

JILL TO AL AUGUST 16, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

I know there's a war on but the worst thing in the world just happened to me -- I just spilled a bottle of ink all over the remaining prints of Kathy's pictures which I was going to send Paul and Ann and also on the rug. It's just the sort of thing I loathe other people for having happened to them too. Well, the rug didn't look so hot anyway after my last and only effort to wash it but even so, etc. etc. You'd better come home soon before this place loses its pristine look, which at best was a bit on the demi-vierge side.

I was over to school this afternoon, the weather being a bit too uncertain for the beach. I had a coke at Commons with Syb and Mac and of course my alter ego Kathy, then went to the book store and got their last copy of Klaus Mann's anthology which you recommend. As I recall, Edmund Wilson's rather distant review in the New Yorker wasn't very favorable but I don't see how one can really take great issue with a collection of this sort. And I'll never know, thing is, because I'm not familiar enough with European literature. Sybil also got me Pamela out of the university library and to both our amazement the edition was published in 1790, is yellow with age and all the s's looks like f's. Of I fhall have confiderable difficulty in fcanning the fcrivening of the diftinguifhed fcribe Richardfon. I doubt if I'll be able to read more than a page but it will be interesting for its historical value.

Campus looked the same but the people are, as you know, not very prepossessing. Which observation led us to an even more cogent and rather amusing observation on the personnel of the party last Saturday night -- the girls, down to the last blooming virgin, were all at least five six, minimum weight 125, robust, tan and bounding about like young orang-utans, while the median male, the prototype being George Hussar, was pallid, thin and languishing on the couch. While the characteristic of the males

present can easily be explained by the war, it is rather a mystery to me why all my women friends and I are such blooming specimens. Do you think there's some selective factor at work there too, such as like attracting like. it's a good thing a talent scout from Carnegie Illinois hadn't crept in with the beer.

I got a letter from Liz today. She hasn't heard from Bill for over a month but guesses he is all right now that the fighting on Guam is over with. She is going to his mother's place in New York the end of this month and I hope she can get out here shortly afterwards. I'm awfully anxious to see her and apparently vice versa, since she says she knows I could cheer her up. God knows why I should get the reputation for being so cheery. Now Kathy's the girl who should have it. She knows how to play a really good game of hide-and-seek now. I hid in the bathroom today and she crawled in after me and shouted with pleasure when I crept from behind the door and yelled boo at her. She also jumped about ten feet in the air. She also is learning how to play another silly game with me: Tonight when I was feeding her she kept poking her rattle into my mouth and would stop drinking and laugh when I'd bite it or her fingers. She also enjoys having me bite her feet and kiss her stomach, and will laugh loudly when I do so. More damn fun.

But you'll see for yourself soon, my darling.

I love you always,

JILL TO AL AUGUST 17, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

The Affair of the Shoes for the Italian Lady is well on its way to completion, you may be pleased and surprised to know. I started last night at the mysterious hour of ten o'clock to peruse Klaus Ollendorf's Montgomery Ward catalog -- he works for Wards and was tutoring up to that hour, which explains both time and place for you. Then after selecting what seemed to be

a suitable shoe though not even remotely answering the lady's qualifications, I parked Kathy with a kind neighbor this afternoon and went to Field's and got the same pair for two bucks more. But anyway, it's more convenient to do it that way in this instance than to shop by mail. The gal who waited on me was a European so she thought that the size she gave me would fit. I'll send them out tomorrow. I saw some cute little make-up bags at Kresge's today and I got one and some lipsticks for myself, so maybe I'll get this lady some and put it in the shoe box. If she isn't the type, take it out and give it to some deserving young chick. Incidentally, the soles of these shoes are plastic. I got a pair like them last year at Fields and they have worn very well, you might tell her. There aren't any maroon or beige shoes in this country any more, at least, not in rationed leather models. I got this pair without a stamp although I had cadged one off Klaus for the occasion. For some reason, the fact that you were an officer was the thing that swung it. Just another piece of Field's snobbery I thought.

So much for shoes, and a lot that was. I hope she'll be able to wear them. You might also tell her I wish I had that little feet.

I also bought myself a pair of red mules for the house and returned some very swish dresses the Hess's had given Kathy months ago. She had never worn them and had long ago outgrown them and I was rather grateful for the cash. Then I had pie and coffee at Pixley's, a rather unheard of and proletarian pastime in my To.O., looked at some excellent reproductions of European 20th century painters in the library and then went home. It's rather fun going downtown like that occasionally, wandering around bug-eyed and alone. I guess I should do it more often. I think this is the first time I've left Kathy in two or three months.

Later ... I just started to read tonight's paper and it spoke of the Seventh Army being in France so I guess that is where you are too. I had suspected it before but suspicion is nowhere near certainty, so now it's my turn again to sweat it out. I say again because for a long time I had a pretty good idea of where you

were and the hazards or rather, lack of them surrounding the locales, so I had a fairly easy mind on the subject. But I know, darling, that after we've waiting this long nothing can keep us apart and I pray for you always. The papers say there has been very little resistance on that front so far, which may be true. You never can put too much faith in the reports at the beginning of a big action. They try to be accurate, I guess but the news just isn't available it seems. But take care of yourself, dearest, and remember how much I need and love you. And Kathy too.

Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 17, 1944 V-MAIL

Jill darling,

Here we are, as you can plainly see. In fact, you probably know more about the whole business than I do. All I know is that we waited and it was very hot. Then we had to walk with all our equipment and it seems that I've been walking every since, until I am dead tired. I couldn't sleep last night I was so worn out. I don't think it was because of the many mosquitoes or the hard floor I slept on or the continual noise. Today I have a slight sore throat which may come from the foul "Pall Mall's" they issued us. The country is beautiful and I've already had various trifling conversations with the inhabitants but I am sick of everything and want to go home. I'd prefer by far a room with you even across from the Yards. Beauty, not. I have a longer letter to mail you today, but this will say faster that I love you and hope you are praying with success for my return.

Many kisses to Kathy. My all to you.

Your,

Al

P.S. I ate pounds of grapes today, out of boredom.

JILL TO AL AUGUST 18, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart --

My life hasn't changed any but somehow now that there is a big campaign underway, I feel I must be rather more grave and circumspect in word and deed. And since most of my days is spent in hilarious frolicking with Kathy (the healthy child is the happy child, or vice versa), there isn't much left to write about. I do know I'm rather tired -- I never seem to get to sleep before midnight these nights, what with reading that ponderous anthology of Mann's. The pages aren't cut so I must present a very odd sight, lying naked abed with my studious spectacles on and a spring blade knife posed meditatively between my teeth. Then, when I finally do get around to abandoning reading and page-cutting (to the ratio of five minutes of one to ten of the other) I like to lie awake for a while and think about you. It's quite a game. Last night I was trying to imagine every part of you and it's amazing how good one's sensuous recollections are. I'm sure that if I were called upon, I could give a much better description of your person than your personality. I can even remember how your toes turn up. I wonder if everybody else has the minutiae of their loved ones so firmly impressed upon their minds. probably this is just part of my bug-eyed powers of observation.

And another deterrent to my sleeping the blissful sleep of the innocent is that Kathy keeps waking up and giggling and making Bronx cheers all night long. I don't wake up entirely so I don't know how long or how often she does it but this has been going on for nearly a week now and I am very tired of it. She is so tired too she has to sleep a lot during the day, at least she did this day. I guess there can't be anything wrong or she would cry. She makes this awful thrr-up at everybody and everything now, and will do it if you do it first at her. I am training her to do it at the sound of Dewey. Do you remember Borgese's proud parental story about how his little girl identified an aeroplane. Well, Kathy doesn't come right out and say aeroplane yet but

she certainly observes them, to the extent that when she hears the sound of one going past the house, she will look up towards the window, which is really quite good, making that identification, don't you think? She waves her hands and yells if she's outside and sees a low one. She reserves a detached, head-tilted stare for the big transports at a higher altitude. She's very popular on the block. The lady I left her with yesterday afternoon has two kids, 6 and 3, and they didn't want me to take her home when I came back. She'll always stand up and give a great cheer whenever she sees any of these small fry. It's probably the most flattering attention they've ever had.

That dratted cleaning woman didn't come in today so I had to do the wash and cleaned half the house, gritting my teeth and mumbling. This is war. I'm afraid I'm awfully spoiled and really hate housecleaning, although I guess it wouldn't be so bad if I did it regularly and gave up the trips to the lake. And I suppose anything is bearable, if you've got your guy around to cheer you on to greater feats of domesticity. I don't know. I just hope we'll never be very poor for very long, a pious wish that.

All my love to you darling, and keep well.

AL TO JILL AUGUST 19, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

I thought I would write you a page before going over to mess which is near the place where letters can be mailed. I am feeling fine, but hot. I am able to bathe but don't have much in the way of clothing with me, with the consequence that my woolen trousers are a quaint compound of sweat, grape stains and dust. The grapes are wonderful and in season. Last night Jim, a British major and myself went with two huge wine vessels to a farm not far off and had them filled with good red wine, a glass of which I am drinking at the moment. We also got some very fine red grapes there. There are vines all over the countryside. Several times a day I reach over and get a bunch

or two. They are very good for the thirst and this is really thirsty country. The beachhead is going extremely well. You would be amazed as we inevitably are by the quantity of stuff to get ashore. There is a score of little dribbles that sum up to a torrent when they hit the main drive. I picked up two swell fur-lines (!) German knapsacks which I am afraid to send you, remember how your poor oppressed soul practically broke down when I gave you a sleeping bag. I know the kids would be delighted with them.

Now Pete Rhodes has come in and is clamoring for the typewriter to write a report. There hasn't been much action as far as I'm concerned on this trip, you'll be happy to know. The Luftwaffe is still around making a nuisance of itself every now and then. it takes only one bomb nearby to make one have respect for it and read with interest the reports of our bombings of their airports in France

The news as a whole seems excellent. I can't see how the Germans can avoid our capture of Paris.

Sorry I can't finish out the page, darling. All my love, as always. Give my baby a big kiss.

Your,

Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 20, 1944

Darling --

I'm getting so tired of struggling with that ugly V-mail paper and my inept fingers that I thought I'd try handwriting for a change. And I find I'm not very good at that, either. I must have a vitamin deficiency. I've been tired lately and I have an ugly sore on my leg, ringworm probably. And today I took a vitamin B pill and wasn't tired (though the ringworm is still there) so it must be

that.

I've been in a bad mood too, lonely, and very much craving your presence. The night before last I dreamt you were coming home soon, and then all of a sudden there you were, sitting at a big table with the family and me, eating (of course). It was so real I felt terrible when I woke up, and cried a little. But still, I always hope to dream of you when I go to sleep. In this dream you had on a white waiter's coat and you were very quiet. I guess that was my original impression of you -- a taciturn young man in a white beer jacket. And at that point I fell in love, where I have been ever since.

I'm enclosing some nice pictures of Kathy the man next door took. And a rather horrible one of me - taken right after a fatiguing sortie to the Loop. They were taken last week and you can see her standing up in her buggy in all her glory.

I guess I'll have to weaken and use the typewriter -- there's too much to say.

I just spoke to Mom and she sends her love and says she sent the salami, only it is really from Jeannette in case you want to thank her. I am going to mail the shoes to you tomorrow (the road to hell is paved etc.)

I had dinner at the Kerners last night and spent a pleasant evening chatting with them and another girl, one Helen Stillman. Her father is head of the FBMS where Buss used to work and she remembered him. Buss incidentally is coming in the end of this week for another vacation. I think somebody ought to start spreading out the vacations of the two brothers De Grazia so the younger one gets some of the breaks.

I was down at the beach quite a long while today with Kathy. I brought her lunch, thinking she'd take her nap under a tree but she didn't and managed to survive until bedtime tonight without any fuss or scenes to speak of. A great raft of people were down and kept showing up -- even Steinbrecher showed up. He likes Priscilla I guess. Priscilla is always surrounded by these

All-American types like Howard Hawkins, all playing ball and flexing their muscles like mad. So who should be a more fitting addition to the company than Bob and Ena Mohlman, who also put in their appearance, at which point I left. I shall never get over the phenomenon of the Americanization of Ena, down to the last dull nuance of the Sigma Chi Sweetheart prototype. I don't know why I have such an aggression towards her. Someday you get me down on a couch and I'll free-associate and you can find out why. Anyway, I'm getting so I just resent everybody who isn't you, which takes in a lot of people.

Angel, I have to go do the dishes now. All my love to you --

JILL TO AL AUGUST 21, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Still no letter from you since the new invasion but I don't expect to hear for several weeks, since I know how busy you must be. Incidentally, the last two letters from you, dated the 6th and 7th were both opened by the censor, though nothing was cut out. I guess the security boys get even more careful around invasion time. But I feel very strict with myself about writing you often now, because you probably don't have much to brighten your life with in the field (to put it noxiously) except letters. You know what, the Danenburgs sent Kathy the cutest little gold locket today. I think that was awfully nice of them, don't you. I put it on her and she liked it very much, and sits with the locket part in her mouth with the damndest smug expression on her face. The only way you can get her to spit it out is to make her laugh, which can be done very easily, as by biting her foot, saying "Boo" or just jumping up and down on the furniture.

I continue to have a lengthy, impassioned correspondence with Liz Evers. We've both abandoned the plan of setting up housekeeping together, at my instigation, but I'm still anxious to have her out. I have this idea -- a new and doubtless passing one -- that if she comes out and stays until elections, we could

both get some work in, taking turns with child care. I'm getting a yen to do something. I know that when the weather gets cooler there won't be so much to do with Kathy and time will hang heavy. The mad social whirl of the summer is palling rapidly already, not to mention the summer itself, and while I don't expect much satisfaction from a part-time or at-home job, at least I could feel useful for a while. It's not that I'm getting sick of domesticity -- on the contrary, I don't get enough of it. There's nothing more maddening than reading a divine recipe for chicken and oyster casserole and not having anybody to try it out on. My proposed trip to the coast would furnish a change at the turning of the seasons but I don't think one should trust the satisfactions one might get out of that kind of change, and the disappointment might be worse than the restlessness that originally motivated the plan. I think it would be better if I tried working out something in Chicago before escaping to the coast. I'm beginning to find out that the only cure for loneliness is more loneliness -- if you try putting your faith in people, other than the one you really miss -- you only end up disappointed and hating them, even if they are your own brother. I'd still like to visit Paul and Ann but I'd rather do it at a time when I'm not so emotionally involved in making a trip. Or something. I don't know if I've made myself very clear and whenever I do tell you something like this, I change my mind the next day and thereby make myself out to be an awful fool in your liquid brown eyes. But I guess you know my vices by now and unless I develop any new ones, I don't suppose I should worry about losing you on account of them. Anyway I don't smoke very much ever. You probably wonder why my letters have assumed such a gloomy note just when the news is so good. I think it's just because the news is so good. Everyday I expect the war to be over and when it isn't I am heart-broken and return to my daily life with renewed spleen.

But I love you infinitely and always. Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 21, 1944 (A)

P. S. Yesterday's letter dated a day early.

Dearest,

It's a fine, still cool evening in the grounds of our new billet and I have almost an hour of time to write you before it's either too dark to write or I have to watch the air raid. I feel better this evening for having had a two-hour nap this afternoon. Last night was sleepless. There were lots of mosquitoes, the new bed and a constitutional unwillingness to fall asleep. Also, Major Ross had a half-dream, half illusion last night and woke me up to search the garden for an unidentified prowler about three in the morning. I almost shot up a statue as I was rounding a corner, but otherwise I'm sure he was dreaming. He's convinced of that too, now.

I miss you more every day. You would probably be astounded at how much I think of you. And every day that the war is nearer won, it becomes worse. I don't know what I'll be able to do in the final weeks before seeing you. I'm afraid the strain will be too much for me. Whereas you can always pick up Kathy, I've got to sit and wring my hands. Perhaps it would help if the same week the war ends, you send me a selection of highly interesting books and magazines to tide me over that painful period - things like Home & Gardens and Emily Post (not seriously).

It already seems that we've been in France a long time, though it's only been scarcely a week. Thinking about it for years, I suppose has had its effect. And then so much has happened in this short week. Everyone is slightly amazed at our sweeping gains, though there is always the feeling among old soldiers that to every rapid advance there is always a slow, painful let down. Perhaps it'll keep up this way.

What has happened to that family picture you all were going to have taken. I would cherish such a picture very highly. Please get the family on the ball, darling. They ought to put out a little

effort for their far-flung sons. I hardly ever get a letter from home, and know nothing of the family's health, finances or morale.

Thank God you're preserving me from the same fate regarding my own family. I have most vivid knowledge of Kathy and yourself, though my appetite is insatiable. Physically, too. I don't know whether I'd rather crush you or pet you to death. Time will tell.

Always your lover, Al

AL TO JILL AUGUST 21, 1944 (B)

Darling Jill,

I hope you realize the sheer physical effort involved in writing you a letter. Take this type for instance. Isn't it stinking? (assuming you can read it, of course.) But I am always moving around and every time I sit down to write I must solve the technical problem all over again. Just now, my pen is low on ink and there is no supply available. So I must use this machine. Now you, to make an odious comparison, wholly unjustified since you are the world's most lovable correspondent apart from your technique of making love, have everything in place, ready to go at the flick of the wrist once the desire and/or inspiration strikes you.

We are encamped at a noble and pleasant country place now, the padron being absent and the caretaker living with his numerous family and friends in a nearby house. There isn't a lot of war to see from the immediate surroundings but what news we do get show that everything is going just dandy and that it won't be long before we'll be whooping it up along 57th Street again. Being as you're not here I would love to spend the evening with you in the UT, beering up, throwing darts, beating the slot machines and dancing close to you in a corner. I would be glad to let Mom have Kathy for an evening such as that, after

giving her ample instructions on what kinds of habits not to form in her.

I neglected to mention that I've also had to rub insect repellent all over my bare shoulders and face in order to keep off the mosquitoes who recognize a delectable skin when they see one. But now the moths have come in vast numbers and I have an idea that I can barely finish this page before taking refuge in my sack for the night.

After supper tonight which consisted of a can of C ration hash, a fresh tomato, some grapes, a cup of chocolate, some biscuit and a burnt potato which I was too impatient to bake properly, I walked down the road and talked a French partisan into letting me ride the horse he captured from the Germans. It wasn't very difficult. I just said, "How about letting me borrow the horse" and he said "Oui". So I had a wonderful ride through a lot of woods, up hill and down dale, and then I even had a picture of myself on the depressed satellite of Grossdeutschland to send to you. He wasn't very well trained, but responded very well to a guttural "Alt" every now and then. I'm sure my flanks will be hurting tomorrow, but it was great fun, as you can appreciate, and I'm going to do it again very soon.

I got into a conversation with a kindly old Finance colonel today at the mess and he gave me a lot of his opinions about farming without asking. I'm not sure of his peacetime occupation, but from the way he condemned the inefficiency and laziness of most farmers, I take it he was a frustrated country banker for at least part of his career. He claims that an intelligent person can make a fortune at farming if he remembers to oil his machinery and only use machinery where you are sure a horse won't do the job. He was pretty sound, if somewhat gloomy in his view of the average farmer. There is no doubt that the Jefferson ideal of the intellectual farmer is a grand conception and very intriguing. I just can't wait to get at your victory garden.

I think I'll go to bed and let the moths in peace, the poor obsessed creatures. I may add more to this if I get up early

tomorrow morning. I need never add that I think you're the most wonderful girl in the world and that I love you.

Al

BESIDES their sporadic independent operations, the partisans supplied many recruits to the two French divisions of what now became Army B under French General de Lattre de Tassigny; the budding Army was at first attached to the American Seventh Army, to whose Headquarters -- the G-2 section, under Colonel Quinn and his Assistant, Colonel Parry -- Our Man from Psychological Operations reported. The French, apart from commando units, landed after the Americans, and, as we catch up with the Lieutenant, are hastening toward Toulon and Marseilles, the large port cities to the west; nearly all sea-going traffic would be directed to them as soon as possible. The French troops were the colonial divisions, Moroccan and Algerian, our friends from Italy, with numbers of Europeans among them and leading them.

The Lieutenant understands that he can have little control in respect to the French people. They have long expected liberation. The Vichy supporters and militia have run away; rarely, they snipe or defend some strongpoint briefly until killed. Everybody else is more than cooperative. Whatever problems and opportunities they might present in the way of communications and propaganda are to be handled by the French themselves. Exceptionally, George Rehm of his team has now landed and goes East to the Cote d'Azur to start up a newspaper.



George Rehm in Southern France

A mixed lot of French patriots, partisans, ex-officials and military officers begin a cantankerous caterwauling over public policies and media controls that will never end. Half their time is taken up with explaining who they are to each other and why they should be in charge of this or that installation and policy.

The Americans from the Army Headquarters on down are singularly unconcerned about who is running this part of France, now that they have liberated it. The Lieutenant, for instance, realizes that he would have a hard time taking over the Marseilles and Toulon media, even had he the personnel to go in, arrest, purge, appoint new staff, program the outlets and commence emissions. The task might have been delegated to the French command explicitly, with some representation of the Americans for surveillance, counsel and material help. Information control was quite unplanned.

The front and the occupied territory are expanding crazily. The French troops settle around the two cities for ten days of siege. The three American divisions are among the best, perhaps better than any that have landed in the North of France for they have engaged in one or more amphibious invasions and were loaded with the experiences of Italy: the Third heads up the Rhone Valley; the 45th moves up through the Luberon to Apt and beyond; the 36th goes up the Route Napoleon toward Grenoble. Then there is a task force that closes to the Italian border, and another that is formed of various units, given the name of Task Force Butler after its Commander, and sent up the Route Napoleon alongside the 36th Division specially to intercept the German retreat up the Rhone.

Matters were going poorly for the Germans, but General Weise knew just what to do. He had been deprived of the division that he thought would resist on his left flank, at the Riviera. He found that the second division that he had in that area was being poked to bits, what with being spread out all the way from Italy in a crescent around the coastal mountains and the foothills of the Alps, the Basses Alpes. And he saw that the 36th Division was marching -- nay, driving -- at a bewildering pace up the Route Napoleon. So he ordered the 11th Panzer Division, even while maintaining its front to the South against

the Third and Forty-fifth American Divisions, to send four Battle groups to cork up the four river valleys that lead toward the Rhone and through which Task Force Butler must push, if it will emerge upon the Rhone and cut off the line of retreat of the 19th Army.

The principal site to be controlled is the town of Montelimar, where hills on the East and West narrow the Rhone Valley and provide commanding heights. Through Montelimar, which is located on the East Bank of the Rhone, run the main railroad line from Southern to Northern France, and the Main Highway #7 that runs from the South and East to Lyons. An important, if secondary, North-South highway #86 runs along the West bank of the Rhone. Heavy German traffic to the North starts up immediately along all three routes, and American planes are busily engaged in its destruction. The shoulders of the routes are soon looking messy.

Only one week after landing, after poking around Draguignan and Gap, the Lieutenant is cruising into the beautiful mountain city of Grenoble, its buildings undestroyed, its people joyful, the French resistants very much in evidence. How many miles from the sea has he come? Three hundred, more or less, plus two hundred zigging and zagging. The Americans are overwhelmed by the hospitality of the town; it is a little Roma. He trades cigarettes for perfume to send home. His soldiers have already arranged a party for the night of the liberation with a gang from the University. The evening holds great promise.

However, no sooner does he arrive and hear these glad tidings, than he learns, too, that Major Roos is urgently concerned to find him. The Major is swollen with an important mission. There has come a request from Corps headquarters for help: What kind? I don't know. When? Now, right away. Where? Find the Corps. Where is it? I don't know. It's getting dark. Roos tightens his lips, their sour curl is gone: look, orders are orders, this is an order! The Lieutenant looks hard at the guy. He is crazy. He cannot discuss a problem. He has never been out in the dark.

Still, despite the almost hopeless nature of the mission, the Lieutenant is pleased to hear from Corps, that they believed something

was urgently needed. Of course, the matter is up to the Propaganda Team to decide; it knows better than Corps whether it could be done or not; the sad fact is that no one in the Army from General Patch down knows anything about this kind of military action and therefore, unless it is to be so stupid as to be criminal, a perceived action needs to be framed as a request, not an order. As an order, as Major Roos would have it, this was absurd, yet the Exec did not regard the idea as ridiculous as such. Moreover, he was the only one in the Army who could undertake the peculiar mission, Lt. Johnny Anspacher had arrived, but he was a novice.

It is uniquely his, this kind of work. He drives about in complete darkness over quite unknown roads, through uncertain lines of enemy and friends (who cannot be relied upon to recognize you), trailing behind him a load of messages for the enemy, having in mind finding a corps headquarters that has been on the move, who would tell him where some divisional artillery might be located, and what the problem is, for the purpose then of proceeding to find a battery of artillery that is set up and targeted to do the job. It would not do, for instance, to shoot the stuff at the 11th Panzer, which has high morale, is standing and holding, and is concentrated in small groups; the cannon had to be pointed at the retreating enemy mass.

So he drives along. He has hardly ever asked himself whether the Enemy would kill him if they caught him. Nor did he ever wonder whether bashfulness of some of his company back in Algiers to move up to the Front were due to such a feeling; he considered them as mere ordinary goldbricks. His was a straight military task, one might argue, but the SS police had peculiar notions of what constituted the military; in Russia they (and the whole Wehrmacht, in fact), were under orders, obeyed with alacrity, to kill (or starve to death) any political personnel they came across, any communist party workers, as well as the usual legions of Jews, Gypsies, partisans, and others who simply weren't lucky enough to get out of their way. He knew enough of this to be warned, but somehow, though he always thought he might be killed, he never thought he'd be captured. Strange, since he worked so closely to enemy prisoners of war.

At any rate, he is enough of a soldier, or a simpleton, or rash

enough, to try to carry out the Corps idea. If someone out there is intelligent enough to think of what should be done in this case, the Lieutenant was going to try to help him, instead of driving off around the bend of the road and going to sleep for the night. He thinks of Old Hank, the locomotive engineer in the folk song, who leapt from his engine as it headed toward the broken bridge, singing:

*Oh I may have shirked my duty,
but I've got a sweet patooty,
who would rather have me home,
than dead.*

He often thinks of old songs and old jazz while driving, but not of the popular hits. He heads West across the mountains. He does find Advance Corps HQ. He discovers what the problem is: The main task of the Seventh Army is to capture or destroy the Nineteenth German Army, amounting to about 150,000 men. An excellent chance to do just this is electrifying the summer air of the Command Post of Corps. They know as well as the Enemy that, with the 36th Division well above and in control of the Route Napoleon, the whole lot of Germans must pass up through the Rhone Valley. The Americans are trying to shove motorized infantry, armor and artillery through the narrow hilly roads that lead out, like rungs of a ladder, from the North-South Route Napoleon that they control to positions where they can command by fire and capture by assault the North-South roads of the other leg of the ladder, especially where one of the rungs reaches the beautiful little city of Montelimar. There, hills on both sides fashion a gap lending itself to closure. If the Americans can plug the gap, 150,000 Germans will be out of the War, casualties if they try to get through, prisoners if they don't. Task Force Butler and the 36th Division, in part, are moving with speedily, or with painful slowness, depending upon how you see them, to shut off the escape routes. Their orders are clear and concise; no commanders could have orders more telegraphic.

JILL TO AL AUGUST 22, 1944

Darling --

The German cap and little parachute came today, novel and welcome gifts both. I don't think I'd go so far as to wear the cap but I have it prominently on display. Should I have it dry cleaned? It's awfully dirty but then I doubt whether it will add to the sartorial dignity of anybody in the family.

I didn't do much today except buy Kathy a couple of pairs of little overalls and T-shirts which she can wear when the weather is a little cooler. I read a rather good and novel English mystery story, the name of which escapes me, and got the curse and otherwise lived an uneventful life. In a few minutes I'm going over to Fifth Ward Democratic headquarters with a neighbor to see what I can do in the next couple of months. Probably very little unless I can get somebody to stay with Kathy regularly. Maybe I'd better continue this letter later and clean up the damned kitchen.

The next day -- Oh yes, I went over last night with this girl in the building, who is active in the Independent Voters committee and various CIO units -- anyway, we went over to the ward Democratic HQ, which the regulars have fixed up very fancy on a second floor at 55th and Lake Park. All the old boys I used to work for were milling around -- Hodes, who is war committeeman, Levy and everybody. This girl had to talk to somebody over there so I just sat around and shook hands with the people I knew. I guess I will do some work for her directly, that is, the Independent Voters Committee rather than the regulars, just doorbell pushing probably, not very spectacular, just a citizen's duty, you might say.

The word of Paris's liberation came today. It's really a big thing and I don't see how Goebbels can conceal its significance from the Germans, although it will be interesting to see him try. But even when France is liberated entirely, which should happen in the next month, it may still take an awfully long while to finish

the war on the soil of Germany, if they continue to hold on with such persistence. That worries me.

The silk stockings came just a little while ago. Thank you very much, darling. They'll be very nice to wear in the fall. You'd be home by the time I get around to wearing all the stockings I have. I hardly ever wear them now that I am a housewife.

I just read a dull book called Shore Leave, about Navy people on leave, if you hadn't guessed. Everybody drinks a lot and lays a lot and talks like Eastern college undergraduates. I had forgotten how much I disliked the All-American type.

Kathy looks very snappy in her new clothes, her outfit today consisting of a yellow t-shirt and aquamarine colored overalls. The overall legs are rather long and she trips on them when she stands up but I have no intention of shortening them as she will probably grow by the time I find both needle and thread at the same time and place. She is doing a lot of standing around on floors these days since she has learned to pull herself up on practically anything, including a door. I'll have to get her shoes next, which will require a trip to the local ration board for extra coupons, since I've used hers all up on me, beast that I am.

The poor girl is standing in the living room now, having just arisen from her nap, patting an album of Ellington records I just got. She is a great patter and foot stamper these days. I wonder what significance it has. Sometimes she pats her hand and stamps a foot simultaneously and it looks as if she were going to fall apart out of the sheer effort. She makes steps with her feet but sometimes she will take several steps, or just hop up and down with one foot, to only one step on the other, the total effect being that of one gripped by the dancing mania of the middle ages. I'm very bitter that you can't see her. I'm sure we or anybody will never produce such a cute baby again, and it's a shame you have to miss seeing this amazing, precocious and jolly child grow.

But a million big kisses for you, darling. Good luck, too.

Always,

-- Jill

JILL TO AL AUGUST 23, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

The news continue to be marvelous, with Romania (note correct AP-approved spelling) joining our side. People here are talking about V-Day -- whether or not the bars will be open and what they will do in either case. I think that sort of talk is notably bad taste and I doggedly refuse to be of good cheer until the day comes. Though hardly a masochist in this case I still think there will be a lot of time and trouble ahead before peace comes. Anyway, I don't think this war- is-practically-won spirit does anybody any good. It's OK to be jubilant if you haven't waited for what seems like years, the way we and a lot of other people have. If you have, every extra day of waiting seems like an eternity.

So much for the Cassandra of Ridgewood Court. Actually there isn't much else to write or think about. I'm pretty tired from a day of rather strenuous house cleaning and am waiting now to go over to a meeting of the Independent Voters Committee, which will probably be very dull. I still shrink from group action, both out of ennui and a certain odd shyness, but I feel it my Duty to show up at meetings of these groups with noble aims, even though I don't add anything to them except my presence. What baffles me is what people have to talk about at political meetings, if they all agree to begin with. I think you once made a very cogent observation of this sort of group behavior -- man's propensity for mutual fur-rubbing, I think you called it. Joan Kelley is a great girl for meetings and conferences and in all the years I've known her, I've never been able to discover what was said at them or what pleasure she derived therefrom. This same, and for me, mystical quality, also holds for business conferences and editorial meetings. Most of the time you know

what you are supposed to do or better still, that somebody knows and is damned well going to tell you. Ergo, why a conference. Why not just an order scribbled on a piece of paper?

I had a dull evening last, too. The girl from the top floor, the one who plays a violin in the school orchestra and remembers you, came back from a summer in new York and had a few selected neighbors in, all people I loathe including the refugees from directly over my head, with whom I am barely on speaking terms. I did find out that the male of the family was a prisoner of the Russians in Siberia for three years in the last war, which at least reduces my death wishes towards him, though not to his ex-wealthy shrill Viennese wife or their hammer-wielding, pogo-stick leaping little boy. Anyway, that's how it sounds. Speaking of little boys, I lent out the German cap to my favorite Nick today, with many admonitions to care for it fondly. It fit him perfectly. Now I don't know if he has an exceptionally large head, which certainly isn't apparent, if true, or whether the owner was an exceptionally small boy, which also may be true if some of the rumors drifting back here are correct. I read somewhere that some American soldiers disarmed a small group of Germans and sent them back to enemy lines with their pants shorn to the knees and candy in their fists. Oh damn, this is a dull letter. I love you so much, too.

Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 23, 1944

Dearest, my Jill,

Aren't we doing nicely?

I got lots of mail from you yesterday and a New Yorker, my first French mail.

Worked hard last night and have no time to write now either.

All my love to you, though.

Apart from the boredom of life apart, you seem to be bringing up baby and otherwise doing OK. Me too.

Love & kisses,

Your

Al

AL TO JILL AUGUST 24, 1944

Darling Jill,

I've had a very quiet day, mostly because I've had no transport to get me where I wanted to go and therefore had to make the best of my immediate surroundings. That wasn't very hard to do, although our rapid advance makes the prospects of lots of travel very enticing. So I got up around eight, made myself a hearty breakfast, with lots of good coffee, shined my boots, played around with some leaflets, studied some maps and somehow the morning passed. Then I prepared myself a big lunch, which we ate very pleasantly in the covered veranda of the house and we talked for a good while. Afterwards I took a nap in the sun on the grass, woke up around three-thirty, took a wonderful cold bath by the pump a few meters away and whiled away the time until supper with a variety of people who kept arriving at our camp for one reason or another. Tonight we ate a huge meal from which I am just now recovering and so went the day. I feel very well after it. We have been able to find lots of wine, grapes and fresh tomatoes around here to augment our diet, which up until today has been mainly C-rations and K-rations, with some 10-in-1 which is a lot better than the other two. The dump today gave us some spinach, I see and some of that fruit cocktail I detest and a few other good odds and ends.

I was very shocked to hear the true version of George's story

about Dieter. That is really unforgivable. It's hard to get angry with George but I certainly would like to tell somebody off on it. But why isn't Dieter in the army, it occurs to me in passing. Some of those interesting figures around campus certainly give me a pain. I respect Ollie for at least sticking his chin out as long as he could. They could do as much.

I got both of your letters on Walter's financial affairs. I judge from them that you are not advancing the money and though I don't know as much about it as I should, I wouldn't either. We won't lose much by the time I come home staying out of his zipper factory and I'm sure the banks are full of money to lend to good risks. And if they don't like his prospects, he can cool his heels for a few months like I've been cooling mine on a hell of a lot more important things for the last couple of years. I don't think he'll like that "call" business. In fact, I think it's sort of funny. It's so typical of Walter to be more interested in your money than you are; he's interested in everything about you more than you are. I wish people wouldn't take such an annoying interest in other people. I know I'm impolite, but I dislike people always asking me how I feel, for example.

I'm very eagerly waiting for those pictures of Kathy you said were finished; they'll have to be very good indeed to beat those tiny ones. I love them and you too. I'm glad I wrote you 15 letters in the bad month of June and wish it were more.

Your Al

AL TO JILL AUGUST 25, 1944

Dearest,

I have just finished a most delicious piece of melon on this fine Southern French evening. There wasn't much, eight pieces from one melon for the group of officers who had just finished a perplexing conference, where we tried to make heads and tails of the situation which can only inadequately be described if it is

called "rapidly changing". But how much nicer it is to think in such terms than it was during those dismal months at Cassino, when it felt as if we were establishing a new race of mud rats in Italy. Now in the open breezes and the fresh fields and forests I can feel your nearness and let my spirit raise itself slightly towards the sky. I can reread your letters and look at your picture with heightened anticipation. I can look at a country which has not been destroyed and a people which is hopeful and almost religiously joyful, convinced that now they have recaptured life's greatest good and determined to keep it. France will be great again. I feel less doubt of it now than ever before. They have reassumed their country with complete sang-froid and savoir-faire. It will be the French who will run France and who will treat with the rest of the world as equals.

I have never been convinced, incidentally, of a big-four control of the world, apart from my liking of other countries than those represented among the other three. That France, Italy, the Low Countries, and the Scandinavian countries should be swamped by the "big" ones never appealed to my political philosophy. I have strong doubts about the subjection of Germany. There is so much profundity in German culture that an attempt to level it to the Balkan or Arab level ought to proceed very carefully. It is a brain operation, not a sprained ligament. Extreme talk, like the castration scheme brought up by a certain British colonel who stayed with us last night, is scandalous, absurd, and harmful. Apart from the million other objections, it would produce a world of men full of castration fears for generation on the side. Such extreme solutions only confuse the issue and make more sensible compromises impossible to obtain. On the other side, Germany, or rather the Germanic peoples, produced their greatest contributions to culture before the unification of Germany. Therefore, we can expect that it will be as fine a region if it were cut down to its neighbors' size. Nothing will be lost by losing Austria, East Prussia, the Sudetan, Danzig, Schleswig-Holstein, and probably the Rhineland. With their masters butchered, the East Prussian peasant would probably become a fine collective farmer, or a Polish peasant as well. I

think the Germans love authority more than they do blut und boden. I shall be anxious to see a lot of things once I get to Germany.

But here the page is finished and hardly anything about how I love my best girl. More than any other girl in the world is not enough. More than the loveliest sunset that ever came by my hungry eyes. As much as my life, with all its shady lanes and sunny corners. You are the music and the coolness, and everything is better or good because you are in it. You must always know that I want you very much.

AI

ON the 21st, at a Seventh Army briefing, Task Force Butler is commanded to turn West off the Route Napoleon and seize the heights Northeast of Montelimar; following this up, VI Corps orders a full Infantry Regiment of 36th Division and most of the 36th's two battalions of 155 millimeter heavy guns to reinforce TF Butler: blocking the Valley of the Rhone is your primary mission!

Still, all is not going well. As the Lieutenant would tell you, Clausewitz says (*On War*) that the principles are simple, but the details are difficult. General Lucian Truscott, commanding Corps, does not seem to have much confidence in his 36th Division or Task Force Butler, which is, after all, mostly a chip off the old 36th block. The General is issuing commands on the Battalion level! For instance, on August 22, he is ordering the 36th Division Commander to get the 977th and 141th Artillery Battalions into positions in which they can fire on Montelimar and the roads to the South of it. At some point, some bright junior officer on the Commanding General's Staff must have remembered the Italian experience and said "What we need is some surrender leaflets dropped on the roads so we can get more Krauts to surrender. Where do we get hold of some of that shit?"

Four hours later the Lieutenant shows up pulling a load of the shit in a trailer. At this point it's the "shit of Divine Uranus," gold, the

signature of Eisenhower on the insignia of SHAEF. The Germans are promised heaven if they surrender, that is, safety, food, and ultimate return home. The packs of paper are gift-wrapped in glowing bronze shell cases with explosive heads and fuses with timers set for air-bursting at 1000 yards or whatever the artillery observer gives as the grid of the road where these Germans are trudging stolidly along, just now under cover of a night that they wish would last as long as the years of darkness covering the Jews in Exodus from Egypt, whose descendants even at this moment are being rounded up and killed by the masters of these same cattle who are tramping dustily up the three roads of the Rhone Valley.

The few rounds of shells he carried should have been many more, so that every artillery battery of the Seventh Army wherever it was would have a hundred -- a score on hand, the rest allocated to it at the ammunition dump. The propaganda shortage is not nearly the main shortage, which is of trucks and truckers. Anticipating fierce combat in breaking out from the beaches, the Allied logisticians had provided a great deal of ammunition at the expense of trucks to haul it. In one of the letters to Jill, it is written, "we are moving too fast for anything, including the human frame. The group that are really winning this campaign are the truck drivers, white and colored. They are worked beyond all reasonable standard of endurance.." He specifies gas and rations as being short, but strangely the very surplus of ammunition on the shores meant a shortage of shells at the front, for lack of the trucks to get them there. In one place, a 36th Division battery ceases to fire upon the retreating Germans and is useless against counterattack because it lacks ammunition. Perhaps after the Italian campaigns, where ammunition seemed in infinite supply, the Americans are firing hastily and wastefully.

If all had been well prepared, the retreating Germans, including those elements that turned to counterattack in order to protect the withdrawal, would be treated to thousands of several different leaflets along the right of way dropped by air and shot from cannon; they would hear loudspeakers advising them to surrender. These capabilities would be present had the propaganda command been fully experienced and seriously planning, instead of quarreling and quibbling, in Algiers and Naples.

Too, combat unit officers and their generals (gung-ho, to show they are mensch) are usually thinking in terms of explosives. Or yet, inasmuch as many infantrymen would rather not personally blast their fellow-men, and considering the limited number of assignments a combat commander can shift them to -- for assisting the small true "killer- group" -- a detail of one or several men could be formed in a company to specialize in capture. They would be trained when in reserve and on the job.

The Lieutenant knows better than anybody what made an enemy surrender. The soldier who is close to surrendering because of hostile fire or injury or demoralization faces a terrifying decision. He is threatened with death on the spot by his next in command, or after arrest and trial by his own commanders, and he is likely to be shot as he tries to give up, whether by accident from the enemy who shoots on sight without understanding his intention to give up, or by an enemy who would rather kill than capture, especially if given an easy target and a crowded agenda. In a way, deserting or surrendering is like dying, or, even more, like suicide. Hence the enemy has to know how to surrender as well as being convinced to surrender, and friendly troops have to know how to accept a surrender. So these leaflets he is carrying bear not only solemn assurances of decent treatment, under the signature of the highest Allied authority and are stamped with iconography of authority, but also describe on their reverse side the technique of surrendering, including the use of a white rag and of the proper words, along with the removal of the helmet, and so on. Part of his job is to insinuate as casually as possible to his fellow-soldiers how to go about picking up prisoners: surely the veterans know how, but the replacements, usually a third of the Army in battle, are most nervous in going about the business.

There are always doubts about one's mission, beyond the ordinary doubts trying to crowd into the mind, if one is special and an innovator. What makes him move through these strange mountains and dark roads is a conviction not so much that he can save enemy lives (for there is a lot of opposition to saving enemy lives) but that he can take a number of the enemy out of action, and even if he gets rid of one enemy soldier -- never mind that he might catch a hundred of them -- he would justify his bit of this immense war in terms of what many

years later came to be called "costs-benefits analysis," and "more bang for the buck." He is one of a million Americans, British and other troops who have managed to land upon the continental shores in Italy and France, and as of this point in time all together they have managed to dispose of 400,000 of the enemy, within the year following the invasion of Sicily and the Italian surrender; that would be an average of 0.4 per man. Actually, with the Luftwaffe counting for very little all of this time, Allied troops in France, subject to the risks -- small or large -- of combat, numbered perhaps 300,000 divisional personnel plus 50,000 in air crews. That is, the truer average in combat would be one-to-one. Whatever the ratio, he felt that he had already far exceeded it.

It was hard to measure who disposed of whom, of course: few men recognized directly whom they were killing or even if they were killing anyone. Was he engaged in killing or not killing when his own infantrymen shot enemy soldiers led to attempt surrender, or when his leaflets were used to entice Germans out of their holes in order to strike them with an airburst of shrapnel? This would occur sometimes even though he might advise against such tactics, which were generally forbidden, when an incident would arise, and even though the Geneva Conventions bound the warring armies to take prisoners and treat them decently, and even though expediency reinforced mercy; for the enemy would cease to place any faith whatsoever in the American propaganda, denying what it said on all subjects, aside from when and how to surrender, and, furthermore, the enemy would fight to the end, with devastating results.

He drives into the falling night, to when two tiny slits of light become his guides to the road ahead, following the Route Napoleon down to Die. The hundreds of tracked vehicles, trucks and cannon moving on it are grinding up the pavement of the narrow highway. He takes the right-hand fork when he reaches Die, and the road is less and less travelled as it approaches the area of Montelimar. He asks of several murky figures and knows he has not arrived. At last he comes upon an outpost, manned by a major with a 50-calibre machinegun. They exchange greetings.

The Major awaits, wide-awake, impatient, for the light of dawn.

He can then resume his slaughter. He has a piece of the road in his sights. He knows that hundreds of Germans are even now, especially now, pushing along the road. Come dawn, he will repeat his act of the evening before. He sees a column of Germans straggle into range and he opens fire, killing and wounding a number. He is protected by the forest; he moves his weapon then, before a panzer self-propelled cannon can draw a bead on him or an enemy party can get by his soldiers who are covering him. It is actually a machine gunner's job that he is doing and the Lieutenant is a little surprised at it. Either he is a dedicated killer or he has to do it himself in order to get the job done. Officers in the American army frequently do the work of their enlisted men, not only because of the tradition of equality, and because they are more skilled, but also because in situations of danger their morale is higher than that of the men. In any given platoon, company, regiment, division, army, only a small minority do the effective work. It doesn't matter whether one is speaking of killing or paper-work. But isn't it the same in all groups?

The Lieutenant feels sorry for the exhausted Germans plodding along, under the hammering of the heavy lead slugs of this beefy exultant type, as if they were pigs moving down the corridor of an abattoir. But it is the way in which most of the death and maiming of war occurs. Soldiers are caught in a barrage and killed and maimed. They are helplessly trapped and destroyed. Their boat sinks and they are drowned. Most of the rotten glorification of war is based upon the obscenely false idea of chivalrous men facing one another with similar weapons and expecting a decision that will be based upon courage and skill at arms. That this is all false, he has long known; it's the fallacy of the ass of Fred Faas. Fred still couldn't sit down without a twinge. Even if war were as it is faked to be, it would still be as morally wrong to kill under idealized tournament conditions as to kill with the typical treacherous advantages of real battle situations.



Fred Faas at Anzio

Moral or immoral, he likes to think of himself as a warrior, however, and therefore admits to the need and occasional usefulness of battle under such circumstances. Too, he would behave like the Major. Indeed, he wonders whether he should stay for the duck-shoot. But time is passing, no second heavy machine gun is handy, and the Major appears in no mood to share his luck. The Major, whose face is obscured by the darkness, does allow some idea of where the nearest artillery piece is located, by recalling its muzzle flash. The Lieutenant circles around and finds it.

The gunners are mostly glad to have a human contact and are willing to fire the leaflet shells at dawn. Yes, they will get several shells to their sister howitzers as well. They were pulled out of Cassino for the Provence operation; they have had experience with propaganda operations. They like the thought of talking to the Germans, so to speak. His jeep drives bumping onto the gun site and they unload the shells.

Then the Lieutenant steers off into the damp gloom, with a twinge of mourning and nostalgia in parting from the little squad tending its piece, isolated in the dark green forest, so tiny a part of the world-wide scene of war, serious small voices receding into the blackness. This small feeling impinging upon comradeship, repeated hundreds of times, this too is a cause for the recurrence of war. It covers senseless warfare with balm and bandage of brotherly love. Absurd, yes; true, yes. "I should have stayed for the action," he thinks, as he crawls up the road like a snail. But they have a forward observer who should be able to tell them if the firing works. It would have been

better to drive in the daytime, too. Or would it?

What happens in the end? During the eight days of the Montelimar Battle, the cannon of the Seventh Army units of the East, not counting the Third Division and Forty-fifth Division who came firing up the roads from the South, shoot off 7000 rounds a day upon the Germans along the Rhone Valley roads and at the units of the 11PD defending them. His 35 rounds of leaflets in the battle of Montelimar amounted to 1/1500th of the 54,000 rounds that were fired by the cannon of the 36th Division and Task Force Butler and he was 1/60,000th of the total manpower engaged (counting the aviation troops) or 1/30,000 of just the American combat troops alone. To the artillery fire must be added the small arms ammunition, the machine guns, the mortars, the automatic rifles, rifles and handguns (practically none), but emphatically the bombings and firings of the Twelfth Tactical Air Force that rattled off an abundance of machine gun ammunition and at the same time dropped 851 tons of bombs upon communication facilities and 953 tons on troops.

Notwithstanding, three bridges over the Rhone were partially maintained until the last Germans had escaped to the North. At times, wreckage rather than artillery and small arms fire blocked the route of the escaping Germans. And of the advancing Americans of the Third Division! For the Germans blew up on the road whatever could not carry them farther. Viewing the approach of the Americans to the South of Montelimar, the German rearguard on August 29 barred their route by an assemblage in three files of the wrecks of 500 trucks and cars, and of metal junk galore.

The 11th Panzer Division did its job well. Despite a flash flood that made the Drome River almost impassable for a day, and despite repeated, if half-hearted attacks, from the hilly flanks to the East by the much better armed and more numerous American forces, they were able to withdraw without surrendering a single unit as such, and furthermore, before they pulled out their own last element, had protected the withdrawal of most of the rag-tag Nineteenth Army, perhaps as many as two-thirds of the total, the remaining third having fallen into the hands of the Americans and French.

There were some bitter complaints from German infantry

commanders whose troops had legged it for seven hundred kilometers from the coastal defenses to the final line established across Northern France. They felt that they had been contemptuously abandoned by the 11th Panzer Division. But on the whole the Germans could claim victorious retreat.

And the Americans might have asked themselves, once more, why they did not pursue the enemy vigorously, why they retreated from the high ground that they had first taken in several places over the Rhone Valley, why they had tended to let air power and artillery take on the total job while the infantry stood by like lazy male lions waiting for an easy kill.

JILL TO AL AUGUST 26, 1944

My darling,

I didn't write you yesterday -- the result of trying to sleep off the previous night's political meeting and a big ironing -- and as a result I am all clogged up with things to tell you. I guess the item of first importance is today's activities, which have left me in a state hardly able to write at all. Kathy and I went up north for the biggest family reunion in years -- Buss and Mir, Joey, the boys, Mom, Dad and Uncle Charley, who is in town briefly before shoving off to Hot Springs where he gets his leg treated. Oh yes, and Cooney (how could I forget?). The day came off in old style -- an enormous dinner of fried chicken and apple pie which Mom took three or four hours to prepare; much orchestration by the three DeGrazia brothers; much dashing about trying to find essential items like eye glasses (as usual, Jill's); an argument between Ed and Vic; and the new note of the two babies crawling, walking, talking and taking away each other's toys. Joe is an absolute darling. He talks quite a lot and of course walks and handles himself beautifully. He is very blonde with dark blue eyes, a rugged forehead and an angelic smile. He kissed Kathy several times and kept calling her by name. Fortunately, they haven't gotten to the stage where

possessiveness is rampant on both sides. Uncle Charley brought them both toys -- a push-duck for Joe and a beautiful and very expensive fur bear for Kathy, both chosen with exceptional good judgement for an old bachelor, I thought. Joe took the duck away from Kathy at one point but there wasn't any conflict for she is too young and too entranced with everything to object to the mere removal of a toy. She wasn't quite as interested in Joe as she might have been had there been less stimulation of other sorts going on. Mostly she loves Cooney, as does Joe, and kept crawling after his retreating black form. Cooney shuts himself up voluntarily when the kids are around so there isn't any danger of conflict between them. But when cornered he will allow himself to be patted by Joe and tail-pulled by Kathy without any protests, thank goodness.

Kathy and I stayed until after her dinner time and then returned home, where she still had enough strength to stand up and peer into the toilet bowl before retiring. I started to write this last night but decided to continue it today, Sunday, when I would have more strength. And a gloomy Sunday it is, too, cold, rainy and full of the loneliness I suppose I shall have to get used to now that the season is changing and we'll have to spend more time indoors. Sure the news is good but it still doesn't make up for not having you and for all my dreams of you at night which are not fulfilled by day. It is nice to spend a day like yesterday with the family, but there is always that figuratively vacant chair at the banquet table, which makes coming home and being alone all the harder. And there is nothing, absolutely nothing, one can do about it.

The meeting I went to Thursday night certainly wasn't the answer. I guess I wrote you that there is this dull but well-intentioned girl in the building who is trying to organize a neighborhood group to get out the vote for liberal candidates this fall. She seems to think that I'll be of some help so she is carting me around to meetings with her. I go because I think it's the sort of thing one should do, given a certain set of political beliefs, but it is dull as hell. This meeting was at an apartment down at 45th and Ellis. About 20 people were present, including

Dr. Adams from the department of religion over here, and presided over by Roz Lepawsky -- all Independent Voters Committee people and a few CIO. The fabulous Mr. Levy from the City Hall and Fifth Ward regulars was also present, an amused spy from the Organization. The talk was interminable, all dealing with the mystical and to me incomprehensible problems of organization. It started to break up about eleven and the moment it did, I lit out impulsively and alone like a frightened fawn, though ennui rather than fear was the motivation this time. My friend was startled to find me gone and so was I, since when I got outside I didn't have the slightest notion of where I was (we had gotten a ride down there) and I wandered around for a little while until I got myself oriented and found a street car. But I guess I'll go to more meetings anyhow. The girl said that after a while I would get used to group life and would have as much (crap) to say as the next person.

Little Kathy is waking up from her nap. She is learning to play very nicely by herself and I don't think she'll be much of a problem to amuse this long afternoon which looms ahead. She has a lot of toys to play with and things to investigate so she ought to amuse herself. She is learning about all the wonderful potentialities of objects -- that if you beat certain things against other things they will make a noise. As a result she is always tapping something against something else, like a rattle against a stuffed toy, mostly with no audible result at all.

I couldn't write you Friday because the cleaning woman was in and all was chaos. She certainly is a character (what colored lady isn't?) but she really is, especially since she has started to unfold her days in a, quote, white sporting house in Toledo to me. It seems she was the cook for the girls for about four years. I am learning all about Life in its more ignoble phases, and will no longer be the innocent bud you left me as.

Buss looked very well yesterday. They finally sent our stuff from Washington so I can expect it any day now. Mom said he gave Vic a good talking to in re Vic's monomania on music. And Ed plans to join the Army Air Force some time next month, I think.

So the boys have some controlling hand over their destinies after all.

God, darling, I'm afraid I'm so damned gloomy I'm not worth much as a correspondent. But it's only because I love you so much and am so damned dependent on your presence for my happiness, even after a year and a half of separation. But anyway, there is this consolation. We've sweated out the worst part of it. No matter what happens we won't have to wait this long again.

All my love to you, my sweetheart.

Jill

AL TO JILL AUGUST 26, 1944

Dearest Jill,

I just wrote you a letter last night, but will write you now, this morning, on the chance that I won't have a chance to mail another letter for a little time. You know how things are these days in these parts. The volte-face of Rumania gives everything the levity of expectation when it is put with the big events on the Western fronts. I drove a little this morning through some woods, of which there are many in this part of France. Sunshine is really wonderful when it has forests to filter through. It is completely different from the blank face it presents in a desert or on a barren hill. You might say that a forest really sings in the sun, but the desert never.

We had a good breakfast this morning of a prepared cereal, pancakes, bacon and coffee. The cereal is found in the five-in-one or ten-in-one rations. It is a fine cross between the dry and the hot cereal. It also contains milk and sugar and one only need add water to it to make it very palatable.

Lt. Samarselli didn't sleep all last night. It is his first night in

France in three years and he was too excited to sleep. The French are that way now, not too excited not to fight but almost. The other day I was with a French battery that was set up near Toulon. We had just captured the ground they were emplaced on, and there was a full-scale celebration going on in the middle of the battle. There were several farm houses and the families and the soldiers were eating in shifts at a great table outside under a tree. The wine was drunk as fast as it hit the table and the rations were spread all over the place with bowls of fresh tomatoes and fried potatoes here and there. With one hand they were fighting the war and with the other they were celebrating the liberation of France. The cannon were set up hardly ten yards away and went booming off over the heads of the celebrants all the time. The captain of the battery would snatch himself a glass of wine and a handful of pommes frites and dash over to his CP a few yards away to give the order to fire. This kept up for hours, well into the darkness. The guns kept hammering away at the bedeviled Germans who were fruitlessly counterattacking, old diners would get up and fresh ones would take their place. The black-as-tar Senegalese sweated, swung their trucks around, and fed up the ammunition, grinning broadly and almost dancing while they worked in their enthusiastic excitement. A forest fire on a nearby hill lit up the sky as it darkened and the volleys of the howitzers flashed brighter and brighter. The vineyards were coated with dust, many of the grapes, crushed under the great wheels and the trampling feet. But no one cared - they were French feet and French wheels. The French were liberating themselves.

There isn't time to write more. I have a prettily drawn little German guide to France which I will send you soon, whenever I can think of a well-turned phrase of love to inscribe in it.

Give my love to the family and many fond kisses to Kathy. She must be such a beautiful baby!

Your Al

JILL TO AL AUGUST 28, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

I was so glad to get your letter this morning -- August 13, the first I've gotten since the new invasion. And you said just the right things -- that you're eating and sleeping enough and that you love me. But don't make fun of me, sweetheart. You know I'm not of the "men-are-just-little-boys" school of feminine allure and I know how you hate being fussed over, but hell, there's just a decent minimum of solicitude a female should show for her male's health. I guess it's funny anyway when I do it because we're so damned far apart there's nothing I really can do about you anyway.

Today is Kathy's birthday. She is eight months old, a fantastically old age for her to have reached in such a short time. It's positively blood-chilling the way time passes. It seems like yesterday you're only a baby yourself and today you're out of school a decade and have all sorts of responsibilities and a Past. I guess that's what's wrong with me -- being the youngest of the family I never can get over being a baby myself and am therefore all the more appalled by the passage of time. I'm taking Kathy to the doctor today for her monthly checkup and then think I'll go over to school and pass some time there. I'm really awfully glad that Buss sent the records because I must do something now that the weather is so awful and when they come, I shall start studying them. I don't know how far I'll get, with my customary persistence.

I slept nine hours last night, unheard for me. Kathy slept until 8:30 for some mysterious reason. She probably woke up during the night and played for an hour, which is the usual cause of her over-sleeping. However, I have moved my bed out into the dining room so that it would have been difficult for me to hear her if she had awakened and just played. I finally made the big decision to sleep elsewhere and after eight months of putting up with her silliness because very recently she had been waking up when I got into bed to read, making both reading and sleeping

impossible for me for several hours thereafter. It's quite a revelation sleeping alone for a change and I sleep a lot better. I think I wrote you yesterday about Kathy's new fun in exploring objects -- by tapping them against other objects. She also puts them in her mouth, of course, which isn't particularly noteworthy except that she has extended this practice to putting things in my mouth. She'll be sitting on my lap holding a rattle and all of a sudden will look up with an angelic smile and put the rattle in my mouth, which as you know is usually open. Then she will chortle happily, particularly if I bite it or her hand. She also imitates noises now -- will make a Bronx cheer if you make one, will say "nah" if you say it. She'll probably be talking, or just starting to, when you get home and you'll have lots of fun teaching her things. And she'll probably be eating pretty much the same things you do, except chopped up, so all you'll have to do is chomp your pork chops like a good guy and set her a fine example.

Darling, a million big kisses to you and all my love. Kathy's too.

Jill

P. S. I didn't know there was so much space left. I can use it to good advantage too. Such as did you get that money order for \$50 I sent you. If you don't need it now, buy [] or something unfrivolous, but there's always poker, thank God, to stave off the marks of thriftiness.

JILL TO AL AUGUST 29, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

More mail from you today, a typewritten letter and a couple of V-mails, both dated the 21st (with the mysterious inscription on the v-mail that yesterday's letter was dated a day early -- don't you mean late?) and a V-mail of the 23rd. Incredibly fast work, considering that the V-mails came as is. The photographing machines probably aren't working yet in your area. I was

overjoyed to hear that you are well so recently and that you are up to your old pranks of hijacking German horses. I mentioned this to Priscilla and she said "And he will probably send you the horse when he is through with it." She was over last night and we fought off boredom by drinking a bottle of beer.

The books, maps and records finally came from Bussy and all are in good condition except a couple of the books are mildewed, but then they were none of them very important books anyway. The fiend didn't send the Italian books that go with the linguaphone set but he is returning to Washington this week to come back again next (he does lead a complicated life) and will bring them back with him. So I shall have to delay my studies another week, no great loss because the weather is turning nice again and we can resume our outdoor pastimes. But I realize that from here on in, it is strictly a matter of trying to breathe a little life into the rapidly cooling corpse of summer. We were down at the lake this summer and it was absolutely deserted though the weather was warm and sunny. Chicagoans give up too easily. Most of them are probably divesting their beaver coats (a touch of envy there) of mothballs and getting ready for the season of steam heat and sin.

I took Kathy to the doctor yesterday and he pronounced her fine. She now weighs twenty pounds and one ounce. When I asked him, he advised me to start toilet training her, which, under Freud, I am loath to do for another couple of months. (And so I won't). She also yelled from the minute she got into the examining room till he stopped examining her, although she suffered no harm at his hands because he didn't give her a shot this time. Then we went over to school for a while, Kathy was pretty tired and fretful after school, mostly because she had the distinction of being probably the first baby to bump her head on the steps of that little platform in the Commons room. So on the way back I tore off a morsel of the loaf of Jewish rye bread I had been carting around and gave it to her. As a result, for the past 24 hours she has refused all food except milk and Jewish rye bread, the atavistic little creature.

The wife of the cousin who is the son of Cousin Adele, that foul creature whom you once met in New York, was in town today, in a stopover between trains and so spent the day here with Kathy and me. Uncle Sam sent me via her a darling little yellow jacket and overall suit for Kathy for which I am infinitely grateful because Kathy doesn't have a damned thing to wear all of a sudden. She's grown out of all of her baby clothes and since she spent the summer clad in diapers, I just hadn't considered the possibility of having to outfit her all over again for the winter. This girl really isn't too bad in a dull sort of way. I took her for a walk this morning and gave her lunch [*page two of the V-mail is dated Aug. 29-30*] which Priscilla attended, and afterwards she took a nap so altogether the day wasn't too trying. This afternoon after she left I took Kathy over to the Midway, where we met George Hussar, that humorist, who asked for you. Then we watched a ball game carried on by some marines who must be studying something over here. We got in at the last inning and four men got in on one hit, which seems to this inexperienced eye and excessive amount, indicating incompetence somewhere. Kathy also tore up a Daily News I was trying to read. It never fails. I always buy one in the afternoon and she always manages to tear it up, no matter how far I sit myself from her and no matter what other distractions, even down to my eyeglasses, I place between us.

Since I starting writing this yesterday evening, I was interrupted. A guy I used to know in the sociology department -- named Marcson, I don't think you knew him -- dropped by and we spent a couple of hours talking over old times. he teaches soc. at Penn State and is very much dissatisfied with the status of teaching at a small isolated school. His colleagues are dull and inferior and the town is so isolated it prevents other social contacts. I don't feel very sorry for him, however. Even though what he says in criticism of his job may be justified by peacetime standards, he isn't right in demanding such standards. He made several -- and to me, laughable -- references to teaching "loads" -- in wartime. Those damned sociologists are all alike. They get so entranced by observing

society objectively they never get around to participating, which is probably why they chose to observe society objectively in the first place. He told me Warren Dunham was in Washington in OWI. I raised my eyebrows questioningly -- the question in reality being what the hell could OWI find to do with a sociologist -- but Si mistook the look and said, "Of course, he's there just for a year or two -- it's kind of an experience in field work for him."

That is the state of the social sciences, or at least one field thereof, in the greatest school on earth. Come back and let us farm, let us fornicate, but let us not do field work.

Oh dear, it's another dreary day again. I took a nap this afternoon to pass the time of day. I do think afternoon naps are rather fun, unless you are prone to overweight, in which they are fatal. We must take a nap after lunch frequently when you come back. Just think -- a luncheon of deviled crabs (which I have recently conceived a passion to cook, so far frustrated), baked potatoes, salad, fruit and then everybody racing off for the nearest bed, where their libidos can be given free expression. Kathy can play with her rattles, and you with me.

All my love and many kisses to you, my sweetheart.

Jill

JILL TO AL AUGUST 31, 1944 V-MAIL

My Sweetheart --

Today brought your virtually epoch-making letter written before D-Day on the southern front. It really is exciting for me to get so close to the big show. It must be a terrific feeling, approaching strange and hostile shores, not knowing what the hell.

Womanishly, I must have the last word (at least, I hope it will be the last on the subject you brought up in that letter -- to wit,

Kathy's ability or lack of it to stand on her feet. All I want to know, DeGraz, is what the hell you want me to do when she stands up -- knock her down with a piece of lead pipe? You've got the cards all mixed up anyway -- what you're thinking of is rickety children and our little dove is definitely not that.

We certainly had a gay day today, proving for all time her good humor and staying power. Mom and Mir and Joey came down this afternoon and after horsing around here for a while, we went over to Leddy's for tea. It was definitely Swedish style -- tea lasting from four to seven and accompanied by an enormous amount of food -- salad, sandwiches, cake, coffee and discreet libations of Bourbon. Sven and his wife was there, as well as Annagene (who sends regards) and Nancy. Joey hadn't had his afternoon nap. In fact, on the buggy ride over -- he and Kathy riding tête-à-tête, the poor little guy fell asleep. So he was in a pretty awful mood, particularly since, with that instinct that children and dogs seem to have, he probably sensed what was expected of him and refused to live up to it. So Mir was quite busy and harassed. On the other hand Kathy, just because it wasn't my family and I didn't give a damn, behaved angelically. She crawled around the floor and laughed and both children made chaos out of the orderly Leddy home. Kathy is just at the threshold, and Joey definitely in, the age where they root up everything. It requires steady nerves, an unconcern for germs, and a disregard of the ordinary rules of housekeeping, all of which Mir and I are equipped with. I really pay very little attention to Kathy when she crawls around -- that is, I watch but don't interfere much unless she is on the verge of pulling a lamp down on her. Joey goes her one better -- while Kathy just tears up newspapers and New Yorkers, Joey attacks books. But he's a darling. He loves to kiss people and is very friendly when he feels at ease. he giggles and jumps around Kathy, calling her by name, and occasionally knocks her over in an effort to kiss her. She doesn't mind a bit either, and has never once cried after one of these often violent assaults. But Joey has not the least bit of malice in his heart towards her. Apparently, there's enough difference in their ages now so he

doesn't view her as a threat, the way he does Ernelle's 15-month old baby. Joey calls me "Dull" incidentally. Out of the mouths of babes, etc. Mir and Mom just left, after keeping both babies up way past their bedtime. But it's amazing how they manage to survive irregularities. Kathy had some jello and a cookie at tea and god knows what all Joey ate. I hope you won't be a strict father, or the kind that thinks the baby will break or burst, depending on the irregularity it's subjected to. I find that a lot of fathers, except Buss, who is wonderful that way, lean in that direction.

All love , dearest.

Jill

[At the top of the page:] P. S. Have you ever heard Stampy Jones by the Duke? I'm playing it now. (I'm getting as bad as Vic).

[After the first paragraph:] PPS I love you.

AL TO JILL AUGUST 31, 1944

Jill Dearest,

I haven't written you for three days and feel properly bad for not doing so. But it has only been because there was neither time to write nor a place to mail anything I did write. Today I finally got back to where there was some mail waiting for me, several welcome letters, including ones from August 17, 18, and 21, the last almost a miracle considering that we are in a new theater here in France and things aren't too well organized as yet. You said many nice things and I love you for them, but it is useless for me to repeat them. I think, too, that I'll be kissing you good-night instead of writing it before long. The pictures of Kathy and yourself were as good as any I've ever received. Those of Kathy were marvelous. Why aren't we making a fortune from her flexible and beautiful mug, not to mention her divinely

proportioned, infantily speaking, torso? What a large and beautiful mouth she has. No wonder she can give the Bronx cheers in several different keys. And her eyes are as meaningful as those of any adult I've ever known. They look so deep. Altogether she looks really in the pink, and I insist that a great many more people know she is mine if I have to coerce German prisoners.

There are a lot of the latter, incidentally. Even in well-conquered territory, the FFI turns up with little bedraggled bands. The French are cleaning up enthusiastically. There are a lot of French colonial troops around who have been in France since the blow-up in 1940. The Germans used them as labor and kept them under very hard conditions, one bad meal a day and that sort of thing. Now they are being put willingly into the French forces. One column of German prisoners was walked for a hell of a ways by some of the Senegalese of this sort. The French just gave them a rifle and said to march them to the camp. Naturally, the Senegalese were jealous in their work. Another little group I saw was being marched down the road by several boys with rifles. With one exception, they were kids of fifteen or so, cocky berets on their heads and dead cigarette butts in their lips.

I've seen some magnificent country too. How I wish you were with me. Still, when you are with me, I would like to spend weeks in one of those clean, picturesque villages tucked in the creviced slope of a towering range where life is beautiful, green mountains in the summer and wonderful snowy slopes in the winter, and where there is plenty of fresh milk to drink. We'll do that, too, some day. Until then, there are many things we could do right at home. I wish I could have been there at your party. I would have rescued Kathy from the bondage of her play-pen and had her blow foam from the beer.

(Next morning). I'm going off again this morning. My driver, who is a Frenchman from Oran, spent the evening putting the truck into shape. He is a very good driver as French drivers go. He hardly talks at all, too, which is mostly a blessing.

I got another letter from Herz before he knew I was in France. I think he must still be in England. He says he likes his job there. I myself am looking forward to going into Germany. That will be a very fine day when we cross the border. After that, only home will contain my patience.

For the woman's hour, you can state on my authority that the girls of Southern France are very pretty, seem one and all to exhibit some personality, and are past masters at the art of hair-do. No matter what her age the French female fixes her hair in a fetching fashion. The upswept sides and crown in the middle style is widespread. They and the rest of the population seem not to have suffered as much from hunger as one has been led to believe. Especially in those mountain areas would you find numerous girls like the type at your party.

A guy who arrived yesterday told me that Jerry will be going to Rome soon, probably. I'm sorry he's not coming here but know he will like it there a lot.

I got a letter from his Honor, the Mayor, a few days ago helping me file my application for an absentee ballot and telling me who to vote for. I think I'll be very cagey and mean to you, asking you for your recommendations on the minor officials involves. I can't know them at all.

I got a long letter from Ann, too, written in two installments a month and a half apart. They seem happy and Paul was apparently doing some interesting mechanical engineering. Paul 2 must be a big boy by now. Come to think of it, they worked faster than we did, though not under the same handicaps. Didn't we meet each other roughly about the same time as Paul and Ann?

There isn't much left to tell you that I can tell. I do want to say that I thought you looked very pretty and trim in your picture, though the fatigue compared favorably with that evidenced in my Rome picture. A day at the Loop is terrible. I realize that. Only lunch with you at Bergdorff's could ever put me through a

day of it. That's enough to make it a holiday.

Once more, adieu, with many kisses for you and one for Kathy's luscious lips, providing they aren't covered with mush.

Always your,

Al

THEN he turns his wheels toward Marseilles and takes up a main road into the city. Halfway in he notices some skirmishing ahead. He parks behind a wall and ventures along the street. Snipers -- some guys never give up -- especially when they are convinced, with some reason, that they will be killed; this is better; you die in a duel; like the Lieutenant says, it's more of the ideal war. The Lieutenant spies a bookstore. It is open. He enters and browses. He comes upon a book that he has never heard of, in his own field, *Théorie des Opinions Publiques*, by a scholar he has never heard of, named Jean Stoetzel; it was published in Paris only the year before, employs American sources profusely, almost as if there were no chasm of war splitting the scholarly world. It handles the material with a competent theoretical system, too, and the Lieutenant recognizes promptly that it is superior to any American work in this regard. He pays for it with Allied francs that the proprietor accepts with pleasure.

The firing has stopped. He weaves his jeep through the debris of the Old Harbor. Most places that are not damaged are open for business. A barber shop, what a luxury! He gets a haircut, shampoo and shave. No charge, says the Proprietor. You are the first American to arrive. He walks about the breakwater, it is quiet out there, the sea is calm and dark blue. A pretty flame-headed freckled girl, full-bodied in a tight white dress, is also walking about, and responds smiling to his greeting. She is a nurse and is from Corsica. He talks with her for a while as he peers through his binoculars at the half-demolished old city. He feels he must move on, takes her name, should he ever be back, and drives North. He never returns.

The American Lieutenant is most eager for the mobile presses and loud speakers of the combat propaganda unit to arrive. There may be opportunities at any moment to catch up with a group of Germans and persuade them, if they will not surrender, to resist less and to hit the road to Heimat. The cheery Old New York blarney face of Tom Crowell does not poke out of a truck window until September 9, by which time the Montelimar bottle has emptied itself of Germans. It is early, but not early enough.

The French army is dressed American, equipped American, and has acquired some American habits, which very often are nothing but practices that the American army learned from the French from 1776 to 1918. Until now it has been mostly Muslim in the ranks but increasing numbers of continental French are being enlisted, especially from the forces of the resistance. Their leadership is first class down to the sous-officiers and their morale is excellent, being especially obvious and noteworthy and commendable on the assault when most troops want to drag their feet, naturally. They will incorporate all types of people and their ranks swell.

Seventh Army Headquarters lets the French HQ attach a small platoon of men and two officers to the American Combat Propaganda Team and the Executive Officer has the responsibility for employing them. The two officers are Jacques Pregre and Jacques Villanave. The enlisted men work under Corporal Francois Bernard, who hails from Paris and handles the boys well. They are supplied by the American company, are under its orders, but let alone to do their job. Principally they drive around gathering political intelligence and using a loud speaker truck to inform and control the population. Their connection for liaison is the French Army B G-2 section and principally André Malraux, who has recently joined up following upon a brief experience in the Resistance.

End of August 1944 letters

