

**JILL TO AL DECEMBER 1, 1944 V-MAIL**

Darling --

A great raft of mail arrived from you yesterday and today -- V-mails of the 18, 18 and 19. I suspected you were in Paris from a previous short letter and now I know. It sounds as if you had a wonderful time, which always pleases me more than you think it does perhaps. After all, just by virtue of having Kathy and living in a big city I manage to have fun of a sort rather frequently and I would feel awful if I thought your life was totally dismal.

I did something this morning that will make history in the annals of our mutual assistance league. I finally took the bonds from their resting place beneath my despised pink underwear and mailed them off, registered of course, to the Federal Reserve Bank. You may well wonder why I chose this moment in our careers to take the drastic step. Well, as I told you, I'd bought five thousand dollar bonds with most of our University Savings account, and somehow it seemed a little thick to keep that much money in bonds in a dresser drawer. Incidentally I chose to deplete the University Bank rather than the other two we have savings accounts in because one day before elections I was distributing leaflets in front of that bank and that old bastard Hoff came rushing out into the street and told me to go away. Little did he reck he was dealing with a member of the propertied classes and forever may he rue the day.

We have 6300 in war bonds at maturity value and you can figure out how much that is at face by multiplying by 5/4. Or in other words we managed to collect 1300 on just our earned incomes alone the past three years or so which is pretty good, don't you think? Don't worry about your buying bonds. I think that every time I go to cash my 55.55 check, which is still coming in, I'll buy a 25 dollar bond, to keep our hand in, so to speak. Our checking account always seems to stay above the 200 dollar mark no matter how much I spend on trips to New York etc. etc. so I guess I can do it at the present rate of depletion.

In answer to one of your questions, no, it's funny but nobody I know has joined the Wac. I think I got closer to it than anybody, and I still stoutly maintain I would have if I hadn't gotten pregnant, even though I think having a baby is infinitely superior. Why do you say that the Wac are under hopeless competitive conditions in Paris? Do you mean for men or for goods and services?

Oh, Kathy's teeth aren't so bad. Now she has two lowers and they don't look so inharmonious in duo. I really can't share your concern over their lateness. In fact, getting teeth late is the one thing you can do late without its having significance. It's purely hereditary, like birth weight. And out of the wisdom born of experience, let me tell you that generally orthodonture done at any early age (before one's middle teens) is a complete waste of time. You have to wait until the kid develops a hearty sense of vanity before they will submit to regular visits (which I never did) and the ascetism of eschewing gum and caramels. But actually she might get perfectly good teeth. You never know. She's still making efforts to walk, successful enough to carry her a few feet anyway. I think she would do a lot better if she didn't insist on dragging her huge wool blanket everywhere with her. She's made quite a fetish out of her blankets, so much so that I have to leave one at Mom's to keep her happy when we go there. She holds it and sucks her thumb and buries her face in it and laughs and leaps up and down on it. It's very amusing and I'm sure not very significant for the development of her psyche, lest you worry.

Do you want to hear the rest about Howard? Well, he had left Buick to go to Texas but since the Texas deal blew up he is now living in Evanston and working at Chrysler by day and tending bar by night. I guess there never was a time when Howard wasn't holding down two jobs. However, his industry avails his wife and her child nothing, since she is always complaining to Lillie that she has no money for their expenses. I still think he is awful, completely without redeeming features. What do you like about him -- his big beautiful shoulders?

Vic however is lots nicer than he was a year or two ago. He is as smart as ever, of course, and as slaphappy over swing, but he seems to help more around the house, although he is taking a job at the post office for the holidays and Mom says he might as well, he is less trouble there than at home. But he acts nicely which is all that counts. He used to be so damned rude.

Your New Yorker subscription expires in June, I think. Naturally I'll renew it if you're still overseas, please God not.

I'm so tired (I started this letter after lunch and now it's right before supper, my supper -- Kathy is asleep already). Yesterday I did an enormous wash in the afternoon and then went to a meeting way down on Hyde Park Boulevard with district leaders of IVI. All is discouraging, since the board of directors is composed of a lot of shits like Walter Johnson -- that university group is invariably disruptive, the Douglas people I mean -- and they may make it impossible for the rest of us to get anything done, since they always want to turn everything into their own private boys club. Well, anyway, the meeting I attended was for rank and file leaders and we had a fine if disillusioning time bitching about the higher-ups. Then today I had to shop and sort laundry and take Kathy to the doctor. She gained three quarters of a pound which is pretty good considering how little she's been eating and she is otherwise fine. She yelled a lot which is always enervating.

I'm tired, darling. Almost too tired to say I love you, but not quite.

Jill

***AL TO JILL DECEMBER 3, 1944 V-MAIL***

Dearest Jill,

I received two letters from you, the first in several days, both written on the way to New York and both most endearing. I haven't written you for the last two days because I haven't had a

decent moment in which to write. I don't think I miss anything here so much as I regret not writing you. The resulting pangs are unbearable. We've had a couple of fine days until last night, in which our planes soared overhead in great numbers, delighting everyone.

This letter won't be much but it'll be followed by more as soon as I have time. I've only read your latest letters once & can hardly wait to get at them. My three invariable articles of apparel are my helmet, my pistol belt and your latest several letters. I like to almost wear them out in my shirt pockets before filing them away.

You are always my only love and my girl. I wish I could kiss you now instead of waiting for the next forty years to do it all.

Your

Al

**A**S I said, the Front stagnates. Should I now say "What is war Really like?" Is this the time to tell it? But I have already done so and of course have still more to say, because everyone except the rational people on both sides, numbering a baker's dozen, are sure that it must last much longer and if they believe so, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, and it does last longer than it should. To repeat, for most of those who are likely to be killed, wounded, captured, War is usually a going and coming and sitting, then abrupt deadly events ordered by leaders, friend or foe, spiced besidestimes by murderous skirmishing, stepping on or running upon a land mine, catching a few surprise shells or an aircraft incursion, or an individual or collective accident -- the literal meaning of "casualty" is "mishap or accident" -- including especially one's own planes, shells, mortars, small arms. Time elapsed here among the grave risks is short, a few minutes, an hour; a bombardment for days is rare. The greatest number of casualties are brought on by forces and people one doesn't see. Rarely according to plan. Often in consequence of being forced against one's will. A large

number of deaths are legal and illegal murders -- the difference being that the legal deals with helpless, fleeing, unaware enemies, the illegal with men disposed of while trying to surrender or in custody. Battle and war are aimed at profiting from the greatest advantage, imposing the greatest inequalities, the unfairest tricks. It has only a little to do with hunting and almost nothing to do with competitive sports. It is fear and sadism, and these are hidden in the countless cases surrounding the "legitimate" casualties of war and overlain by thick layers of myth and amnesia. But why go on? You know it all.

When the Seventh Army artillery gets within range, a 155 mm cannon is driven up to fire leaflets upon Karlsruhe, across the Rhine and miles away. See here, it proclaims, the heart of the Reich is in reach of our cannon; stop your foolish resistance. It is a little premature, four months early, like the leaflet that announced to the enemy that their troops at Cassino would be trapped via the Allied landings at Anzio. Still, it feels good.

### ***JILL TO AL DECEMBER 4, 1944***

Darling --

A miracle! Kathy is suddenly learning to do everything fairly well, and what is more, to understand more of what I say than I ever believed possible. You know, the tendency is to underrate their understanding, since they themselves can't talk. But last week, when I discovered that I could teach her how to get off a couch or bed without crushing her skull in transit, I realized that she understood verbalizations. Now she carefully lies on her stomach parallel to the edge of the bed and diffidently drops her legs to the floor first. And yesterday and today she finally caught on to the hang of using her toddler. That's that machine with four wheels, the front two freely rotating, that they can dash about in a semi-standing position. She races around the house in it, backing up when she meets obstacles, exploring every corner and crevice of the place. It's much nicer for me to have her in it than crawling because she can't possibly hurt herself. It has rubber bumpers to spare her and the furniture and the only

anguish that has derived from its use is when she runs over my feet with it. She's been using it all morning while I've been cleaning the house and it's a blessing, since she can't reach over and eat the mop which she would otherwise do if she were flush with the ground.

Here are the kodachromes. The two lighter ones were taken at the end of September, I think, by Mr. Rosenthal upstairs. The more brightly (as a matter of fact, more accurately -- she was that tan) colored one was taken by a perfectly strange middle-aged man last summer, circa August, who took my name when I said I'd like a print if it ever came out. This very Saturday past he called me up and brought it over, very kind of him I thought since there were absolutely no strings. He didn't even accept a proffered cigarette. He says that the pleasure he gets showing his friends the kodachrome of this little character holding a beer bottle is ample reward.

It takes forever to get the transparencies developed into this form of positive, which is why they are so late.

As usual, I didn't get to write you all weekend and I'm really properly sorry. I've just had a mad social life -- to Joan's for dinner Saturday night, then back in a cab with the baby. Then Bill came over with Priscilla Bergquist. I loathe women, married, who engineer romance but this is my fault. Priscilla said she liked him so I had them over to dinner together before I went to New York and a great friendship has sprung up between them, which is OK by me naturally. Then yesterday, Sunday, I stayed in bed sullenly all morning, unable to sleep and finally did sleep in the afternoon, and then, in atonement, took Kathy for a long walk down to the lake, it being a moderate day, in the afternoon late. Then this girl from across the court came to eat and then we saw Mr. Skeffington, a long handsome rather dull movie with Bette Davis, in which she gets to look so horrible it turns out to be a horror movie, not the social satire it was intended to be. But it was a fairly adult film and worth seeing for that. Kathy is standing around reaching up at the keys. That is why the above line is such a mess. Now she is pulling all the stationary out of

the desk drawer which I opened to distract her, piece by piece. She is so good these days I can hardly blame her for these little vices. She stays in her bed in the morning after breakfast for several hours, giving me a chance to eat a leisurely breakfast and clean up, without muttering a sound other than the occasional crash of a pie plate she is fond of. She goes to sleep right after her lunch and dinner without a squawk and when she wakes up, does not cry but sits sighing and yawning for a long while. Then when she finds the need to get up urgent she bangs on the door, an imperious gesture but superior to crying. She is the most admired, loved and paid-attention-to child that ever lived and yet you can't say she's spoiled because her habits are good and regular.

I got a little V-mail from you this morning, directing me to give gifts to the boys, which I'll gladly do. I've already got an album of Bunny Berigan for Vic but have to take it back as someone else, an admiring guy from school, is giving it to him instead. I thought I'd give them each five from me and then the stuff you told me to give them. Don't send Mom and Dad anything if you can't find anything. I'll give them a bond from us both instead, which will be much appreciated I know.

As I survey the wreckage just left by your child I wonder at the dictum once laid down by you -- namely, if they're old enough to throw stuff (popcorn) down, they're old enough to pick it up. Oh well, I don't mind. It's good for my figure.

Since I started writing this this afternoon I've gotten four more V-mails from you, all dated the 21st (not really, but that was the median date by far). And you criticize me for mis-dating my mail! I've only had time to read them all once and I want to get this letter out in the early evening mail. My chief impression of them is that you are eating much, if not well. You are right about mold not affecting the contents of the salami although it is so unattractive and evil-smelling that I paraffined the one I sent you for Christmas, hoping this will avert the evil eye. I'm sorry I'm such a lousy wrapper. And when I think of the care you take to send me stuff. I do wonder what they do to packages. They

must go out of their way to mangle them.

I think I have a pipe around the house you sent with two others for the boys and then told me to hold this one for you, which I am doing if I can find it.

Oh, Jane Hess hasn't shown up yet. Somebody is sick in her family in Toledo. Anyway I told her I didn't think I'd want to make a permanent arrangement of living but she could visit me any time and stay that way. I really hate the idea of sharing the apartment, now that I've gone to the trouble to fix it up for us. I know it's selfish but hell's bells, why trouble oneself to live with somebody else when one can afford to live alone. I'm just [one whole row of "x"s] (that line repeated itself, that is, I typed over by error) too manic-depressive to live with anybody in harmony for any length of time. Marriage is different of course. Even if you do fight there are always compensations and modes of adjustment which you don't get in any other relation, which the exception of love without marriage, of course.

I really am manic-depressive, I'm convinced. Right now I'm depressive although yesterday I was in a pretty good mood as I recall. I think one reason is the awful state of the world. I really wept when I heard this morning that Greek police had fired on their own people. If you have any apology to offer for British policy in Belgium, Italy and Greece, and for our continued stiff-neckedness in France, I'd like to hear it. I'm all set to start a one-woman campaign against our State Department. The labor unions here don't seem to get very excited about this, and of course, our shitty little organization is too busy ironing out its internal difficulties to embark on a new crusade. The terrible part of this all is that the people of this country, the greatest democracy, etc., are so damn out of touch between elections. If these disturbances had occurred before elections, somebody would have said something, even if it had to be a Republican. But now we return to the mud, to rest there another two years. I naturally feel strongly that when things like the Greek incident occurs, everything that has been done is so terribly wasted, including the very minor, comparatively speaking, sacrifice we're

making. There was a good little poem in the New Yorker you may have seen, something to the effect of -- Envy the dead .. if we succeed, they will have died for a cause and if we fail they won't know anyway. Extending that a little further -- I rather envy you in battle. By virtue of your participation at the mud-and-sweat level of war you can establish a socially and therefore personally acceptable role in this world mess. In other words, you can say "Why worry" when it comes to the Greeks or the starving Armenians. You've done your share of sweating. But on souls like me, well fed, comfortably established with a baby getting her orange juice and cod liver oil rations everyday, the full burden of guilt descends. I cannot be vindicated through suffering because I don't suffer. Our separation is hard but I'd be a fool to groan long about it when the merest footstep of imagination brings visions of the horrors visited on others. All that is left is a frequent deep feeling of shame for oneself and one's brothers.

Now don't start accusing me of having a martyr complex. I don't think it's true for one thing. For another, I've always detested masochistic women. I just think that what I feel is the natural feeling of every reasonably well-informed reasonably decent civilian.

Well I have to eat and blow my nose, being quite carried away by my own nobility. Incidentally I'm still reading the Maurois book, which has quite the most beautiful book jacket I've ever seen, a face of a woman by Vertés. Everybody is intrigued when they see it lying around and I am hard put to explain it's not salacious (from the title). It's just sort of interesting in a literary way, though not strictly escapist, which I'm always looking for. It reminds me of our Love, which is a poignant thought always. I don't know what category we fit in -- I think you're romantic but how would you classify a woman whose notion of marriage is a combination of sex, political discussions and jigsaw puzzles. It doesn't sound very romantic but probably is.

Anyway I love you -- Jill

**AL TO JILL DECEMBER 4, 1944 (A) V-MAIL**

Dearest Jill,

Everyone is running around blacking out things so that I don't know how far I'll be able to get before someone notices the tiny slit protruding from this window. It makes the guard feel important if he can remind one of the matter, especially too since it gets him out of the rainy blackness into the warm room for a few seconds.

I've had my first good meal in four days tonight, roast beef and potatoes. Otherwise it's been catch as catch can without much of an appetite for the things the catch produced. Later on tonight I'm going to break into the jar of cheese spread Daisy sent me with some cider made by the Germans and bottled by them and conveniently left behind for our consumption. I got a letter from you today, Nov. 9 in that dull period before you went to New York and after the elections. It told a nice tale of your daily routine which I miss so much being a part of, even if you don't think it is very entertaining. Now too I know you got the decapitated bottle of Schiaparelli and bought an elegant and simple stamp with your name on it. It's a fine idea. But you should have had it made in just the right size for V mail stationery. I was puzzled by your seizing the opportunity to use Jill De Grazia without more ado, after your history of opposition to just that formulation of your name. What gives, gate? You had me convinced I was a boor and worse, if anything can be worse.

Your fine scarf arrived too, that mark of the dandy male. I went around without a coat today, with the scarf hanging down around my neck, just to exhibit its beauties more conspicuously. It has a really remarkable sheen and I feel that it is almost a shame to wear it, though at the same time I appreciate a good piece of clothing now much more for the salutary effect on the drabness of my life. Thank you and a kiss for every stitch.

Anspacher just got back from a good ride and we were talking over the results of it. He went with Galitzine and both are very

bedraggled. Wallenberg joined in and we had a very intelligent talk for a change. It is remarkable how one authoritative dimwit can ruin a conversation among intelligent people and it is also remarkable how intelligent a discussion can be when the participants partake of the same level. A dull remark, but one with more meaning to us who have to tolerate so much of the first kind.

Now that I remember, you were actually a mystic wonder when you said that you knew it was just about time that I had lost the scarf you got me in 1942. I did, no sooner than the words flowed from your pen. It's uncanny, but I'm still angry about who picked up the scarf and if I find it on anyone, it will be perfectly placed for the twisting that'll ensue.

Again, I must say goodnight without touching you -- sleep and awakening, both without passion. What a life. Love.

Al

***AL TO JILL DECEMBER 4, 1944 (B)***

Jill Dearest,

I really don't know whether I'm a mood writer or a colder, routine self disciplinarian. For half the time I calculate when I should do this and that, and like to plan at great length, and the other half the time I am like this writing a letter before breakfast in the dawn's gloom. Another inconsistency is that I hate to speak at this time of the morning and yet feel no strain at all on writing. Let anyone call out a cheery good morning to me and it is enough to send me into a paroxysm of rage.

We are in an isolated forest next to a tiny chapel whose bells ring for the seven o'clock mass in the morning. They woke me this morning and I had a great desire to attend but was not able to dress in time. Tomorrow morning I will get up in time and brave the howling morning wind to sit amongst the nuns and

feeble old people to hear the prayers.

We are comfortably housed for the moment in a structure the Germans built when they thought they would stay forever. It is warm and comfortable beyond any of our expectations, the whole house being heated from a basement furnace like our barracks back home.

Last evening, after supper, I lay down on my cot and fell asleep and didn't awaken until eleven. Afterwards, I undressed and read the rest of Huxley's Antic Hay by lamp light. As Huxley goes, it is a good book, better than the others of his I know, mostly because he was purely in the nihilistic stage and hadn't got around to trying to formulate any sort of philosophy. The buds of his later mysticism are apparent, however, though not obnoxiously protuberant. It is remarkable, in fact, how little he has changed in twenty years - the same people, the same subjects, the same social structure. He's not a very great writer. I think you are right in reading those old writers as you seem to be doing. I don't see much in the moderns, little that I know about them.

Capt. Galitzine came back yesterday and will be with us again. I mentioned him in that letter on the executions if you recall. During the interim the lucky fellow has been on an atrocities commission in which he unearthed a lot of horrible evidence and went to London on leave to get married. He married a BBC woman announcer who broadcasts lots of programs to the troops. He showed me the announcement of the marriage in the London Times, Captain Prince Galitzine - family of the Czar - and Miss Higginson of County Down. It was all very nice but now he's here again. Fortunately for us, and this is why I brought up the matter, his new wife is obsessed for his welfare and has promised to send him two parcels of books a month. So I shall now start to read a collection of modern Russian short stories.

I must be honest with you - leave us face it - those pictures of me weren't sexy-looking, that's the campaigner's stoop or

droop. Too many months overseas, dull rations and constant friction and movement, the result being that Lil Abners become Frank Sinatras. So much for the pictures. In reality, of course, I imagine I look much as before, i.e., different when I look at you than generally. I'm sure I'd feel a hell of a lot differently, anyway. I can never make up my mind what our first weeks together will be like, but I do know that they will be SOMETHING. Therefore, I am not very worried by the exact itinerary.

I hope you are rid of your cough by now. If it consoles you I felt your description to my marrow and could taste the tar in the medicine. I hope you have a much better time on the rest of the trip than you had on the train. Something must have happened to make the time fly by, for your second train letter was postmarked damn near a week after the ride itself. If you haven't sent another letter in all that time, I'm going to bite you hard when I get at you - where, is a military secret you'll have to figure out in advance if you can.

Always your love,

Al

***JILL TO AL DECEMBER 6, 1944***

Darling --

I'm just rereading a letter of Nov. 26 from you in the cold grey light of the middle morning. The typical Chicago winter has set in -- just a grey haze from morning till night. And the human organism appears to survive at the same low level. I'm just finishing coffee and a cigarette after a relatively sleepless night -- Priscilla stayed and we didn't get too much sleep -- and I feel sort of awful. I still think your advice re the evils of coffee is sound.

If your little company pup is still a pup when the war is over (and who knows) you must lure him away from the troops to Kathy.

Then she will have something else to cripple with her infernal machine, which she persists in running over my feet. Yesterday I went downtown in the afternoon while Priscilla sat with Kathy and broke down and bought a most sensible looking ugly pair of shoes, which should afford some measure of protection. I also got Kathy some cute pajamas with built-in feet and a carriage robe, magnificently loud plaid, my Christmas present to her. Then Priscilla stayed for dinner and we horsed around and I didn't get a chance to write you.

An interruption! And what a wonderful one. The mailman just brought the Renoir perfume, which smells just as beautiful this time as last. Thanks ever so much, darling. This time I'll hide it where nobody shall ever find it, probably including me. I don't have to worry about the cleaning woman anymore because I don't have one, having decided she was a waste of dough. Also came some candy from you, Whitman's, which you must have ordered a very long time ago because it said so in the box, that it was delayed because of hot (?) weather. Thank you for that too, although the Whitman people just deserve boos, for failure of a mission and for making it stale too.

Kathy has two more teeth coming in, uppers this time. She is very restless as a result, waking up at all hours and playing, if not crying, although it has the same effect on my sleep. Sometimes I think nature is very hard on us, from infancy on. First it's teething, then it's the curse and God knows what other afflictions if you're healthy merely. And of course if you're unhealthy there's no end to the assortment of woes.

Our diplomatic struggles are getting almost as interesting as the war. What do you think of all this anyway? The English think Stettinius' note concerning a "hands-off" policy is very rude and I think the English leaders are turning out to be a bunch of stinkers, which is even ruder. I'm glad to see that Long and Berle are out of the State Dept. although some of the people they've kept, like Dunn, or instated, like Clayton, aren't much better. It's all rather discouraging, and I think you should come home immediately to straighten this all out, at least in my mind.

I have a pleasant little surprise for you, if it ever gets to you. A carton of Camels, no less, which I shall wrap so as to disguise its form and contents to the utmost. Cigarettes as you know are almost impossible to get here unless you know the seller. I get a pack once in a while from the druggist, enough to fill my meager needs. However, somebody told Klaus about a dealer in Joplin, Mo. and he wrote to this guy and got a whole bunch of cartons at 15 cents a pack! We are all mystified, he no less than anybody. The guess is that a lot of wholesalers are hoarding cigarettes and disposing of them at what would be cost to a retailer but which still represents a substantial profit to the wholesaler. Anyway, he sold me this carton for you and I am forwarding it on, since it is easy enough for me to continue to take my chances with Mr. Weinstein, the local druggist.

I sent the Kodachromes yesterday, darling, and pray they reach you in good shape.

It's time for me to drag the little one out, it being a nice day. (Later.) All my love to you, dearest, and all the cigarettes I can lay my hands on too.

000XXX Jill

***AL TO JILL DECEMBER 6, 1944 V-MAIL***

Dearest,

I know that I must be beginning to sound like a cracked record, but I really am on the go and don't have time for a decent job of letter writing. Tomorrow will be a rough day too. The weather isn't too cold but it's generally dirty. There was a pretty sunset tonight, a fairly unusual occurrence. Last night we had a fine bottle of cognac from Cognac itself which Hank Miller, a civilian trucker, brought up to us. I read a few pages of my latest book *Life and Death of a Spanish Town* by Elliot Paul and see that I will like it.

I got a letter from Ollie Rerner yesterday that didn't make much sense but was nice, and one from Vic who put me completely at ease regarding the fate of Kathy during your absence. He described a terrific wrestling match between her and Cooney, which, apparently, she won. Her morale seemed definitely high and he says she was eating well. Vic refereed the fight, I might add, by clubbing Cooney over the head whenever he growled, a not negligible advantage on Kathy's side.

I got a letter off to Earl Johnson a couple of days ago. I'm feeling very well and finally have amassed enough clothing to go forth in a jeep comfortably. My promotion came through, as you can plainly see, which means that you now have a captain instead of a lieutenant completely and perpetually in love with you.

Many tender kisses,

Al

***JILL TO AL DECEMBER 7, 1944 (A)***

Darling --

Will you please sign at the X mark and return to me ... I guess the why and wherefore is self-explanatory.

Don't I deserve the purple fig leaf for finally doing all this? You can pin it on too.

Little did I reckon I would lapse into such crudeness.

Much, much love, in fact, all.

Jill

**JILL TO AL DECEMBER 7, 1944 (B) V-MAIL**

Darling Al --

Whew! Mom just left and we will probably both drop dead shortly. We had one of those delightful, feminine exhausting days, washing, ritting [?], dyeing and god knows what else. We dyed blue things brown and brown things blue and everything is a mess. But we had fun except that I am too tired to breathe. In the middle I had to tear over to school, having an appointment with Lloyd Warner, who is eager to get a statistician to work over some of his class and caste stuff. We didn't reach any conclusion because he has to get the stuff in some presentable form yet, but perhaps I will do some work, if I can figure out what to do, after the first of the year. I would get paid for it and it would fill up some of the loose moments of the day, which get fewer and farther between, as my housework piles up. But the only way I can be happy without you is to be busy as hell, exhaustingly so, even if it defeats my vanity, which cries out for nine hours of sleep a night.

Certainly there is nothing in the news to make one very happy or hopeful for an early peace. Our diplomatic shenanigans, specifically those of the British, are dreadful indeed, and may well account for some of the slow progress of the war.

Joan just called me with the sad news that Lou Eisman was killed in a plane crash over France. He was editor at SRA when I was there, you may recall, and a uniquely right guy, for that place and for any, for that matter. He had enlisted about three years ago and was a non-com I think in the air forces. It's too bad that such Christian souls have to get it.

It sets me to worrying and wondering about you again. I say again because most of the time recently, anyway, I assume that you are all right and well fed (you'd be amazed at the number of references to food in your letters) and out of the zone of immediate danger. I don't know what I'd do without you, although I know other people somehow managed to survive. Even with you so far away, you are somehow the center of my

life and the end of my hopes. But I know we'll be together some day, even though it may not be very soon. I could positively slay all the people, the businessmen, the advertisers and the politicians, who talk about post-war products and post-war life as if it were only tomorrow, just a neat turn of phrase, instead of a distance measured in some million more human lives. Again I think it would be preferable to be an oppressed civilian rather than a well-fed one, just to be spared all this self-righteous and incidentally self-seeking optimism.

Well, this letter didn't turn out to be a very pleasant one after all. And I hear Kathy rattling around in her bed, probably preparing herself for a night of riotous play when she should be sleeping. I wish to hell she would get all those damn teeth in right away, or whatever it is that is bothering her. But I really can't complain. She is such a good little girl ordinarily.

Darling, take care of yourself and remember that I'll always love you.

Your

Jill

***AL TO JILL DECEMBER 7, 1944 V-MAIL***

Dear Love,

It's a hell of a flickering light & I don't feel much like a letter but perhaps I can fill this sheet before I stop before the sheer weight of obstacles. Harold & Tom are drunk as coots & are making stupid remarks about me from the depths of a plushy bed in a room we're living in in a little village. Sgt. Crusenberry is making coffee with a blow torch. I do wish those two would shut up. It's only eight thirty but it seems like midnight - I'm that tired. The weather's been foul as usual and the roads were rough & long. I am tired, but I also feel good because I accomplished a lot. I just took time out from this most disjointed

letter to sing a couple old chanteys for everyone by popular demand. "The ol' man's grave" is certainly a tear-jerker, for Crowell anyway. They are now busy planning a trip to Florida après la guerre in Harold's half-track, with a White Packard with red leather seats as second choice.

There isn't much in the news the last couple of days to worry about the war ending before Xmas. However, it's all a matter of swinging our terrific superiority into line. It's saving a lot of lives. And it's costing the Germans a lot more, damn them. I hope next spring will be ours together. I need so much time to show how much I love you.

Always your

Al

XXX to Kathy

***JILL TO AL DECEMBER 8, 1944 V-MAIL***

Darling --

I was sitting around before, contemplating the cruel fate that keeps us apart on cold winter nights. As usually happens, when I'm feeling most depressed I'm also (fortunately for you) most inarticulate. So I gave up & just scrubbed & waxed the kitchen floor in retaliation. Now I feel better tho I don't abandon my original position -- that the world is giving us a thorough fucking. I like participating in great world movements when I choose to do the participating. But I'm getting damn sick and tired of us being one of the several billions who are getting pushed around for the benefit of future historians. I hope Churchill's speech convinced you, since it must be a fine feeling to be fighting a war for that son of a bitch if you really think he is one. As you can guess, I am still insurgent. Lucky for Roosevelt this didn't all happen before elections or he would have had one less buggy-pusher on his side. I would have written in Orson Welles' name,

or maybe Humphrey Bogart. Well, maybe there'll be a letter from you in the morning mail with something to cheer me up. Although right now nothing would, short of a homecoming announcement. Isn't there something I could do to get you home? Suppose Kathy and I both got measles? I have your Camels all wrapped & ready to send you tomorrow. I hope you won't be like this girl I know who gives away packs because she doesn't like the taste of Camels!

I love you darling & will write more tomorrow when I'm in a better mood -- I hope.

Your loving Jill.

***AL TO JILL DECEMBER 8, 1944***

Darling Jill,

No letters from you in three days, days fortunately of lots of work and not much time to think of the far away. Everything straightened itself out with a snap this morning and now we are in the groove again, working as much as usual, no more and no less. Some people have quite terrible jobs in this war, I rediscovered today, and I don't mean the infantry. I'd much rather be an infantry private than one of the men in the ammunition service companies. I have a few working for me and they tell me that they are scheduled on a 12-hour day, seven days a week. They work in the filthiest of weather, always outdoors in the muddiest fields, lifting ammo. Imagine that, if you can, and the worst living conditions, - cold, crowded & bare, food not too well prepared. There is hardly any amusement save movies and card games. I'll bet they soon find out whether anyone has slipped into the outfit with an ordinary IQ. He'd go batty.

I sent off a couple of more Christmas cards tonight to Italy, one of them to Jerry. I've sent about fifteen altogether, an all-time record, for which I am unreasonably proud. I even thought of

sending them to the Bill Kings & Mrs. Singleton but couldn't remember their addresses.

I've been seeing a lot of these towns around here lately, and they are very quaint, out of fairy tales, originals of the gingerbread school of architecture. They must be lovely in the spring and summer, for even now they seem remote and elfish. The inhabitants clump all over the place in wooden shoes, most of them of the almost pure Alpine stock, square-headed, with blue eyes and stocky figures. As Tom said of one well-stacked specimen today, if she ever kicked you in bed, she'd kill you. Many of them too have that peculiar woodfolk haircut, the straight bang dropping over the forehead until it almost reaches the sunken blue eyes. They are certainly a far cry from the Western and Southern Frenchmen.

I suppose Christmas will be upon us before we realize it. Mine will be nicer this year than last, because I love you just as much and am a lot closer to seeing you. I'm getting more and more anxious & eager to see Kathy since she must be wonderful fun by now. I had supper with some Ordnance outfit tonight which has been here a long time and which I knew in Italy. We thought that there must be some provision made to get the older troops back home for a while. No excuses for manpower can possibly overrule the case of men who have been away for as much as two years. We have so many divisions here now that I believe sometime soon the War Department will start relieving the old-timers, since no longer does the argument hold that we only have several battle-trying divisions & need them badly.

I'm enclosing a copy of my promotion order for safe-keeping. Could you, by the way of record-keeping, give me an account of our finances. If you can't, you're a bad girl and I'll refuse to come home for Christmas.

Love.

Al

**JILL TO AL DECEMBER 9, 1944**

Angel --

I'm writing this prone (or is it prostrate) because I'm trying to conserve my strength. I'm having one of my spells again -- you know, sleeping poorly, lots of energy badly dispersed, jitteriness, moods of elation alternating with depression. What a peculiar constitution I have! And to think it could all be straightened out by the application of one simple drug, namely you. I really do attribute my weird nervous dispositions to a lack of stable home, and incidentally, sex life, & therefore don't feel the necessity of moving off to the nearest analyst when I feel this way. Oh yes, & I have a practically constant but very mild headache. But don't feel too sorry for me. I get a lot accomplished in this condition, viz. more floors washed this morning. Dirty floors also seem to be my constant bête noire. That is because Kathy crawls & walks barefoot (she doesn't seem able to manage with the size 8s the salesman at Kiddie Kick -- believe me, it's the name of the store -- inflicted on us) & I don't like her to get any dirtier than necessary.

My prediction in last night's gloomy letter was true -- I did get a cheery V-mail from you today, dated Nov. 27. Listen, you goon, I do date my letters. All of them. Somebody must be rubbing the dates out, probably you, just so you have something to criticize me for. Not that I wouldn't welcome the opportunity to fight this thing out with you in person.

I finally summoned enough strength to type this thing. Anyway, Kathy is up, tooling about the house in her infernal machine, dragging her newly washed blue blanket -- the beloved one -- with her. Talk about fetichism -- Stekel could write books about this one.

Oh, getting back to my vices, I don't open up windows so much anymore because Kathy gets too cold by morning, due to her inability to snuggle down in covers the way we older, more sensible types can. But I still subscribe to the theory of wide-open windows and breezing rooms. So there.

People have been dropping in and out of here like bedbugs all day long. The Neugartens, Klaus and his affianced, and then I met Dieter Dux at the grocery store and he gave me a hand home, since Kathy was squealing from the cold and I had to carry her. He is finishing up his thesis in International Relations, a peculiar sort of pursuit these days. He seems like a pleasant enough guy though, polite and irresponsible.

Kathy is getting to be an awful pain in the neck. Once she spots me at the typewriter there is no peace because she wants to work it. The only time I can really write you is when she is asleep.

I guess I'll go to the movies tonight. And I'm getting hungry now.

Much much love to you, you also hungry creature. More on the morrow. My weekends are always so fraught with excitement.

Love love love

Jill

P. S. I sent the Camels using your letter today as the spurious request form. They never read them you know. Did you ever get the cartons I sent last summer. Answer yes or no.

***AL TO JILL DECEMBER 11, 1944***

Dearest Jill,

The rain keeps coming down tonight and every now and then I must draw at this bottle of Martel we have on the table top to prevent possible shivers. I haven't shivered yet, but it is possible, if I don't watch out. Fred Faas is already in bed, having been up and out since five thirty this morning. This room is really a slum of the worst kind. It's no bigger than our kitchen was on University Ave. (God, never let me forget those days) but there are four of us piled in unceremoniously and

confusedly. There is no plumbing and we all wash from the same dirty old white bowl. We make our coffee on the floor with a blow torch and a pot that would cause a whole class in Kitchen Kleanliness to faint at one fell swoop. But the coffee that comes from it is very good. The reason I haven't taken over another room in this one-street village is that there is no heat available in another room and I would rather have those few minutes of heat we can manage by mutual cooperation and a stove here than any amount of cleanliness or space. There aren't many troops around but on the other hand, there isn't much space. We have a flickering light that runs from a generator on the half-track standing below the window in a little nook that keeps it out of the way. But the light is so bad that I must keep a candle going at the same time to have enough light to write by. I suppose to one less used to it, this room must have a terribly sordid and jaded air about it. There is equipment all over the place, three cots and a bed, and a table littered with used ration containers, an opened tin of milk, a couple of cognac bottles and various pieces of paper. The floor is carpeted by cigarette butts and mud and the walls have pictures of Christ and several saints, with an incongruous unsaintly-looking couple who have apparently just been joined in holy wedlock and don't look any more impressive for it.

Adams is in a terrible mood these days, with some reason. He just got a letter from his wife telling him that she was suing him for divorce after nine years of married life. He doesn't know whether to tell her to go to hell or to try to get home to find out what everything is about. Meanwhile, he consumes quantities of liquor, can't sleep, and asks for and listens to well-intentioned advice from all sides. He has a six-year-old daughter too, which makes things more difficult. Otherwise, there isn't much change in our lives. I noticed the bulletin board this morning which is up (it's down just as often). There were the usual notices: the order of the day for the guards, a notice threatening dire punishment for anyone who ventures out without a helmet and gun, another notice threatening the same for anyone who doesn't turn in surplus equipment, various admonitions and information from

the Army headquarters, and a request for blood donors. Nothing new has been added except an announcement to the effect that the supply sergeant is collecting candy from everyone to give to the children of whatever town we happen to be in at Christmas time. I think that is a pessimistic note, since giving candy to German children is verboten and I'd like to get there before Christmas. We have had fresh meat yesterday and today, chicken and pork roast from America. There is no comparison between the quality of the meat they send us from home and that that can be scrounged infrequently here. The American is much better.

I got two long letters from you yesterday from Nov. 25-26. Then another of Nov. 11 came in which you dispensed with the problem of love in human life in a few sweeping generalizations which if your friends try to follow them will end them up in sanitariums of some sort or another. Though I suppose that a short letter is hardly room enough for you to expound all the fine points and shadings in your philosophy of sex. Then you dispense with intellectualism as a way of life and advise me to go into the corset business. And finally you tell me you will hate me (or rather, divorce me) if I advise you to sleep under the same roof with another girl. Since in a previous letter you had expressed considerable interest in the arguments on both sides of the question and only later made up your mind, it is peculiar, to say the least, for you to become so embattled on your final position. Therefore, you are unjustified for divorcing me if I have in a weak moment suggested that if you did decide to take in boarders there might be justification.

Now for the counterattack. I demand that I be furnished immediately with a full accounting of our various monies. Imagine not knowing all the banks you put deposits into. You are just like the squirrel who hides nuts here and there and then forgets the hiding place. You and your ideas of safety in numbers. Now God knows what will happen to the bonds you are buying since once a thing takes the form of paper in your mind, you either put it on your heat like Kathy or kick it around until it gets lost.

Enough abuse for this letter. At heart, you are really an angel, my angel, and I would rather kiss you than do anything else to you - well, not quite, unless "kiss" be broadly defined.

Always your

Al

***JILL TO AL DECEMBER 12, 1944 V-MAIL***

Darling Al --

Oh joy, a whole cigarette to accompany the writing of this. As one who has been cigarette-less for nigh onto 24 hours, I am elated. I went downtown this afternoon and of course you can't buy a pack in the Loop for love or money. Being naturally defeatist I didn't try offering either of these items to anybody. But then when I got back my pat Nudelman sold me a pack of Rameses, a rare and delightful brand. They taste like rolled up playing cards. Priscilla is here and we just did play some gin rummy, which I won naturally, to revive some bitter memories for you. Apparently you and I had been playing according to wrong and too lenient rules, so you see, everything will not be the same when you come home, contravening the N. A. M. slogan of Keep America the Same for the Boys.

Priscilla has been seeing a lot of Bill, which gives rise to a lot of delightfully low discussions on our part on why he does not make passes at girls. It might be his upbringing, although nobody can be that well brought up. On the other hand, maybe some people just aren't that interested in the pleasures of the flesh, since Bill doesn't like to eat much either. It can't be Lakeview High, for look at the deGrazias. Sink me if I know. What do you think, or is it too sacred to talk about?

I haven't written you since Sunday, or Saturday, dog that I am. Saturday night I spent with the Neugartens and Klaus and his fiance. We played some bridge, which I still don't like very

much, and the two men banged on the piano and two of the females discussed psychology and I read the New Republic. Very dull. Sunday there fell a great spate of snow and in the afternoon, after suitably resting for the ordeal, I tied a box on a borrowed sled and put Kathy in the box and we went forth in the blinding storm. She was only mildly impressed and got very cold. Yesterday it was still snowing and I was in a vile mood so I didn't write you, fearing I would say only the very worst, so I went to a terrible old movie with Diane last night, something to do with the ethics of the nursing profession in Manchester, England, of all places, with Carole Lombard. Which brings me today, when I knocked myself in the Loop, buying useless presents for people like Unk and Irma. I also bought myself my 1000th sensible brown hat, the kind that costs a lot and which I always say about, well, it will last a long time. Then I wear it once and put it in the closet and the next time I wear it, the locale is a train (or a bus or a plane). I will first sit on it and then leave it behind by mistake.

I still haven't gotten Xmas presents for everybody and it is very depressing. I got a dinner table cloth and napkins set for Mom because she is always beefing about not having one and it was expensive and not very wonderful looking. And I'm still looking for suitable gifts for Mir and Buss and the two little nephews, Paul and Ann can be taken care of by the New Yorker. But jeepers, the dough sure flies. I wish I knew how to knit but I'll be damned if I'll learn. It's a concession enough to domesticity that I know how to make fudge. I have a foolproof recipe which we can spend many delightful hours testing when you come home. I would send you some only I don't think it keeps very well. Darling, here is the end of the page, with hardly enough room to say the only thing worth writing -- that I love you terribly and miss you equally.

Jill

**JILL TO AL DECEMBER 13, 1944 V-MAIL**

Darling --

No letter for [from ?] you since Saturday now (today is Wednesday). I guess you must be mad at me for taking an unauthorized trip to New York. (Oh, dem golden guilt feelings.) No, I'm not really worried about that, only that you yourself are on the march, probably further and further away from me. Except that, too, I occasionally get a flash of idiotic hope when I don't hear from you for a while, that big things are brewing and that all of a sudden, I'll get a phone call from New York and it will be YOU.

Speaking of unauthorized trips, I'm very seriously thinking of taking another one, to the coast this time. Now that I've proved to myself I can survive an autumn and part of a winter in Chicago, I think I shall escape it. Specifically, I might go the middle of February and stay for a month or two, breaking the back of the winter so to speak. It really is awful here. I can't keep Kathy out for more than an hour at a time, it's so cold, not to mention myself. And the nights are so damned long and lonely. Tonight, I'm going to the movies again, the second time in three days. I don't think I'll make a practice of it but Lettie called me and we're going to have dinner out and then go, after we get our cherubs to bed. Her husband is in too, but she gets to see him every couple of months. Don't berate me for not having interests. I know I should but you didn't marry me for that. You must have known that I was pretty good company and fond of male companionship, specifically yours, but not much else. Anyway, I can't find my library card and the only thing I want to read now is Trollope and you can't buy him for love nor money. Excuses excuses. Anyway, I'm going to start doing something about train or plane reservations now. I got a letter from Paul yesterday saying how delighted Ann was with your pin, it's the only thing that keeps her best dress together. I think what finally decided me to go was his mention of that fatal word "ski". My skis are leaning against the dining room wall and have been for a month now, ever since we rooted them out of Mom's

basement. You can imagine what pathos there is in a lovely pair of skis in a dining room where there's eight inches of snow outside. Anyway, there's plenty of time to decide what I'm going to do. All I do know is that if you're not here I want to get the hell out. It would be different if I could take a job but that's patently impractical since I'd never make any money paying a sitter. And Kathy is too young for nursery school. Anyway, I do enjoy taking care of her but it's just too much to expect anybody to enjoy doing just that. Oh what the hell am I griping for, I guess it's because Kathy is rooting around my feet, crying because I won't take her up and let her play with the typewriter. She's a damned spoiled little momma's baby, which is not precisely her fault but not precisely mine either. At any rate, the world is hard enough without the necessity of a mother having secondary relations with her child, for the dubious goal of not spoiling him.

Well, she has achieved her goal and is now sitting on my lap, furiously beating the space bar. Oh I give up.

Later -- zoot, I am off to dinner and the movie with my girl friend, quote. Anyway, I am still capable of heterosexual love if not pursuits, namely you.

I love you,

Jill

***AL TO JILL DECEMBER 14, 1944***

Dearest One,

There hasn't been a line of mail here for several days for anyone. My relationships with you therefore have been confined to your tracings which ended in your letter of November 26 and the stuff that dreams are made of. I'm not kicking. That's enough if the big things are lacking. When will Kathy start writing? After all, if she is big enough to walk, she must be big enough to write sensible accounts of her wanderings. Can't you

give her a column in your letters called "Mommy's little helper." or something like that. I suppose you've profited already by her talent and are employing her infant labor to good ends, like carrying empty whiskey bottles to the trash barrel or pulling down the shades at night that you are incapable of pulling down.

Things are pretty much the same here. The campaign is going along well, or at least the cold historians will say so fifty years from now when they will no longer consider the torment or waiting that besets the people who are doing the campaigning. The weather has been better the last couple of days and that has helped. Our present mess is well set up in the town café and is very warm. The ordinary rations taste very well under the conditions. I feel fairly languid, but that's general, and I think it's mostly a product of boredom. I'm afraid that after the war the soldier from a long stay overseas will be dull in some ways for the high-tension civilians. He is likely to simply sit and stare at everything; he has lost a lot of enthusiasm as usually expressed and will be less concerned with the sensibilities of other people, especially if they've not been along on the ride.

The other day I gave a talk, which I made into mostly a discussion, to a company of heavy cannon maintenance men. It was for the army orientation and education program. They get speakers from the regular army outfits and ask them to talk to another outfit here or there, when they can get time out from their other work. The discussion turned out to be interesting and would undoubtedly be extremely interesting to the people back home. The most remarkable fact that was borne out, in my opinion, was that, contrary to a lot of people back home, the soldier overseas for a long time judges political problems in the war better than the people back home, if you keep constant factors like formal education, age and so forth. This outfit was one of the original outfits in North Africa, and went through the Italian campaign as well. I think they have as good ideas as anyone on what to do after the war with Germany. They are not vocal at all but they think a lot, and importantly, they have had to take a lot of knocks and therefore are not soft in their thinking

or in their resolutions. They've had what most people at home lack, time on their hands with nothing to do save mull things over, and that produces correct judgements and sound opinions more than a bedlam of news columnists, magazines, newspapers, books, radio and all the million things of civilian life that make a man a doer instead of a thinker. I actually think guard duty is much more than a chore, for example, It is a discipline and an occasion for the free working of the mind over an extended period of time. If one sits back on his haunches or is compelled to sit back and just do nothing but watch what happens when the world goes by without him as it does in fact, remarkably, he emerges from the experience with a better perspective on his place in the world as well as with a real increase in self-respect that comes from knowing that he isn't actually tied to the great continually revolving wheel.

But I must get down off the cracker barrel and finish this letter before supper. We eat at the barbarous hour of five o'clock, you know. Around nine or ten at night, ravenous figures can be seen skulking around the camp fires trying to find someone who has received a package from home or who has hoarded rations from some past trip. Breakfast is always a poor meal and I can't eat very much of it. If we had eggs or good things like we used to have at home, I could eat much more. But our mess sergeant is a very poor one and is obviously deprived of his taste glands. He can't make anything well. I don't know how he managed to turn out a fine couple of turkeys for Thanksgiving.

Though I feel well, Roos and Tom have colds, Faas has stomach trouble, and Harold of course is concerned over his wife's divorcing him. Isenberg is resigning his commission because of over-age, he says, and because he can't stand the gaff. I answered Martin's letter yesterday, telling him also that you had visited with his mother in New York.

Give Kathy a hug for me, darling. You had better scout around for some Venetian blinds (what's the matter with Walter "I can get it for you wholesale" Blum) for I may be inclined to do things I wouldn't want bandied around the neighborhood. A thousand

kisses.

Always

Al

CAPTAIN Alfred de Grazia has felt also that he must end the year 1944 with a reckoning. He therefore elaborates a message to all of the Seventh Army Artillery Personnel concerning propaganda operations. Not every 24-year old is permitted to address an Army like General George Washington, but strange powers dropped upon youthful soldiers in World War II, and it goes to show that he didn't spend all of his time scrounging for food and drink and writing home. (George Washington, incidentally, delivered himself of a voluminous personal correspondence while conducting the Revolutionary forces in the War of Independence.)

He signs off, "By Order of the Commanding Officer, Captain Alfred de Grazia, CAC, AUS", hoping for the best. The problems are many, and subjects of written complaints, reports, and expostulations over field telephones, in themselves the generators of numerous misunderstandings, even misfirings. Trucks cannot find the propaganda shell dump, or they arrive there without knowing what they came to get. When nothing can be done, as when a tank runs over 50 packs of explosive powder or a leaflet intended for the Second Mountain Division is shot at the SS, there is the customary cursing, black humor, alcohol, and a turning to other tasks and pleasures.

He had arranged for record keeping beginning in early October for the first time -- an historic First! -- and therefore we know that by December 10, 20 leaflets had been produced and fired all or in part. Each shell case was stencilled with the title of its contents, the converted shell, its metal base screwed back tight, double-tested. It was rare that a base piece and the paper wads ejected in a muzzle-blast, which was dangerous (hopefully, over the enemy, the pieces would clobber somebody). The shell fuses were not completely reliable, at the longer ranges especially. Artillery units sometimes failed to pick up

their allocations. Sometimes they fired excessively, at other times under-firing out of fear or uncertainty or ignorance. (An enemy divisional front would typically require 100 shells, and about 250 propaganda shells would communicate with them in the course of a week.) An unfortunate general condition prevailed: when psychological conditions for firing were best, targeting conditions were worst.

The editorial policies that the Team settled upon were initiated mostly on the Italian Front and fully developed in France, so that there was nothing at all new when finally, as the War was nearing its end, on February 7, 1945, Commanding General Robert McClure of the Supreme Command, PWD, SHAEF, issued general orders to follow certain policies. I summarize them:

No direct appeals for desertion. Carry always some reference to decent treatment as prisoners. Don't say prisoners are sent overseas. Say prisoners will be repatriated "as soon as possible after the war." Suppress all names or indicators of deserters. Use only the fancy "official" surrender pass or safe conduct guarantee. Do not disparage the enemy to his face. Do not boast of our valor. Reiteration is no fault; don't strain for variety. Do not answer German propaganda directly. Stay off of larger political agitation. Tie in news of operations consistent with the news as announced by SHAEF. Tell no untruths (except in the rare special black operations where the identity of some party of the enemy is pretended).

All of this had for a year and more been part of the operational code of AI and Company of the Eighth, Fifth and Seventh Armies. Consider, if you will for a moment: the Frontpost newsletter has been fired regularly all this time at the enemy; it is factually accurate, unemotional, unabusive; it was more accurate and objective than most American and other Allied newspapers and magazines sold and read by the civilian millions of the homelands. The soldier propagandists feel that they cannot afford to lie; the journalists around the world and their editors at home feel that they cannot afford to tell the truth. Even when they are winning!

But isn't that a sign of a well-working Army: when the

Commanders issue orders that are already in effect? Just as Al writes his wife proudly that he spends only an hour and a half per day administering the Company; a man would be an incompetent meddler to put in a long day at it. I would not argue that Alfred might be a better Commander if he reached out to do certain new things, which I have mentioned and will continue to bring up -- things that hardly any officer got around to doing, it is only fair to say, like running a book club, or insisting that everyone be trained to do the jobs of several others, in case of need, or daily equipment inspection, or instituting voluntary services for needy civilians, or arranging visits to historic sites, or getting men to write home more often. Come to think of it, much of this is being done in one way or another. Lieutenant Johnny Anspacher has a decent knack for it.

The Germans are doing very little frontline propaganda. Captured directives, however, show that the flood of Allied propaganda annoys the leadership all the way up to the Command and General Staff, and field commanders are urged to prohibit any circulation of the leaflets and to devote resources to replying in kind. They rely upon rockets, patrols, left-behinds, reconnaissance plane drops, and civilian carriers to distribute an undistinguished set of messages. Anti-semitism is a persistent theme, also slackers on the Home Front. Nor does the theme of useless sacrifice of troops by dumb leaders escape their attention. "Where is my Daddy this Christmas?" asks a rocket fired leaflet of its Third Division targets. The 45th Division gets one reciting its losses from Sicily onwards, assuring them of their good chance to die in the mud for the war-mongers and profiteers who contrived to stay home, and ending in a clever P.O.W. appeal: "Your buddies are glad to be out of the mud. They are sure to return home safe and sound. You still have a long way to go. Keep alive if you can. For remember, YOU ARE STILL WANTED... FOR JAPAN!" (Query: isn't this admitting that Germany will surrender?) They do a lot of humble boasting: "You are not finding the German soldier such an easy foe to overcome, are you?" And "What is the German soldier doing? HE FIGHTS LIKE A LION FOR EVERY YARD OF GROUND!" (This is too much! The surviving landser is painfully cynical: he calls the Iron Cross the "Frozen-flesh cross," a phrase from Russia.) Letters from Americans in Prisoner-of-War camps are

reproduced, also sad letters removed from the pockets of dead men.

"Do they have an effect on our troops?" De Grazia is occasionally asked, never with fear or concern, generally with the attitude that the Germans are wasting their time. Sure, he says: there is always somebody around who can be discouraged by a sympathetic communication to the point of giving up earlier than necessary. "Winning can cause more damage to combativeness than losing." The idea is not too difficult for combat soldiers to comprehend. The idea should go unexpressed, however, tabooed back of the lines. Although quite a few Americans are taken prisoner, the universal vocalized supposition is that they surrendered to save their lives -- which covers an extended gamut of judgements.

The Germans rigged up balloons made of oiled paper, 11 meters in diameter, which, when inflated with about 22 cubic meters of hydrogen gas could lift up and carry over into French-held territory, much of it Alsatian, about 40 pounds of leaflets. The leaflets are in bundles; no mechanisms are used to bring the balloons down to earth or to scatter them about. They depend entirely upon vagrant breezes for their direction and traverse. Conceivably they land when the gas is leaked out, or when shot down by an agent who then circulates the leaflets, or more likely by an Allied soldier. They are couched in English and French, not in German, though doubtless the people who would be most inclined to obey instructions and further the adventure would be German-speaking Alsations of the more rural type.

### ***JILL TO AL DECEMBER 14, 1944 V-MAIL***

Darling Al --

Oh joy, two letters from you today, Dec. 3 and 4. I hadn't heard from you for about five days and I'd guessed you were moving again. I'm still not sure except that it sounds as if you'd been quite active lately. Also the news has the Seventh Army on the move, rather rapidly in the past 24 hours too. I'm glad you got the scarf. Ever since I sent you a wallet from Field's (it seems like years ago) that you didn't get, I've rather distrusted allowing

the stores to mail out parcels. But Finchely seems to be reliable. I hope you won't lose it because I want to borrow it someday. I've lost two scarves in as many weeks and am rapidly freezing to death and hate to buy a new one, having dropped liberal hints around the DeGrazias, subject: Christmas presents for Jill.

Not much happened today except that it was cold out and I stayed in and housecleaned and did the laundry. Also I made Brownies yesterday and have been eating them all day and feel rather awful as a result. They are small chocolate cookies, you know, and when I make them, they have the consistency of dried mortar. As Joan patronizingly pointed out, I am not an experienced baker.

Oh, subject of argument -- why my name is stamped Jill and not Mrs. etc. That's because the more you have on the stamp and the bigger the print, the more it costs. Anyway, I think, but am not sure, that it's OK for a girl, married, to write her Christian and married name together but still, when she is being addressed, it should be Mrs. with her husband's name and in any case, it should never be Mrs. Jill, whether married, widowed or divorced. My, what a big mouth the horse has.

I saw Gaslight last night, with Ingrid Bergman and Charles Boyer. It was sort of a phony psychological horror, not nearly so good as those ones with Robert Montgomery we used to lap up so well. And do you remember the one we saw with Jean Gabin, where he went around strangling people? I remember after that movie, which we saw on 63rd St., ascending the long flight up to Janice's and my apartment together, with me full of qualms since I didn't know you very well then. I guess I figured if Jean Gabin, a likely looking male, could engage in such anti-social behavior, well, anybody could. You can count me as one of the more impressionable members of the movie-going public.

It's funny but Kathy isn't walking any more now than she did three weeks ago. I don't know whether it's a natural leveling off of development at certain time or whether the machine hasn't just made her lazy. In any case, once she is released from her

bed or playpen, she much prefers to just follow me around, watching me and shortly thereafter nagging at me to play with her and pick her up, than doing anything. I guess it's quite natural but I am more aware of it because I am with her so much. If you were here there would be a period during the day when you'd want to play with her and take over, but this way, I have to be all things to her. I don't see how she can avoid being spoiled, but we'll just have to chalk it up to one of the hazards and horrors of war. I guess I don't mean spoiled so much as being overly dependent on me. But I'm sure it won't have any lasting effects on her character. (continued)

You'll be pleased to know she's really extremely responsive to music. When I put the radio or phonograph on she stands up and waves one hand as if she were conducting the band, or else she bangs her hands together and sings along in a voice which is only slightly less tuneful than my adult one. I might also add, with less pleasure, that she pulled down the little radio today, completely busting up the bakelite case although the radio still works, *mirabile dictu*. And I was just re-arranging all the furniture in the house, which I do periodically, partly out of neurosis I'm sure, and partly with the sensible view of trying to get breakable, tear-able or electrically charged objects in more inaccessible positions. I think for the tenth time I've moved the bed from the bedroom back into the dining room, it's really a dilemma. If you sleep in the living room or dining room in this house you can hear all the noises from the hall, which are many and loud. On the other hand, if you sleep in the bedroom, where can you [*you can ?*] close the door against all the strangers in the night, you hear Kathy. Or worse yet, Kathy hears you and wakes up and proceeds to play and sigh for a couple of hours. Then, if you make a move in the bed, she'll make even more noise so that you have to get up and play with her or give her a bottle to soothe.

She's funny too because for about three weeks she's been drinking her orange juice out of a cup and now, all of a sudden, she wants it only in a bottle again. I think I spoiled her by giving it to her in a bottle in the first place. Now I don't know what to do

-- whether just not to give it to her at all if she won't take it in a cup, or return it to the bottle, on the theory that it's better to have a spoiled than a scurvy brat. There are all these little problems which fortunately, usually disappear sooner than it takes time to write about them.

I've naturally been following the diplomatic news, the latest being that the Senate hasn't made up its mind about MacLeish yet. It would be a shame if he didn't get the appointment, being the sole liberal. I really don't blame the president so much -- he obviously can't force liberalism down the throat of the Senate or the American people, for that matter. Churchill is a different story, of course, since he's obviously pursuing an unpopular and fatal cause. But just because we know from history that liberty is a hard-won thing doesn't make one any the happier for all these developments. It seems almost astronomically beyond the grasp of the human mind, that so many people can be pushed around by so few. Certainly the simple slogans one learns from either Marxism or sociology as it's taught here don't account for much when one starts feebly struggling with these problems of human freedom. And as for psychoanalysis -- hah, I laugh. I guess I'd better stick to cleaning the house.

Darling, do you see any chance for a leave at all? God, what I'd do for 30 days with you, or even a weekend! All my love to you, and Kathy sends some too, what she doesn't reserve for her blue blanket or Cooney or Liza Kerner, her great passions of the moment, all unreciprocated, I might add. Liza cries every time she sees Kathy because Kathy is so big and makes so much noise and knocks Liza over backwards when she tries to kiss her. A tough life for everyone.

Love love love -- Jill

*End of December (first of two parts) 1944 letters*

