable patriotic verse inside. My God. Do you remember Ben Gant, Eugene's brother in Look Homeward, Angel? Till the day he died, he never said much of anything except, "My God, will you look at that?" He was an uneducated boy with tender instincts, and I think he died with that sardonic commentary on life's corniness on his lips. Well, that's the way I feel now.

I'm enclosing an article by Lippmann on your old flame, representation. I don't know whether it's good or not, but I sort of liked it. Anyway, there's a little dribble at the bottom about the Fifth Army which you might like to read. That reminds me -- Rosable asked if you had written saying you'd seen the Sistine chapel and the Pantheon and so forth. Again assuming the pose of Ben Gant, I snarled, For God's sake, Rosable.

Anyway the house is clean. I sweated it out all day with Bernice's vacuum cleaner. So now I can go to the hospital with clean house which will soon get dusty again. I guess I told you the folks were coming down here Christmas day. I bought a goose and Mom will cook it, I hope. It's a very unfamiliar bird to me. I don't think I ever ate one, as a matter of fact.

Why do people get jaundice, anyway? Gosh, I hope you don't get anything like that. Take care of yourself, darling, if there's any way of doing it. Somebody is going to have to be a fit companion for the baby, and the way I feel now, all I'm good for is breaking and entering and raising marijuana in a window box.

But in my sourest mood, I still love you and am happy to find none of my animus directed against you. And if you were only here, I'd probably be sweet as sugar.

All my love, dearest.

Jill

Jill [*ink spot*: "even the pen is against me"]

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 23, 1943 (A) V-MAIL

Dearest Love,

I have no intention of letting this measly V-letter suffice for tonight's writing to you. I shall do the larger opus after I finish this and a couple of minor letters. However, it has been a banner day for me with letters and packages. I have your letters of Dec. 1 and 4, one of Dad's, one from Daisy, a good package from Mom and another from Daisy, a copy of private Marsdon, and a letter from a confectionery in NY returning \$1.44 overpaid on candy for you and Mom. I am very happy indeed despite the incessant rain and mud, especially since you say that you are in fine health and approaching the title bout in fine spirits. That last brief diagnosis was exactly what I needed. Then in Mom's

package came several pictures, three of which showed you to very good advantage, though my heart went out to you in the one where you were in the grip of the two weed-sucking villains. You looked very pretty and appealing despite the signs of maternity. I hope you'll be taking pictures all along. Their propaganda value is undeniable. I think I'll be able to send you some soon, too.

Give my love to everyone and many kisses to you, darling. I wish you were here to scrub my back. I need a bath badly.

Love

Al

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 23, 1943 (B)

Dearest Jill,

You may be surprised at my writing you first a V-mail letter and then in the same evening another letter, but it just can't be helped. My love will out. I have just finished building up the fire in the other tent and Jim Clark is minding it while he reads. I came into the office tent where several people are stewing over something to do with the artillery and Martin is writing a Christmas message to the Germans. It is raining with a grim, bleak persistence, and is not to be confused with a White Christmas. The mud is very slimy, a thickened black substance that dries to a dull grey on clothing. Generally, the soldiers aren't feeling too chipper. The campaign is moving along slowly despite the great collective effort involved. The Germans cling to their hills. A funny situation on morale has arisen, whereby a much larger percentage of the Americans than of the enemy feel that the end of the war is a foregone conclusion. The Germans fight hard and desperately and we have a feeling that they are stupidly eking out their remaining moments. A very large number of packages seem to have arrived from America in time for Christmas. My initial embarrassment at receiving a tin

of meat was more than compensated for by the gifts other people got. Practically everyone who got gifts from home got meat, lifesavers, chewing gum or bath salts. We are all in a community now of ridiculous recipients. And I still can't force myself to chew gum or eat hard candy. This may be a second cause of the glum faces you see about.

Daisy sent me several nice things, like after-dinner mints, several rum-soaked cookies, some hard candy, and 744 razor blades of which I already have a surplus. I never saw so many blades in my life. However, I appreciate the effort and shall thank her very shortly. Mom's second package of salami and photographs and candy bars was inspired. All three stand me in good stead. There were other things like soup pastes, which are OK, I guess.

Daisy's letter said little beyond that she had written a couple of letters which I had apparently not received and that she was ready to go to your rescue in the event you swooned during childbirth or something. I thought your news of Buzz going into the Navy was swell and would like to hear what the latest is on that. He could come right over to this mud now and take charge of the amphibious operations.

I don't particularly like the name Kathryn for a girl but I don't like any others either. As for the matter of circumcising the boy, I had never thought of it and at first blush think it silly. I don't think my health has been impaired by lack of it or hardly anyone else's. Let it go. It can wait.

I haven't heard from Jerry Ross since leaving Africa. Daisy mentioned him in her letter. I think he is still there. I hope he gets over soon. Then I might see him from time to time. I feel sleepy and think I'll finish this letter on this page. The artillery fire of last night kept me turning over. I dreamt a couple of dreams but couldn't remember them and didn't try very hard to do so. No doubt dreams are significant but the trouble of figuring them out is a little too much, especially if you figure you know what they concern anyway. It doesn't take psychoanalysis

to tell me that I wish to go home, that my sexual appetites are not being fulfilled and that the fearsome shapes of childhood which reoccur are thwarted desires to escape.

It is raining just as hard as before; the unlucky infantry patrols tonight will be miserable.

I believe you will be very pleased to see Habe when he calls on you. He should be able to give you some interesting stories. His slants are pretty good, too, though he has a marked ability at dramatizing himself.

A British lieutenant Joachim of the famous musician family has joined us. He helps Martin. At the moment he is turning out some musical composition from the looks of the scribbling he is doing. Maybe a great Christmas carol will come out of it. He is a quiet, decent fellow.

The road was full of gruesome, amusing and busy things this morning. One silly thing which caught grins from everyone was the sight of one of those huge tractors which usually hauls heavy artillery pieces rumbling and straining down the road with a tiny caisson tacked on behind.

Do you remember that fine map of the Southwest Pacific that I had in my collection. That should be a fine one to put up on the wall. It will allow you to escape from the European front for a while too. I think one of my greatest joys upon returning will be to see what sort of a house you've fixed up. I promise to revere and protect it, whatever its impression on me, save that if the baby wants to wreck it for fun, wreck it he shall. That was one of my childhood pleasures. Mom never did know what transfigurations occurred inside her home when she went out and what rapid repairs went on in the few minutes before she returned. Buzz and I will carry the secret to our deathbeds.

I'll stop now, darling, and read a few minutes before falling asleep, Thoreau, I think, so that I'll learn how to live in the woods and like it.

Many kisses to you. You've had a busy year, sweetheart. The next one will be busier and happier, much happier. Just wait and see.

Your Al

[toward a spot]

Gun oil. I was cleaning my automatic.

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 25, 1943

Darling --

Christmas is nearly over, and, to quote a sardonic comment in a Benchley essay on same, "Thank God for that." In the first place, due to the psychological & physiological eccentricities of your little wife, things did not go off as planned. As I wrote you, the family was coming South for the day, to which end I scrubbed & polished the apartment. But Thursday night, rather late, I began to feel new & strange sensations. I stayed awake till about four, trying to evoke some kind of rhythm or rationale to the vague aches & twinges, then fell asleep out of sheer boredom. When I awoke late Friday morning, I was annoyed to find all symptoms of whatever it was gone, & in its stead a stiff headache from sleeping too late & eating regularly on the dot of 1 AM, 2 AM and 3 AM the night before. It was funny but my sole emotion at thinking pains had started was jubilation, my chief fear that I leave perishable food in the icebox or garbage pail behind (to that end all the eating, & the reason I ventured forth into the zero night to empty the garbage pail. My secondary fear was of boredom, since I had no intention of venturing forth before daybreak, no matter how I felt, and didn't want to sleep because it was all so exciting. I read Flaubert for a while, until sleep was a welcome diversion.

Anyway, by Friday afternoon, I felt headachy and lonely and quite capable of an El ride up north, with even the hopes that

that would bring on labor. So I packed the goose into a shopping bag and made the trip. The goose stank like hell, incidentally. Then I decided to stay up here for Xmas dinner & go back with Mom afterwards. Except now I'm staying till tomorrow, because Jeannette & Benny are driving us down. Dinner was very disorganized - the goose was none too good originally & Mom was more or less unprepared. Before dinner I took a walk to the lake with Bill. He's living at home now, having passed all his course exams in the Law School. The day was beautiful, not too cold and yet not thawing. The rocks were covered with ice and there was a wintry blue haze over the lake. In the bird sanctuary the ducks were having a helluva good time walking flat footed over the ice in their pond, rooting around a mess of stale sweet rolls and doughnuts somebody had thrown over the fence for them. Winter walks like that are fun, but Chicago has so few winter days in which you can do that. Too windy as a rule. Then dinner & afterwards I went to the movies with Doris Bailey, the girl I used to swim with last summer. We saw a very good picture, Claudia, a really intelligent study of the child-woman so common in our culture -- the gal who leans on her mother & never really grows up, even when she has children of her own. Claudia is unusual in that she's saved from chronic infantilism when her mother starts dying of cancer just as she starts her first pregnancy. Most of the girls I know who are like that -- viz. Janice -- are not so well-treated by fate & wind up plaguing themselves, their children or their husbands. I wonder if that is a class or nationality pattern, or both. So many of the Jewish girls I know, middle-class & up, are like that, I think I might have been. I almost started to form that sort of dependence on your mother, but was saved by a streak of stubbornness and the understandably wide difference in our tastes. In the past three months I've become aware, for the first time in my life, that I too could be as strong as your mother or mine. I don't mean right away, but I figure that as things come along, I'll be able to take them, which I never felt before.

Mom is going to stay with me tomorrow night, but if the baby hasn't started to come by then, I think I'll send her home. It must

be hard for her to just wait around, and there'll always be time enough for her to come down and escort me, if it's necessary.

We're waiting around now for Dad & Mom to come home so we can have a family poker game. They're over at Rosina's (a fate worse than). Last night they went to some friend's house & the boys & I played call rummy & spit-in-the-ocean. Ed won most of it. Then he shot craps with Vic & won 7 bucks! But he gave it back!

I'm afraid to write much more & run over to another page, thereby making this too heavy for Air Mail & mailing it tonight. Tomorrow I'll have my typewriter & be capable of greater output. To say that the flatness of this Christmas was all due to your absence is an enormous understatement. I hope there won't be another Christmas such as this, to test our gallantry under figurative or literal fire.

I'll love you always.

Jill

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 25, 1943

Jill, my love,

practically nothing that I can think or say today is independent of you, even in an immediate and direct sense, considering that what I think is generally dependent on you. The reason is that I am deluged by the greatest shower of mail in my life, I'm like a little boy swimming in ice cream. The premonition came on the 23rd and the deluge on the 24th. I wrote you of the first already, of the packages and the photographs and of the several letters, but yesterday while I was eking some satisfaction out of the holiday season by taking a bath, I was presented with twenty-five letters from your beloved and witty pen, plus a miscellany from the family and odd outsiders like Ollie. It was too much. A weaker man would have swooned. But with fierce determination

amidst endless confusion of brawlers in our tent, I read every one from beginning to end without exception. It wasn't a matter of minutes but of hours, whilst around me raged the revelers, while I cursed at everyone to get out of the light, while people stuck things to eat and drinks into my hands with the detachment and serious application of a boxer's seconds between rounds, rubbing his body. As for me, there was no stopping me. I gulped down the pages like a man saved from starvation with no one to stop him. Only when I had read and thrilled to every one of yours did I turn to the gathering, with blurry eyes and a mind whirring with thousands of things. And do you know that as fast as I read the some seventy pages, I remembered very well their contents. This morning I refreshed my memory by reading every one a second time and more exhaustively, as a love letter should be read. One never reads a love letter like a book, or else he is no real lover. Conversely, when one reads a book like a love letter, only then is he a book lover. You read for the content, then for the context, then for what isn't said, what might be said, and what was meant to be said. Need I say any more to let you gather that that was the most intensive spell of mental work I've ever done, with all my intellectual and emotional gears grinding away at maximum revs. per min.

Don't think it is a waste to type a page on receiving my best Christmas present. It is worth far more. It is a hopeless task to make all the remarks I would like to make. I will write a few of those things which occurred to me. For the whole lot, I can tell you my general impression that they came from the most wonderful girl in the world, that you are blessed with unforgettable literary skill and wit. Further, that I had an unmistakable feeling of nearness to you which was particularly gratifying, warming, and almost exotic on Christmas eve of 1943.

I am inevitably in for a spell of letter-writing. I find I owe letters to Ollie, Ed, Vic, Mom, Dad, Gosnell, Daisy, Walter, Hank, and Bill, plus a couple of others. But there isn't any great rush about them. Last night, Christmas eve, we gathered in out of the rain

in our tent with all the men and officers and had a spontaneous period of self-amusement and drinking. There were songs, stories, and card tricks. We had a variety of things to eat and drink, fruitcake, cookies, candies, gin, and whiskey, a great thing, the last two. The hit after them was the salami Mom sent me and which arrived in the nick of time. It was the most original food gift of all, and was highly appreciated by everyone. I managed a couple of slices out of it myself. Another original food gift which I got from Daisy but didn't extend to the drooling mob was of Barbarinettes in rum. Maybe it was the rum.

How stupid of me not to have asked for that picture of you on the boat long ago. I always thought that the best pin-up picture of you from the neck up, or rather, the shoulders, since you show even there the promise of a sweater girl going on down.

The best story of last night involved one of the enlisted drivers called Virgil Fine, from Alabama and you-all re-al-y know it. It seems Virgil got in a death struggle with a pet goat of the British Indian brigade. The goat started following him about, which perplexed the wonderful but not completely resourceful character somewhat. When he asked for advice from Manning, British corporal who told the story in a devastating Yorkshire accent, he was advised to just say, "shoo". He said "shoo" not once but several times and each time the goat would relentlessly follow him. Finally Virgil took several quick steps at the goat and shouted threateningly. The goat turned around and so did Virgil, happy at the success of bombast. But the goat turned around again and with a brief vigorous run gave him an unforgettable bump in the rear. Virgil was annoyed and scared, and mad but not mad enough. He picked up a hammer and brandished it wildly at the animal, saying all the while as he pointed his finger at the goat, "now don't you take another step or ah'll beat yo brains out". The goat just looked serious and came closer and his head and branching horns dropped ever so more determinedly and menacingly, until Virgil gave a terrible cry for help and ran like hell.

Manning also knew some dazzling card tricks, and when trying

to figure them out finally wearied and sobered us, we undressed and went to bed.

Today, Christmas, has us eating very well and reading very well; not only has everyone things from home to contribute but also several have good things to read, among them your loving slave. The food at camp today is very good. Pie and turkey are the high spots. There isn't a great deal of purposeful warlike activity about. Thanks for all the clippings and the magazines. Thank you also for the nuts and the pajamas which are the nuts, by my own and the confessions of other interested tent-mates. Especially notable were the poem of the Pecks and the Simmons mattress ad, not to mention the Barnaby scripts and comment, the Charlton bit which I shall send on to him and for which he will be grateful, and the lurid accounts of the activities of our good friend Earl. The Peck's poem I thought was beautifully done, if on the depressing side. If it were I, blithe soul that I am, I would have added, in the immemorial tradition of the Elizabethan sonnet a closing "but" which would have pointed to a realistic hope of some happiness for the young 'un which wouldn't be the embittered, painful happiness of the young radical who likes a world misery for his company. Barnaby is good and I can't add anything to your appreciation of him. Earl seems to have spoken for himself very well and I need not add my many amens to his talk, tho I might give him some refreshing footnotes. A good controversy might be the making of him, don't you think?

The Simmons mattress made us laugh in several different keys. First, the mattress without the fancy-stuff is something out of this world. Secondly the ad was worded fit to amuse. Thirdly there was your write-in which caused more chuckles, and then there was a gay discussion of the erotic causes and effects of the thing, my theory being that it was not only caused by sexual desires but would be bought by old maids.

I think I got a concerted picture of your home-making efforts through these many letters. How busy you have been, my darling. It is so fortunate that you seem to have acquired at the

same time a desire to cook well with the need perforce to eat the stuff. No wonder you couldn't attain great bulk with all the chocolate brownies you could eat. Ollie writes that the house is lovely, that you looked beautiful, and that they were grateful for our hospitality. As far as I can follow any process which changes colors every other day like that of the making of our home, I have a feeling that it must be a thing of great beauty and taste within the limits of the budget. Sight-unseen, I tender you a caress on your uncurled locks and a kiss square on your mouth for your noble enterprise. Peter will be an aesthete right from birth. If you want, I'll write Buzz about the maps. The pen sketches should have reached you by this time, including the one I sent along from Palermo perhaps, that of the two olive trees.

Thank you, darling, for the subscription to Time. It is indeed the only periodical that ever gets over in time. I should have asked you for it before.

I heard the president speak today in a retransmission from the BBC. He was a little duller than usual but when he started to refer to the second fronts I suddenly thought that Spring wasn't so far away after all with the year about over.

By the way, if you can remember your brief analysis of the movies and the stage of some letters ago, you may find some satisfaction in knowing that I agree with you perfectly and you expressed the ideas I've always felt and couldn't explain as well. You need have no fears of putting things badly. You are almost inhumanly incapable of that. Some day let us write a series of critical essays together. I always have marvelous thoughts upon reading any literary work. My categorizing and analytic faculties are generally playing about as I read.

Your news, scattered over the many days, of people like Mohlman and B and the rest is very interesting, and if the number of people that have coursed through his life affect him pre-natally, the enfant will be a social lion, or is it a social lioness by this time. Bob must have been very lucky to get

assigned in Chicago. But, whatdahell, think of all the fine letters I would never have received. Incidentally, you will get two of these letters. I'm sending a carbon, too, because it acknowledges so much mail. Herz, Clark, and myself got together a number of pieces of candies today and gave them to the children of a nearby town. All the kids were delighted to get the gum, and life-savers, and chocolates. Santa Clauses riding in a jeep. I confess that none of us thought we were actually exhibiting grandness or generosity.

What is the latest on the boys entering college? Ed's letters indicated that he was pointing towards a career as a Brownshirt, and I fully agree with you that they are no malleable creatures, though they may be maulable. However, barring accidents, they'll probably turn out very well.

I'll be waiting now for news from you and the baby. It'll be a big week in our personal history. I hope it is the last big thing that ever happens to us when we're not together. I love and want you, darling. You shall see; you will know.

Your

Al

* * * * *

[Note: a carbon of this letter was also sent, with, in addition, the following P. S.]:

Dec. 29, 1943

P. S. Darling, I didn't get off a letter last night, but I am well despite two shots in the arms, typhus & typhoid, for which I was overdue. My birthday is a cold, damp day. I hope you're thinking of me today. I am immensely interested in any calls, since the announcement about our baby may be in any time now. Sorry I can't radio this to you, but you must know that today I exercised to the full my capacity to hope.

All my love,

Al

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 26, 1943

My only sweetheart --

Sunday

One could give forth with a lot of platitudes about the day after Christmas, but inasmuch as the DeGrazia Yule was not one of over-indulgence this year in either food or emotion (of the happier sort, anyway), there is no particular post-Yule letdown. Last night after I wrote you, Mom and Dad came home and we had a family call rummy game until about two. I won most of the money, a little over a dollar, enough to discharge my obligation to Joan, with whom I had a bet that she wouldn't have her baby until after last Wednesday. You know, of course, how she foxed me.

We all slept late this morning and this afternoon Bennie and Jeannette drove us -- Mom and me -- down here. They stayed for a while, thereby murdering what might have been a peaceful Sunday afternoon. Fortunately, I had the brilliant idea of asking Benny if he'd like to drive me to the local milk selling place, so we ended up spending a peaceful half hour at the Old Bear Tavern, away from Jeannette's fatuities. We came back with the excuse that milk was hard to find on a Sunday afternoon. Then they left and Mom took a nap while I washed my hair -- I live in deadly fear of being snatched away to the hospital with my hair dirty, and will probably wash it every day till the baby comes. Then Diane and Oliver dropped over and gabbed a while, bringing us up to seven o'clock, the present moment. They just left, thank goodness. I guess Mom and I will sew and listen to the radio tonight.

Day and Walter called up today at Mom's. They had tried my place all day yesterday and must have gotten worried.

I really got some nice useful presents from the kids -- a white woolen scarf and you know how fond I am of scarves, a couple of cute little ashtrays, a rubberized apron which is swell because I always get soaked doing the dishes and one of those dinguses for telephone numbers. I gave them fins and Dad a shirt.

Having dusted, dish-washed and discharged all my Christmas duties, there's not much left to do except watch and wait. I suppose I should be happy for this brief pause, but I think I'll have enough leisure in the hospital and afterwards when I come home and have to stay in bed to meditate and relax. As a matter of fact, I need a good rest because towards the end one doesn't sleep too well, but I'd just like to have the baby and immediately start rolling the carriage lakewards. The present warm weather makes me restless, I guess.

I forgot to tell you -- after our walk yesterday, I went up to Bill's house and he took some pictures of me -- I practically bludgeoned him into it. I hope they turn out well for you. Then we looked at his father's tropical fish -- one of my earlier flames, if you recall -- and had some sherry. His father is a cute little man, but I think his mother is a drip of the Sarah Carlson variety. He seems to love her, though. The sherry was good. It's practically impossible to get palatable liquor of any variety now. Even I, virtually a teetotaler because of a curtailed social life, notice it. I've had more lousy sherry, vermouth and gin the last few days than I care to mention. And there's practically no hard liquor of any kind on the market any more, unless you want to pay six or seven dollars for second-rate whiskey. I'm glad I don't drink much.

I feel so silly writing you all this because this and my other letters will be preceded by news of far greater importance, to wit, the baby. But letters still serve the purpose of letting me talk to you, even though what I say is pretty stale, both in actual content and mood, by the time you get it. Just think -- in another week I'll be writing you glowing tomes, instead of these outpourings of a gloomy, impatient, irritable old hen.

The whole trouble is, of course, that I love you, and that's enough frustration for anyone to bear, without the added one of impending, but not actual, maternity. You cad, you're the source of all my woe. You're also my whole life, babies, house and dog notwithstanding, and until you come back, nothing will move. In fact, I think I shall start counting my birthday from that date, which will in effect make me a year younger -- if we're lucky.

All my love,

Jill

[attached to this was a letter signed "Mom":]

Sunday, Dec. 26-43

My dear Babe:

Every one is well including Jill as you see I'm here with her and just waiting but I know & hope that by the time you get this letter you will be a father & Babe don't worry too much about my friends seeing Jill & the baby it won't happen, cause Jill will be too far from them.

Dad is working today being Sunday he didn't like it & our Xmas was sort of a quiet one which we all agreed to make up for it next year.

I got a special letter today from Mir who says Bus is just waiting & expecting to hear any day now just what he is to do.

The boys are fine they enjoyed Jill's stay at our house very much.

You know Babe we send out 2 letters a week from home. I'm sorry if you don't get them we have sent you many pictures let us know if you don't *[receive]* them we will send you more of the same.

Jill is getting ready to go out and mail the letter and has just put on the beany you & Buss brought home from France you

remember she has just put a star of yours on the front of the beany you know that major star you sent her & does she look cute.

Love & kisses from all of us.

Mom

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 26, 1943 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

There is nothing excessively striking to relate at the end of a very damp day. The food deteriorated today to the level of Spam just as if to show us that there is still a war on. Without exception the enlisted men fell ill this morning because of something they ate. Since I wrote you the four-page letter yesterday on the receipt of numerous letters and packages, I have been able to read a little in Time and the New Republic. Salvemini was fine on Italy. Also the review that you sent me of Borgese's book showed that the book is a very worthwhile effort: I have always liked Borgese because of his complete ability to make ideals unsissified. It is a most rare accomplishment. I find myself suddenly interested in child studies, matters which I used to shun. I gather from that issue of Time that 50% of children are dishonest and that children shouldn't be teased by fathers. The New Year is about here and I shall be happy to give the old one a boot on its way out. It has meant nothing except for a few happy days early in the year, some hikes with you, some meals with you, not enough nights with you, in short, a travesty on the possibilities of time. One tenet of my early life was borne out, that a letter can be used to perpetuate and even inflame love. That it has done, despite the beliefs of most uninitiated that correspondence is a hopeless and barren thing. I fall in love with you every time I get one of your letters. I fall more in love with you when I try to write you letters. Despite this fine justification of a belief, my chief and only real resolution for the coming year is to spend as much of it

as possible with you.

I am learning a little German and will be learning more as time goes on. I have already become familiar with the units opposing us. It is easy to see why war is just as difficult a concept to understand as justice, reason and all the rest. Boyhood patterns don't work. Dabinette is still wandering about like Don Quixote looking for the battlefield of storybook days. He still thinks it exists and is perplexed and chagrined because he can't find it. Every little piece of it is different and yet it is all the same, following the general rules for the behavior of men you get in any of the social sciences. I remember deriding Quincy Wright's writing on war and peace and the derision is even greater now. War comes out of life like flu from the body, and you can't know about war unless you know about the whole nature of life, just as a knowledge of the nature of the body is necessary for understanding influenza.

I am constantly being struck by the little room we live in around here, five or six grown, active 1a(s) living in a small piece of canvas, under only two-thirds of which you can stand up. Quite a contrast to the big apartment in Palermo. I keep going from one extreme to the other, not minding either particularly. I feel neither ill-housed, ill-clothed, or ill-fed. I feel only a need for close, immediate, bodily response from you, such as you might give if the times were in joint.

All love to you, darling.

Al

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 27, 1943 V-MAIL

My darling

Monday

My nicest Christmas present came today -- five long letters from you (dated Nov. 30, Dec. 8, 9, 12 and 13) after a month fairly barren of your mail. I had gotten a couple of letters from you

within the past three weeks, but they were written before you reached your present position and, having a good idea of the conditions surrounding that locale, I was sort of worried. And guess what! Somebody sent me the most luscious green sweater from Peck and Peck, green enough to give me the color of eyes so admired by one of your comrades-in-arms, small enough to give me the torso so admired by my sole, if absent, comrade-in-arms. Not to pretend further ignorance, thanks just loads and loads. It's really lovely.

To follow your example, which is a good one at any time, this is what I've gotten from you to date: a pretty green ring, a pretty silk scarf, four silk stockings (pairs, I mean) a cigarette case, book of poems, cosmetics by Chanel, candy and sweater. What a haul! I feel like a blonde of the 1920's. I haven't gotten any of the books, which I insist I would be interested in, nor drawings, nor has anybody gotten any pipes. Mom got your candy but the big haul of silk stockings for us both hasn't come yet. Added to everything else I love and like about you, you are just about the most generous and thoughtful present-giver yet.

I've sent you, which you apparently haven't gotten, a pair of pajamas, two billfolds (one a wallet, the other a billfold), a subscription to Time overseas edition and one or two more packets of magazines, one of which contained some New Republics and Nations. I have been sending clippings in my letters, but not systematically. However, I've sent enough so that you should have gotten some, and wonder if maybe the ones I send are censorable. From now on, I'll clip the Sun and ask Ed to do the News, if he has time. I'm glad you have a new APO, and not that silly African one, so that mail will reach you more quickly. Tell Herz I sent him another (2nd) letter and a store-bought cake from Field's. The one you got I had intended for him, and had made a much larger more elaborate one for you, but the one for you swelled up beyond the limits of size and weight set by postal authorities. Herz's mother sent me a very nice Xmas card, which was sweet of her. Again, I ask that you write every month or so asking for the New Yorker and the Nation or New Republic, because we can't send any packages

weighing more than eight ounces without showing the letter of request to the postal clerk. The same goes for anything else you want. I know that sort of takes the surprise out of the package, but so it must be. Also -- I got a letter from Jerry telling how well and nice you were, but not giving any news about himself, except that he was still in Algiers. That was quite a while ago. Also -- tell your Colonel we have a substantial library of his books in Washington! I guess that covers the mail and personnel situation. Must go to the next page, sweetheart

Oh yes -- why don't you ask me for some chocolate -- I'll send you a goodly package of bars. Within the last month, the shortage has eased up here. Being overseas must have afflicted you with an unseemly modesty if you really think I could be diverted for one moment from loving and thinking of you first and always. Even now, my chief anxiety is for you, my chief woe that you can't be here. And my saying this is the McCoy, because as I write, I am getting all sorts of vague twinges which may or may not be the real thing. The trouble is, I took a walk over to Lying In today to see Joan, and these may just be pangs of fatigue, although I usually don't get them this long or severe. I'm selfish enough to hope it's the real thing, even if it means the baby won't have the honor of being born on your birthday. I'm getting kind of bored and crave the excitement of childbirth. Mom had stayed with me last night and went home this afternoon, but when I called her a while ago to tell about your letters (they don't deliver the mail around here until eventide, practically) she thought she'd better come back again tonight. However, in this one instance I'm pessimistic enough to think that this is all a false alarm, and that I must spend days or weeks more with a great tummy, inability to sleep and dirty old clothes.

Seriously, I don't think there's much danger of my forming a neurotic attachment to, and thereby over-indulging, our child. After all, you can't sleep with, argue with or get drunk with a baby. I can't imagine a child being even a halfass substitute for a husband, any husband. And as for a husband like you, it's impossible. We've had so much fun together and so much

tumult too that maternity is a pale bore by comparison. I love our baby already because it's your baby and because I'm naturally fond of children, dogs and plants, but you and you alone are my reason for being. And oddly enough, I wasn't as acutely aware of that fact until I started having the baby and acting the way a fairly decent wife should.

Of course, there's still a chance of my spoiling the baby, the way I spoil Cooney, because I know how much I love freedom and hate to curtail anybody else's. However, there's even less chance of my spoiling the baby than Cooney, because spoiled children are such a pain, whereas a spoiled dog is little worse than an unspoiled dog, a dog's horizons being so limited.

Did we ever consider, even academically, the possibility of love on a semi-weekly plan? If we mentioned it at all, it must have been in derision. I would hardly consider ours a marriage of souls or intellects, although we both have a powerful set of think tanks, I like to believe. What a genius our child will be, with my high I.Q. and your literacy. Someday I shall show how bright I am, by reading a chapter from Mannheim. In the nonce, you must just take my word for it, a pretty battered word too, since I only vaguely remember a fourth-grade teacher telling my mother, then an influential member of the local PTA, that I had an IQ of 145, and my mother telling my father, and me eavesdropping.

I'm going to run all the way to the mail box with this and back, and if I don't have any good labor pains by then, you can have the goddam baby yourself. It's funny, but I'm hostile to the child for not giving me anguish. To the untutored eye ear nose or throat it would seem like masochism, but if you saw your pretty flat stomach as mangled and mixed for as long a time as I have seen mine, you'd understand. Excuse me, I'm going to get an apple. I am determined to leave nothing in the icebox when I go.

You asked me about pictures. I already wrote Bill Steinbrecher took some of me on Christmas day, and after the baby comes, I'm going to get a fancy guy to take some of us. I am letting my

hair grow because it's getting too straight to wear short and curly. Mom likes it long. I'm neutral. It saves me the trouble of having it cut, but on the other hand, it's sort of hard to see through it and especially when I am at the movies, I sort of object to the life-as-seen-through-seven-veils-and-a-blanket effect.

Gosh, I wish I could decide whether this was the baby or just a backache. It would be sort of exciting to have this be my last letter to you before I went to the hospital. Joan, incidentally, has a very nice-looking baby for one so young. They have named him Michael Kiernan Kelley. She is fine and is going home Friday. Nobody in the family likes the name Peter Joseph for ours, but I am damned if I will abide by the tastes of your ruffian younger brothers or your father, who apparently had quite a hostility to his brother, yclept Pietro. Vic, I am sorry to say, is as one-sided as all that, to quote you. I wish you were here to beat something into him or out of him. Now he doesn't want to take the competitive scholarships exams for the four-year college in February, which Ed will take. He would rather spend four years in high-school. I try to talk to him about it, but it does no good. Anyway, about the name, I want to keep part of yours for the baby, and nothing else goes so good with Joseph as Peter or Paul, and we had to count the latter out. Incidentally, Mir sent me a cute cotton dress for Christmas.

I'll start sending you clippings and things tomorrow. Meanwhile I'll continue to write V-mail unless you find Air Mail reaches you just as fast. I'm tired of your not getting my letters, not to mention how you must feel.

000XXX

Your ever-loving wife, and I hope, baby --

Jill

[some stick drawings:

Dog looking at pregnant woman. Caption "left profile

(undressed)"

Baby and dog. Caption: "Projected results."

Pregnant woman and Christmas tree. Caption "Right profile (dressed)"]

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 27, 1943

Dearest Jill,

It is a cold, cold night out, not really cold, just chilling to the marrow, and there is a wind that is almost howling. The tent pitches like an old ship and every now and then a cold draft slips through to make one thankful he is not on patrol, that the war can't last forever, and that even if the mind of man was not capable of preventing war, he did invent the stove. That little devil at the moment feels it is up against stiff opposition and is crackling and consuming wood at a great rate. How nice, and how apt your remark in re your bed-warming activities. I would give anything to have you pass this uncomfortably cold night with me, solely for your warmth-giving qualities. If any other matter were to come up for consideration during the night, it would be pleasant but only secondary. I am fortunately possessed in lieu of you of a bottle of rum, newly acquired, which put the spirit of life into our cold eyes before we braved the weather to the mess tent tonight, but liquor, at best, only creates desires, unless one is a confirmed drunkard.

The day was as cold and windy, a clear, brilliant wintry-smelling affair that caused one to sit up like a ramrod in his jeep seat despite the penetrating blast of the machine in motion, and unlike the damp, chilling days when one curls up into a little ball for comfort and protection as far away from the rain-dripping sides as possible. There were no mists to conceal the Appenines that rose to the East like a solid line of spine, topped with snow filled with colors, white, green, brown and grey, marked unerasably against the bright, full blue of the sky.

I stopped reading my New Yorkers to write you, I'll have you know. They were most interesting and diverting. The October 16 issue had so many good things in it that there is no starting on them -- the article on old New York and childish pranks by Hewitt, wonderful cartoons including the first movement called "The Storm" or some such title which had to be ended because of the general exhaustion and destruction amongst the orchestra, the most subtle parody on a biography of an accidentally famous man that I learned to loathe so much when I was studying Coolidge, ad infinitum. It is warming to know that such a crew of intelligent and witty people exist in this world. I hope I shall be able to read it for the rest of my life.

You mentioned Paulette Goddard in connection with one of your cracks at my amour-propre. The review of that nursing movie in the New Republic you sent me was the most scathing I have ever seen. Positively violent. The reviewer must have been one of her few rejected lovers.

I remember to have wanted to reassure you about your Christmas gifts. I am very happy with what I have gotten and consider myself more fortunate than most of my acquaintances. And I think I have yet to come one or two, since Paul's for one has not arrived. Capt. Foster just came back. He was delayed by having to wait for the German artillery to try to destroy his bridge. They were without success and here he is. Funny how a man remembers certain things from an incident, dependent entirely on himself. Foster has mentioned several times already a little old man who was lying dead, "without a hat on", he repeats as if there were something strange about dying without a hat as we used to think it were strange for a man to die with his boots off. I remember another case, a couple of months ago when one of our escaped prisoners, who was waiting to be sent somewhere, told me that he was in a hospital when he got away. It was during a raid, the last of several, and he had spent his time reassuring the attendants in this Italian hospital that we never bombed hospitals. When his building was actually hit, he felt very guilty and couldn't get that off his mind, no matter how obviously it was an accident. It was his personal promise that

was important to him.

The BBC has announced that Naples is off bounds to troops and outside civilians. Though we have as yet had no typhus cases in the Army, it is undoubtedly a good policy. It is rather tough on the men who were formerly allowed passes into the town, because Naples is by all odds the best city we have yet occupied, despite its relative proximity to the fighting front. Partly, the innate propensity of the Neapolitans for creating a carnival atmosphere makes it a good trip for the soldier. Also, it is just a damn big city with all the attractions any big city offers by just being there and big. In addition there are women, dives, and museums. The streets are interesting and innumerable. And so are the views from many parts. There is no evaluating on paper the thrill of the bay, Vesuvius, Capri, the sea, and the city from one of the heights over the city. You can put it too on your agenda. It will be an indescribable pleasure for me to take your arm and lead you up the way I like. If you show any of the endurance which you displayed to Bill Steinbrecher at Orchestra Hall, you will probably end up by dragging me the last half of the way. You are apparently a born mountain-climber. Whether I like you or not, you are an indispensable hill-companion of mine because you are so good at it.

Not that whether I like you or not is unimportant. If it weren't for you I wouldn't want to climb mountains or do anything else particularly, for that matter. Apart from any qualities you possess, I should need you in order to open my eyes in the morning or shut them at night.

I filled out my pay voucher in order to get paid on the last of this month. Then I'll look around for a good cigarette case to have around the house. I've seen some before but have never been particularly interested in them.

I feel well and love you very much. I ate too much for supper tonight and hope you did the same. Regards to all, and again all my love to you, darling. Your -- Al

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 29, 1943 V-MAIL

Darling -

You wondered in one of your letters which of yours would reach me the day the baby was born & now I can tell you. It was the one you wrote Dec. 5, & very appropriate because it was a love letter for the most part. The mailman brought it just as I was stepping into Carl Hess's car. I read it in the room where they prepare you for delivery, in between grunts, razor cuts & enemas. While you've probably gotten news et sex or weight already, this is the first letter of detail, & I'm afraid I can't say much, because it's hard to write so flat as I am on my stomach, & because I don't know much more of the results than you do. It's about 8 AM now & the little gal must have been born around 11 last night. They told me it was a girl of some fantastically large proportions. I think Mom said she looked just like you too. I hope so. I can't see her 'till this afternoon. I am already starting to drink lots of water & milk so I can nurse her, though I don't feel hungry yet. I again haven't spoken to any of the doctors or Mom so don't know if it was a hard or easy birth, relatively speaking. I think I was in hard labor from about 5 to 10, then they gave me gas. It hurt a lot but I'm already beginning to forget & am willing to try for a boy any time you are. Mom and I were doing the laundry at about 1 when pains started, but I didn't get around to calling the doctor 'till about 3:30 or 4. It was a good thing I called him when I did. It never occurred to me the little gal would try to gyp herself out of the honor of being born on her Dad's birthday. More later after I see her. I still can't quite believe this is real. One thing I am sure of. I love you very much.

Happy birthday pop & congratulations.

Jill

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 29, 1943

Dear Love,

Happy birthday to me, thank you. Here it is evening and I don't know whether I'm a father or not yet. Try as I might, I could never duplicate here the tenseness and excitement at home right now. If anything, I've grown increasingly uncommunicative and bad-dispositioned in the last several days. The things I'm doing seem more futile in terms of what you're doing. I wish I could be there to kiss you for good luck.

I am enclosing another of the Sad Sack episodes, for you. I laughed most painfully hard at the poor fellow being stepped on and ground into the mud. I clipped out also the poem GI Nick which serves the purpose (1) of being a well-done merry doggerel, and (2) of showing you how general was the army's dismay at the shower of Spam and gum. Dabinette got the booby prize today with a little jar of green olives! I, on the contrary, got a package from Aunt Anna containing O'Henry bars and other candy, for the whole of which I promptly dispatched a V-mail note of thanks.

The corporal in charge of the mess shack was in our tent last night, and had some interesting stories to tell about a camp for escaped Russian, Yugoslav & Greek prisoners he worked in. The Russians apparently are just as fantastic as one has been led to believe by story and events. They used to wash themselves with ice water at an ungodly hour of the morning, write sentimental letters home, plead to go back to the front, hate the Germans violently, work like horses, and drink themselves into highly boisterous condition. The story of their break from a German concentration camp was most unbelievable. Five thousand of them merely charged the barbed wire in a solid football line, broke through it, and through the hail-fire of the German machines which killed several hundred. Then they all scattered to the winds.

One sailor from Sebastopol told the American (who incidentally

had a Russian mother, spoke Russian and lived there for several years) that the Germans used gas bombs on a large number of them who were trapped in a tunnel. The streets were piled deep with bodies. Just now, the Russians are progressing in an amazing fashion. I can't imagine what huge impetus and master organization is behind it. We divided up some of Habe's packages today, a cannibalistic act of which he was aware before he left. So more fruitcake was added to the community of fruitcakes (none so fair and good as yours). There were also cigarettes, candy, soap, and some pieces of Abercrombie & Fitch sort of junk that we'll send him (like money belts & shaving aprons and pouches of one sort or another). He always used to get that sort of "darling" present from his wife who apparently is quite in love with him in a simple, devoted, maternal sort of way. The cigarettes were "Doublets" and you can imagine the rude laughter that greeted their inserted "Story of Imperial Doublets" in a tent of sweaty, hairy & grimy men. "Imperial Doublets were manufactured in the slenderized oval shape because it fits the fingers and lips better and gives the cigarette a more graceful balance ..." Great derisive hoots were elicited by one man's demonstration of the difference when he held a "Doublet" between his dirty, stubby fingers and just any old cigarette.

I think I had better write a letter to Daisy, darling. After all, their morale needs boosting or else Walter won't make P-47 Thunderbolts as fast. Love to you, darling - if not when you want it, at least all of it that you want.

Your

Al

JILL TO AL DECEMBER 30, 1943 V-MAIL

My darling -

Yesterday after I wrote you I saw your daughter so despite the unseasonable hour (5:45 AM) I must tell all. First, I saw her

when she was about 10-hours old & all I could say was "My, she's homely" which is what you would have said too. They wouldn't let me get close, but brought her back for the 1st feeding, to play around with me although I won't have anything to feed her till tomorrow & she doesn't need the food anyway. But the little social call seemed to improve her looks a lot, because when Mom, Dad & Julie Hess saw her about 2 in the baby's little cage, they raved about her looks, & Mom assured me she wasn't trying to make me feel good. (I don't need that anyway.) She came back at 5 to play around some more. Only this time she didn't feel like fooling around, & got her 1st big frustration when I had to pry her off me, because they aren't supposed to stay at the breast very long at first. When she opens her mouth wide to [yawn?], she looks just like you when you're making a face. Otherwise she looks like nothing I've ever seen. She has a very full well-developed mouth, cupid's bow & all & very pink skin. Her hair is black, her eyes blue & slanty, the latter from swelling. What makes her not pretty in my eyes is the slanty forehead, which will shape itself shortly. But we should be grateful we had a good doctor, because she was too big for me, & had to be dragged down a bit, & there's not a mark on her & I am stitched up as neatly as somebody's grandmother's tating. Darling, I think you will be very pleased with this daughter. She is so big & healthy & according to everybody else gives promise of being a beautiful girl. I hope she looks like you. Dearest in the excitement, I forgot to tell you we received 10 stockings & drawings, and books & hankies (for baby). They are beautiful. You are an angel.

J.

AL TO JILL DECEMBER 31, 1943

Dearest Jill,

Still no news from you and the baby. The Red Cross knows where I am, so I feel that It's a matter of waiting for the child to

be born. Nothing else seems of much importance at the moment, and I doubt whether this letter will outlast the page. It is raining and hailing like the devil outside and I just finished dashing out to loosen the tent ropes. The canvas shrinks when wet and if drawn too taut, it splits, creating a fine mess. I also blocked up a minor flood which threatened to engulf the tent. The water crept all the way over to my bed on the opposite side of the tent. It is no Dniepropetrovsk, but it will serve. I got an old letter from November yesterday, and my latest from you is December fourth, which I shall probably remember for the rest of my life without remembering exactly why.

The big news of the day is the Russian [*ink spot in the shape of a bird at this spot*] breakthrough, even to my mud-besmirched vision. Whatever other big news is in the making is beyond our feeble intelligence sources. (How do you like the pretty swan your leaky pen just made?). The parenthetical expression shows you how feeble our intelligence sources are.

I wrote Daisy yesterday and Ollie. I wrote Buzz several days ago, telling him I thought it a fine idea to get that naval commission. I didn't write him about the maps & think you ought to write Mir. There were some better ones, I'm sure, for mounting, than that National Geographic of Europe. Its colors are so dull.

Your New Yorkers still stand me in good stead. Any more you can send of any magazines will be highly welcome. I'm sorry I have nothing to send you at the moment, save my love which is continuously & whole-heartedly offered; I've seen a number of cigarette boxes, none in a good maroon, one in a fair dark green, but their prices I think are absurd -- 1,000 to 2,000 Lire (\$10 to \$20) for a simple mosaic worked on the top lid with place for a couple hundred cigarettes. When I get the chance, later on, I'll get one, however. Once a city is taken and really occupied, the prices shoot up immeasurably. The only prices which seem to remain at their previous level are for cheap, raw greens which we don't eat. Unless we break through rapidly, finally the Germans will clear out the country completely. They

destroy whatever they can't carry off - livestock, furniture, clothing, leaving the people to fall into our hands in an impoverished state, completely useless and requiring a minimum of subsistence even. There is no denying that if wars must be waged, that is the way to wage them. Leaving a prosperous person in the enemy's hands is like not destroying a machine left behind.

I found some leather gloves, not very striking in grey and in tan, chamois & smooth, for around \$2.50 or \$3.00. That is also too expensive in my estimation especially since I'm sure you can get the identical things in America. There again, let me know, and I may see something in times to come.

I was consternated when I heard of your holding up a picture of me four years ago as actually me, but then I remembered that your boat picture is also that old and I'm sure you look like that. Maybe you're right - maybe time has stood still. Just the same, very soon now I'm going to send you another picture of me sans moustache. By the way, do you still knit your brows over nonconsequentials? Probably the baby will first lift one eyebrow skeptically & then knit his brows. Amazing, this heredity, I understand.

All my love, darling.

Al

TRANSLATION OF ZG 73K

ONE MINUTE which may save your life.

Read the following 6 points carefully and thoroughly. They may mean to you the difference between life and death.

1. Courage alone, in these battles of attrition, cannot make up for deficiencies in tactics, planes and artillery.
2. With the collapse in the West, North and Southwest the decision has been reached: Germany has lost the war.
3. You are not facing barbarians who kill for the joy of killing, but you are facing soldiers who would spare your life.
4. But we can only spare those who do not force us, by stubborn resistance, to use our weapons against them.
5. It is up to you to let us know your intention clearly, by raising the hands, waving a handkerchief, etc.
6. Prisoners-of-war are treated fairly and decently, without humiliate and become enemies who have fought bravely.

The decision is in your hands. However, if you should find yourself in a tough spot, remember what you have read.

Leaflet sent onto the German troops during the engagements at the Volturno River.

TRANSLATION OF ZG 73K

What is to be done?

Individual Surrender: Small groups of not more than 5 men surrender by putting away weapons, raising and waving their hands and waving white handkerchiefs or a white flag. If Allied soldiers are in the immediate vicinity, they may be invited to take prisoners, although helpful, are not absolutely essential. Collection points for prisoners-of-war are located along the main highways and thoroughfares.

Group Surrender: As long as units surrender in the presence of their own officers, they are treated in accordance with the Hague Convention and officers surrender their arms under the sign of the white flag on the nearest Allied officer (if possible, of equal rank). If parajays are required, accredited parajays receive only arms in personal contact with the nearest Allied command post.

Treatment of prisoners-of-war

1. Best treatment. According to the Geneva Convention, you are treated like soldiers.
2. Good food. You receive the same standard as we, the best food in the world.
3. Hospital care. Your wounded and sick are treated just like our own.
4. Mail allowances. You can write 4 post cards and 4 letters home per day per month.
5. Leave home. After the war you are returned home as soon as possible.

WHEN TAKEN PRISONER, SHOW THIS LEAFLET TO YOUR CAPTIVES.

Was ist zu tun?

Einzelübergabe: Kleine Gruppen von nicht über 5 Mann ergeben sich indem sie Waffen, Waffen und Köpfe ablegen, die Hände hochheben und Offiziere mit Handkerchen oder ein weißes Handkerchen. Sind alliierte Soldaten in unmittelbarer Nähe, so sind diese eingeladen, Gefangene zu nehmen, obwohl hilfreich, sind nicht unbedingt erforderlich. Sammelplätze für Kriegsgefangene befinden sich entlang der Haupt- und Durchgangswegen.

Gruppenübergabe: Solange die Übergabe in kleinen Gruppen erfolgt, erhalten die Besatzungen die gleiche Behandlung wie oben. Die eigenen Offiziere sind dem Feind unter dem weißen Fahnen zu übergeben. Falls ein Offizier in unmittelbarer Nähe ist, so sind diese eingeladen, Gefangene zu nehmen. Falls Parajays erforderlich sind, so sind diese nur in persönlichem Kontakt mit dem nächsten alliierten Befehlshaber in geeigneter Verbindung zu lassen.

Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen

1. Beste Behandlung. Gemäß der Genfer Konvention werden Sie wie Soldaten behandelt.
2. Gute Verpflegung. Sie erhalten dieselbe Kost wie wir, die beste Verpflegung der Welt.
3. Krankenbehandlung. Ihre Verwunden und Kranken werden genau so behandelt wie die unsere.
4. Briefvergütung. Sie können 4 Karten und 4 Briefe pro Monat nach Hause schreiben.
5. Heimeinsatz. Nach Kriegsende werden Sie so bald wie möglich nach Hause zurückgeschickt.

ZIELE DIESER FLUGBLÄTTER SIND DEN GEFANGENEN VON

Leaflet sent onto the German troops during the engagements at the Volturno River.

Leaflet in German sent onto the German troops during the engagements at the Volturno River.

EINE MINUTE
die Dir das Leben retten kann.

Lies die folgenden 6 Punkte gründlich und aufmerksam! Sie können für Dich den Unterschied zwischen Tod und Leben bedeuten.

1. Du wirst nicht sterben, wenn Du einen Minutenschein dem Kommando an die Front bringst und die Frontlinie nicht verlässt.
2. Mit dem Minutenschein hast Du ein Versteck und einen Schutz vor der Feindartillerie. Du kannst ihn bei jeder Gelegenheit benutzen.
3. Du wirst nicht sterben, wenn Du einen Minutenschein bei jeder Gelegenheit bei der Frontlinie abgibst.
4. Du wirst nicht sterben, wenn Du einen Minutenschein bei jeder Gelegenheit bei der Frontlinie abgibst.
5. Du wirst nicht sterben, wenn Du einen Minutenschein bei jeder Gelegenheit bei der Frontlinie abgibst.
6. Du wirst nicht sterben, wenn Du einen Minutenschein bei jeder Gelegenheit bei der Frontlinie abgibst.

Die Entscheidung musst Du selber treffen. Solltest Du aber in eine verwundete Lage geraten, so erinnere, was Du gelesen hast.

Leaflet in German sent onto the German troops during the engagements at the Volturno River.

THE worst campaign of the War -- West of Russia, though some even doubt that -- proceeds regardless. The soldiers cannot believe it will last so long: they keep expecting a break-through on some other part of the Front. The vast fleets of Allied tanks and vehicles can hardly be employed in the mountains and the mud. Italian mule companies have to supply the French, Indian, and Polish infantry, trying to conquer the German bastion from the Northeast massif; most of the animals are killed or plunge to their death off the slippery trails.

The terrain and the immobility make it a battle of riflemen, mortar crews, sappers, and machine-gunners. (Riflemen are actually equally automatic-weapons men and grenade-throwers, and learn to employ bazookas to explode bunkers, where these fail against the too-heavy German tanks.) Among the Allied troops, the casualties are practically all in the infantry battalions; and in these battalions, each starting with about 400 rifles, 80% of the casualties are riflemen and lieutenants. Murderous to medics, too. The evil weather and incessant cannonading make life unbearable for those not hurt or diseased. Nor do you rejoice in the hurt and death around you. A Special Forces soldier sits on the body of an enemy while poking C-ration from can to mouth; no insult intended, it's better than sitting in the mud.

End of December 1943 letters

