

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

Sweetheart --

Brr. It's cold and I'm getting a cold. But I think I'm going downtown this aft. anyway, to spend one of Kathy's hard-earned Saks gifts. The last time I went downtown on the IC they had a girl conductor on the train. This is not an unusual occurrence, except that this little doll was rigged out in a miniature trainman's uniform, complete with pants, vest and over-sized gold watch and watch chain, and basso voice to go with. It was funny enough as it was, but then she was no more than five feet and had a Veronica Lake hairdo. I made a mental note to tell you right away, so that you might be further enlightened on the impact of the war on the home front. In fine, it is making us a nation of characters. Witness me -- I think nothing of sailing forth in a pair of high red socks and a green coat.

I had dinner over at the Kerners last night -- a very good spaghetti and chianti affair. I brought the sauce because Diane was out of points. Mercifully Oliver left us to go to work after dinner so Diane and I sat around and had a pleasant gossip and needlework session. Oliver is God's greatest bore but I rather like being with Diane since we are cemented by a mutual interest in babies. They have fixed up their place very attractively. Diane has excellent taste, I think. Their place is pleasantly confused as far as furniture styles go, like ours.

I am reading a book which, though a collection of essays, not a novel, is a fitting companion to *So Little Time* in immaturity of style and childish cynicism. It's called *Love in America*, by a jerk named David Cohn who, according to the Dust Jacket, is an American advisor to the British Ministry of Information in Washington. He sounds like another one of these Washington wiseacres. It's a kind of facetious-ethical discussion of marriage and women that they allow you to read for reading period in the Smith college family soc. course. And one always does because it's such easy reading. It's the kind of writing and cerebration I've been ashamed to do since I turned twenty. If I ever get any

time off in the next twenty years from bottles (formula and martini mixes), babies and spaghetti sauce, I must collaborate with you on something. If people can get stuff like that published, we ought to be able to clean up. But perhaps not. I'm sure we both are too self-conscious and self-protective of our intellectual reputations to try anything that may possibly be gauche. I bought Eddy the Modern Library collection of O'Neill plays for his birthday on Saturday as a present from Kathy and will give him a fin for us. I'd like to keep their library going but on the other hand they need the dough for their brave adolescent ventures into swing and dress. Ergo the compromise. They're nice boys, as I've said before, just so long as I don't have to observe their musical and sartorial foibles at too close range. Search me -- maybe Vic's trumpet does sound good to the cognoscenti. Darling, this is all for now. I'd like to take Kathy out for a spin before I go downtown. We both love you madly, and I don't mean that at all facetiously. You are the best man I could have, and the best father any baby could wish for.

***JILL TO AL FEBRUARY 2, 1944 V-MAIL***

My only darling --

No letter from you for a couple of days, but I'm really not complaining because there's been so much mail since shortly before Cathy came (whoops, I spelled her name wrong -- a problem, or rather, defection we'll fall into frequently for the rest of our lives due to my inexplicable choice of the original spelling). She is fine, incidentally. I just finished nursing her. She still has an enormous appetite and gets more to eat every day. The interesting part of it is that as the baby's food needs increase, so does the mother's supply of milk if all goes well, and well indeed it goes with me. I consistently supply her with about two-thirds of her food needs, except in the early morning feeding when I have so much milk after sleeping for five or six hours that if I'm not careful to see that she doesn't take too much, she just fills up to the top and overflows in a startling

manner all over the bed. At which phenomenon Cooney turns his tail and runs out of the room in fear and trembling. Incidentally, don't feel too sorry for me having to get up so early and to bed so late. I'm getting so used to waking at five or six that the other morning when she slept till seven, I woke up the usual time and just fretted away until we had to wake her up by force. I usually go back to sleep after the feeding, although it takes a while to do so. I expect that once the nurse goes tomorrow, I'll be so tired I'll be able to sleep whenever Kathy does. Gosh she's a wonderful baby and she looks so much like you or Dad, I can't figure out which. Don't be afraid that she's the submissive type. She howls plenty when she wants to be picked up. The thing is, her present diet is so satisfactory that unless she is hungry at meal time, wet or has one of her wakeful periods (which pretty consistently occur between seven and ten at night) she doesn't have much to cry for. But when she wants something, she can just about split one's eardrum. The other night before her ten o'clock feeding she was fretting about, and somehow managed to get her thumb in her mouth. This pleased her mightily and you could hear her smack-smacking on it juicily all over the house. But as all good things must come to an end and as babies her age lack motor control, the damn thing slipped out. Boy, she let out a howl of rage that probably created the impression on Ridgewood Court that I was beating her. And so she hollered until I picked her up to feed her. Naturally, she'll stop crying at any time when I pick her up, but unless it's close to a feeding time or she seems to be wet or, more usually, rolling around in crap, I don't pick her up. She usually stops crying in a few minutes. Anyway, having suffered her yowling at two in the morning for the first week she was home, I'm glad to hear her cry any other time of the day or night because that means she'll get so tired she'll sleep through until five or six from whenever she finishes her ten o'clock feeding (i.e. 11:30). Cooney is working out very well. So far he hasn't manifested any hostility towards her though he sure is hell on his confreres of Ridgewood Court and surrounding streets. (continued) I am slowly getting over the notion that he must be walked fifteen miles a day in order to survive and also that being

on a leash is a cruel fate for a dog. I really have to keep him leashed when I'm near the building because he has the notion he owns the alley and street for about fifty yards all around the house, and is apt to chase and bark at anybody he doesn't know. But I still find myself manufacturing excuses to go out during the day so I can give him a good walk, though even his trip to the A and P with me is usually more exercise than he gets up north.

You might have been surprised in an earlier letter of mine to note my exultation over the evacuation of Cassino. So am I since I see by the paper they are still fighting, but hard, around there. I don't know where I got the notion the Germans had calmly walked out. The Chicago Sun, no doubt.

My hair is as curly as it ever was, I guess, but it is so tremendously long (for me) and thick it has absolutely no physical characteristics except bulk. I like it better this way, though it may just be rationalizing. I simply refuse to go downtown and have a cut, and all the good barbers around here got drafted. In fact, every time I ever did find a man who could cut it well, he either got drafted, I either left town (i.e., the sad leaves I took of barbers in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, New York and El Paso -- no, not the one in El Paso -- he was a fairy) or else they are so exclusive and inaccessible, like my Free Frenchman at Stevens' that he might as well be in the Army. Besides, he told me not to come down any more a couple of months before Kathy was born because he didn't think the crowds were good for the baby. And now my hair is so long it seems rather a shame to have it cut. I guess people get sentimental about their attics -- or rather, the contents of same -- in the same way. Anyway, I wear your French beret a lot and it sort of keeps the hay from blowing all over the place.

My neurotic neighbor Virginia was down for tea this afternoon. I had a lot of sewing to do and wanted company. She's the one who's married to the attractive German designer but she doesn't get along with him very well. He's fussy and she's sloppy is a

simple way of putting it. I always feel badly when people don't get along because, among other things, I think of how much we love each other and yet can't be together. I wouldn't say that she doesn't appreciate what she's got, because obviously you can't appreciate something you don't like very much to begin with, and besides, she has a pretty hard time of it so far as money and problem children go (one of her little girls is sort of a difficult child, I think). But oh hell, I wish I could be with you again. I think even fighting with you would be preferable to this bland diet of kitchen, kinder and Cooney -- and no Al.

All my love, dearest, Jill

***AL TO JILL FEBRUARY 2, 1944 V-MAIL***

Dearest Jill -

The mailman has stopped bustling, now that our mutual crisis has passed. Three days without a letter from you leaves me aghast at the emptiness of life, as if I've never gone for equal or longer times under the same curse. In fact it shows how wholeheartedly and quickly I adjust to any emanation, habit, whim, abuse, disabuse, from you, and how I regret the cessation of anyone of them. Be warned that I shall never countenance any defect of yours as grounds for desertion. Right now, I would be most happy to taste in your surliest surliness, your picayuniest pettiness. God, you don't know how glad you could be right now and still butt your by now recurled head against my stone wall of desire. And if I can feel this way about one antipode of behavior, your more normal attractiveness would melt me into a helpless pool at your feet, silly though I might look in that condition. I did, however, get a letter from Borgese today, written while he was at the U. of Puerto Rico. He's back at the U. of C. now. He's very interested in hearing about Italy, and I was just inspired with the idea that though I could never hope to get much across in a single response, you might drop in on him some day and tell him

whatever you may have gathered from my muddled letters. Incidentally, his Life article was circulated clandestinely in Italy by some groups, not that anyone was violently opposed to its ideas amongst the Allied authorities.

Kaufman and I have been having a good time together. He accompanied me yesterday on my milk route and to the dump to watch the conversion of shells today. He's good company, and before being CO at Tunis was with Lend Lease in Turkey, Egypt and places like that. His estimation of the Turks is not very high. Incidentally, he knew Carl Hess vaguely at Dartmouth. Like the others who come up, he's surprised at what the front looks like. Everyone expects so much blood and thunder. Of course, they never get up to the outpost line where the bloodiest fighting is. One unexpected thing is the good food and situation people manage to fix up for themselves most of the time. When the weather is nice, as it is now, the life of most people is quite bearable. We have created very comfortable circumstances for ourselves at the moment including a mess and bar in the farmhouse cellar which would do credit to anyplace in Rush Street. I wish you could be here to lean on the rickety bar with us.

Forgive me my horrible prose, darling. Everyone has been shouting and distracting. I can't possibly compose a decent or even a long letter. You must hear again, though, that I love you, Jill, before I finish. Kiss Kathie for me, if she isn't naughty.

Yours always,

Al

**T**HE Anzio trap has failed, the cold is unending. The world-famous Benedictine Monastery of Montecassino stands nobly on Montecassino above the town of Cassino. Most of the priests have withdrawn. Italian civilians are known to have taken refuge inside. The Germans claim from Berlin and Rome that they are respecting the neutrality of the

Monastery and safeguarding its treasures. As he bumps along on his milk run he hears different stories. He hears reports of helmeted figures appearing in windows, of firing from the gardens, of binoculars flashing. He knows practically nothing about the dramatic events inside -- the rescue of the art treasures, the occasional death and wounding of civilians, the negotiations between the Germans and the priests, the increasing number of civilians from the village and country around who have begged and forced their way into the Monastery. He looks often, but sees nothing untoward through his own glasses. He says so to his comrades time after time, because the whole Army is becoming agitated over the question: are the Germans using the Monastery for gun emplacements, a reserve encampment, and artillery observation, or are they not?

The troops' mood is ugly. You scarcely dare say that the Monastery is not full of Germans taking their ease. One day he is at a natural rock fissure and path by the Rapido to note the day's catch of possibly interesting cases, and several German prisoners are being led through by two Moroccans with fixed bayonets. A short Texan of the 36th Division appears, a lieutenant, and says we should kill these bastards (actually Our Guy was wondering at their good fortune in not being killed by the goumes). They have been firing down on us all day, the sons of bitches, he says. Our Lieutenant hesitates; he can't be sure how determined the officer is; he looks mad: so he says, diffidently, well that's why they're there, you know, that's their job, too, and the other lieutenant glares and snarls but let's them pass. There'd probably be trouble with the goumes anyway; they were expecting a bounty for bringing in live prisoners.

But that 's the mood along the Front. Pretty soon there'll be no prisoners taken, and then we'll have the German expending his last cartridge before giving up and it's the last rounds that kill the most, Allied prisoners will disappear, too, on the way to the Rear. So thinks Our Man, and it is one of his biggest discoveries. Like a travelling salesman who after many wearisome trips "on a shoeshine and a smile" happily formulates the most compelling of sales pitches. He puts aside most talk about obtaining deserters by propaganda, which is the first idea occurring to everybody, and says in a pessimistic low-keyed manner that the idea behind the leaflets is to weaken resolve in specific

ways. The effect of the propaganda is measurable by the number of rounds of ammunition left unexpended when a position is abandoned, by the minutes, even seconds, earlier at which an enemy withdraws or surrenders, by the minutes earlier of the hour when the truck driver pulls over to sleep, by how much rest he imagines that he needs; by how exhausted he feels; by whether he believes he has already done more than his share; by the number of times the thought runs through the enemy's head that, while we may not lose, still my family will be needing me when this is over.

The War does not look so hopeless to the German soldier. (Their Generals will go on fighting forever, of course. It is a goofy error of Allied strategists and propagandists not to threaten the German Generals directly, saying, "You know damned well that this War is lost to you. Your men and women do not. If you do not bring it to an end you will be considered criminally negligent on their account!" The ordinary German, up to a high rank, is a docile infant in the face of authority, and will believe and follow it.)

But see all the reasons for a soldier to keep up his overall faith in victory, especially given his masters' assurances. So far as the German soldier is concerned, the Western Allies had been destroyed at the Dieppe landing, in Norway, and very nearly in Africa and Italy. The richest, most productive part of Italy is theirs. They are so deep into the Soviet Union that any reverses there can be deemed temporary and not so significant. (Stalingrad is hard to deny, however. Tunis was the Italians' fault.) Germany holds the Baltic States; Sweden and Switzerland are cooperative. All of Eastern Europe is held, Greece, too. Millions of workers from everywhere are "voluntarily" producing goods for the war. Every Eastern German Division has about 2000 volunteer semi-soldiers doing everything but shooting at their own Soviet soldiers; but there are a million Russians and East Europeans who are actually fighting the Russians, too. There are French, Belgian, Dutch, Spanish and Italian troops fighting on their side. Spain is supportive. Italian Fascism is reviving, following Mussolini's rescue. The Germans are looting the European Continent and hunger is unknown to their people. There are great plans for rebuilding Germany from the wealth of the whole world. The Japanese, finally, are winning one victory after another in the Pacific Theater, and will soon turn

upon the Soviet Empire. Add to all of this, a confidence in one's top leadership much greater than that enjoyed by Allied leaders, and a belief in the Nazi ideology, which, whatever its perplexing points, promises them and their loved ones a thousand years of comfortable hegemony over the whole World.

No, the Fifth Army Combat Propaganda Team, correct in believing in Allied victory, realistic by contrast with most other experts, is nonetheless optimistic in order to keep up its own morale, and is continually frustrated in finding the key to the ordinary German soldier's mind -- except at the cat's hole at the level of the floor: these men refuse surrender out of immediate affection and loyalty to their platoon; they refuse because they fear for their lives in giving up. True, but not the whole truth at all.

Americans and British give themselves up as prisoners in less desperate circumstances than the Germans. They are more confident of victory than the Germans. The penalties are less for surrenderers. Moreover, the American believes that much rests upon his individual fate; at the same time, he has a larger belief in his own value as a person. Furthermore, a matter both important and little understood -- for it seems so odd -- is the fact that experience in combat improves one's judgement about when surrender is a necessary condition to survival. The experienced German soldier realizes better than the inexperienced American when his situation has become hopeless, and, since the normal inclination when endangered is to be pessimistic, the American soldier will surrender under conditions when the German soldier will not, even when, objectively viewed, the German is receiving much more murderous shelling, air attack, and small arms fire.

Amidst the continual blasting of the cannon, in this desolate landscape, party to the falling dead and anguished wounded, there is a considerable dialogue going on between the German common soldier and the little propaganda group inside the cave, representing the Allied troops. Troops know this and, although the fearfully rigid soldier almost invariably reacts spitefully to saying any word to the enemy, he soon wants to carry on discussions and becomes eager to hear what his representatives are telling them and why aren't we telling them that

they had better surrender right away or else we'll massacre them, something they, of all people, do not really believe can be done. They are in despair. They want to give voice. The propagandists give voice. There are developed several potent and tested messages, based upon careful analysis of expertly conducted interviews of the enemy. They come to be memorized by the Lieutenant.

You could call them the Product Line. There is the "One Minute that may save your life". It is generally useful, to remind the enemy of the possibility of his giving up and of how to do it. There is the official formal-looking and dead-serious surrender pass, the *laissez-passer*, the *Passierschein*. "No soldier should be without one," was the motto. They are copiously distributed. More and more enemy keep a copy tucked inside a boot, under a canteen, or in a pocket; it is a misdemeanor to possess one. It is designed to lend courage in the event of surrender, when a man is completely at the mercy of his captors. The weekly *Frontpost* is welcome among the Germans for its timeliness, calm, and reliability. A translation of this is afforded the Allied troops as well; translations of all messages to the enemy are given to the artillerymen doing the firing. *Frontpost* is a world round-up that is every bit as honest, though self-serving, and competently chosen and presented as, say, the typical American network television news half a century later.

Besides these general products are the special items. When the 5th Austrian Mountain Division or the Herman Goering Division enters the Front, each is given a message of greetings, which plays upon terrors past, present, and future, adding, as always, you are welcome to come over any time. All Austrian units receive copies of the declaration of the Chiefs of State promising to restore the independence of their country. Again, a particularly fruitful set of interrogations results in a firing to a battalion, entitled "*Wo bleibt Hauptmann Eberle?*" Eberle, the unit commander, had been hanging around the rear, and the leaflet reported a number of troubles in the battalion, but "Where is Captain Eberle?" He was kidded by his fellow officers afterwards. It helped to humanize the Allies as enemy and impress the Germans at how much was known about their behavior.

The half-dozen officers discuss and argue and reach agreement

on the principles of propaganda to be employed against the German troops over the long winter of Cassino. What had best be said to the enemy! Their principles, tested from day to day, come to form the doctrines that are authoritatively handed down to the several armies in the great campaigns of France later in the year. For better or worse. As we shall see.

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

Darling --

The nurse just left a little while ago and Kathy and I are left embarrassingly alone, like the principals of wedding, after the wedding. Actually, I am more lonely than fearful, for Kathy is sound asleep after her six o'clock feeding and even when she is awake she is far from a problem child. But this is one bad thing about having to lead one's life alone, for the time being. I get foolishly dependent on individuals who ordinarily would be quite irrelevant in the normal scheme of things, so that when a dog or a nurse leaves, or I suspect even when a plant withers away, I get quite fretful for a time. At least, I get stirred out of my ordinarily easy acceptance of things as they are. Right now I am smitten with the enormous responsibility that is mine for the silent little creature in the next room. It's the first time I've really felt how much depends on me. It's a lot easier on one's mind when they are safe inside of one. By tomorrow morning I'll be quite assured once more. One successful burping of the baby will probably set me straight again. And now I'm glad to have Cooney around. He is very sympathetic to me, though all hell on wheels when he gets outside. You probably wonder why I didn't get Mom to stay with me tonight. Well, I had to get used to being alone with the baby some time, and this is just as good a time as any.

I had a very hectic time downtown today, shopping with Bernice. I got a pair of black suede shoes and a small hat. I guess I'm not very greedy because right now I don't want to see any more new clothes until you come home. In the first place, clothes

these days are so damned expensive and not very becoming. Anyway, I'm not crazy about the shoes but they are the only pair at Saks, and God knows I must have tried them all on, that were ever reasonably comfortable. I certainly was cut out to be a barefoot girl. The hat is brown and you can't see it for the hair, like all my hats. Every year I get a hat like that and end up by losing it because it feels the same on as off, or vice versa. I ended up the tour -- I don't get enough pleasure out of being a consumer to call it a spree -- tight as a tick and loaded down with bundles. We had lunch at the Berghoff and I had too much of that divine dark beer before the waiter brought the potato pancakes. I am getting to be quite a beer fancier. It may be good for the nursing but it's sure hell on my sense of direction. I got on a street car at the IC and was damn near down to 47th before I discovered it wasn't the 55-51st car I'd snagged. Maybe I'm just losing my mind through natural causes. Two V-mails I'd sent you yesterday came back today because I'd forgotten to stamp them. I guess it's love, though mine is hardly the starry-eyed variety you find in the books. I feel like a raging yet baffled beast. As you once said, this thing is getting past discussion. It's ridiculous, appalling, an enormous cruel joke, and we can't do anything about it, not even kill the joker. But we'll be together soon, won't we darling? All my love --

Jill

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

My lovely Jill,

No sooner do I send my lament to the dreary heavens when God answers with two letters from you. So yesterday's plaint is today's content. Now I know all about you as of January 17 and 22, and now I know too that Kathy does cry. I am instructed and happy to hear that she sleeps practically a full night without disturbing you. Well I know that to awaken you in the black hours is to incur your undying enmity. With typical familial

perception she realized almost upon birth that great truth. I don't blame you for reproaching the Red Cross though I waited through the period in question with a dumblike faith, perhaps because half frozen most of the time, that everything would come along all right. Knowing now that some three weeks afterwards you were still staggering about, I realize that such assurance may have been more healthy than realistic. I wouldn't worry too much, dear Jill, about the lag in communication. Life has a sameness about it here which makes the time interval seem nothing at all. Everything from you is as fresh to me as the long-awaited spring to come. My only discommodation from the delay is that I want each letter to get to you before the previous one, since I am never quite sure I wrote that I loved you convincingly enough.

I found nothing disagreeable in your reasons on *[words missing on last lines]* knows, if I don't the influence *[words missing]* it is popcorn or war on misbehavior. Quoting my own environment is hardly justifiable. Granted we could know what it was, I can see elements in it which I regretted since and sought painfully to remove by self-education. I don't know what you thought I meant by the word "discipline" which to you may connote loud cries and beating. The positive acquiring of habits which are good is the greatest part of discipline. If a child is old enough to strew popcorn on the floor, he is old enough to pick it up. He needn't understand the principles of ethics and psychology involved. We can't say anything here, given the pain of writing lengthily on philosophy, but I'm very eager to have spirited and enjoyable discussions on it when you and I can be together. Everyone from Aristotle, to E. Post butts into the picture, and we could have a great time at it, until Sex butts in, at any rate. All this intellectualism may bore you, but, gad, we must amuse ourselves somehow between times, mustn't we?

You know what I'm doing now? sweating out a pot of tea with Foster. Foster is jumping up and down besides the stove watching the water begin to boil. It's very important, the process, to the British. They make a gay, childish fetish of it, towards which I feel very sympathetic.

Thurber's stories continue most entertainingly [*words missing*] I think it's called, done a most commendable job. The soldier likes them, the books are good, and everyone should be happy. It's too bad this wasn't done two years ago.

I am troubled by animal life again. Each morning before dawn, a mole comes digging up beneath me, piling great mounds of fresh earth about and into my shoes, knapsack and PX rations. A local clod told me the only way to catch him is to get up early, which I steadfastly refuse to do. However, one night when I was away, Dabinette almost got him. It seems Dabby swayed drowsily into the tent at the crack of dawn after a bout with some neighboring clansmen. He spotted this activity beneath my cot and after convincing himself it was neither the ground coming up to meet him nor the animal life for the DTs, he fired several wild shots at it. I'm still not sure he saw a mole, but since he missed my possessions as well as the animal or animals, I don't mind.

It shouldn't be long before I get pictures of both of you. I still use frequently the ones I have, though finding it difficult to believe that the girl in the pictures, so fair and so nice, could be with me as one being. You're becoming almost untouchable through absence.

I love you as ever, Jill. Many kisses to you and Kathy (or does modern child-rearing object?).

Yours,

Al

***JILL TO AL FEBRUARY ?[NO DATE], 1944***

My dearest --

Two letters from you today, the 21st and 23rd and I'll answer everything in them before I get on to the duller topic of my own

woes. I must defend myself against your charge of duplicity. Just because I was hungry did not mean I felt good. I can feel terrible and still be hungry at the same time. So can you. So can your daughter. (Well, I don't think she's felt very terrible yet but she's always hungry.) So there. I am not a liar, I am not, I am not.

Cooney went back North last night and I again blandly confess that I had no business having him here in the first place. But some day, I warn you, the lovers will be re-united. I shall take my patrimony and buy a farm far from children and taxicabs, and Cooney and I shall romp on the greensward, when you tire of making love to me and take up with your old mistress, the APSR.

Child-bearing has left no after-effects that I can observe. My figure is just the same as before, I think. The only way in which I differ is that I still would shy away from a man such as you, i.e., one with bad intentions. But I'll get over that before you come home.

Do you really like that wallet? That was the one I deprecated, to be distinguished from the first one I sent from Field's, that apparently got lost. But I'm glad you like it. I just thought it was a little too tricky for utility.

I interrupted this to talk to your mother. She's been mad at me because I didn't go North for Ed's birthday and because Cooney precipitously visited her at a late hour last night (via our laggard friend Steinbrecher who called on me last night and was given the honor of escorting Cooney northwards) and I was mad at her for being mad and I thought uncooperative. So I called her and had an amicable discussion to get me in a good mood to write you. If you can follow that. Life would be a lot easier if everybody weren't so damn much alike in this family. I get mad, you get mad, she gets mad. I appease easily, you appease easily, she appeases easily. It runs like a Latin verb book. The only difference among us is that the females lie awake at night and brood. You could, and have, gone to sleep after leaving me

forever, verbally, of course.

The reason I haven't written for a couple of days is that life has been a perfect rat race, with me the rat. Everybody has been dropping over and it's awfully bad for both the baby and me to have company at this stage. Now I've adopted the policy of not answering the phone or bell. Julie Hess was over Saturday afternoon. She is a bossy little bitch, spoiled and full of bad advice. She told me she didn't let her three-month old baby play with rattles because she wants him to be creative in his play. I pointed out that he'd probably end up masturbating, which shocked her. Yesterday Laura Berquist, Bill and Jerry Moritz descended upon me in a great cloud, like locusts. I really do like Bill, though, and changed my mind about his mother after she wrote a very cute letter sending those pictures we took Christmas day. The thing is that no matter when people come, the baby has to be fed. The only bad part about the baby is that she takes so long to feed, and Mrs. Thompson made no effort to break her of the habit. I'm trying to now -- it may have been she was too young before to experiment with. I just stop now after one hour has elapsed. I've also cut down her time on the breast, mostly, and a sad fact it is, because my milk supply is not as great as it was because of the mental anguish of the past few days. Anyway, when people are around her when she's fed I get distracted, or something goes wrong, because that is when she spits up. As I've said before, spit is just a manner of speaking. It comes out in a great parabola, and looks as if a Borden's truck had overturned. Gosh, don't ever think a husband is superfluous in the infancy stage. Even if you never lent a hand, and I presume you would, just having you around would make things easier. It's an awful thought that one is solely responsible for another's life. I keep thinking I might fall in a faint (though I've never fainted in my life) or take too many sleeping pills and then what would happen to the baby. As a result, I've left instructions with Bea and the back door unlocked most of the time, so she can pop in and see us. It would be helpful, too, for somebody to pick her up once in a while, for a change, instead of me. Every time I get started on something,

she has to be fed, diapered, or turned over. A husband would relieve one of the feeling of an inexorable fate. There, are those reasons enough for your terminating the war this very instant? Do you really think it will be this spring? You're so optimistic but I'm scared of being disappointed. But I guess I couldn't feel any more thwarted-in-love no matter what happened than I do now. The more I see of other people, the more I'm convinced I want to retreat into a little hut with you -- that I no longer have to see the world or any of its inhabitants because you are the world for me.

Oh, and the chief trauma of the day was the arrival of Hubert Nexon, now a Sgt. in the CO (AA) on the scene with his wife. They dropped over about noon. He had bumped into Dietz and she had told him about me. I double-dated with his wife and the Hess boys once. She is without [*doubt*] the bitchiest girl I have ever met. She hasn't a decent thing to say for anybody. With a woman like that he couldn't get to be a dogcatcher in Cicero. You may be pleased to hear all this. Personally, I have come to the conclusion that he is a pompous prick -- anybody who could stand a lacerating-tongued woman like that must be a prick, and he always was pompous. I got sore because she viciously attacked Rosable, even though I said repeatedly she was a good friend of mine. She also and inclusively criticized everybody else and then asked how much I paid to have the baby. Jesus, quel taste. Hubie is here on furlough. He's stationed at Camp Edwards. His wife's family live here. They are Hyde park people and she is the first one I've thought to apply the word kike to in a long time. On second thought, I take it back. I hate the word enough not to use it on anybody. She's a lady prick. Is that better?

I have to eat supper now and make formula. I wish I had more time to write you. The pace I'm living is ruining my style of writing but style, schmyle, I love you just the same and will try to be a good wife, if no Dotty Parker. In fact we both love you so much -- I'm sure there never was a man so well recommended to his daughter as you.

I told Kathy about the jeep being named after her too.

All my love -- Jill

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

Dearest Jill,

The new speedup mail system produced your letter of Jan. 25 two days ago. I'm only recovering now from the shock sufficiently to answer it. In it you mention my letter of Jan. 13 which is indeed a marvel of rapid communication. Yesterday I got letters from Buzz and Bill Evers and today an envelope of clippings from you. Bill has been having an easy time of it, so he says, and is nothing loathe to assume a more onerous job as in North Carolina somewhere. He is a captain now, you may know, which would seem to demand some attention from me towards climbing the promotion rung again. But one hardly ever notices those things around here, and if it comes now or some other time makes little difference though I would like you to have the increment in income. Am I laboring under an illusion that you have enough to get by on comfortably. If not I can send you some money out of January's pay which is jingling in my jeans. I am delighted to hear that Kathryn is prospering so, and would like to hear more about how you are getting along. I am disturbed to hear you were so weak even three weeks after the deed. You seem to be treating her properly and as every self-respecting infant should be treated. I was much interested in that fact about her falling to sleep while eating and not getting her fill all at once. Such patience you must have. I'm not quite sure I'm convinced that she reacts socially already, despite your strong evidence. Your extraordinarily sweet voice must tickle her ear-drums. I read a review of that Anna Freud book that seemed to make it out well, nothing revolutionary but very instructive in an intelligently stimulating way. I hope that by the time I get home, you'll be willing to let me pick her up and give her a kiss of my own. That ought to make her socially

conscious. Will I be the first man to kiss her? I am thinking of charging something for all these visiting firemen who want to go on tours. It's getting so that the people in the divisions don't expect to see me without that some new man from distant places is with me to ask questions and draw lessons for use elsewhere. Otherwise my work is proceeding normally and perhaps if it weren't for the new people who keep coming around, it would be boring.

Herz got a letter from Habe who says that he is anxious to get back to join us and is finding many at home difficult to get along with. I enjoyed your clippings from the Sun which appears more than ever to be a good paper, and Grafton to be the greatest of columnists. No one can pick out inconsistencies in behavior or policies better than he.

Our camp site is getting to resemble the city dog pound. Attracted by heat, light, food, and a number of other dogs, some most quaint specimens of dogdom have here assembled, to lift their voices in sweet harmony, to chase and bugger each other about, and to act as stumbling blocks on the road to Rome or the latrine as the case may be. The one that is at my feet tonight is a great, tawny beast, as ugly as Pluto's watchdog and twice as large. He doesn't know any of the people here but apparently one of the other dogs said it would be all right. I went in into Weaver's tent a few minutes ago and there was a big yellow bitch sprawled out on his cot, most comfortable, thank you. It's a plague, I tell you, black ones, brown ones, spotted ones, enough to drive a man to drink, save that one of the clumsier dogs kicked over the cognac bottle, spilling the contents.

We had two delicious meals today, roast beef in the noon meal and steak tonight with onions. The meat must have been frozen in America and was very tender. It doesn't take many meals like that in a week to solve the mess problem. With typical military skepticism everyone is waiting for the return to the spam what am. I read the funniest article recently in the Starts and Stripes in which the makers of Spam protested against its growing

unpopularity, saying that they sold a lot of "luncheon meat" to the army but no spam. They're so pathetic in the face of the rising tide of protest and the post-war outlook that the fact that they're not telling the truth isn't important. Millions of soldiers will cheer lustily as their ship goes down. One of my fondest dreams is to be "helping" you cook some food we really want to eat some day. You would shudder at the abuses that are heaped on the fair name of fried bacon as you conceive of it.

Did you ever get those maps from Buzz? I'm glad you like the olive tree drawing. The artist gave that to me for befriending him, which amounted mostly to giving him cigarettes and being friendly. Very simple but he was an appreciative, sensitive soul. I'll be looking for something different as I wind my way painfully northward. I do hope the pace accelerates soon, for our sake as well as that of the rest of the world. There is so much to be done afterwards that it is a shame to waste so much time finishing off the preliminaries. And I don't mean to imply a criticism of what is being done, because only when you are right in the middle of it do you realize what a labor it is. If only we could use to full advantage our great mechanized power on the ground.

I guess it's time to stoke up our fire and get to bed. The light isn't too good around here for staying up very late in order to read and write. You can put that down as a possible reason for deficiencies of quantity and quality in my letters if you are of the opinion that they exist. I like you always feel incompetent to get as close as I would like to you via the mails. I think we have done as good a job of that as possible, though. But if all of this were over, I would defy anyone to find a happier set of people. I have never felt a doubt that you are most wonderful. My chief doubt now is whether I can keep myself from having the shakes when I am with you again. I love you, as always, and Kathie too.

AI / AI

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

Jill, my dear Love -

Nothing at all unusual happened today, but that, of course, doesn't mean I don't want to bend your ear with l'amour. I saw the same many acres of devastated country, ate three meals, heard the usual artillery serenade, thought fond things about you, and frittered away some time on a fire since the day and last night were around freezing which may seem tame to Chicago but is damned cold here. I actually got into a mild snow storm this afternoon. The mountains are all capped with snow again and looked very pretty in the distance. Just before dinner I had a few minutes to spare which I devoted to the painful task of burning up all letters not of Jillaic origin. I dislike losing all of the boys' bright remarks of the past months as well as those of everyone else, but I'm afraid that the only ones I shall be able to carry around are yours. I took pleasure in dealing with one from Walter which had escaped its proper fate by some accident. You may think it's silly to keep letters but I feel in many cases grateful to people who are affectionate enough to write and make a conscientious effort to write well like Ed most of the time does.

I'm reading a book of short stories by William March whom I have discovered to be a hitherto unknown source of morbid and pessimistic tales. They don't make me happy and I don't like them very much, but he has a certain amount of strange originality. One or two at a time are sufficient and I will then listen to a soldier named Kinney play his accordion. He is also a strange boy, sensitive despite six years in the infantry. He was wounded in Sicily. The other evening I had to go to town on a job and spent part of the evening in the company of several guys named Reynor, Vernon, Howard, and a girl named Ellige, all of them British. All of the men are among the cognoscenti on Italy. Howard is a brother of Hubert Howard of Sicily days (incidentally they are sons of the former Brit. ambassador to U.S. and Italy, I believe, and not sprung from Leslie). Elizabeth Ellige is an intelligent competent woman who managed to get

sent out a couple of months ago to the base and thence to Italy. It's the kind of job you would have liked to get if you could have had your cake and eaten it. With perhaps a couple of exceptions she is the only civilian girl in these parts. I told her, and she agreed, that if the reason for sending her out was because of the manpower shortage, it was silly. That's just a gag, because the men around the place don't kill themselves working. Witness our friends Stern, Rathburn, and others. As is evident, I still bear a grudge against women in the theater of operations, and because I believe I can't help it if I think in paradoxes.

A guy named Barney, a cut fellow with a black mustache and beret wants to use the typewriter and I have said what little I have to say, except that I wish you were around to see and feel how much I love you. I should be getting yours and Kathie's pictures soon, shouldn't I. And, by the way, darling, how are her names to be spelled, Kathie or -ey, Gail or Gale. I don't like Gale very much. Too outré. Many kisses to both of you in all your spinstery splendor.

Al

***AL TO JILL FEBRUARY 8, 1944***

Dear 601

Please forgive my addressing my agent so caressingly, but I think I've seen enough of this cloak-and-dagger business not to fall head over heels in love with anyone. That your number should be up is my great good fortune plus some shrewd guessing as to the face behind the mask. Now before the censor and the FBI are both after you, it behooves my mad jealousy to reveal that we are married, yea, one and inseparable. And especially after seeing those photos from Christmas are we inseparable. You are most lovely, darling. Several men here were incredulous when the significance of the date was explained to them. When I think that now you are if

anything in finer form, great gobs of froth pour forth and my eardrums sound like thunder with the pounding of my temples. Being a simple soul, which means being contented with small joys when larger ones can't be had, I'll manage to bear up under the increased blood pressure for a little while longer now that Kathy came out so well.

Your descriptions of her feeding problems are most vivid and interesting. I'm sure there is nothing I can add in the way of comment, except perhaps to burp out of sympathy with the little one. That's the trouble these days. You have the monopoly on the most important news story of all time for me and yet I must write something. Naturally now I feel as barren as a League of Nations correspondent does. Maybe I could discuss all the Dogs around the place, but even there you have a much more newsworthy object in Cooney. And I'm not friends with any dog like you are friends with Cooney (if not more than friends).

Mrs. Thompson seems to be the proper sort of nurse to have around the house, capable, energetic, and responsible. Does she think the house is like a doll's house because of its size or its furnishings?

About her name, let's call her Kathryn. The boys like Gail because that was the name of Flash Gordon's girl. And thank you very much for thinking about me and the news clippings even while in the hospital and under duress vile.

In response to your comments, I just haven't been able to wash my back properly since leaving your tender care. And I don't think that that will be the only time your legs will be grabbed in days to come. The question put better is when won't they be grabbed. Ah, the crises to come, water all over the place, whipping towels, slamming doors.

It may have been today, it may have been a week ago (why should we let the censor know?), we were doing some test firing on a 155 mm. Howitzer against a mountain near here. Three shots went whizzing past our position where we were observing

the bursts when suddenly a truck burst into view, careening down the road with four serious pale faces looking to all sides as it came. The driver screeched to a halt next to us, and then all of a sudden they began to realize what was happening. They thought the Germans had counterattacked and that they were in a hell of a spot. They had been working near the mountain and these shells roared at them like express trains. They waited out one, then two, still incredulous, then they went like hell. One of the officers in the group from the artillery battalion told us he had found a surrender leaflet folded in the hand of a German soldier who was missing most of his chest from another 155 shell. The title of the leaflet was, truthfully enough, "Now things will really be in earnest."

Besides your letters of January 9, 11 and 26 today, I got a letter from Dad the day after Kathryn was born and a note from Gosnell with a Christmas card. Dad had fun listing all the books that he received around the time of your confinement. You never have said what you think of the Encyclopedia which is full of nice pictures like you draw. Especially touching are your dog and children drawings. Your self-portraits leave something to be desired.

If you are curious about the liquor situation over most of occupied Italy at present, it is this. The only hard drinks practically anywhere are not so good Cognac and a cherry brandy, not too good either. Wine is not plentiful but can be gotten. Its price is around 125 Lire the liter, outrageous for Italy. The cognac cost 500 Lire the liter which is also a gyp. In Sicily the prices are somewhat better in the cities, much better in the country. Wherever the armies go, the prices go up, nothing is to be had, and the liquor gets worse. The other day quite a few of the boys gave their blood to a hospital nearby and in return got a shot of whiskey. My blood type unfortunately is not in demand (B), although the cook, who has the same type, got in for the drink of whiskey.

Next morning.

I am always a non-dreamer or a non-conscious dreamer, but lately I've been wishing that I'd dream about you, and sure enough last night, to fulfill my patent desire to remain asleep and yet remain warm, I dreamt that we were in bed together, no fuss or feathers, no great action or plot, just the warmly delicious fact. If I could only do that every night, I'd beat this old winter.

Many kisses to you both, darling. I hope that before long I can rejoin you just as vividly as in the dream. We have a lot of winters to beat still.

Always your,

Al / Al

***JILL TO AL FEBRUARY 9, 1944***

Sweetheart -- Tuesday

I'm writing this in the kitchen, where I've transferred my base of operations, i.e. radio & Kathy. The latter is here because she keeps kicking off her covers & I have to keep my eye on her. I'm here because I just finished a big wash, to the accompaniment of Bob Hope et al. Thank goodness for radio comics. Corny as they are, they make the long winter etceteras tolerable. I don't see why I need a four-room apartment. I spend all my time in the kitchen, baby's room & john. I got another V-mail from you today, again Jan. 23. Gosh I must have complained a lot. Again, don't give my piteous outcries a second thought. By the time you receive them I have new troubles & the old ones have dissipated. Think of all the fun we can have when we're together again, laughing at our past woes. I guess no trouble is really trouble unless it lasts. Like now, life is holy terror. But once Kathy's on a 6 to 6 schedule, i.e. when she no longer requires a 10 o'clock bottle (i.e. at 4 months, I think), I'll have more time. So I must beg your indulgence. If I don't write as much now as I have in the past, it really is because I don't have a minute, & not

because I'm lazy, forgetful or don't love you. Writing you is my greatest pleasure, really. When I go to bed at night I think of so many things to tell you it takes me forever to get to sleep. And I find myself talking to you constantly all day long. That probably accounts for the number of things I drop or spill all day long. If I didn't know better, I'd think I had tertiary syphilis.

Kathy is having one of her wakeful spells. This is a good time for her to have it because it means she's sleepy after the 10 feeding but since it means she usually ends up crying (for about an hour now she's been cooing and muttering in her beard) it kind of interferes with my writing. Since this is the only time I can write you, it kind of louses things up.

I've tried to get as many things done outside as possible. I send her diapers out. The diaper wash also accepts 5 pounds of her white clothing but that still leaves a lot of wash for me to do. I had a cleaning woman but she's had flu since Xmas. I don't understand how women can do this year in & year out unless they're very much in love. And most married people don't seem to be, at least the way we are. Aside from sure passion, which we hold together in an extraordinary degree, I find you all I need in the way of intellectual stimulation. And since a woman with a young baby doesn't have time for reading or company (last night the Kerners dropped over & I wouldn't even let them in - I told them the baby was sick, a big lie) what does she do if she's married to a dope? I guess that's why so many women are dopey, I suppose, & why the soap opera flourishes as an art form.

(You can understand why my handwriting quavers, with Red Skelton in one ear & Kathy's screams in the other.)

So although I don't have you to talk to in person, I have the comfort of an intelligent listener in my imaginary conversations.

Kathy has developed long black eyelashes like yours. A source of wonder and joy to me who have been virtually eyelashless these many years. Even Hubert & his bitchy wife said she was

beautiful, unsolicited. Well, she looks like you. Aren't you proud of your potent genes? She has a loud voice, though. I don't know where she gets that from --

I have to go now - her feeding time. I love you with all my heart.

Jill

***JILL TO AL FEBRUARY 10, 1944***

Sweetheart --

Another busy day, made quite tolerable by two V-mails from you, the 26th and 29th. In the latter you were just about to disagree with me about the universal conscription bill when you were cut off. I guess even the post office won't allow our essential harmony be interfered with. I do hope I get the second half, though. God, darling, I too wish we could be walking together, in lovely pastoral scenes. Chicago right now is far from lovely and pastoral. We're having the first blizzard of the season. It's been a very dry winter so far, and January was unusually mild. You can see by the pictures I'm sending. In one half of the roll, taken one day, I was quite comfortable with just a dress on outside. They were taken with the nurse's camera and aren't too good in the closeups. It's a shame it isn't really summery out so you could see more of the baby. She has to be so bundled up for outdoor shots in this weather, and the indoor ones aren't very successful.

Kathy is very well, thank you, and I kiss her all the time, for you, for me, and just for luck. And she has luck, thank goodness, and needs it because I discovered to my horror that she can flip herself around today. I put her on the bed for a minute and you guessed it, she flipped off. I called the doctor right away and he told me not to worry. It happens all the time, at least once in every baby's life. She's perfectly all right or I wouldn't be telling you this. She took her feeding right afterwards and was full of gurgles and giggles all afternoon. It gave me rather a start,

though, not to mention her chagrin at first. The bed is only a foot or so from the floor and the doctor said they can fall a lot further than that without anything happening. Needless to say, from now on I strap her down when she isn't in her basket or crib. She's getting so big that I'll have to dispense with the basket altogether pretty soon. It's a great convenience now, though, because I can wheel her around the house and keep my eye on her when she's awake and kicking. I guess my telling you all this is in the same class of shamed confession as your telling me when you lose at cards.

The maid came in today, thank goodness. She's had flue, which was the reason for her disappearance for so long. I tried to show her how to use the washing machine and it was a holy horror because she is completely incapable of learning anything. And since I can hardly get the thing to work myself, it was a very unsuccessful and frustrating session. I guess I'll have to send the stuff out, which sounds easy on the face of it, except that 1) the laundryman doesn't like coming because once he met Cooney 2) the laundry likes to keep a sheet or two as a pourboire 3) they don't like to, and won't, iron anything. Ah domesticity, ah wilderness.

I hope you're right about the essential weakness of Germany. Christ they're fighting like devils, which you know better than I. I can't help but be discouraged, with spring so close and you so far away still. If you could only get a leave. I think I'd settle for that very transitory piece of happiness if only I could see and hold you again. It's been so damn long, almost a year now, and every day seems harder to bear than the one before. I think a lot now of the first days of the separation, and how calm I was then. I guess I was so tangled up in the mechanics of living and Herz's car that I couldn't look ahead to this. There was my stomach and the baby and Herz's carburetor and the problem of where to spend each night until I got back to the Chicago. I couldn't even look ahead far enough to realize I would ever get large and pregnant. I even went ahead blithely in New York and bought a couple of dresses, size 12. You wondered why I didn't write much then. I was stunned, busy with inconsequentials and

too unimaginative to look ahead to this. And I probably had some unconscious resentment, which only Freud could have plumbed, against you and a world that had left me with a whoopsy feeling and a wheezy car. But I wasn't too numb to treasure, as I treasure now, that early morning goodbye in front of the MP gates, and the way you patted my face, the last thing you did. But at least we still have the hope we can make a world together again. I suppose a lot of people don't even have that. Kathy is wonderful and healthy and amusing in spots, but she couldn't exactly take your place.

I really must stop writing these lugubrious letters. I have to read nothing but S. J. Perelman from now on. I finished that book by Flaubert last night (in between one late feeding and another -- it didn't seem worthwhile to go to sleep) and it threw me into a fit of depression. He certainly was a master of portraying unpleasant people and grand frustrations.

I have to go now. The baby wants her evening meal. It's 9 but I guess she's hungry.

I love you with all my heart.

Jill

I'm sending 4 pictures in this letter, 4 in another.

***AL TO JILL FEBRUARY 10, 1944***

Darling Jill,

I'm sure no one in the Fifth Army got a better letter than I did today. It was your three-page air mail of Jan. 28 and I found it beyond all praise. I squirmed sympathetically with you when you described the embarrassment and confusion of changing the baby's clothing at the doctor's, so vivid was the picture and so well do I know you. And I am almost beginning to believe what you say about all her virtues. If she actually does the things

which you describe she must be most extraordinary. If she can take the cod liver oil, there is no hope for us - she's terrific. Your description of all her activities goes down in the annals of fine literature, literature that is here to stay, at least in my kit bag. You didn't do so badly on yourself either. I was very happy that you are apparently well, resuming your provocative figure, and have bought a striped dress with buttons down the front. I like dresses with buttons down the front, if only for the things they are capable of. I get your point completely on the difference between labor and other pains. Why not say between destructive and constructive pains? Or is that reducing some great emotion to the level of logical distinction? About Cooney, I feel as if he might be too much to handle, too, with the baby around. When will I get a picture of this fantastic infant?

It's raining now and steadily. Looks like a couple of murky days ahead. I got off a letter last night to Ed. I'm several more behind still. I enjoyed Ann and Paul's letters. I enjoy thinking as you do, that we might spend some pleasant times at their new place and the California environs in general. I don't know that I'll want to do a great deal of rushing around when I get back for a while. I haven't even seen your doll's house yet, even though you may be familiar enough with it to leave it for a while. I imagine it'll take me some time to regroup, reorganize, reequip and to breathe some free air. You can count me out of any specific plans until the war is won. I'm not worried about not enjoying myself "here" rather than "there" inside America. I am concerned about getting to America first and that's enough. Though things are slowed up here temporarily, the air raids go on apace, and by this time next month the Russians should be inside East Prussia as well as in the rest of Russia.

I'm glad you liked the pictures I sent you. I certainly gaped at yours that arrived a couple of days ago. Kathy should be grateful to be raised amongst such charming, intelligent and handsome company. Only sheer perversity could make her be dull and ordinary. The second trio of photos I didn't send because they were very dark and unintelligible. I took a picture of some Italian pack mules climbing an incredible slope at the

front but the slope in the picture seemed tame and [in?] comparison.



Italian Army mule train carrying supplies and munitions up the mountain behind Monte Cassino.

We built ourselves a bar in the ground floor of this farmhouse that would put to shame Old Heidelberg, Ye Olde Pub and any other tavern I've ever seen. Hardly any work was necessary. You walk into it from the barnyard. It is an arched doorway, of two large heavy wood doors swinging inwards rustily. Inside, there are two rooms, hardly separated save for a great simple and beautiful stone arch, which divides the two for the senses. In the first room are chairs and a long table, an opening cut in the form of a narrow rectangle to let in light and air, and a stove set directly beneath the arch. A radio is set on a box in one corner. The whole appearance of both rooms with amplexness and high ceilings, their thick stone walls and simple arches and beams suggests age, permanence, solid non-bellicosity. Through the single, great archway, you can see three immense barrels laying on the crusty stone floor. Any of the tree is a heavy load for a donkey and cart. They are, unfortunately, empty. Above them and behind them are two more of the small vents in the thick walls. To the left as you enter is the bar, a few old pieces of timber hammered together, chest high, behind which are located the miscellaneous bottles which are purchasable at the moment. The bar creaks and groans as four or five people lean on it together. Drinks are dispensed by the first sergeant and, when he isn't around, by whatever officer is thirsty. They are signed for on the honor system with the result that within three weeks everyone has been assessed three times. Since the liquor is general[ly] unfit to be called such and

you can't wander off the reservation, it is usually easy to tell who has sold his honor for a pint by the absurd behavior immediately thereafter ensuing. To complete the picture of the place, which also serves as an officers' mess, I ought to mention the sawed-off half of a barrel which makes a fine cocktail table opposite the bar (though "Duke" Ellington uses it principally to collapse on), and the large number of spider webs draped about the wooden beams which form the ceilings. As a perfect last touch, the bit that makes our tavern all that the fireproofed hay couldn't make the Connecticut barn in *So Little Time*, there is a great rat that peeps with sinister eye at the careless drinkers below, and several times an evening scampers across the beams, only a long tail to show to the startled men when they finally look up. We've spent some good evening there. We are generally musical. We have a capella singing, tonette ensembles, accordion solos and duets with the ocarina, and radio music. We listen to our own radio frequently.

Later in the evening: The weather has turned into a misery, lots of chilling rain. I feel thankful for little things like being alive, not soaking wet, having a comfortable place to bed down, and otherwise feeling mean and vicious. Earlier, there was one of those fruitless and exasperating "councils" with which must be infested this life. In all my life I have never enjoyed conferences. Men are so helpless in facing problems, they are so abysmally ignorant of themselves and so fear and hate having any petty weakness exposed, that I sometimes feel man's sojourn on earth will end with him scarcely a step above his original state. To the extent to which men bluff, glamorize, and sentimentalize themselves and their environment do they expose their weakness, inexperience and incapacity. I hate the false booster spirit that they weave like a cloak around themselves. Their mutual fur-stroking perpetuates and propagates themselves. Their numbers have cursed our society.

But I shouldn't go into this any more when I want you only to know how much I love you and the simple idea that your daughter is also mine. Many kisses, darling. Al

**JILL TO AL FEBRUARY 11, 1944**

Sweetheart -

Here is the other half of the latest roll. Ain't I quaint?

A great blizzard is raging but neither wind, sleet nor etc. stays this etc. I wish I could say the same for the Diaper Wash man. Here we are diaperless & he has not yet made his appointed rounds. Ah woe. I'll try to get this out to you while she is still asleep.

Muchos love.

OOOXXX

Jill

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

Sunday -- My only darling --

I am writing this with the radio blasting my teeth out. To think that I used to complain about the DeGrazia predilection for a loud and continuous performance: the sad truth is that in the past three days (during which, I regretfully add, I haven't had time to write you) your little darling has turned overnight from tiny to medium-sized baby. Which means she has a profound yen for society. At first I thought it was gas. But now I realize she wants to be entertained. Mom was here for the weekend and fulfilled that function admirably, but now I must (a) unspoil her and probably make her an insecure 57th St. neurotic; (2) amuse her myself (3) find a more or less adequate substitute. Right now she is listening entranced to the Great Glide sleeve, a program not particularly to my taste. Its only virtue is that it precedes Jack Benny. Oh yes, it also tonight contained the definitive war shortage remark. Glidy went into a store for some Valentine chocolates wrapped in red ribbon. The clerk said, "Sorry, Mr. Gildersleeve, red satin ribbon has gone to war."

Kathy has just gone to sleep. Now I can turn the radio down. As a matter of fact, I take a kind of naive delight in keeping it up loud. The hysterical German refugees upstairs, who on three occasions have told me to (1) stop hammering; (2) stop barking; (3) tone down "Information Please" have an eight-year old son who is taking increasingly to practicing his clarinet in the afternoons. Even to my non-musical ear it is an experience comparable to the water cure or biting into a wormy apple. Especially since I spend the hours between 3 and 5 in the afternoon trying to snatch, usually unsuccessfully, a bit of the sleep I don't get at night. Incidentally, my whole trouble is not Kathy so much as an inability to sleep as soon as I hit the sheets. If I could do that, I could get enough sleep, baby or no. But as of old, as you may well recall, I have to go through several volumes of Gibbons before unconsciousness mercifully creeps up on me. I really think this is an enduring vestige of childhood behavior. Somewhere I was reading (the Chicago Sun no doubt, that fount of all misinformation) that children really have a much harder time to get to sleep than adults, and one shouldn't expect them to go to sleep as soon as they are put to bed. They are too eager to see life to sleep. I guess I'm sort of the same way. The reason I don't sleep, which I've tried to explain to amateur psychiatrists and one or two doctors, is not that I worry, I just think so damn much. Most of the time I'm writing a long mental letter to you.

Anyway, to return to Kathy, she is developing a vociferous and somewhat appalling, to me, social awareness. She will always respond now when she's spoken to. But along with the laughter and gurgles, just as every silver lining has a cloud, come the tears. I have discovered, after a very tough week, that babies cry for a variety of reasons: 1) they are hungry (she only cries before a feeding, for this reason); 2) They are dropped (just once). 3) They have gas (she doesn't often because I valiantly burp her as often as she will burp. This is a chore that makes feeding not as pleasant a task as it might be). 4) They have just had a bowel movement and are tired of sloshing around in it. 5. (not often) they have been awake for quite a while in a good

mood and they're tired of it. Then they cry themselves to sleep. 6) They have been asleep for quite a while and wake up, and are sore about it. Interrelated with these last two reasons is, of course, the desire for attention. Right now she is crying after having been awake after a feeding for a half hour or so. She may either have had crapped or is just bored. Search me, I'll have to search her first. She also hiccups a good deal. All of this keeps me very busy answering questions I pose myself, and doing something about it. But she is still not a crying baby in anybody's language. Mom herself is amazed at how readily she gives up the battle and goes to sleep. Mom incidentally is a very nice grandmother. She is not full of bad advice in the traditional stereotype, freely admitting that she's forgotten a lot and people do things differently now. She came down yesterday at noon and left this afternoon. It was swell to have her. I felt so much more at ease, even though, after Mrs. Thompson's training, I'm really better equipped to handle the baby than she is. It's just nice to have somebody to hare one's questions with, and to take over in an emergency. Yesterday evening, after I had nursed her, I started to cool off the bottle which had been heating in very hot water. Naturally it exploded in my face. That wouldn't have been so bad except that it was the last bottle and I had to make formula that very minute. It was nice to have Mom take over the baby, who was sore and puzzled about the whole thing.

I made an interesting and original supper tonight -- left-over spinach chopped fine with garlic, baked in cream with an egg topping it. I shall call it Spinach a la Bete Noire, after Cooney. Like him it looked a lot better than it tasted.

I got three more startling phone calls in the past three days. Polly Hart who is in town, Earl Johnson (I don't know why that startled me but it did) -- he is going to Puerto Rico to organize some social science study at their university -- and of all people, Virginia Stern, who is in town on business. She said she couldn't tell me the business until she saw me. I naturally have mixed emotions about seeing her. I know I wouldn't call her if I were in new York, where she's living now. Yet I'd like to talk to

her about the news from overseas. I guess she's coming out next week. Generally I have been discouraging people from visiting me in these parlous times. Mac called the other day and I flatly refused to let her and Syb come over, even though I found a black hat -- very becoming -- around the house which I suspect belongs to one of them. I hope they don't think I'm just holding out on the hat. Perish forbid.

While I was listening to Jack Benny before, I addressed a lot of V-mails to you. I find one of the things that stand in the way of my writing, besides sheer lack of time, is the nasty mechanics of addressing and stamping these damn things. Now I have a whole week's supply and every time I have a minute and a good thought, I can just bat it out to you without going through the old rat race. Smart, ain't I?

I have been drinking so much beer lately that now I am sorry you don't have brewing connections; I'm under the happy delusion that it's good for the milk, of which I don't have much. But I keep trying anyway. Here's the end and I still love you.  
OOOXXX Jill

Kathy still has black hair and curly eyelashes.

**JILL TO AL FEBRUARY 15, 1944      V-MAIL**

Sweetheart --      Tuesday

Two nice V-mails from you today, a pair each of the 31st and Feb. 2nd. I hope my mail is reaching you as rapidly. I think that breaches in the flow of mail from me to you is caused by the fact that I have sent a lot of Air Mail and that doesn't get to you as fast as this kind. From now on, unless I have clippings or photos to send, I'll use V-mail.

I was interested and pleased about your remarks in re Ed. I think everybody, from Mom to me, is beginning to recognize just what a gem he really is. In the past year he has matured

tremendously. Not that he always wasn't a fine young boy, having the qualities he has now, but right now he is quite the man of the family. I wish there was some way I could help his intellectual development, but aside from urging him to take the scholarship exams in April there is little I can do. He is going to take them anyway. But he realizes that he may be drafted and that puts a different light on his academic activities. Furthermore he is surrounded, apparently, by a bunch of deadhead teachers at Lakeview. The one he has been consulting about the U. of C. told him that she didn't think he would make the scholarship because a really smart girl (get that) from Lakeview took them and failed. I was indignant, naturally. You know, Al, if he really wants to go to college under his own steam and not go through the ASTP mill, and if he doesn't get a scholarship, I think we might finance him. I'm getting my money this month and will have plenty of loose cash. I hadn't planned to touch any of it until you came home, but this is different. If you agree with me, I think we ought to pay the tuition bill outright and not have any of this business of a loan.

Incidentally, my birthday is the 24th, not the 12th. That was Lincoln. Thanks for the compliment, though. And you were close -- it is a multiple of 12. Daisy is coming out next week, from Tuesday through Saturday. I'm very disappointed she can't stay longer, but she has to return to that a-hole husband of her. The man is absolutely neurotic about his dependence on her. She wrote she is bringing a lot of papers for me to sign, in reference to the estate. It's funny -- for a long time, from my seventeenth summer on, I thought I never could wait until I was old enough to get my money, and that by the time I did get it, I would be too old to enjoy it. And now that I have it, I'm completely bored and disinterested with the whole matter. Maybe I was right -- I am too old to enjoy it now. More likely, my table of the goods of life doesn't at the moment include thirteen thousand dollars, or whatever it is. I'm sure I don't know what I'm going to do with it for the time being, besides paying off my school debts to Paul and Day. I suppose I ought to invest it in something spectacular, but I really couldn't stand the emotional

strain of trying to make money. What do you think I should do, dear? I'd like to just leave it in a savings account and/or buy war bonds. I haven't got the time, self-assurance or inclination to become a lady Rothschild or Baruch.

We got a lot of mail yesterday from miscellaneous people we know in common. Juni King wrote a long rambling account of her activities as a homemaker, Spanish learner and election official at the NLRB run-offs at Douglas (in which the CIO lost, I think). She is still the same self-improving, restless June. But I can see now why women get that way, although I don't have the same background of insecurity that Juni has. Baby-tending is damn dull, no matter how lovely the baby, how winsome her smile, how startling the resemblance between father and daughter. Figure there are five hours a day in which you don't do anything but just hold a bottle or hold her at the breast. Oh yes, and another half hour spent shoveling in the orange juice, with a little silver trowel used by these acid-puckered lips in her infancy. And then there are the innumerable changes, mopping ups and rinsing of white clothing. What I'm trying to say is that it isn't bad, it's just intolerably dull when you finally come to the end of it all about midnight and have to go to bed alone. I could do a lot more without particularly minding it -- after all, I do have a cleaning woman, a diaper service, which most people don't have -- and probably stand it, if only there was you to reward my labors and agitate my mind. I can honestly say, however, that I have never once thought of breaking the monotony with anyone else but you. Though I admit I have succumbed to a relatively minor vice in the form of Pabst Blue Ribbon (Groucho's sponsor). And the vast multitude of men, women and children who seemed to take up my time during pregnancy don't interest me any more. I simply don't have the energy to carry on a conversation unless I'm really interested in it, which never was the case in my social days. Now I talk to Bernice when I feel like talking, or I just shut up. Oh yes, I spend quite a lot of time and wind burbling to the baby. One can hardly classify these outpourings of loving epithets and invectives as conversation, though. I think I achieved the prize baby name some time ago,

when she was giving me one of those pushed-out-leave-me-alone-I-want-to-sleep mouths, so characteristic of a certain party whose name I care not to mention. "Little Alfredtina." Doesn't that make you writhe?

And back to the letters, I got one from Liz that made me very sad, although it was written in a splendid courageous tone. She's just waiting around New River, in a lousy hotel room, even as I did at Newport News. Bill is due to be shipped to the So. Pacific any day. Then Liz goes back and has her now-close baby in Boston. It makes me cry when nice people get bad deals, and this is one. Why I'm even better off than she. At least you'll be coming home sooner than Bill, and the chances of your being captured and/or horribly treated are less. And knowing how I felt the last month -- lonely, clumsy and inadequate -- I know how much harder it is for her to leave Bill than it was for me to say goodbye to you when I was only a month pregnant. I guess Bill is, in a way, glad to be seeing some action. I can only speak for Liz in my indignation and sorrow. And for some reason, I feel more affectionate and protective towards her than to almost any other girl I've ever known, possibly because she presents the phenomenon of an intelligent yet extremely unsophisticated woman. She's not tough like Joan and me (and Bernice, I might add) and I hope she never gets to be. Not that we aren't ladies, on the surface. Oh damn! More tomorrow. I have a little headache now. (No, not Kathy). I love you. J.

Darling --

I just signed off at the end of page two, complaining of mal de tête, but decided I'd go on if I didn't have to listen to the sound of the typewriter. If I ever get time, I'd like to see both Borgese & Earl. This is lovely snowy yet warm weather for walking. I wish I could leave her long enough to prowl around our old haunts. I got as far as 57th St. this morning (the mail was here) & then had to come back to feed her. I love walking fast, with my arms free of bundles or baby. I sent Capt. Heycock that Life story. A friend of mine from Esky, now proofreading at Time, got it for me.

Back to letters, I got one also from Mildred Danenburg [Dannenberg], very sweet & inconsequential. I think I'm doing nobly, carrying on your social-political life for you. No, I really don't expect any medals. All I want is you. Stop writing such nice letters. Maybe I won't be so single-minded in desiring you then. My handwriting is awful, isn't it. I love you,

Jill

***AL TO JILL FEBRUARY 15, 1944(A) V-MAIL***

Dearest Love,

Nothing new and the same old love and desire runs rampant, as it always does when I can't spend my hours in a great fury of activity. I wish I could seek you out tonight instead of sitting coldly and damply, contemplating the cloudy night, the mud-swept scene and the same paling companions. They must feel the same way; I know they do. There must be a great love to let one live with other people to the exclusion of others. I know I could do it with you even more than I've done it in the past; you've scarcely lost your appeal and virtues in retrospect and via correspondence. They have the same pleasant, obsessing appeal to mind and body, making you not only my mental pin-up girl, but also my choice to be stuck in a fox-hole with or in bed with during an air raid. And even a priori and solely from your writings, you are my choice as mother of my child. You would hardly say that we have differences in raising her, if you know how completely happy and secure I am to have her entirely in your hands and under your personality influences. I haven't the courage to go about telling everyone of the marvelous things Kathie is capable of at such an early age. There are several reasons: I don't like to excite envy; the insensible and inexperienced ones wouldn't appreciate the facts, they might put down your solemn truths as the expected ravings of the parent in that sort of good-natured, patronizing manner usually employed. I am not at all skeptical. I don't see what is so

unusual and extraordinary in our having a marvelous child. I wish you would tell me whether she has brown or blue eyes, or can't you tell for sure even yet.

I hear sounds of music coming from below, apparently Manning playing the accordion. He is the most wonderful British music-hall type, black hair and mustache, heavy, with a flashy smile and a great repertoire of card tricks, nostalgic songs, and amusing powers of description in a Lancastershire accent.

Rome again has that far-away look about it, doesn't it. I'm not so sure that the Germans won't crack with a resounding bang, though, despite the lack of movement of the past couple of days. But at any rate the rest of the par proceeds apace, and each pace is a pace towards home and you. I had a rather frigid bath yesterday, nothing like those fine steamy occasions of time past. I find it hard to convince myself that I really need one under these conditions. One impelling occurrence was the acquisition of scabies by a couple of our people. They itched and scratched all over the place until they had to go on sick call and get a lot of ointment to encase themselves in.

My Time magazines are coming in nicely, and they are well worth whatever effort you employed to subscribe. The Chicago Daily News subscription isn't coming in at all, and might as well be abandoned, if you can do it gently. I'm reading a good book called Ministry of Fear which you'd love.

All love and kisses to you and Kathie, dearest.

Al

**O**NE day near the middle of February, the combat propaganda officers are called together by Lt. Col. Weaver who explains that Fifth Army HQ has finally determined to bomb the Monastery, to wipe it off the face of the map, with a great air and artillery bombardment. Afterwards, the infantry will attack and capture Monastery Hill. The

officers are impressed. Who would not want to see this bottleneck at Cassino blown open.

They do have doubts. De Grazia, for one, disbelieves the intelligence that is supposed to lay behind this decision. So far as the bombing is concerned, he does not know enough about the limitations of air bombardment to dispute whether a bombing, if heavy enough, must really wipe out the usefulness of the Abbey to the enemy. Yet the prospect occurs that troops can fight from behind rubble as well as or better than they can out of windows. He has not seen any action from the windows, for that matter, nor is there any consensus of the divisional intelligence officers on this account. He has argued, both on aesthetic grounds and on military grounds, but mildly and circumspectly, with artillery officers who want to open fire on the Abbey. Nor has Herz brought back from the interrogation of German prisoners any evidence that other German troops are fighting from or are even present, resting or observing, in the Abbey; yet Herz is known to get amazing confessions from his prisoners; furthermore, he talks to the military interrogators regularly; no word from them, either.

Our Man's advice is not being asked at this point. He is expected to help prepare a leaflet to be fired into the Abbey, telling the Italian civilians hiding there to get out lest they be gravely endangered by an impending action. No help is to be promised them in fleeing; no instructions are to be given; the Germans are not to be accused outright of occupying the premises; no indication of the nature of the threatened action is to be given. The leaflet is drafted in English. A deliberately vague wording is managed: the Germans have known how to use the Monastery.

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*ITALIAN FRIENDS*

*WATCH OUT!*

*We have until now been especially careful to avoid shelling the Monte Cassino monastery. The Germans have known how to benefit from this. But now the fighting has swept closer and closer to its sacred*

*precincts. The time has come when we must train our guns on the monastery itself.*

*We give you warning so that you may save yourselves. We warn you urgently: Leave the monastery. Leave it at once. Respect this warning. It is for your benefit.*

*THE FIFTH ARMY*

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Neither the Army Group Commander, General Alexander, nor the Fifth Army Commander, General Clark, dares sign the message. The Chief of Staff, General Gruenther, approves the text. Italians at Army HQ work on its translation. Tom Crowell prints it. Our Lieutenant supervises its packing into shells, and consults with Division G-3 about which battery is to fire the twenty-five rounds. He pulls the loaded trailer to the firing site, where the shells are unloaded.

It is 13:00 hours of the day before the bombing. He has gone as far forward as necessary -- it is probably well beyond a rifle shot; there are eminences from which to observe the Monastery grounds and windows, all of them -- and he waits. Below and behind him, to his right, he can view an American infantry company in reserve. A number of men come out of their holes to get at the hot food that a crew has brought up to serve. Enemy artillery shells come flying at them and they dive hastily back into their holes, their lunch interrupted. Not far from them and slightly above are elements of another company; these men witness the scene and laugh, pointing.

He turns to the Abbey. Massive, impressive, calm, silent, many windows broken, here and there a piece chipped off its facade by an artillery shell fired "accidentally-on-purpose", claiming that the round had fallen short, or been defective, or that a wrong setting was used. At the designated time, the artillery pieces fire their thousands of leaflets upon the lower face of the Abbey. He observes that most fall short of the windows or drift beyond reach. Then he sees leaflets fluttering down, several unmistakably wafting into the windows of the bottom story. The message must not only get inside but it must go to where the

people are sheltering. Other leaflets are observed to fall upon the grounds to the west side of the great building. He descends to the rocks next to which he has parked his jeep, and drives back to camp. The leaflets got in, he reports, we can call HQ and tell them.

**AL TO JILL FEBRUARY 15, 1944(B) V-MAIL**

Dearest,

A short note is better perhaps than none at all. I must leave in a few minutes. Long is putting some gas in the car and checking things. I am only two weeks behind your life at the moment, having received your letter of Jan. 31 yesterday. And in which you explained "patronizingly" the matter of the linen initialing. I don't know what in the hell you're getting patronizing about, even though you "hate to be." It's only a matter of a slight error and/or difference in taste in towels. My retort courteous is a bit of patronizing on my part, designed to make you feel that we share even this occasional vice in common. Your remarks on the Quisling speech were superficial. The man is speaking from a profundity of experience, which must be understood to be a way of life, of survival, a drawing upon life which has practically as great claims to realism as our own. Only if you understand the fullness of thought behind that speech and the acts of people like him, can you abandon the naive reasoning which draws the world in blacks and whites and doesn't give credit for sincerity and intelligence where credit is due. The world is most confused and only on the highest level of political utterance are the issues drawn clearly and they are done so there because of the lack of clarity language permits. Below that, all is shambles, the good is mixed with the bad; the good are inconsistently good, the bad are inconsistently bad and sometimes good. The story of the Abbey in the news of these days is a case in point, seen in crystal clearness only by amateur thinkers, a most complex problem of analysis in reality.

It's nice to know that you received a note from Irene Keller and that, as Buzz wrote, Mrs. Singleton called to ask about us. Even

though we care little about anyone around us when we are together, we seem to have impressed nice people in a favorable way. We've had a couple of additions to our team of late, cloak-and-dagger boys from the Near East. The case of dear, allied Turkey, strong and ready, fighting for right, has, as a consequence, received some elucidation.

I haven't received the pictures of you and Kathy yet, though you imply that they are on their way. I have one roll of film left and then I'm afraid that I'll have to spend the rest of the war here looking over people's shoulders into their cameras.

The Army announced the history of the cigarette business dealings for the soldiers overseas, and I'm amused at the stark inconsistency of the violent press attacks on labor bickerings and the absence of comments on the maneuverings of tobacco manufacturers which withheld good cigarettes from the soldiers overseas for a number of months.

Well, I've spent one more day of my life thinking amorously of you, which means that I am one more day closer to the time when I shall not need only to think about you. Don't kiss Kathy for me if it gives her a rash; just buy her a six-inch steak on me, she'll appreciate that.

As always, all my love,

Al

**A**T the outposts of the Allied side of the Abbey, a kilometer from the gates, sentinels have been warned to watch out for escaping civilians, perhaps a great many of them. In fact, none appear. Night falls. Still no refugees. Dawn. The period of warning has past. Once more he climbs a height facing the abbey, not so close this time, Mt. Trocchio. He -- there are others there as well now -- waits for the planes to come. They do. Almost precisely at 09:30. From over the Apennines come the bombers, wave upon wave, suffering no flak, no enemy fighters.

Passing over the Monastery each Flying Fortress releases its three tons of high explosives. This goes on for some time to dump their thousand tons. Some fall far off target (to where, he will learn, Indian and New Zealand troops are struck as they wait to attack. American vehicles are hit three miles away. About 17 miles away, at Presenzano, 16 bombs exploded around the advanced camp of General Mark Clark, working at his desk.)

He goes down the hill now and works his way East to where any survivors might show up. There emerge a few Italian civilians, women, children, older men. Is this all of you, he asks. They are all dead, they say, all dead. Didn't you get our warning, he asks the woman who appears to be fairly composed. Yes, and we tried to get out...

There is no access to the Abbey except from the German lines. No one had thought to seek an armistice to collect the wounded and dead. No one had thought to have ambulances and litters and first-aid personnel ready. The Germans would have given some help but they are desperately busy. Allied artillery has begun an intensive bombardment immediately. To the joy of the gunners, every cannon is unleashed. They are psychologically massacring the Abbey. The Allied troops waiting to attack have been pulled back because of the great expanse of the bombing, yet are ordered to attack as soon as the bombing ceases.

The Indian Division is unready to attack; conditions were such even before the bombing that it could not get ready, General Freyberg was told; but the Air Force could not be asked to do this every day, you know, so the attack must go forward, ready or not. By the time the Indians have crawled back up to the original jump-off line, the rubble has created an entirely new configuration of stone and debris, cut new paths, and given the Germans time to bring up reserves and ready themselves for the inevitable assault. The attack is a ghastly failure. And now there is no reason to observe the sanctity of Montecassino; the Germans dig themselves in securely. Their defensive positions are stronger than ever.

It does appear that General Clark had opposed the attack, whether for fear of the repercussions from American Catholic quarters or because he sensed the illusions of the intelligence reports. Those

who backed the attack included Air Force General Ira Eaker, 15th Army Group Commander Alexander, and the New Zealand General Freyberg, Corps Commander, whose 4th Indian Division troops were to attack after the bombing. The Division General of the Indians, Francis Taker, who had been opposed to a frontal assault on Cassino and considers only the heaviest imaginable bombing would be effective, has come down with an arthritic attack and is hospitalized while the final decisions are taken.

The Germans got around to disseminating a leaflet among their enemies weeks later, declaring that "all decent people in the world were set aghast by the news that one of the most venerable monuments of Christian culture, the Abbey of Cassino, has been destroyed by British and American bombers." It denounces "the colossal lie" of German use of the Monastery. "And What Have You Gained?" shouts it headline. "By thus violating this sanctuary of Christianity, your bombers have given us every right to incorporate the remnants of the Monastery in our system of defenses. The ruins have been turned by our men into a formidable fortress which has defied all your efforts during the past weeks and caused you an untold number of dead and maimed." Thus has your shameless crime boomeranged, it concludes.

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

