

JILL TO AL JANUARY 16, 1944(A)

The University of Chicago

The Home Study Department

Darling darling - Sunday

Some time ago I think I wrote you about the fine & eloquent newsreel I saw of an ugly old Fascist pleading his case before an Allied tribunal. These are stills from that film. You can't see his face, but one of the officers looked like you.

Sweetheart, I think we can live without a cigarette box, & I without gloves. You know how I hate being robbed. Anyway, Lilly brought me a glass one last night which, if not beautiful, will do the trick. Besides, if we get an expensive cigarette box, the baby will break it & we may be mad. This way, there's nothing she can destroy of any consequence.

There's another letter of today on its way too.

OOOXXX

I love you -

Jill

JILL TO AL JANUARY 16, 1944(B)

The University of Chicago

The Home Study Department

My sweetheart - Sunday

My choice of stationary will undoubtedly strike a homely, if not nostalgic note. Anyway it should re-assure you that I haven't thrown away your civilian residue, my worst predilection and probably your chief fear in re me. I guess my tendency to throw

away things at one time (& may still) constituted the greatest threat to Al-Jill amity, far above such conventional hazards to matrimony as infidelity, neglect of the home, neglect of the person, addiction to loathsome pets, gambling, drinking and failure to replace cap on toothpaste tube. (I guess that covers all the things that disturb married people - I purposely don't include beatings, because you were always too nice to hit me very hard, and I'm not brawny enough to hit you hard enough so that it hurts - I hope).

Speaking of tests of strength, the family brought down the French encyclopedias last night & I just made a valiant attempt to put them in the bookcases I had built. In the first place, they're too big to fit & I shall probably have to build a new one when I become a fully-functioning citizen again. In the second place, they're so heavy I don't have the strength to open them & look inside. However, in a couple of days I shall do so, having first submitted myself to a stiff regimen of vitamin B pills & arm exercises. However, my immediate goal of physical achievement is to be able to sit on a chair & type, so I can abandon this loathsome pen & position of balancing the paper on my legs. It makes me so mad because I really feel (& am told) look wonderful, but there is still that nagging little cut in my rump which is healing, Gottseidank, but which requires a greater measure of immobility to do so than I'm willing to suffer.

Kathryn & I were certainly thrown into a fret last night by the arrival of eight (8) full grown & assorted DeGrazias & Blencoes to view our respective persons. I don't know how good an idea of the size of this apt. you got from my diagram, but it certainly isn't big enuf, or rather, doesn't have enuf furniture in it, to hold that many people, especially when I am draped on the couch like Mme La Farge. Anyway, there was much milling around, cooing over the baby, the worst offenders naturally being Aunt Lil & Mary, Howard's wife, who kept on pleading plaintively with Howard to give her a sweet little girl too. The way they smooch in public I wouldn't have been surprised if he'd laid her on the floor (there being no room anyplace else) & proceeded to accomplish that end. The boys as usual conducted themselves

with magnificent aplomb. Vic, as always, competent to carry on the most adult & interesting conversation in the room (the people kept interrupting us with silly questions about the baby, the females particularly, holding up various articles of Kathy's wardrobe, in which I'm not the least bit interested, & burbling over same). Ed, as ever, poised, discreet and smiling. They're really fine boys, despite their outward signs of hoodlumism & my expressions of annoyance with them at times. After all, the true test of one quality anyway, their social adaptability, is when they are forced to submit to such cruel and unusual treatment as last night's obstetrical & maternal atmosphere. And they can't even smoke to cool off, since they rigidly adhere to the policy of no-smoking-in-front-of-Dad.

Uncle Bill was there too, looking more than ever like the tired shop supervisor. And so was Howard, who to me, is le plus grand asshole of them all. Free Frenchmen everywhere, I apologize.

Kathryn was initially, & at the behest of the nurse, arrayed in a dainty embroidered kimono (the phraseology is the trade's, not mine) & covered with a delicate spun-wool blanket. She promptly & lavishly crapped over these ten minutes before the company came. I laughed fit to be tied, since it was just what I would have done if 24 years of civilizing inhibitions hadn't tied my alimentary tract into knots, except when given certain stimuli like a john. But the nurse was very upset, particularly since, through a shortage of decorative costumes, Kathy had to be changed into her regular, & undecorative nightgown. I honestly think she looks better that way, anyhow, just the way I look best in 1) a bathing suit, 2) naked, 3) sweater & skirt with spectator-pumps-&-no-stockings. I don't know if the analogy holds this far, but she is so pretty & sweet she doesn't need elaborate clothes to enhance her & actually looks best against a background of white cotton and talcum powder.

I was so excited to get your 3 letters yesterday of the 31st, 2nd & 3rd because I was sure one of them would contain your reactions to the birth of the baby, an event hereafter to be

referred to as the b. of the b. S--t on the Red Cross, a task which may devolve upon our accomplished daughter. Not only do they fail to inform you promptly, but 4 days after the fait accompli they regale you with inaccurate & inadequate information. Do you think that if I were supposed to have a baby at one time I'd have it another? What kind of plumber to you take me for? Furthermore, that's just an old wife's tale about its being a boy if it's later. Everybody told me I'd have a boy because 1) I was big in front but not the rear, 2) I'm that kind of girl, anyway (a Tomboy, to use that sickening expression). They also told me the baby would be 2 weeks late because 1st babies usually are.

But I'm so glad she's a girl. I'm sure a boy would have never been so pretty. Everybody agrees she looks like you -- a boy probably would have looked like me & not been half so exciting, for me, anyway. Furthermore, she can't squirt in my face when I'm diapering her, the way a boy does. That must be very disconcerting to the new mother. All in all, I'm thoroughly satisfied & hope you will be too. If you could only see her, I know you'd be finally convinced, if you're not already, that you're the most accomplished adequate man in the whole world. This is really the final test, you know, & in our case, it's a particularly cogent one because she's much more a product of you, genetically, than me. Left to my own devices, I would probably produce something that looked like Uncle Sam who, tho a dear man, has definite defects of face & mind. She'd probably have my disposition, & may still, for all we know. Not that she'd be any better off having yours. When I think of it, we'll be hard put to blame her faults of personality, whatever they may be, on one or the other, since we both have pretty much the same vices - bad tempers, big appetites, predilections to sleep when we should be awake & to be awake when we should be asleep (she has all those vices except the first one now). We are both also moody, self-centered and sexy, which would probably be considered vices by most people but which seem to work out fine with us. Anyway, I don't believe in the inheritance of personality traits. Kathy will probably be another Pollyanna, bad

cess to her, because of her happy relationship with her mother's loving if not ample bosom.

Gosh, I started this letter in the morning & then interrupted it for lunch, after which everybody & their dog came over. In the order named, there tracked through our tiny hut MacEddowney, Syb Farretes, Jane Barry, Fritz, Bea, an unidentified German, Maxine & an unidentified boyfriend. In between I twice excused myself to nurse the baby, so you can get an idea of how long this has been keeping up. Now they're all gone & I missed Jack Benny & am very mad. I tried to make Sunday different from other days by skipping breakfast & sleeping from her 5 to 10 o'clock feeding & not taking a shower in the morning. But since everybody came over, I never got a chance to shower at all. This plaint may sound strange to you who never get a chance to wash hardly at all, but I've gotten very much in the daily shower habit & really need it, sweating it out in this hot little apt. I'll have you know, incidentally, that there is no litter to trap your unwary feet. I'm really much neater than of old. Anyway, I don't like stuff littered around on tops of furniture though don't much care if the windowsills are dirty, etc. etc.

I think that German said he would mail this on his way out from Bea's. So I'd better stop.

All my love, one million kisses and 50,000 bear hugs to you, darling.

Jill

AL TO JILL JANUARY 16, 1944

Dearest love,

Since there has been no letter from you today and no very fast reply is necessary, I'll write an air mail for a change. I am still enraptured by the descriptions of the little girl and don't expect I'll ever get over that feeling. It certainly will make us exclusive

to have a girl in the family. Undoubtedly her male cousins will spoil her, and since all my knowledge of discipline was predicated on a boy, the same thing may happen through her father. By now, you must know whether her eyes are still blue and her hair still black. I didn't think they would necessary stay that way although that is a good combination.

Nothing much has been happening around here, although there is a constant flux about everything that makes the wisher think that changes are in the offing. The Russians seem to be running amuck in Poland. I never saw such a picture of smashing victory as was presented in this morning's news. Do you know that the soldiers here are more interested in what is happening on the Russian front than they are in news from home, or anywhere else. Everyone lights up when the subject turns to the East. The weather here has been kind lately, just another fall spell, with moderate winds, plenty of fallen leaves, and for the past few days lots of full moon behind pine trees. Forever and a day, I shall think of you when I am struck by that romantic combination. Remember the night when I finally got down to making a formal proposal in the mountains of California and wasn't too much surprised when you turned me down. You were agreeable enough that evening anyway. We used to take very daring chances, didn't we, anyplace and any time. I won't be satisfied until we get a good-sized reserve just for ourselves, where we can chase about for longer periods of time.

I've been reading a very shallow book called *So Little Time* which Herz got for Christmas; there isn't too much of Marquand with which I disagree as there is of what he leaves unsaid. I'm so sick of that heavy-witted irony and shallow cynicism. He falls far below Sinclair Lewis and accomplishes less. His hero is the biggest ass I've come across in a long time, worse than Aeneas whom he resembles markedly. And he is drawn much less poorly. It's just the book for the last year of high-school literary prize. He ought to go back to writing his Mr. Moto stories where he doesn't have to be ashamed of not going deep. His style is like the poorer type of New Yorker articles and in fact the whole book has the constant air of having been blown up from a New

Yorker story. The general air throughout the book is like Janice Dietz talking for hours on end, and you know that I can stand only a proper amount of that type of wit.

So endeth the book review section with malice towards all.

By now you should have gotten the pictures I sent you. The big one was badly blown up. If you don't like it you can have it enlarged the way you want it. Long, my driver, showed me a picture of his daughter at the age of six weeks. She was born while he was overseas too, in fact only about a month after he had left America. She is a very pretty baby. He is a very nice guy from Madison, Wisconsin, very reliable and a good driver, though extremely quiet. This evening we rigged up the volley ball net and had a game. At one point he was hitting the ball towards me and said "take it, sir!" Funny how habit will make a guy say "sir" under most unusual circumstances, even when playing on the same team. The use of the conventional word doesn't imply that relations are very formal. They are, on the contrary, most informal. For one thing, under pressure of doing things with a meaningful end for the most part, discipline comes almost naturally. Artificial stimulants are scarcely necessary, though it is good to keep observing some of them.

I suppose that letter you wrote in the early dawn was an omen of these next months. I'm very sorry for you, my darling, having to get up at all odd hours, especially knowing the fascination which sleep holds for you. When I return, I must find a place for you where nothing in the world will disturb your sleep save a kiss from me, like Sleeping Beauty.

I'm enclosing an interesting speech. Please save it for me. Now I ought to write a letter to Howard or the family or somebody. Maybe I will or maybe I won't. I can afford to be fickle about some things. The only constant object in life is you, my darling Jill, and I hope before many more lonely nights pass to dim your eyes with many kisses. With all my love, ...Your Al

JILL TO AL JANUARY 17, 1944

The University of Chicago

Department of Political Science

My Sweetheart -- Monday

What an achievement! I am sitting squarely on my battered tail, with typewriter directly in front of me and at the proper height and angle for a reasonably effective performance. However, these weeks of indolence have taken their toll and I must confess I prefer to lie down, except when writing to you.

I am in a paroxysm of rage, even if I don't know how to spell it. Three letters from you came today, Jan. 1st, 5th & 8th and you still haven't heard about the baby. I was so mad I did a thing unheard of for me, who am a Mrs. Milquetoast ordinarily in the presence of large institutions -- I called the Red Cross and gave them hell. They replied fatuously that it often takes two or more weeks to get the news across by cable. What the hell -- is there no way a man can hear of such vital subjects as the birth of his child? I am sick and tired of this enforced isolation we must both undergo. Every letter of yours makes me more and more frustrated and sad -- that I can't speak to you directly, that I can't even write you with the certainty that you'll get the letter, and that when you do get it, I've long ago forgotten what I said. I read your letters and get a vague desire to jump on a train, and then have to laugh at myself because the wish is so pathetically funny -- as if taking a train to New York would even start to bridge the physical distance between us! And then, finally, I fret over the physical discomfort you undergo and I get a little shaky in the knees when I realize the proximity to you of real danger. All in all, fuck this war.

Still, your descriptions of office life as carried on in the frontline manner makes it sound a helluva lot more attractive than the cages I've been in on Michigan Avenue. Oh well, I'm probably better equipped to endure climatic rigors than you and yours -- the extra layer of adipose tissue in the female, I'm told -- and

also had greater trauma at the hand of office managers locally than you. I shudder to think of the fair months I wasted behind typewriters, deluding myself into thinking I was pursuing a career when all I was was a high-class clerk and when I could have been getting a sunburn and spending a few more hot afternoons on a bed with you. I suppose you were just as guilty in a way, reading those silly APSR publications, but at least you stoutly maintained you were interested in your work. I never could say that for myself.

I'm not sure I agree with you in your condemnation of that Briggs child because I'm not sure what behavior is to be expected of a two-year-old. I think the solution is to keep popcorn off accessible table tops if one objects to popcorn on the floor. We may have some disagreements over bringing up our children, my policy being to avoid discipline as much as possible, either by overlooking what other people might consider juvenile crimes --like swearing or breaking the furniture -- or by removing the furniture. I do know that at one year a child pulls everything down and apart, and one can't do a thing about it except to disregard it or remove all breakables from her range. Besides, you seem to imply that anti-social or asocial traits in the adult stem from asociality in the child. I'm not so sure that's true. Possibly the least disciplined children, in the conventional sense, grow up to be the best integrated adults.

I still think that love conquers all, though I suppose I'm not far enough along in maternity to do much else but love. Anyway, look at you kids. You certainly had little else but love in your youth, since you must admit you weren't exactly subject to consistent or ruthless discipline; yet nobody has any kicks coming about any of you. Now don't start fretting that we'll have one horrible brat of a child, due to mammy's laziness and distaste for authority. In the first place, there's not much damage I can do the first six months & I know all the answers through then, anyway, to wit -- feed and fondle the baby, keep her comfortable, don't diaper too much, don't pick up between feedings unless very wet, don't put her in things that restrict her movements. I hope you'll be home after that and we can work

out her upbringing by the dialectical method.

Bernice had to teach somebody's class tonight so Fritz came down and we just finished a lengthy conversation on everything from education in Germany to his fervent desire to be where you are and my fervent desire that you be where he is, namely, in our sitting room. He is ordered up for induction again Wednesday. This is the third time -- previously they rejected him for a latent diabetic condition and a history of some spinal disease. He feels fine and has all along very much desired to be in the Army and hopes he makes it this time. Bernice doesn't like it but sensibly doesn't want to appear an obstructionist.

I'm sort of stealing this time from the baby. It's after 10 PM and she still hasn't waked up for her feeding and I'm certainly not the one to do so. However, I had better stop this letter, skimpy as it is (by comparison to the four-page ones I used to toss off in the dear dead days when my only company and distraction was Cooney) and refresh myself for the ordeal with candy and milk. I'm such a pig.

I guess I don't have to tell you, but I do every time, how much I love you and with what yearning and passion I think of you, all the time.

Always yours,

Jill

[Drawing: heart pierced by arrow The baby's crying!]

AL TO JILL JANUARY 17, 1944

Dearest Love,

Here goes another attempt to say a world of things in a few words. I always have so many things to say but find that it is too much for my poor frame to put them all down. Today brought much mail. It awaited me when I got back to camp around

sunset, very beautiful sunsets, too, these, with pearl greys and pinks stretching 360 degrees in the sky. There was an annoying amount of dust on the road with these past dry days and the great fleets of trucks. The omniscient post-office must be running a courier service on you, Jan. 2, one of them was dated, too good to be true, the third letter since Kathryn stopped kicking you in the stomach. Then there were a couple of B. C. letters from you, one from Dad, a birthday card from Mom, that card from Bill Evers, the Key Reporter (what a magazine!) and a letter from a Lt. Henry Williams, a guy from college whom I don't think you ever knew, all of this and Time magazine for December 20. I don't know how to cope with the barrage of mail from the family - I can't possibly answer it all.

Your orgasm over the stockings made me jealous as well as very pleased. Oh to be stroked as you must have stroked them, especially now that I itch (for obvious reasons) (tomorrow I must seek me out a bathtub). Your A.D. letter spoke of getting the second consignment of stockings, I'm glad to see. Now the only thing missing are about four bundles of miscellaneous books including the encyclopedia.

I agree that your "home brew" (what a wonderful term) is great good fortune. I suppose it is universal with girls of middle income and higher to think that they could never possibly give milk "just like a cow, my dear." Janice would be shocked. I'm mildly surprised that the little lady doesn't cry more. Do you think she will be dull and stolid? I'll bet if she had one look at me she would cry constantly, with great desire in her infant shrieks. Mom sent me a delightful picture of Joey, who is by all odds the cutest baby ever. And he is so gross, almost like Victor. I plan to write Vic, incidentally, about his untowardness, just to relieve my rage feelings, if nothing else. Can we give him a few bucks and send him off to some school somewhere. I'm sure he'd do well and he'd learn a lot more. Both his and Ed's environment is so narrow. Mine was a hell of a lot wider at their age, mostly, I think because I wasn't in love with any pal or gang of pals and was constantly moving about foreign fields. You wrote you had some New Yorkers about. Please send them to me when and if you

can drag your lovely but weary body into that disagreeable task. (Trying to show this request to the postmaster ought to fox you!) You also write that you were worried about my moving. Don't let that bother you for a second. I feel perfectly confident that I'll be all right. I've figured ever since childhood on seeing the year 2000 come in. Anyway, it isn't nice to worry. I like to think that nothing in the world could prevent you from leading your own life well, that your shapely pins are also good ones to stand on. Tell me, instead, how you are. How long did you stay in the hospital and was that longer, the same, or shorter than usual. Are you feeling very fit now? Could you swim a quarter of a mile and then give me a prolonged kiss under water. What say we go to Glen Park some day and dive for that suit of yours I lost. I'll never forgive myself. My eyes are tired - too much wind and dust. All my love, darling and a kiss to Kathryn, without awaking her.

Your Al

JILL TO AL JANUARY 18, 1944

The University of Chicago

The Home Study Department

My darling Al --

I knew this would happen. I started out to write you a couple of hours ago, and then decided, in re-reading your letters of this past few days, that the desk was cluttered and it was difficult to find your letters that I wanted to find, so I started sorting your September, October and November letters and ending up by reading most of them. I always feel guilty that I don't actually know every word you've written to me by heart, though I was pleasantly surprised to find that I remembered the substance of most of them and had already a pretty clear idea of the chronology of your travels. Then I started documenting your words with pictures, and for the umpteenth time, ogled your

flexible visage as it underwent the many rigors of Army life, from KP at Tyson to the latest representations of it which came this morning. I liked the first batch of pictures very much -- you look stunning in a sullen way in the half-of-you one, and I recognized Hertz's swagger stick in the second of the trio without your even telling me. The other one is, anyway, a very graphic study of what the QM will do for you when it tries. The other half of the roll of film hasn't come yet.

Came also a V-mail of January 7th. I will send you Borgese's book as soon as I get over to the bookstore, which may be any day now. I haven't gone outside as yet, but can theoretically any time after Kathy is three weeks old, which is today. I feel very strong and well, but just want to make sure that all is healed up before I venture forth or do much else but sleep and eat. I have a lot of magazines to send you, and newspapers too. I'm also sending you our only two noteworthy Xmas cards, from Betty and Jerry Zorthian and Betty (Betz) and Sepp Lanz. The symbolism of Jerry's card astonishes and in part escapes me. For such a simple tool as he, he certainly has a weird subconscious, of which he never gave any indication of being aware of. I'd like to see them again. I was very fond of Betty and thought him a comical little character. In the Lanz's card, those are Betts' stock in trade figures. She can't draw anything else, and has pulled down a pretty salary for such a young 'un just for drawing them.

I mentioned before that I felt guilty about not knowing all your letters by heart, a patently impossible feat. That's because I have such great esteem for you as both a love and a man of letters. You certainly have written some wonderful, witty and profound things (as well as some really lyrical love letters) and I wish to hell there was somebody I could show them to, in fact, a lot of people, shouting all the while in the manner of Jimmy Durante, "That's my boy!" I used to read parts of them to Joan, but we don't see each other often enough to permit that anymore. Besides, in payment, I'd have to listen to parts of Tom's, who writes well enough but whose experiences at Gulfport just don't interest me. I spoke to him on the phone this

morning. He asked for you, naturally. He's all pepped up over his kid, and the 14-day leave he finally got from those Simon Legrees of the AAFTC.

While I was reading your letters before, I had Kathy on the couch with me. We usually let her fool around about 45 minutes before her six o'clock feeding so she'll be more tired during the evening hours and give us some peace. She still wakes up at three in the morning and shouts her head off for a couple of hours. I lean against the stomach and let her grab hold of my finger. Sometimes she cries and most of the time she just stares. She very definitely responds to the voice now. While Rachel the nurse was holding her to burp this afternoon, I moved from one side of the room to the other, all the while talking and she turned her head following the sound of my voice. She is really very smart, don't you think, for three weeks? I wouldn't know either. Rachel sometimes recites nursery poetry to her and she stares fascinatedly. Rachel has a good strong Negro voice and she responds better to it than she does to mine. I still can't believe she's my baby. I keep thinking that a very pleasant Negro lady with a pretty white baby have come to stay with me, as boarders perhaps, and that pretty soon they'll leave and I will be returned to my old solitary state of having a big stomach and a snarly black dog. Cooney, incidentally, is still up north with the family. After he got out of the animal hospital he went there. I decided not to take him back until I was quite able to take him outside myself, and not depend on neighbors to do so. It's hard enough to keep the house stocked with food, depending on the good graces of my friends, who really are white about the whole thing, as I must. The only drawback is that I must make up menus at home, not knowing what they have in the stores, which often is puzzling to a good pal like Bernice who, sent out in quest of lamb chops and bananas, can only find suckling pigs and mangoes that day on 55th St. (Ha.)

Your child is now hiccuping loudly in her basket, and although I am one room away it shivers these old timbers. She is taking more food all the time -- now it's five ounces -- if I'm good it's three from me and two from the bottle. Still, I'm doing better

than many, nursing her as long as I have. If I can keep it up for another three weeks, I'll be satisfied that I've fulfilled the physiological function of motherhood for the time being anyway. I think it will be enough to give her a good start in life too. Incidentally, there is something to this business of nursing giving one one's figure back in good time, else I have an unusually elastic set of muscles. My figure looks quite normal although I am a couple of inches bigger around the waistline than before. If anything, it looks better because I'm bigger in the chest. And this is without doing any of the exercises I was supposed to do. Usually it takes at least six weeks for the uterus to reduce, about three months for the whole works to return to the status quo, if it ever does. Of course some women get hopelessly out of shape, although it doesn't happen so often with the first birth.

Enough of this Narcissism. Of course, I could pass it off by saying that if I didn't love you so much I wouldn't be so concerned about my figure. Well, it's true that I do love you so much, more than anybody could love anybody, I'm sure, but I'm afraid I have feelings about this fair white etc. quite independent of my feelings about you. What the hell, everybody got to have a hobby.

If you were here, I would deed you my hobby quite willingly, and also a million kisses. All my love --

Jill

JILL TO AL JANUARY 19, 1944

My Darling --

It makes me mad. All day long I think of things to say to you and when I finally sit down to write, I go blank. Well, before I forget, I thought you might have a set of pictures made like the ones you sent me for Mom, if you haven't done so already.

And I always wanted to tell you this, but I never did. You know, your prize package (of stockings, pen drawings, hankies et al) came the morning of the day I went to the hospital. Some of the excitement of receiving them might have been somewhat diminished because I was feeling back-achey and in a bitch of a mood. But anyway, when I opened up the handkerchiefs, I said to Mom, "Aren't they cute. But they're for a little girl. Now I'll have to find a nice little girl to give them to!" Considering I didn't know I was having labor pains, or that such pains would shortly produce such a quantitatively and qualitatively fine female child, I think the remark was nicely, if unconsciously, prophetic. I also use that table scarf for Kathy's dresser. It has a very cute design on it, suitable for a baby's room. I read an article in this morning's Sun about embroidering pillow cases and have gotten all pepped up over the idea of making some for her bed and promptly sent off ten cents in stamps or coin to the Sun needlework department. I should have signed your name to the letter, as I did the last time I got pepped up over a hobby and signed your name to a fatuous request for information from the Washington Bird, Fish and General Wild Life Department. As I recall, you were rather piqued to find a treatise on bird calls among your official mail over at Ritchie.

I also read an article on how to re-finish furniture in tonight's News and when I start functioning again, think I will do a job on this mahogany desk, bleaching it to tone in with the House of the Future. Somebody should take my eye-glasses away.

Anyway, to get back to the substance of the paragraph before the last one, I don't think there are many fathers who give their daughters presents before they are born, and from such a great distance too. I think you should be rewarded for such thoughtfulness and I shall do so when you come home.

Laura Bergquist called up last night and asked me for dinner Sat. nite. I don't know if I'll be out on the streets by then. But anyway, the point of my mentioning it at all was that she said she had a beer with Steinie's friend, Jerry Moritz, one night, and from the boys' opinion of me, apparently I was becoming the

Mrs. Miniver of the South Side. A waspish remark I thought, but so funny I could hardly believe it came from Laura. (I'm afraid that the fact that at one time or another we had (1) the same job (2) the same man have caused Laura and me to be a little less than generous in our opinions of one another, though we both think the other good company, if nothing else).

The baby is crying. She did not get enough to eat before and I have to get up and give her the bottle some more, as Rachel is cooking dinner. 'Scuse it please.

She only took a half an ounce. Phooey, it wasn't worth getting up for. I had an interesting and enervating afternoon. Rachel took her first afternoon off, and there I was left alone with that fearsome creature, the baby. Actually, I was very calm and collected about the whole thing, I guess having nephews helps, because I did occasionally diaper and feed Paul and Joe. She crapped in her pants and I changed them with great aplomb, then I nursed her, except in the middle of it the baby carriage man came with the newly repaired baby carriage, and I had to throw her down and write him out a check. Then I gave her the bottle, having heated it to the correct temperature. The only flaw in the whole performance was that I didn't burp her, or rather, mistook one of her large repertory of noises for a burp. As a result, five minutes after I had set her back in her basket with a sigh of relief and had lit up a Chesterfield in the classic manner of calm and collected people, she tosses up all five ounces of milk, which is a lot of milk if you see it arching across the room in a neat parabola. So I had to clean her up and change her clothing, my first try at that knotty little problem, and feed her all over again. This all took two and a half hours, as contrasted with 40 minutes the nurse manages to do everything in.

But it's funny, babies don't seem to mind whoopsing. If anything, she looked satisfied, with an air of accomplishment about her. Nor do I particularly mind performing these tasks which might be repulsive to the civilian, as I shall thereafter designate the non-mother. And I find myself loving her for herself alone, as well as for the fact that you're her father, the latter of which

feelings sustained my tolerance for her during the months before she hit air.

You may be unhappy to know that at the moment you are faced with the competition of Frank Sinatra, whose notoriety must surely have reached your remote corner of the world. He has his own radio show now and I just turned it on for the benefit of Rachel, who hadn't heard him before and wondered what all the fuss was about. She still wonders, and so do I. Mom, however, claims he stirs her soul. I guess I'm not young enough or old enough to appreciate him, and Rachel, who is crowding sixty, is too old.

Fritz just came in with the news that he'd been rejected by his draft board again. Poor Fritz -- not only is he disappointed but he'll probably have to go through all this six months from now again. Nothing is static to the draft boards.

(added, in hand writing:) Hell's bells - Diana and Oliver came in after that last sentence, interrupting what I had planned to be a nice long letter. Now it's quarter of eleven and having nourished the baby I must go to sleep too - But anyway, I'll write more tomorrow to my best and only sweetheart.

All my love [*underlined 3x*] (even in underlining I try to outdo you.)

Jill

[drawings of a Baby parabolically eructing - Woman fleeing - puzzled Dachshund]

AL TO JILL JANUARY 19, 1944

Dearest Darling,

Three letters came from you this morning, all of them very old, the 31st Oct. & Nov. 6 & 7th. But like old wine and friends, they merited a great welcome. There isn't so much in them that is not

past answering; one was so full of musings and recollections that it might well have been sent in January, save that your late letters are so full of flash news bits, that there is no room for philosophy - save again that a philosophy underlines the activities those B. C. letters showed again that you took to motherhood like a duck to water, amazing how easily you adapted yourself to the whole thing and I'm very proud of you.

I am annoyed at this late date that Daisy should have sent you all those towels marked J.O. DeG. Doesn't she admit we're married yet? I think it's in very bad taste and unless you furnish me proof by Post I will (1) continue to think they are selfish uncouths and (2) trample the towels underfoot. Perhaps she is preparing you for the separation and/or divorce.

You mention insurance. Very thoughtless of me to forget about it; I guess I feel very cocksure about living. Anyway it's a good idea save that 1) even though delicately done it would make Mom and Dad feel less secure and less loved, 2) they would give their last cent to the baby if I weren't around to help, 3) I still feel an obligation to secure them somewhat. Anyhow, the pittance would not be needed to keep the baby from starving and besides if I'm not alive, she ought to feel more sorry for me than for herself. Etc. Etc., ending with the promise that I'll either formalize the change or just inform Dad who is less Machiavellian than Mom to give the baby half of the ill-gotten gains when gained. The problem is hopelessly academic. I have no intention of causing the widow's pension fund any trouble.

If you could see me now, you would comment on my appearance which is very vivid indeed. I eat a lot, sleep enough, do not get particularly worried, am rather mean and caustic, and keep looking forward to the Spring as the greatest of all Springs the world has ever known.

I moved today and have been busy transporting my accumulated possessions. Those of Long and myself practically fill the jeep when we're included in the load. That may not seem much to you but I feel it's a lot and it is a lot when the exigencies

of the field life are present. I don't know where it all comes from, though Christmas candies and things have made up a good share. I don't have enough to be spick and span, an immaculate staff officer, even with all the junk. But you know how galoshes, overcoat, raincoat, helmet, blankets, knapsacks and all sorts of odd things mount up. Laundry has been fairly easy to have done lately since my base of operations has been fixed. An old couple run a laundry that doesn't cost excessively. The soldiers in Italy have found that the problem can be taken care of better than they expected and it helps a lot. The old guy in this particular place gripes to me about the King whenever I see him. He blames everything on him and his accomplices. The situation is pretty bad on food, but I have found the news reporting in America as seen in clippings from good papers and magazines to be well done. You probably have a pretty reliable view of the situation. But back to possessions. I'm very sick of my ugly belongings (not a request for more presents) and will be very happy when I'm able to wash all over, put on a soft pair of shoes, clean underwear, and loose, soft, non-khaki pants and shirt. It will be unbelievable when it does happen. It's so rare (I never recall it happening) over here that a complete change in clothing occurs simultaneously with a bath. It's not impossible to do, but the effort is very fatiguing and the pre-planning required makes an amphibious operation on the military level seem simple.

You were right in saying that Paul and Ann's gift would please me. I play most delicate airs on the tonette already. I find it especially nice to have during long tiresome jeep rides. I'll play a few ditties for you when I get home.

I'm getting a little cold writing now. We haven't put the stove into action yet. All my love to you, Jill. If your hair hasn't curled out by this time, I'll cut mine even shorter in sympathetic hairicide. Give my little girl, Kathryn a kiss for me, please.

Yours as ever,

Al

THE first phase in the gruesome winter-long Battle is the set of struggles to reach the Gustav Line, pivoting on the Town and the huge Benedictine Monastery hovering above it; American and British would argue about who did most to arrive at this point. The Rapido River Crossing, fought principally by the 36th American Division, of Texas National Guard ancestry, is the larger part of the second phase. The 442nd Japanese-American battalion, later regimental combat team, begins to play its distinguished role. The American 34th Division also is launched into the impossible, and loses half its riflemen. Whose defeat is worse, the 36th's or the 34th's? Who failed? Before long, every fact is known about both episodes. But, where every fact is known, the truth acquires a multiplicity and complexity never to be resolved into an answer. One thing is sure now: a frontal attack upon Cassino is madness. Still, the Command orders it again and again.

He regularly visits these units and the 45th and 3rd Divisions and 1st Armored Division, hearing and spreading gossip, examining their situation maps, which are better locally than those at Army HQ G-2. The next propaganda operations are planned. He asks them to shoot certain leaflets over selected targets, explains why, gives them copies and English translations of the material to be exploded over the Germans, and shares whatever information he may have about the results of past firings.

They like to hear his opinions about how the war is going generally and when it will end: he is a live source. They get their news regularly and ordinarily from the *Stars and Stripes*. They get letters and clippings from home. But Americans do not write much. They hear an occasional short-wave broadcast. Men come back from leave in Naples and tell what they hear from other soldiers there.

He supervises the conversion of smoke shells at the little ammo dump his Team maintains, and tells the artillery ammo trucks where and when to pick up and deliver the shells. In each shell are about three hundred leaflets carrying general and specific messages; as the shell which is set to explode at a certain height over enemy pathways or positions goes off, the leaflets spread out in a pattern and drift down to where they may be reached and read by the soldiers. It takes about 15,000 leaflets to cover a division's front, about 50 shells. A single

burst, about 100 yards up, on a windless hour, will usually put the message near anyone below within a diameter of 150 yards. The Germans are told by their officers that they should turn in enemy propaganda without reading it, but they read and often keep it, even if, to the minds of Allied troops and the Propaganda Team for that matter, they seem hardly responsive. They should be showered with the paper at dusk, so that they can observe the fall and pick them up after dark, safe from both enemy and friendly fire.

Then, along the way, he sometimes visits infantry units and get their ideas of what might bother or affect in advantageous ways the conduct of the enemy, and talks with prisoners or prisoner interrogators for their information about specific weaknesses and details that will lend authenticity to the propaganda when received by the enemy. This information goes to the Team, the intelligence and ideas to Martin Herz and Hans Habe. Unfortunately, Habe now catches jaundice and then contracts pneumonia and ends up in a hospital to the rear. When his Christmas gifts arrive from home, his friends save the finer little pieces for him and devour the rest, as he had bequeathed them to his friends, though they feel a bit ghoulish and sad. Herz, too, contracts jaundice, which seems to be endemic, but stays on.

JILL TO AL JANUARY 20, 1944(A)

The University of Chicago

The Home Study Department

Sweetheart --

Here are the other pictures of your little rosebud. I forgot to mention for the record -- they were taken when she was two weeks and three days old. Big, ain't she? I know you have nothing to go by so that is merely a rhetorical question.

All my love to my dearest one

JILL TO AL JANUARY 20, 1944(B)

The University of Chicago

The Home Study Department

Darling -- Thursday

I really feel that Kathy has arrived in the world. This morning came your telegram acknowledging the Red Cross's (at long last) and also her 2 ration books, entitling her to full fare. In the first case, particularly, it reminded me of the old conundrum of physicists: "if there is a waterfall in a remote section of the world where no living creature has ever set foot, does the waterfall make a sound?" Similarly with Kathy's existence -- unknown to her father & hitherto unrecognized by the OPA, did she really live in this world until today?

I routed myself from my couch to get to the A&P today, to use up a lot of ration points that expired today. It was my first day out, and probably my last for another week or so. The streets seemed much wider, the trolleys much noisier, the Chicago haze more glare-y and the people more pushy. I felt like a Jackson Park squirrel who had gotten out of bounds. But the air smelled good and it was nice to be extravagant with my money myself, instead of having someone else be it. I was accompanied by Peggy Steele, the lady who lives in a George Price house & atmosphere across the street & who is the mother of 5 girls, one of whom Karl Hess used to squire about.

I also picked up a developed roll of film & cadged a new roll from the druggist. He only gets 3 of any kind a month & saves them for pathetic cases like me. I'm sending you half the pictures in this envelope and half in another. They're not very good pictures as they were taken indoors & the sun makes a glaring pattern against the wall. But they're good enuf, considering, and Kathy does look like that, only prettier. The one with me came out black because Rachel took it. That is why there are no more of me and the baby. I suspected she would foul things up. The next pictures I'll take outdoors & ask Fritz to

do it. He's a German & developing fluid should run in his veins.

I also got a letter from you this morning, a V-mail but I couldn't read the date because it wasn't photographed very well. It told about you & Dabby singing in a jeep. I think your intentions to write me twice a day are wonderful, & am touched even if you don't carry them out. I don't see where you get the time. Even I, who am absolutely non-functioning, can't manage more than one a day, though it's true I have a heavy extra-curricular load of correspondence right now, thanking people and letting them know. I swear I have about 20 more letters to write & I've already written a number. It's hard to do lying down as I most always am. And God, I have about two weeks of Sun editorial & feature pages that I must fold neatly, take to the PO & send you. Thing is, I don't tear them out immediately upon reading because I save the paper for Rachel to read. Then they start piling up from the day before, & the day before the day before. I hope your subscription to Time will appease your nose for news & that you'll release me from this unhappy chore, so mindful of my days at the City Hall. Meanwhile, I'll keep sending this toilet paper with a progressive slant to you, & naturally, will always send you items that I think will amuse or interest you.

I got a nice letter from Martin the other day in re fruit cake & its whole semi-humorous history. I also wrote his mother a letter telling of baby. She had sent me a Xmas card. Daisy sent me your letter to them, which was a masterpiece of diplomacy & downright kindness. You really are a very nice fellow, & for a woman who married you for your brains, looks, ambitions, politics, versatility, sleep-a-bility and least of all amiability to say that really means something. Daisy was needless to say delighted. She was also worried you hadn't gotten the Nescafé & wanted to know if she should send more. She really didn't just send you the leftovers of hoardings but bribed her grocer to give her a great mess of it. It's still rather hard to get, God knows why.

I had the baby buggy Paul & Ann sent refurnished for a fin at a local carriage hospital & it really looks swell & very durable,

unlike the Victory models. It ought to serve for numerous walks over to the lake, for mother's daily bath, Cooney's daily romp, and baby's daily sunstroke.

Baby, the little cad, is starting to cry for her 6 o'clock feeding. It seems that I always write you around this time. I talk to her a lot about you, telling her how much you would like her and how much you already do. I don't tell her what you're doing, however, since the War Department might disapprove.

Like you, I always leave the good part to the end - the expressions of great love and devotion. I really do love you, darling, which probably sounds inadequate next to all the things I might say or that people had said, but it sort of covers the situation.

always,

Jill

Kathryn is lying on the bed with me, shouting out her lungs. I'll try to get her to write a few words.

-|- Kathryn Gail (*her mark*)

JILL TO AL JANUARY 21, 1944

Sweetheart --

Friday

Your letter of Jan. 9 came a little while ago. It contained that bile-making ad which led me to a few speculations on my own hook (which I hasten to put down on paper before my porous mind lets them go to the winds). It (the ad) is, in a way, the *reductio ad absurdum* for wartime conduct. In other words, no matter what you do, you aid the war. Win the war by keeping your children healthy (tell that to starving Greek saboteurs or Yugoslav partisans); win the war by being a bookie (after all, you entertain war workers); win the war by just sitting home and eating cookies (so you don't put a burden on war-crowded

transportation facilities [the phraseology is the current choice of copywriters - not mine]). It is the ultimate in attributing virtue to negative behavior, very much like the philosophical folly the ancient philosophical Epicureans finally achieved, in which to achieve pleasure & ergo the good life, you could do nothing but sit around and avoid pain.

Any anger you might feel at the conduct & verbalizations of the U.S. civilians is certainly righteous. God, what a crappy bunch we make ourselves out to be!

On the one hand I berate the selfishness of my fellow citizens on the home front and on the other, I offer you a little of the home-brewed variety. To wit, do you have to have the better part of the Sun every day? For the first time since you went away I had some unkind thoughts in re you last night when I started unraveling 2 weeks newspapers for your perusal. In the first place, I ruined your child's nail scissors cutting them down to size so they'd fit in the skimpy manila envelope. In the second place, the damn things have to go first class & will certainly drive us into a hole if nothing else will. In the third place you'll probably be bored stiff reading them, since they contain very little else than the opinions of people probably less informed than you and with pretty much the same political & ethical slant. So can't I return to the old eclectic method of sending what I think you'll like. Tell Herz to cease his fatuous and dangerous talk about his mother's accomplishments as a librarian and research worker. Maybe she doesn't have anything else to do. Even with the nurse I'm kept pretty busy, between nursing, trying to get some sleep as I can't get a consecutive 8 hours on the baby's schedule, shopping (since yesterday I've started taking a short morning spin to the corner - presumably it strengthens me & besides everybody who could possibly do my shopping has flu), resting from shopping, an overweening social life centered in our living-room & writing thank-you notes. Nurse Irnee sent a beautiful hand-knitted blanket & sweater today. That kid has so many sweaters knitted by so many loving hands she could spend the winter in Alaska.

Liz Evers wrote that they were being transferred to New River (Georgia ???) & not to San Diego & that she would stay with Bill & if accommodations weren't good, go back to Boston to have the baby. Still, it's hard, because Liz is not as strong as I am, or was, & it's a miserable place to be.

I heard that the Peck's new baby died, but don't know if it's true or what the circumstances were. I guess it would be extremely bad taste to comment any further.

I'm enclosing a tidbit from the New Yorker* "P.S. I can't. There's writing on the other side" the rest of the magazine will come later. There's a swell story on Jimmy Durante in this week's (Jan. 24) Time. I hope it appears in your edition. (Send me one, by the way, I hear they're different.) Anyway, I'll save it & send it if you like. Maybe you're not as feverish about his humor as I am.

I love you, darling, more than anything or anyone in the world. It's nine months now since we parted. I think I can wait another 3, but no more. You'll have to desert then. All my love, J.

AL TO JILL JANUARY 21, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

I am shocked to notice that between one thing and another being sweated out, it is now nearing the end of January and we are so much nearer to each other. I was in the middle of an exhausted sleep last night when someone wakened me and shoved several letters at me. They turned out this morning to have been two from Dad, one from you before the event and one of Private Marson. I collapsed back to sleep and read them first thing this morning, with only the dull but important perception that the latest news wasn't among them. However, they were all sources of joy this morning, while I was eating some once-powdered eggs, toast, and drinking coffee. Yours was lovely as ever, such taste, such dash, such confusion. I am

relieved to know that our baby girl does not look like a dog after all these traumas. And fie on you for not taking those protective measures with that black b..., as you so serenely confess. I had had a rather pale view of you after birth, of lying so wanly and helpless abed, too listless to move with hardly enough strength to hold the pencil in order to write me. Now Dad writes on the 30th of people bringing you malted milks, quarts of ice cream, etc., all of which you gulp down before clamoring for more. Deception, thy name is woman. You ought to have some K rations handy; they're just the thing for an emergency snack. Well, have an extra gallon on me. I love you for it.

The best present came from Paul and Ann today, a second one. First the magnificent tonette and now the chessboard, pocket-size, beautifully done. I've seen one before, and admired it then. I will certainly write them a letter for having thought of most suitable things to send. We now have an orchestra. Corp. Manning plays the accordion, Joe Ferla the mouth-organ and myself taking the licks on a tonette. I'd write to thank Julie and Carl if I had their address.

The weather is much clearer now. The days are bright and crisp, the nights frosty and cold. Jeep-riding any time is cold.

I heard from Dad that you got the books. Apart from the encyclopedia, they aren't very pretty, but they're on things that interest me. You ought to have fun with the encyclopedia.

I just took off a few minutes to eat lunch, canned salmon, canned beets, tea and canned apricots. Now I must get going. Wish you were here to take the drive with me. It's a beautiful day and you would see all sorts of interesting and thought-provoking sights. You would hear the big canons going boom. Sometimes a big gun will open up near the road and startle you out off your wits. Or is that impossible. You would probably turn around and say "hush up", or more probably, if they saw you, it would break up the firing plan entirely.

One of these days I'm going to crush you, sweetheart, with the

most inflamed kiss you've ever been willing partner to. If you think you feel weak after little Kathryn, wait until then. I've never wanted you so much as now.

All love to you and Kathryn. Your

Al

JILL TO AL JANUARY 22, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling

Saturday

I suppose it's rather indecent to use what you call the snooper's express, since I feel like telling you right off how much I love, desire and miss you. I don't know if it's the weather, which is grey, or the Saturday radio Met, which is Carmen and corny, but some bedeviling spirit possesses me so that if you were here, I would hurl myself and you under the nearest quilt, thereby escaping both weather and opera and possibly gaining some positive ends thereby.

Tom, on furlough, and Joan were over last night. Needless to say, since I hadn't seen Joan for almost two months and Tom for over six, it was quite a sentimental and gala occasion. We went through two bombers of Pabst, six of Bal. ale and several small bottles of Porter. Tom mixed all three species of brew into a nourishing and palatable drink. Apparently it had a high therapeutic value because the baby got five ounces of milk from me at her ten o'clock feeding and slept like a dead thing until five this morning, both unheard of events hitherto. Everyone agreed that, nice as it was to see one another again, the occasion was flat and stale compared to some previous bouts because of your absence. We discussed babies, the Russians and your wonderful description of the escaped ones, sex in its less scientific aspects and Tom sung several Aussie songs, including Waltzing Matilda. He has a nice beery tenor or at least, can carry a tune, an ability which I lack and very much admire in others. This morning I found a third bomber of Pabst

on the sidewalk outside one of the living room windows. Tom had thoughtfully put it there to cool off. I think it testimony to either the honesty or prudery of our neighbors that it was still there.

From this same sidewalk and through the same window there comes a large grey cat now to seek the warmth and sympathy of our happy home. I had the bad sense to speak kindly to it the other day and now he is constantly meowing to get in. He did yesterday and Rachel chased him out again. He'll change his tune when Cooney comes back. I don't know but what it was this same cat that walked into the dining room through an open window about two months ago. I was sitting in the living room and heard unmistakable sounds of a struggle to the death between cat and dog in the back part of the house. However, with magnificent concern for my own nerves and the welfare of the baby as yet unborn, I just sat there until the sounds died away and Cooney came limping in looking very pleased with himself in the role of guardian of the gates... Your letter of Jan. 11 came today. Thanks very much for Sad Sack, whom I dearly love, and the negatives which I'll have made up for distribution to interested parties... I had pickled pigs feet and sauerkraut for lunch. It's the first time I've had the first-named item since you or Johnny Hess brought a jar over that first summer for the mutual delectation of the three of us. I hope it's the last. I guess it was Johnny that brought the feet -- you courted me with a two-pound roll of liver sausage, which I also loathe. It's a wonder I ever looked at either of you.

Love indeed conquers all. And I do mean you.

000XXX

Jill

AL TO JILL JANUARY 22, 1944(A)

Dearest Jill,

Your January 5th V-mail came early this morning along with an airmail of December 26th. The latter expressed some anxiety about me, more touching than realistic. I'm perfectly all right and have every intention of staying that way. That is, as perfectly all right as one can be when he's madly in love and each new letter [*word missing?*] the already mounting frenzy of impatience. It is a great shame, too, that I can't see little Kathryn in her first days and weeks. I know I would love her as you do. All indications are that you are in a fine state of "mother love" and it is a wonderful emotion, apparently, even at this distance. I'll bet you shine and glow all over. To stave off too much pity for me, I'd like to point out that it is silly to regret a great deal of happiness because it couldn't be perfect. Even as I am, I get a great deal of joy from knowing about her. I'm happier than I was before she came and is that anything for which to be pitied? A talk with any of the soldier fathers over here would show the same feeling. I've heard from them a number of times that getting a baby in absentia still was their greatest joy overseas. I feel the same way.

I got a damn fine letter of Earl Johnson yesterday. It was a long one and devoted mainly to a very bitter appraisal of the "home front." Earl is as dead serious as the New Republic and very brilliant about it. He hit at the things you've hit at and that one could gather from the publications that reach us, advertising, the decline of the spirit of sacrifice, the Cotton, Ed Smiths. I deprecate, however, his, your, and others theories that Shangri-la lies in the bosoms of men overseas. Certainly, whatever is the future must lie in them for better or worse and there are tendencies towards both. The romantic's view, and that means most people, of the men overseas is capable of great self-delusion. There is nothing of a grand revelation for a cook who knows the war and the Arab world from a stove in Constantine and two Arab K.P.s The "breaks" work here as everywhere. I met Stern, Westbrook and Hoagie not so long ago as captains.

I just happened to be separated from the unit. They did hardly anything of consequence but were in the right place, namely, a way back where things could be done. They're very humble and helpful when I see them, not often, fortunately - it seems that every man has a conscience, no matter how large or small. The story is most outlandish and doesn't bear repetition here. Strange to say, Stern seems to have tried to get mine around the technicality which eventually obstructed it effectively. He got his on a most amazing fluke. I hope you don't get too angry about this. It doesn't make my work less interesting or the contribution much less. But this business and many other things would give one a better grasp of overseas life in all its ramifications.

I wrote Vic an unfairly sarcastic letter yesterday about music and school and things. I guess he won't like it very much. What's new with Buzz. Is he really inducted? I'm not sure that wouldn't be better than the Navy business. A lot of the latter is so silly.

Bill's mother isn't another Sarah Carlson. She is very nice and very frank in her mild way.

I'll write you a V-letter tonight, darling. For now, I love you very much and don't expect that it'll be hardly any time before we'll be carousing about familiar grounds at a great rate. Kiss little Kathryn for me.

Yours always,

Al



German leaflets sent onto the Allied troops at the landing at Nettuno, January 22, 1944.

AL TO JILL JANUARY 22, 1944(B) V-MAIL

Darling -

I'm awfully sorry to hear about your troubles and feel I ought to give a sympathetic expression in response to your Jan. 4 letter, right away. I know all the while that the baby didn't need me but you did. If we had been in bed together, no physiological or psychic process could possibly have kept you from bouncing up in the middle of the night in the direction of the phone. Now look what happens. I'm not there and you refuse to budge.

Fortunately, your January 5th letter put you well on the road to recovery, which in your case seems to have led through the john. Really, though, I understand that you must have felt very miserable and beaten about, and regret exceedingly my inability to offer so little personal solace. I came overseas to take the physical hardships of the war but you seemed to have taken them yourself in far greater degree. I can say weakly that it is kind of cold here, and add (much more strongly) that this morning I felt the need for your bodily warmth more than words can reveal. I took ten extra minutes to get up by recalling the blessed state of sleeping next to you of a wintry morning. If that be love, make the most of it.

The landings near Rome have been announced. I was almost in on them, but the bulk of the work is yet to be done on this side and I am looking forward very eagerly to the next days. We did some hot propagandizing in the last couple of days and am still in the thick of it. Our 5th Army team is the most scientific and

effective in history.

All my love, dearest. Please think of me kindly, despite your woes. Kisses to Kathy, too.

Your Al

AL TO JILL JANUARY 22, 1944(C) V-MAIL

Dearest -

As the details of the various maltreatments your poor body has had to go through come in, I really feel for you. Poor darling, why must you get bigger and better babies? What a great, strapping infant she must be. I'll be glad to send you part of my next pay to buy yourself ice cream sodas. You easily rate one or two Purple Hearts. It's amazing what the human frame can stand - four to six hours of great pain, all the effects and aftereffects, including feeding the cause of all the injury and feeding her well. And then you bounce back talking about more children - What are you? The Lady or the Tiger? I'll feel ashamed whenever I have to duck. Incidentally, no one is at all self-conscious when the whistle or the plane comes. Everyone dives undignifiedly into the nearest hole or rut. From your letters, I gather with great relief that, despite everything, you've had no permanent ill effects. I would feel very badly if any harm came to you even indirectly through me. Your last letter (Jan. 15th) had you heading johnwards, happy day. But keep me posted. Your descriptions of your own body can't be as good as mine, but, at any rate, you can give them first hand. The bee-yu-tiful wallet come today, just the thing. You can now imagine your picture encased in black, seamless, leather. I'm still encased in khaki and there's nothing you can do about that, I'm afraid. But that has nothing to do with my loving you more than the rest of the world put together.

Love to Kathie, too.

THE amphibious landings at Anzio are really a third phase of the Cassino Campaign, tied in clumsily with the 36th Division Attack of the second phase. Early in the month Herz and De Grazia are told of "Operation Shingle." A strong force is to be landed at Anzio, to cut the German lines running south to Cassino and perhaps trap the divisions now at the Front. Buck Weaver and the others figure that, if they can unsettle the minds of the German soldiers at Cassino a bit, they might give way more readily in the face of the coordinated attack along the Cassino Front. They might even be bottled up.

Secretly and carefully the leaflet is drawn up and printed. It maps the landings, tells the readers that they are in danger of being trapped, and recommends the usual ways out, all colored in the terms and mood of heroic pessimism: slacking off resistance, retreating, letting oneself be taken prisoner at the first opportunity.

On 22 January, Allied troops land on the beaches of Nettuno and Anzio against insignificant resistance; even the minefields are a negligible problem. On the Cassino Front, the Lieutenant has made his arrangements with Captain Peterson of the 34th Division artillery, which covers the central Front. Two days before the landings, a typical fire plan is mapped. The projectiles are set for air bursts every hundred yards from the first positions on back for 800 yards. Then, on 22 January at 15:50 the leaflet is systematically exploded upon the startled German soldiers: they learn of Operation "Shingle" before their commanders do. Total surprise, the dreamed-for element of all battle, is achieved, on both Fronts.

But General Lucas, in command at Anzio, exhibits no hurry to dash for the arteries of communications and their protecting hills. For that matter, he hardly attends to the chance to sweep right into Rome, which is weakly defended and has a population eagerly expectant. As soon as they encounter significant resistance, his troops are ordered to dig in, to await reinforcement, despite their vast superiority in organization, numbers, artillery, and air power. Despite, too, the fact that they have a powerful navy off shore, which can defend them if they are forced back, employing the same kind of deadly fire that broke up the Axis counterattacks against the Gela beachhead in Sicily.

Our Lieutenant is disturbed to hear that the operation has been checked by counterattack. He hurries to the Map Room of G-2 of Fifth Army. He is astonished by what he sees. The invading forces have identified at least two-score enemy elements. True. But they are scraps of this and that. The Germans are halting every *landser* going or coming on leave or from hospital, any vehicle, gun, unit -- no matter of what division or special designation or competence -- and throwing them together into a makeshift "Army", and pushing them forward against the Americans and British. The Allies wait; better German units arrive; the Germans counterattack incessantly, as they are doctrinally commanded; and the new Anzio Front freezes.

JILL TO AL JANUARY 23, 1944

The University of Chicago

The Home Study Department

My only sweetheart --
Sunday

I'm sitting before the typewriter very contentedly. It's a lovely warm Sunday afternoon, the concert on the radio is very good, and I've just nursed the baby and am replenishing the lost fluids with a nourishing bottle of Balantine's. I am testing the thesis that malted drinks are good for one's milk. And the baby and I spent a pleasant, if somnolent, noon hour having our pictures taken in various enchanting poses by Fritz, who has a good camera. I hope the pictures come out well, especially of the baby, though I couldn't get her to open her eyes for anything. I had lunch with Bea and Fritz, and the baby just dozed away on their bed, proving herself to be a perfect companion and guest - - much better than Cooney who always whined and whimpered unless he was permitted to sit on the back porch of their apartment (and then he would bark).

I spent a riotous Saturday night making fudge which never fudged. I always have that trouble. We are going to pour it over

ice cream today and make sundaes, Rachel and I. I am feeling very well, however, and could indulge in higher life if the opportunity presented itself. After I finish this I'm going to take a little walk and mail it, and also your letter from yesterday -- I'm not so efficient about seeing that the mails get through as I was before the baby came. Every day I get stronger and can do more for the baby and me. Today I dressed her for the outdoors, doing a very sloppy job too. But it's very encouraging, this renaissance of my high spirits.

Encouraging also is the second landing in Italy. God, it may mean cleaning up the whole German army in Italy. Maybe you will be home this spring after all, though I don't dare hope too much. Gosh it would be nice if you could see Kathy before she gets much older. Everybody says they get so much cuter as they get older, but she is so perfect now I'm afraid any change would be for the worse. The nurse, who has been doing this sort of thing for forty years, says she is a fine child, so I'm just not biased. I think she is even cuter than Joey because Joey's eyes weren't as large or set as far apart. You'll probably have to wait until you come home to gaze into said limpid pools, as she never stays awake long enough to get a picture of her functioning on all eight cylinders.

In one of your letters quite far back, you commented on the novelty of selling unwanted books and I think you almost praised me for the idea. I forgot to tell you how that little episode came out. Well, I lugged six heavy and dull books over to Woodworth's. Outstanding among the assortment that *The Introduction to the Study of Society* by my a-hole Smith professor, Frank Hankins. The man who appraises books wasn't there, so I left them with a sigh of relief and came back a couple of days later. The guy was there then, and told me in a bitter and cold tone that he wouldn't think of buying them, the store was full of dull unwanted books as it was. I asked piteously, well, wouldn't he just take them and dispose of them to some worthy cause, and he absolutely refused. He said nobody would want them, and wouldn't I please get them the hell out of his store, only he didn't swear, he just looked. By that time I had

put on several more pounds of baby and was incapable of carrying them all home at once, so I had to make two trips. The reason I obliged him at all was that he had promised to order these two limited, and therefore hard-to-get, editions of Goya's etchings for me, and I couldn't afford to antagonize him. So your original premise, i.e., that nobody would want books that you didn't want, was correct and I wasn't so smart after all.

Darling, I would like to send you some fudge if I can ever make the kind that gets hard. Would you please ask me for some? Would you also please ask me for some magazines generally, or some New Republics specifically? Bernice subscribes and if I can ever get her to read them -- she is three months behind already -- she is going to give them to me to send you. I also wrote the New Yorker yesterday to ask them about an overseas edition I hear they have. Then you would have a better chance of reading them all and fairly steadily too.

I am getting sleepy from the beer. Take care of yourself for you are my only darling. All my love, and all Kathy's too, whatever that's worth, limited as her emotional range is.

000XXX

Jill

Speaking of pet peeves in re our American Way of Life, do you know what mine is? It's the concert programs sponsored by vast industrial establishments like Ford or GM, the main purpose of which seems to be not the dissemination of good music but to avail the fourth vice-president the opportunity to shoot his mouth off. Apparently every big corp. in America has on its payroll in the upper brackets one if not many assholes who should have been circuit-riding methodist ministers but who, having missed their vocation in the lust for Mammon, have been storing up sermons in their crabbed bosoms all these years. Then along comes radio, a good if mercenary conductor like Stokowsky, a contract between corp. and conductor, and voila, the executive has his day. I have just heard Mr. Charles G.

Kettering, whose name is burned as indelibly and unpleasantly in my mind as Spam is in yours and who is the vice-president of GM, take up 15 minutes of an hour's symphonic program extolling the virtues of American industry and exhorting the youth of today to become the dullards of tomorrow via the system of free enterprise. The awful thing is that he does this every Sunday and says exactly the same thing too. And guys like that invariably have the most unpleasant radio presences. They could at least hire a radio-trained stooge to toss off their paeans of penuriousness for them.

And then they play Wagner!

Cartoon:

Woman holding her ears - baby holding her ears - radio playing music - dog baffled.

PPSS - Here's the tidbit, verbatim. Down at a Southern army camp a platoon was taking it easy beside the road after a hard morning's workout when a column of Italian prisoners came along. As they passed, one of the prisoners muttered with infinite scorn "Golda bricks!"

JILL TO AL JANUARY 24, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

The morning mailman just brought me your very latest letter, Jan. 14. The mails seem so much slower these days. I can remember when the average time of your letters took was two weeks at the most, but now two weeks seems to be the minimum. I have some time to write you now. I'm waiting for the newly waxed kitchen floor to dry and Kathy is miraculously playing quietly in her room and seems content to wait for her lunch for a while. Every once in a while I give her a lamb chop now. She loves them and eats great hunks, just swallows it without chewing. I'm sure it must make you very mad to think

that such good meats goes down her unappreciative little maw, especially when her constitution can get along very well without fresh meat. When you come home the two of you can fight it out over the chops.

Aren't those Bierce stories fierce (poem). But the Halifax ghost book you sent me takes the cake in something, probably soporifics. I don't like ghost stories anyway. Somehow a ghost to me is singularly lacking in horror, is pallid, both literally and figuratively, alongside of one solid human being with evil in his heart. And then when you get some nasal buck-toothed public school man drawling out a succession of anecdotes, all concerning castles, people you don't know with family trees you're not interested in, and unhappy wraiths just as harmless and adenoidal as the teller of the tales, you have my prescription for a good substitute for Nembutal. The few English detective story writers I've read -- god wot I loathe the detective story form as much as Edmund Wilson, who, in last week's *New Yorker* (you'll get it eventually) lambasted the whole sorry set much to my delight -- are similarly naive, circuitous and dull. The exception of course is the Victorian novelist of mystery who is more strictly a writer of melodrama, who writes much better for one thing than Agatha Christie and her sleep-inducing contemporaries, and who is primarily concerned with characterization rather than whodunit. This may seem hard to reconcile with my fondness for detective pictures but actually, the kind I like are not detective stories at all. They are works of suspense and the problem of evil motivation -- such as the picture I saw the other night. You know the murderer from the start. The suspense lies in his technique and the manner in which the evil of his ways is punished by society or his conscience. Naturally he is always punished one way or the other.

Kathy's cold is all gone today and she is acting like a little angel. It certainly is gratifying to see her like this -- self-sufficient, uncomplaining, and humorous.

Later ...

Jeepers, Joan came over for lunch and just left and this man just called who was at my house New Year's Eve and is coming out in practically 2 seconds to take her (Kathy's) pictures. He is a Chief in the Navy and a photographer and since practically nobody has film anymore this is a great opportunity, if I can fend him off. I mentioned this to Joe, the guy who brought him to the party and who is a friend of Rosable's and he said, "Well, if he is going to take Kathy's picture, let Kathy worry about the quid pro quo." And so I will. For it's you I love, with or without 16 mm film.

Jill

AL TO JILL JANUARY 24, 1944

Darling,

The mail is coming in with most beautiful regularity, now one, now two, and pretty well in order. Today I got letters from you dated January 5th and 7th. In the last two days, your letters of Dec. 24, 25, 27th, 29th, Jan. 3rd and Jan. 4th arrived. I could hardly ask for a more complete record of a most crucial week in my life. I think I can say, that is, that these things have happened in my life, even granted that I'm several thousand miles from them. I gather that, as for me, Christmas wasn't such a gay gay season, but that the events of the two weeks following were. It was especially fine to notice how you came out of it all with a very gay and vigorous spirit. When reading your latest letter, I was almost afraid that you would eat little Kathy up once you got her alone. To your hospital-acquired generalizations I say amen, to all three and a couple of my own. To loving you more, the answer is always yes, though that is somewhat silly when talking of such enormous quantities. I can't say I'm more pleased than not to have her look like me. I'd rather have her look like you. But that is what you said, isn't it? As for feeling as if I owned the "helpless" baby, I can't feel as you do. I realize I don't own her at all already. It is lend-lease, a

fine analogy, but don't forget, to what good uses both the British and the Russians have put lend-lease. On the third point, regarding her utter innocence and absence of bad qualities, I'm not at all sure in one sense. She may already be hatching plots in her little skull to get along without your milk, without my income, and without the rest of society as well. They are dangerous, these silent babes. I admit, if she isn't handsome while she sleeps, she is like me and not like you. You sleep beautifully and never look prettier than when trying to keep on sleeping. And you wonder why I disturb you with amorous intent. You just don't know how ravishable you appear while sleeping.

I think you have hit the key to romantic love in your use of the word "ultimately." I feel the same way. Other loves are possible but one will win out against all competition. It certainly is the best explanation of the theory of "Romanticism" I've ever heard. Don't be surprised if I some day strip it of its context regarding us and apply it to much broader fields.

Are you really going to get a gallon of milk a day? That seems a gigantic lot. Not that there is any comment implied, but I just recalled that I haven't had a glass of fresh milk since leaving Camp Ritchie some nine months ago. So drink my share too while you're at it.

By the way, in answer to scattered worried remarks on your part, I'm very healthy, hardly ever miss a full meal, and even, strange at it may seem, visit my favorite toilet regularly. That last is a laugh. One of my victory aims is to get established on a familiar toilet seat once more. Vulgar, isn't it. But not if you've experienced the great number of inquisitorial devices I have. It does make one versatile and agile, anyway. The present one is a wood crate, worked over by some reluctant EM who apparently had 1) either a grudge against the power-wielding class or 2) a very tiny bottom. In Foster's words, it's like trying to pass a camel through the eye of a needle. And in the cold dawn, a half inch of frost doesn't help.

I'm still looking for a chess partner for a game on that Tom Thumb chessboard Paul and Ann sent me. People's hours are too irregular or they have letters to write. I saw Martin this morning for the first time in several days. He and Clark are living apart temporarily. I also got coal this morning which makes life so much more dandy. About my work - as you see by the fact of my writing you this afternoon - I'm not wearing myself to a frazzle just yet. I manage three squares and frequently a snack at night. For your information, I'm really attached to *[censored]* for my work, that's the *[censored]* on the main front, and have been in that area since I came up to the 5th Army. *[censored]* is helping assault Cassino these days. I never saw a more peaceful scene than *[censored]* from our side of the river near the town of *[censored]* which is on a hill. It shines beautifully in the sunlight in a charming location. There is a monastery on a peak above the town which commands an excellent view too. Occasionally Germans can be seen to run in and out. Away from artillery shell bursts, their explosions look like so many geysers and creampuffs playing about the houses and streets. The Germans have good observation, as have we, and part of our artillery effort is directed at picking them off of the great black sides of mountains across the river. Like many vices, war is dreamy and beautiful from a distance. Only close in is the wretched destruction and the ugly, fearful minefield felt. The final blow to the great romance, the *reductio ad absurdum* is always the little old woman who decides between the lines and in the muzzles of the artillery that there is no time like the present for hanging out the wash. That is why the eternal literature on war comes from the ground war - and the fun of it, the dash, the clean-cut business, the neat comfort of the sporting crew comes on the sea and in the air. My sympathies are with the infantry and the artillery, as any fool can plainly see.

I haven't had news of you and Kathy in a couple of days and am thirsty for more already, spoiled by the splendid postal service of the last *[cut off]* weeks. It is useless to ask questions because you invariably tell me all I want to know. You *[cut off]* wonderfully, you know, my wife. You would *[cut off]* what I think

of you.

Hartley is hammering away at a 155 mm. shell. I supp [cut off] to help if only to ensure my own [cut off] and to assure little Kathy some day soon that her father is capable of paying as much attention to her as her mother.

All my love to you, darling.

Your

All

P. S. Mirabile dictu! Your two letters of January 1 and 14th came, amazing the latter! It's nice to know that scarcely two weeks ago both you and Kathy were doing so well, save that I must officially frown on any activity on your part that will keep you in bed. Why the hell can't they sew things up right? Or am I ignorant? Love.

THE Germans are so proud of their performance that they prepare their own leaflet, something rare on the Cassino Front. They reproduce part of the Allied leaflet, then place a tiny dot alongside the beach on a map of Italy, far from Cassino, and crow, "Here is their bottling up (*Kesselschaft*)!" He writes to his wife that the Beachhead "is like a bird-cage into which the enemy can poke his finger anywhere. But already he's been bit, and bit badly."

Third Division, P.O.Box Anzio, asks for somebody to talk sense into the enemy. Martin Herz volunteers. Al de Grazia is willing to go but it doesn't take much persuasion for him to concede his part of the job to a new comrade, Infantry Lieutenant Joe Ferla, who has a gentle smile and a willing heart, and feels that this is his dish of tea. They go by boat, bearing with them the loudspeaking equipment needed to talk across the lines. With local help, Herz and Ferla set up. The amplifier is sneaked forward to within sniper's range of the enemy. They leave it there and follow back the wire they've laid. Then they start to talk into a microphone. What they say is deemed obnoxious, apparently. Or

perhaps it is too seductive. An 88mm artillery shell explodes nearby. Martin is blown about and scratched up. Joe is struck by shrapnel in the guts and hip. He holds his guts in and tries to roll under his jeep and is hit again, this time by a 50 cal machine gun bullet. Martin calls for help and they are evacuated. With some surprise on all sides, especially his own, Joe survives and begins the long journey back through the chain of hospitals that ultimately ends with the Big PX. Our Lieutenant wonders whether he ought to have gone and done the job right, which, translated, means, whether they would have had better luck had he gone himself.

He establishes a daily routine. Each day he crawls out of his bedding roll, usually first one up in the tent of four officers, brews coffee in a heavy tin can on the pot-bellied stove while shaving, and begins his rounds of the Front. He cannot tell at the beginning of a day how far he can get and whom he will see. He can be sure of seeing the barren hills, the exploding shells, both friendly and hostile, the dug-in companies, the destroyed farmhouses and bombed villages, the peaks of the Apennines turning white in the first snows of winter, and roads that are sometimes asphalted and pitted with shell-holes, at other times dirt roads and often only paths. He drives a Willys jeep, that has lost its exhaust pipe against a stone and can cause soldiers to dive into ditches when it backfires; he gets it fixed at a motor pool down the line, so he can drive in peace with just the ordinary noises of warfare, the continuous booming of cannon from one point or another of the compass, the artillery shells that shriek, the crazy jackass brays of the six-mouthed *Nebelwerfer* mortars. He almost never hears the small arms fire, being a safe distance away (he hopes), if only because they signal an attack or counter-attack and are accompanied by deafening cannonading and occasionally by aircraft diving and bombing in support, always of the Allies, never of the Luftwaffe.



Jeep on the snowy roads around Cassino.

He is continually uneasy about land mines (over a half-million actually were dug up around Cassino alone); he hates the thought of getting his legs or balls blown off. The refrain of the song: *no balls at all, no balls at all, she married a man, who had no balls at all*. Mines seem to be everywhere at first, but as the front stabilizes they are discovered and deactivated, and besides he tries to keep to familiar paths known now to be free.

Captain Foster has a similar job with British Corps on the left flank to the Sea. They have their tea-times on occasion. "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."

JILL TO AL JANUARY 25, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart --

Tuesday

Your letter of Jan. 13 came today, the first one telling of the baby. Gosh I'm glad you're glad. The baby came on schedule, you know. Somebody in Greenhill's office was off the beam. I guess it took so long for the news to reach you because of the natural incompetency of the Red Cross in such matters and also perhaps because the cables were blocked by the plans for the new landings in Italy. I just gave the baby a smacking kiss for you, though I'd already given her many before, without your approval. In fact, I kiss her a great deal, not being particularly bothered by bogeys of germ contamination. (I don't let anybody

else do it, however, or let anybody else pick her up, except the nurse and me.) I'm reading a swell book about babies by a woman doctor who worked with Anna Freud. Stud Ruml sent it to me in a great burst of human feeling. (I guess I must be a nice girl if even a neurotic and rejected suitor makes such a disinterested gesture.) Anyway, it's like that other book I read on babies by the Aldriches, based on psychoanalytic theory. If what they say is true and I believe it is, I've been doing all the right things and Kathy should be, and is, a well-adjusted little kid. Gosh knows no kid ever got any more oral stimulation, considering the inordinate length of time she takes to nurse and then to feed on the bottle. And apparently (apparent to the nurse and me, anyway) she is unusually well-developed for her age, both physically and psychologically. If you can separate the two. In the first place, as minor an indication as it may be, she takes at least twice as much food as the average girl of her age. Secondly, she is very plump and well-constructed, with a large chest and back, yet with very long legs (and feet, I hasten to add sorrowfully) so she won't be a butterball all her life. And a few days ago she started to laugh in a social manner. Babies smile almost from the day of birth, at least she did, but at that age it's attributed to gas or some internal pleasurable stimulus. However, now she laughs after she's been fed if you talk to her. I'm sure it's social stimulation since she doesn't do it if you don't pay any marked attention to her. This is very precocious behavior if it's true --they usually don't do it till the second or third month. However, it's quite plausible babies who are well taken care of do respond earlier than those who aren't. There maybe some innate predisposing factors, considering what a whirlwind you were and are, but, talking to my friends who have babies like Julie Hess and Joan, she seems to be an unusually well satisfied child, singularly lacking in so-called feeding problems. This I attribute to the fact that she's breast-fed and to the high intelligence of the nurse, who is also very patient. Kathy has an insidious habit of going to sleep right after nursing or after she's had a few swigs of the bottle. The ordinary untrained mother, which I would be if it weren't for the nurse, would interpret this as meaning that the baby's had enough.

However, she really hasn't -- it's just a little nap she likes to take --and if we didn't wait until she finished the nap and then give her the bottle some more, she would be half-starved. It takes about an hour and a quarter to feed her, all told, but it's worth all the time because then she's happy and is gaining weight in great chunks. When she's older she won't feel the need to rest in the middle of a feeding, and what the heck, I have nothing else but time anyway. I guess I can tell it to you because you are her father and share some (to be exact, half) of the pride of production -- she really is one hell of a pretty baby according to all experienced and disinterested observers. I agree with you that we are going to have one heck of a time beating off our male contemporaries, not to mention hers.

I hope you are interested in all the loathsome details of feeding and burping. It's really all that one can tell about the behavior of a child this age and I figure you probably want to hear all. She has a loud impolite burp and you can burp at each other all you want, providing you hold her to do the burping. It is a very dull process but necessary, as they are apt to whoops up their food if you don't burp them. Nursing is dull too, except I have taken to confiding all my reading to pocket-size books, so I can read easily with one hand while holding her with the other. If I just sit and look at her while she's nursing I get just as cross-eyed as she is. (No, she doesn't have an optical defect -- they just look that way.)

The nice pictures of the olive trees came yesterday. I like it very much but think I'll have it re-matted, since the one on it is rather wrinkled. I'll put it in the baby's room maybe. Mom said the boys got their pipes yesterday too and since you sent them, it puts the official stamp of approval on smoking in the house.

Mom is coming down Thursday night with Mamie, Dorothy and Mr. Cooney. The last-named will stay if he behaves himself. I'm naturally a bit apprehensive about his attitude towards the baby. I know if it's unfavorable it won't take any violent form --his previous tactic in re children has been to ignore rather than to bite, and to go through ridiculous attention-getting mechanisms

in reference to the adults around. Once while I was wheeling Jerry Weil, a little boy in the building, Cooney snatched my gloves out of my hand and not only refused to return them but dug a big hole in the lawn of our neighbor, the Doberman Pincher family, and hid them. The Doberman was sore as hell when he came out and saw the hole because he smelled the footwork of his enemy, Cooney.

If you can think of any questions to ask about the baby that I haven't already given you the answer of, hurry them along. Gosh I think we were clever to have her. All my love to you dearest, and all of Kathy's too.

Cartoon: woman and baby holding up arms.

JILL TO AL JANUARY 26, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Wednesday AM

I've just wrapped about a doz. New Yorkers in two packages & Borgese's new book which you asked for & shall dispatch them presently, God & the post office willing. Postal authorities have been putting in a big campaign to get people to use V-mail because shipping space is so limited & I'm properly cowed into doing so, inadequate as that medium of communication is. It's still early in the morning. I didn't go back to sleep after Kathy's feeding - & am now waiting to aid & abet her bath. I'm just starting to bathe her myself. It's a big job because she wiggles so and I succumb to a backache half way through. I hope by the time the nurse leaves that I'll be able to do all these things without excessive fatigue. She has been crying a lot since yesterday. I think her formula needs changing. Tomorrow we go to the doctor for her first month's check up and he will tell all. The news is wonderful this morning - the Germans have abandoned Cassino. Maybe this is the beginning of the end. If you don't hurry up & come home the kid will be able to bathe you, if you permit such intimacies. On second thought I'll hog that job for myself. You are the only person I know whose back

I'd like to wash. You look good & you don't wiggle. On the other hand, Kathy doesn't grab my leg. It's a narrow choice. Sorry this is so short.

I love you very much.

000XXX

Jill

Cartoon of woman, mop & baby in bath.

AL TO JILL JANUARY 26, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest,

I've completed within the past few minutes a late scrutiny of your past letters from Christmas on, all of them, which is no small reading job. I found in them various adjunctions such as to tell Walter and Daisy to go to hell, thanks for the stockings and other things, and many reflections on your late coming to grips with the basic processes. Kathie seems to be coming along beautifully thanks to your newly acquired skills and even you seem to have come out into the tenth round fighting, albeit a bit groggy. I shouldn't exclude myself from the groggy list, since I went without sleep last night and spent the morning in a heavy slumber. I was in an evil mood when I did turn in and feel somewhat dull at present. It rained very hard driving in the early hours of the morning, and I completed the job of the elements by slipping in the mud just as I thought I had reached the safety of the tent. However, little things like that are soon forgotten and I am quite ready to write nice letters to people I love like you (exclusively) and look forward to the next meal. I must write Bill Steinbrecher, Earl, Paul and Evers. So much I am indebted. Really, I find that one correspondent like you is enough, qualitatively and quantitatively: anything more is gilding the lily. No doubt you are reading the news avariciously all the while you are nursing Kathy. Our landing shows every sign of a great

success. Still, I wouldn't put anything past the Germans and am not counting the German army in Italy out until it is surrendered or destroyed. Their staff officers are most determined and skillful. Two evenings ago, I took a very long cross-country walk, an unusual practice for me since being here. I enjoyed the solitariness of it, and found some most beautiful farm scenery. One old mill and waterfall was particularly lovely and I wished very much that you were there to see it with me. There was a fine soft embankment too, sloping down toward the stream, very inviting in the soft lights of early evening. Just the thing. The countryside in Italy has more people than our own but they blend very well into the scenery. They belong there. There are small, bright-looking boys and girls tending flocks of sheep and miscellaneous herds of goats and pigs, invariably accompanied by a dog or two. Men and women come riding donkeys in from work along toward dusk. I would like to walk with you through selected portions of the world some day, Darling. Not all, because there is too much of it and besides I, and I think you, like periods of hibernation also. Is it agreed?

The first sergeant seems to be waiting for this typewriter. He is a very nice fellow named Stimson who got a baby girl a few weeks before we got ours. He's a tough-looking hombre with a long scar across his cheek. Now Dabby wants me to take off with him too. You aren't the only one who has too many people around her.

All my love to you, dearest, and give Kathie several kisses for me. Do you kiss her much or little? I don't know what I'd do.

Your only

AI / AI

ONE time Foster comes in quite late because he has been held up at a bridge under fire, which the German guns cannot hit in just the proper way to collapse it, and finally they quit; but he is mostly impressed by a dead civilian without a hat, "without a hat," he says repeatedly, and one doesn't know why this detail should obsess him. But then the

American recalls the old Lancastrian song he has been taught, which in dialect goes something like this: *Nympt te moor pah thet, o nympt te moor pah thet, o mympt te moor pah thet*, sung as medieval church dirge. *Else ye shall catch thy death o could:.....* repeat and refrain *then we shall av to bury theethen'll cum th'wurms and et thee oop.... then will th dooks cum et th wurms....then we shall kill and et te dooks...so we shall av to et thee oop* and of course it ends as it begins, "*don't go out on the moor without your hat.*"

The Team moves out of Caserta to consolidate the operation and to catch up with the Front, leaving Buck Weaver behind for Army liaison, still their Commander. They locate in the ruins of a farmhouse, camouflaged, and out of range of all except heavy artillery and aircraft, from which there is apparently no threat. That's where Club Rainwater is.

Visiting firemen are ever more common, from units across Italy, from Army HQ, from Naples, from North Africa, even from London and the States, for the slaughter, misery, and legends of Cassino are becoming famous by word of mouth, soldiers' letters, newspapers, and film. It is the only European ground show where the Westerners are admitted. To hear the artillery serenade, to see bombs bursting in air, occasional dogfights in the sky, and the famous bleary-eyed bearded characters of Bill Mauldin's cartoons: that's the ticket. Al de Grazia sometimes carries a visitor along, warning him not to appear curious about what he is seeing and not to attempt joviality, prayers, or righteous wrath, nor optimistic forecasts about the end of the war or the waning power of the Germans.

Lt. Commander Livingston Hartley is irrepressible. He is so different, in his braided peaked naval cap and naval insignia, that soldiers are bemused. After all, his business is boats, which they vaguely realize are separate and distinct ways of winning a war. Liv comes in one time telling of watching across the lines to a farmhouse under fire and of "a funny little German running in and out crazily." It appears that every visitor forms his own peculiar indelible memory.

Not long afterwards he is riding with Lieutenant de Grazia, who is going up a road taken often before without being fired upon; but suddenly large calibre shells whistle overhead and begin to crash

nearby. Hartley leaps out and runs for the ditch and rubble, De Grazia behind him for he has to stop the jeep before jumping, so he is struck by the absurd sight of this lanky naval officer in the flapping huge long greatcoat and the visored cap skipping along the side of the road. He blames Hartley for the incident. The same German observer, who had watched the Lieutenant on various occasions and thought him too insignificant a target to waste some precious shells on, spotted the braid and thought, now we'll catch ourselves a General!

De Grazia does a little visiting on his own, to Naples where he beds down with "D Section" at the splendid Palazzo Caracciolo. He joins in the general elation at the news from Algiers that Col. Hazeltine, their detested Chief of Psychological Warfare Operations, has been summarily relieved of his command on December 24; C.D. Jackson is temporarily running the show until a military Commander is designated. There are now new English arrivals to meet, John Reynor, a media executive; John Vernon, a more typical aesthete and scholar; and Edmund Howard, rather like his brother, Hubert except that he has a more distinctive and wry sense of humor and is more of this world. (A third brother, present Lord Howard, is G-2 with Eighth Army HQ.) There is talk of Alfred coming back to join them; Alfred, more militaristic of mind, is hoping for a breakthrough by some means. Whereupon he might do another Bari caper and be one of the first to arrive in Rome. Just imagine its plethora of media-control challenges! And other joys!

He fixes up a ground hut for himself alone out of a mosquito net and the canvas of two pup tents, sleeping on a canvas cot, shaded by bulrushes. He is practically sewn into his long woolen underwear, and sleeps rather like pickle in a herring roll-mop, four blankets and a quilt inside a canvas roll. It is from here that he now leaves upon his daily milk run. The weather is bad, the troops in a poor mood. The Army is stuck; one adds brightly "But the Russians are doing great." This Front begins to look permanent. New things are being added. More and more ammunition and artillery and airplanes arrive so that the enemy is subjected to practically continuous bombardment and dare not move about in the light. As if he didn't know, a leaflet tells him, "We are firing twenty shells to your one and, if we need to fire another five, we can do that too!"

The Army Quartermaster has moved up an ingenious system, a mobile bath and clothing exchange. Soldiers proceeding along the main road, Highway 6, South of the front lines are directed by a sign to where they can strip off their clothing, hand it in, take a hot bath, receive a set of fresh clothing, get back in their vehicle and go on their way. He is favorably impressed by it. Americans are dirtier at the Front than the English: he recalls Heycock in Sicily bathing daily out of his helmet using a large sponge that he treasured; Heycock always walked after a meal, too, as if he didn't walk the rest of the day. De Grazia comes upon several Germans, just surrendered, one morning; they have emerged from days of a filthy inferno; one blonde sad lad is picking dirt from another like him, and combing his hair with the carefulness that monkeys use on one another. Maybe Americans learned as children to punish their mothers by dirtying themselves. And now they are punishing the Army in a way that is hard to prevent.

There is a lot of dirtiness among the troops, despite directives to the contrary; trench foot is common; no one wants to take off his boots and socks in the cold and muck and what the hell, so a guy spends a few days in the hospital; he needs the rest anyhow. Let them cut off a toe, for that matter; it's better than going back to the foxholes. Foot disease is the Cassino campaign's equivalent of the malaria of the Sicilian campaign.

JILL TO AL JANUARY 27, 1944(A)

Sweetheart -

I'm sending you the other half of this roll with a longer letter today. If you fail to get the other letter let me know & I'll have duplicates made.

Much love & many kisses to you.

Jill

JILL TO AL JANUARY 27, 1944(B)

Sweetheart -

A V-mail of Jan 11 just came from you. (Phooey -- I hate writing by hand). These pre-when-Al-heard-about-Kathy letters tear my heart and also make me feel foolish for my gratuitous assumption that the mails come in order. I hope the enclosed pictures assuage your grief. I'm sending four in this letter and four in another. Even if either half fails to get you (the post office is getting very threatening about all the people who use Air Mail instead of V-mail) let me know. I'm having copies made naturally. Fritz took them Sunday with his fancy little German camera. He doesn't like the photographic quality of them, perfectionist that he is, and claims he needs a light meter. However, they are good enough for me. The indoor shots were made on their bed. Note cluttered Neugarten bureau, DeGrazia knee. In outdoor shots note bricky brick building on left (that's where we live -- the bottom row of windows is the English basement -- we live in one like that only in the other wing facing the lawn I'm standing next to) and homey Ridgewood Ct. homes. (Note Time-Life style of captioning also.) At the end of the street is that vacant lot we used to cut across going to the 53rd St IC on icy days. Also note drunken appearance of your child. We couldn't get her to wake up. In the close-up of her outside, don't you think she looks a lot like Dad and also like you? She's frowning because of the sun but she still wouldn't wake up. I think she's pretty, don't you?

We'll take some more this Sunday and every Sunday that we can get films for. I prefer Sunday because Fritz can help and he knows a little about picture-taking, though not much.

The New Yorker answered my query about a direct subscription to you and I enclose their letter and also that adorable little overseas edition in still another envelope. I can't quite figure out what they mean. I guess it takes a mind well-versed in the ways of GI.

I have to go shopping now. It is still morning but I did want to

write you before I take this whole mess, and also your New Yorkers and the Borgese book over to the post office. I didn't get a chance to mail them yesterday. The weather was so warm and lovely (65 -- isn't that unusual) that I took Kathy out for a trial spin in her buggy. Since I was a little timid, I took her down to the genteel wide open spaces of 53rd St. rather than to the proletarian and cluttered alleys of 55th where the post office is. Today it's raining and I have to take her to the doctor this afternoon as she is one month old. I'll wrap her up good. I am finally being convinced by all the nagging nurses and grandmothers that the baby is not as hot as I am.

Now I worry that you are going to be a strict father because you never had any sisters and don't know how silly adolescent girls can be. We may even expect too much of the little boys. After all, you were unusual, and furthermore, they really have shown an unusual willingness to accept financial responsibility around the house, working the way they do. It's hopeless to try to divert Vic at this point in his life. His great passion is his trumpet and whether or not he turns out to be any good, it's a wholesome interest and keeps him off the street. He is beginning to take lessons now from a man described as the best trumpet teacher in Chicago. He is so excited about it he has agreed to stop eating so much, a welcome bargain to one and all. He even admits he has to get a good classical training before he can start learning swing from the ground up. I think they'll come out fine. Eddy is really a very sweet and thoughtful kid and is quite mature in his feeling of responsibility for the family, especially for Vic. I think you can easily interpret their relative lack of enthusiasm for college in the light of current conditions. After Al, Ed doesn't know how soon he'll be drafted once he turns 18 and Vic has had more opportunity to see the world than kids of his age do in normal times because he's been working so long. That in itself diminishes his desire for the academic life. Oh well, we should worry if they get a year or two behind in their intellectual development. It's the same kind of casualty that everybody in the Army who would rather be a civilian must undergo.

I still have to go shopping. All our love to you, my darling.

More tomorrow.

Jill

AL TO JILL JANUARY 28, 1944

My dear Love,

I am presently engaged in a biting, humorous repartee with Tooter regarding the incapacity most people to even blow their own noses. I don't know what lacks in most people's training and/or mentality but they are incapable of taking care of themselves and lacking in the qualities necessary to get others to take care of them. I don't mind either method. Forgive me for ever berating your non-practical qualities. You are far superior in resourcefulness and independence to most men, far superior and far more intelligent. Why do I have to forsake your company for such a crowd of incompetents? You are so neat and nice. And when things aren't done, they complain, but never think of giving an order to have it done. Such fools. Remind me to kiss you so much more often for your good qualities I neglected to praise, even though it hardly leave me time to eat.

Last night I wrote you no letter, deserting life and love to write to Earl. I finally tossed it off before turning in. I'm reading a thrilling collection of short, well-written, science mysteries, including such things as stories by H. G. Wells, and one on man-eating plants. They are good and I'm sure would appeal to your bug's-eye biases. Animal life is not so active these days in these parts. I've found one or two insects in my bedding in the past couple of weeks but they seemed to be only some type of beetle. It's a wonder anything can survive these nights, and I'm sure anything that would survive would perish in the open jeep rides that follow.

The first couple of copies of the Chicago Daily News that Uncle

Bill sent me for Christmas arrived today. Despite their autumnal antiquity I enjoyed reading them very much this afternoon. They made me feel so much closer to you and to a lot of other things in life I'd not had time to think about, so much do you eclipse the whole of Chicago's millions in my thoughts. I see Westbrook Pegler's still whipping it up. I'm sorry, but I could only laugh at his columns. They seem so remote and old-fashioned - Do people still get worked up over him daily? Leaky and Yoder still seem OK. O'Brien is working his confusion and good-hearted mysticism overtime. The smarty-pants editorials are still there and the local murders and gamblings again only arouse amusement. For pathetic specimen of the year, I nominate the depraved little beast who murdered his 4-year old step-daughter. Such an elementary psychology book crime. And then all the good Slavic and German names that resound in the city news - of robberies, meat prices, factory stories, soldier stories. What a funny world I left. I enjoy reading the home paper so much more here. It does give me, in addition, that actual feeling of being close to the city. I'm certain there are articles in it which we'd find worthy of comment. I almost instinctively want to ask you what section you would like to read first. You are really my darling; it seems that practically every experience in my life is tied up to you in some way.

Would you, by the way, send the Daily News and Time mag. my correct address. You might call them up and save writing.

I still can't figure out how Kathy grew so large on so little. She sounds like an all-time record for baby girls. Like you, I am grateful that you had an excellent doctor and sorry that you had to go through such a tough time because of a couple extra pounds. Do take care of yourself now. You can bank on losing half of whatever you gain now when I return. There will be rock-leaping, parlor games, tavern dart-games and dancing, frenzied cooking of minute steaks (you know I can't stand the sight of raw food laying around with no one doing anything about it) and exhaustive and exhausting talks far into the night. You don't half know what a horrible creature I've become, full of desires, obsessions, and devilish new ways of turning each minute of

time. In some ways I've reacted and I don't know what will come of such habits. I insist upon shaving and eating regularly; I still put a good shine on my shoes when I can and a few things like that which I once thought were silly accoutrements of 18th century fancy armies. I don't think there's enough of that in our own army. People that go around with beards and unkempt clothing soon convince themselves that they're dog-tired, well on the way to physical collapse. Of course, at home where physical collapse is hardly to be feared, the luxury of unkemptness will be looked upon more favorably, save by victims of said stubble.

I appreciated and found very interesting that article by Lippmann. I think he glides by issues, however. He implies 1) that congressmen should represent the nation and not their constituency; 2) that congressmen are run by pressure groups (I'm not so sure of this); 3) that the polls and newspapers are more accurate judges of P. O. than congressmen (think of this awhile); 4) that the President is more representative of the People than the Congress. It all boils down to Lippmann using the term "representation" too loosely for me to make real sense out of what he is saying. However, and that is the function of most political commentary and political "science" writing, for that matter, he says pleasing things in a varied way and under an intellectual cloak that I like. Therefore I approve of the article. Earl Johnson hit the real point more nearly when he applauded the president's leadership, i.e. "non-representative" qualities. I'd put it this way - in the nebulous realm of the margins of public opinion, congressmen, for a number of reasons best not gone into here, are timid and conservative, whereas the President pushes ahead to a decision according to his own ideas.

While you clear your throat to the tune of B.S., I'll go on to finish this letter. As you know, the battle for Rome is on. It won't be a pushover. But the results may be brilliant and far-reaching. I'm almost ready to take bets on whether a great Second Front will be necessary.

Do you know how many blankets I have now? Four and a quilt,

just enough, with a wool underwear top, to make sleep comfortable. The cold air smells good but feels bad. I have plenty of clothing too and of toilet articles, in short, of everything I need. Hershey bars would be wonderful, and you would be even more wonderful for sending them only if you have time - no hurry. And I would also like - I blush, I cringe - a box of ordinary cigars. To think the vile [*used?*] would ever enter your life, and through your most trusted loved one.

Many kisses to you, dearest one, and to Kathie, too. Whiskey-drinking, cigar-smoking and evil-smelling to the contrary, I love you and will abstain from all for one good crack at you.

Your sweet, lovable pal,

Al

JILL TO AL JANUARY 28, 1944

My only darling --

Friday

Your two V-mails of Jan. 15 came today. I think it's swell my mail is getting through to you and yours to me, so we are only separated by a month or less now, instead of several. More, more, you cry, in re news of the baby, and I'm happy to give it to you all.

I used to think your expectations a little high when you claimed you could get any girl you wanted and the best girl in the world at that. (You did tell me that once, when I first knew you.) Well, I don't know if you got the best girl for a wife but you certainly got the best baby girl for a daughter. By everybody's standards she is wonderful. Even on the grossest physiological level, she does remarkably well. We went to the baby doctor yesterday for a monthly checkup and she weighs ten pounds now, which means she's gained on the average of two ounces a day since birth, which is terribly good. He X-rayed her and listened to her chest and she's in perfect condition. And her behavior was

superb, in a DeGrazia sort of way. I carried her over and back from his office on 57th and Harper and she loved it, though I can't say the same since she must have had fifteen pounds of clothing on in addition to her original great weight. I didn't use the buggy because it looked like rain and carrying her I would have been better able to keep her dry. She didn't cry at all during the examination, though when he started to talk to me about her the phone rang -- it was the local Collector of Internal Revenue, of all things, I gathered from the angry drift of conversation, and then she bawled out appropriately. However, while she was on the examining table she did manage to crap and wet all at the same time, which drove me into a frenzy of activity and embarrassment, since I had to clean it all up in my awkward way. It took me what seemed like hours to get her dried and dressed again, and all the while the doctor kept poking his head into the examining room and asking me if I wasn't ready yet. I was a sad sight indeed, with the sweat pouring off me in gallons and my hair falling down in my eyes, and me unable to push it back because I was holding her with one hand and trying to dress her with the other. He gave her a richer formula, which she is taking like a sport today, and also started her on orange juice and cod liver oil, which she doesn't feel so sporting about. The two are given separately so she isn't conditioned against one or the other, in case she develops a liking for one and a distaste for the other. She not only laughs now when you talk to her, but lies awake after a feeding and crows with amusement at herself. This is very advanced behavior. They usually don't start that till they are three months old.

Today is her first month's birthday and I bought her a big black and white panda. I had to go down to see Greenhill for my first month's checkup, so I did some shopping, my first in months. I got myself a sort of nurse's uniform only it isn't white, it's red and white stripes, and also another cotton dress. They both button down the front, a necessity these days when I am constantly shedding my clothes. They also look much neater than sweaters and skirts for wearing around the baby. Greenhill

said I was fine and practically a virgin. I think the way he stitches people up, they come out smaller than when they started. I guess I told you before that cutting the patient instead of letting them tear is a routine matter nowadays. And the size of the baby doesn't make it hurt any more than it would ordinarily, because by the time the baby starts its trip down the birth canal they give you gas. That is usually the last fifteen minutes or so of labor. I think that most of the pains are directed towards opening up the mouth of the uterus so that the baby can get going. I don't remember how many details I gave you of the whole process. As you can gather, I didn't have a very long labor -- at least, the hard part wasn't very long -- about four hours, I think. I like your comparison of my naiveté with that of the soldier going into battle, only I don't think a soldier could be that naive and live. I was fully prepared to run through a couple of volumes of Jane Austen in the labor room, and was mildly surprised to say the least, when I found myself just about ready to read through your letter that came when I left the house for the hospital. I guess Mom was sort of amused, in a faint way, at my literary aspirations of the moment. There seems to be a great conspiracy of silence among women who have had children about the whole process. It's a fortunate one too. It's difficult to describe what it's like without scaring the pants off a man; yet the fact that the normal woman is willing to go through the whole thing again and again must indicate something about the psychology of pain in childbirth. I would still rather have a baby than have a tooth drilled, although there is no comparison in the pains involved in each experience. The thing about having a baby is that the pains are all your own -- there's nobody there to inflict it on you. And then, of course, you know you're going to have a baby. The whole thing, up to the point where you don't do anything else but hurt, is very exciting and I'm sure I'll always find it that way. Actually, the worst part for me was the ten-day span in the hospital, with all the petty irritations. It wouldn't have been so annoying if you had been there, because Greenhill would have let me go home the 8th day, knowing you were there to care for me as only a husband can, the way he did Julie. You could have also kept me steadily

supplied with ham sandwiches and milk shakes, to supplement the nauseatingly deficient hospital diet. And I would have felt fine and victorious right after the baby was born if I hadn't deemed it necessary to eat a huge lunch right before leaving for the hospital. It didn't exactly stay put.

I guess that's the whole story, and a very pretty one it is, too, considering the results. I'm just sorry we didn't start this whole thing when we were 21, except maybe we wouldn't have been so many places together if we'd had to confine our travels to maternity wards and nurseries.

The nurse is leaving next Friday and I shall be very glad to be alone, although she's fulfilled her function excellently. You get so you don't think your home and your baby are your own with a competent nurse around, especially if she's domineering and motherly and you're easily cowed and kiddish, the way I am. The nurse claims I am worse than the baby. That probably is true -- I'm only reasonably competent and mature when I'm completely removed from mothering women, like Mom, this nurse, my old nurse and Daisy.

Mom and Mamie, Mamie's sister and Dorothy came down last night with Cooney. This is sort of a trial period for Cooney, though nobody else knows it but me. I'm not so sure I'll be able to take care of him and the baby too, especially since he gets more erratic every day. I sort of hinted this to Mom when she called just a few minutes ago, and she hinted right back that Dad would probably have a fit if he saw that dog go in and out of the house one more time. I think Dad is more attached to Cooney than he will admit. I think I shall give him back, though it will take tact and maneuvering, to save my face as well as Cooney's, as I guess I shouldn't have wanted him to come down at this time in the first place. He is a helluva worry, though, always fighting with other dogs and aching to get out. I guess his behavior is more aggressive than usual because he's jealous of the baby. He doesn't quite know what to make of the baby, but has enough sense to stay away when I'm nursing her. He doesn't go near her or her basket. He just follows the nurse

or me around, or sulks in the corner if we're both busy with her.

Bob Cook is back in town on leave. Marion Gerson called me and they are coming over Sunday. I suspect they are going to get married some time. I hope so, since he is a nice guy and of course I think she's a wonderful girl and ought to get married to a nice inoffensive lad such as he. He's probably quite a man by now, having three good years away from the Hyde Park atmosphere.

I got a nice letter from Mrs. Herz congratulating us. She said she had seen Habe. I hope he'll be here soon. I've found out a little more about what you're doing from the Digest article, which I was fortunate to find in Greenhill's office today. (If you can't find what you want on a newsstand, go to a doctor, I always say). I can imagine how garbled a version of the facts it must be, but it did leave me knowing a little more than I did before. I never could understand your references to the ammunition dumps before. Gerson is going to get me that back issue of Life. They have access to old copies at Esquire. I'll send it to Mr. Heycock then. Even though I was forewarned by your comments on the Digest article, I still always find it exciting to read something about your work.

God darling I miss you. It's like putting together a puzzle and having the biggest piece missing (the four motors of the Flying Fortress in the military puzzles we're used to doing). If you were here I think I would be completely happy. But maybe you're right -- it will be soon. The news from your side is good.

I'll love you always -

Jill

JILL TO AL JANUARY 29, 1944

My sweetheart --

I just got back from a rather exhausting walk with Kathy, the buggy and Cooney. We went down to Cunnag's at 53rd and Blackstone and had ice cream cones. I felt very sad that you couldn't be with us and that Kathryn was too little to eat a cone. Cooney had chocolate and I had coffee ice cream. 53rd was just lousy with baby buggies and we had quite a time weaving our way in and out of them, especially since Cooney kept wrapping his leash around my legs until I finally had to release him. The weather has been very nice and relatively warm this week, and besides, she has plenty of sweaters and blankets. This morning she got a pair of blankets and a satin quilt just like the fancy ones we have, which you haven't seen as yet. She really has gotten some magnificent presents. I haven't had to buy her a thing except the nursery furniture. Unkie gave her the blankets, incidentally. And this morning came a silver knife, fork and spoon set that I had had when I was a little girl. Unk had resurrected it and polished it all up for her. It is beautiful though it has my initials on it which gives it a nice sentimental touch if you have no emotions about the initials BO.

I went out this morning to buy beer and cadged a half a pint of pre-war gin off Mr. Hype Park Liquor. It was a dollar and a quarter and I put it away in my underwear drawer. I can remember when one could get a good quart for the same price. Incidentally, the sentimental fruit cake that I had cached away in the same place for our mutual delectation when you come home is half way eaten already. I took it out of the drawer because I was tired of smelling like a fruit cake and noticed it was beginning to get dry, so decided it might as well be eaten. I'm glad I didn't save it because it wasn't so wonderful, albeit very fruity and I whoopsed one night after having eaten it before I went to bed. I'll make a much better one for you.

Ed gave me a beautiful large picture of himself, an enlargement of the one for his graduation year book. Everybody thinks it is

you, you still look so much alike. I thought it was very nice of him to give me one. Speaking of pictures, I think we'll have a professional one done of Kathy and me when she is about two months old or so. And speaking of Ed reminds me of christening because Mom thought it would be nice to have Ed be the godfather. I had already asked Mom to be the godmother. Both godparents have to be Catholic if we want her christened in the Catholic church. I thought we would also do that when she is a little older, about three months, and the weather is warmer.

Did I tell you that Day is coming out some time in February? I called her last night just for the heck of it, and the whole damn family was over at her house for a visit and I had to talk to them all, sixth cousins included. I'm awfully anxious for her to come. I think it will be fun for us both. The nurse is leaving this coming Friday. I could have her longer but I want to get in practice before Day comes so I can appear to be an old hand.

Gosh I'm so sleepy from the walk I can hardly keep writing. I never do write as much as I want to or I think I should. But I do love you, passionately and constantly, regardless of the length of my letters.

Jill

AL TO JILL JANUARY 29, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest -

I'm in a bored mood of dolce far niente this afternoon. Everything is going along nicely in my infinitesimal sphere though the rumble of artillery means that Jerry is getting a hell of a plastering all this while. I can't see any of it from here, here being the farmhouse room headquarters which looks out only on a dead string of vines and a line of skinny trees. It's times like these that try one's patience, knowing that everything is going fast while I'm going slow, knowing big things are coming while having nothing to do, having too much time to think of you

and miss you. I suppose I could go through a lot of motions of doing urgent things, such as Herz is prone to do, as well as a couple of others. They have compulsions that won't make them admit that there is a time for waiting as well as a time for acting. Or maybe I'm getting stale and disillusioned but I doubt that. Even a good raid on Berlin fails to stir me much. I get a momentary elation and that passes. There is nothing like a good breakthrough to give the spirits a rise, even though the raids may be more important. I don't think it'll be long before the paralysis at the heart of Germany creeps out to its limbs. An animal can thrash around for some time after it is mortally struck. There is a certain amount of decentralized locomotor ability.

Your letter of January 14, which came yesterday, had all sorts of things about soap operas (I read detective stories, now degenerating, aren't we), politics and civilian luxuries. I don't mind the last as long as they don't complain about the little sacrifices. I think I disagree about total mobilization. Why should it be done at this point? Why wasn't it done long ago when we needed it most? What good will come of it now? That is my feeling also towards a huge army of 9 millions and towards sending all this mass of men overseas. What will they do? Who will they fight and where? I think that we have plenty to do the job right now, considering the armies of our allies. I feel sorry, too, for the large number of men with families and from responsible places, like Buzz or Bill King and others, who must be confined to very low grades in the services because of coming in late.

I shall be dismayed if Kathryn continues to resemble me. I want her to look like you. There's nothing like having more than one of a good thing. Yesterday she was one month old already. The sweat has hardly dried on me and she is aging! I don't think beauty during the first couple of years means anything at all, or even for the first sixteen years. I was my handsomest at six and look at me now. (I wish you could.) I'm smoking a cigar. Wouldn't I be repulsive?

Hartley said his wife had written that Whitaker showed up at a cocktail party of hers in Washington. Habe wrote Clark the most painful letter about how nice it felt to be in New York. We are all drooling with envy. I'm about due for one from Galsworthy or Heycock on the same subject. I may head for America, if I do, like a couple of colored boys are supposed to have done in an amphibious jeep. They were sighted several hundred miles off Casablanca, the story goes. No I wouldn't either. The longer I stay, the happier I'll be when I get back.

Always your,

Al

JILL TO AL JANUARY 30, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Comes the end of a very wet Sunday. It started off by my being routed out of a very sound post-six-o'clock-feeding by the nurse to learn my latest lesson in baby-tending -- formula-making. It took me practically all morning and I damn near fell in the sterilizer to come up pure and germless myself. A very dull process it is, and I flinch to think I'll be doing it for the next ten years, more or less. This afternoon Gerson, Bob Cook and Jane Cates came over, and I started all over again, only this time it was beer, vodka and a little item I thought up all by myself, vodka martinis -- to wit, one part very dry sherry, one part vodka. It is a very painless drink, from the tiny sip I had; I am becoming increasingly convinced that vodka is good for anything gin is. Naturally I did not partake of these goodies, only beer, being a Nursing Mother, which has kind of the same hushed quality about it in print as the phrase Expectant Mother. Cookie is very sunburned, a Lt. senior grade, and not particularly embittered by war in the Pacific. He admits that most of it is very dull, even when he was C.O. of an LST in the Lae operations. He says we are infinitely better equipped than the Japs and is very optimistic about the end of the war in that

area -- though of course it will terminate after the European one. He is completely the nice guy you meet in the services now, resigned to what comes and not particularly soul-searching, not asking for much considering what the expectations of his class and kind once were.

Speaking of the war in the Pacific, everybody here is of course appalled by the stories of the Jap atrocities. It's revolting, the whole business, but I don't see why we should be surprised. But we do it, every time -- at the two-facedness of Franco, at the Fascism of a Petain government, at the brutality of the Germans in Poland. We still insist on viewing war and diplomacy as a polite game of checkers, in which the direction of the moves and the number of men removed from the game are limited and somewhat predictable. We don't seem to realize that the enemy will do anything and furthermore hate us desperately because we are potentially so much more powerful than they.

To more pleasant topics. Cooney appears, and I use the word guardedly, to be adjusted to the baby in his peculiar way. He waves his tail around when I pick her up, whatever that means, and gets excited when he sees me dressing her up, because he knows we're going for a walk. However, I dare not make any predictions. I still think that when she gets to the toddling stage we'll have to get a puppy and bring them up together. He's too old to tolerate the vagaries of a young child.

And then you'll be here to determine whether or nay we shall have a dog, its sex, breed and appearance, and all the domestic matters which hitherto I've had to work out alone. It will be much more fun when you take over. Think of all the arguments we can have, and all the kisses and sundaes we can share to make up to one another.

All my love, dearest – J

JILL TO AL JANUARY 31, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart --

Kathy is yowling mightily for her two PM feeding and so I'll take refuge in this letter to you. Two of yours came a little while ago, Jan. 16 and 19, the latter written on what I can only guess to be GI toilet paper. First, in reply to your very astute and amusing review of *So Little Time* -- I'm glad you told me, because I was all set to read it, in line with my policy of reading everything you say you read if it isn't too difficult or too technical, which automatically excludes everything but *So Little Time*. But anyway, my intentions of maintaining our wide community of interests is there, even if the mental muscles aren't. (I still haven't gotten past the preface of *Mannheim*.) Incidentally, what publication is that Quisling speech from? It looks interesting though I haven't read much of it yet. I just came back from shopping with Kathy. We are quite an addition to this already quaint neighborhood -- buggy, Cooney, and me with my dangling socks and locks. And Kathryn completely covered with assorted produce and loaves of bread. Her coloring is still what it was at birth -- dark brown hair and funny-colored eyes, not quite blue yet not much of anything else yet. She is beginning to look like a big baby now, not just a new infant, and has a very active and appealing face. I gave her a bath this morning and it was lots of fun for us both. She splashes around like a little fish, though I guess those swimming motions are part of the infantile reflexes. I'm bushed. I didn't go back to sleep after her five AM feeding but stayed up and made formula and breakfast for myself instead. I'm practicing all these things to be ready for action when the nurse leaves which is Thursday, thank God. I am tired of being bossed around and shopping for her highly limited food tastes. I hope you get the pictures soon so you and your driver can vie with one another in the beauteousness of your babies.

Darling I hate to sound patronizing but you are strictly off the beam about Day and towels. That is the way all household equipment for the bride is initialed. It's just a form, like a woman

using her husband's Christian name after the Mrs. instead of her own (i.e. not Mrs. Jill). I know hers are marked DOB and my mother's were that way too. I guess using the wife's initials instead of the husband's is an extension of the old tradition that the household goods belong to the wife. Anyway, it's good form and bears no reflection on your actual ownership or the stability of the marriage tie. So bear her no ill will -- and it was a magnificent present, the cost of good linens being what they are. And I like them initialed that way, anyhow.

I had to go feed the baby just now and read that Quisling speech while doing so. It is a masterpiece of equivocation, deliberate paradoxes and sheer immorality.

We got a letter from Irene Keller today. Do you remember her? She and her husband are in Medford, Oregon. I guess the little girls were at an El Paso boarding school until they got settled there. I had sent her a Christmas card, you see.

Oh, about the insurance. I had forgotten I had ever written you about it. You know how I am. I get these ideas fixes, only they don't stay fixed very long. (continued on our next -- J.O.DEG). I guess November was my month for fretting over fiscals. The day I wrote that I was probably sore at your mother for some breach of faith, like forgetting to get me a bargain in the bargain room. I really don't care much about it at the present time, since I suppose you're right that they need it more than I do -- I mean, the psychological values derived from insurance. But I still think all matters involving your finances, no matter what or in which direction they're disposed, should be in my hands ultimately, if only because I'm really a lot smarter than anybody else in those matters, despite my apparent inability to keep my checkbook sweet and clean. You're right about your mother being Machiavellian, though. Considering the ease she got that half dozen pair of silk stockings off of me when she didn't even like that color, I shudder to think of what she could do with something that she did like the color of.

The presents keep pouring in for Kathy and the letters keep

pouring out. I am working myself up into a fit over the amount of correspondence I must carry on to maintain even a semblance of courtesy towards friends and relatives. I wish to hell I could forget about everybody, but I suppose it is writ in the stars above that I am a well brought up little girl and must write well brought up notes on occasions like these. I wish to hell furthermore that I had never learned to write or that my mother had never taught me to curtsy. She really did, you know, and I spent the first nine years of my life bobbing up and down like a Halloween apple until I finally got wise to myself and discovered that I did not look like a dear little girl, only like a great big jackass.

Kathryn did get a blue flannel bathrobe from Cousin Rose, the one who gave us the blankets and quilt, which is very sweet. It's just like a grown-up man or woman's robe, but she can use it now after her bath. It had a rope tie around it and I think lambs dancing on the pocket. You'll probably want one just like it, in lieu of the one that got burned in the stove.

I'm sleepy and enormously hungry, though I've already had two large breakfasts today, as well as three sandwiches, soup, milk and apples for lunch. It's about four o'clock now and I'm ready to start on tea.

Lots of love to you sweetheart from us both. I've kissed Kathy for you several times, indicating to her which were your kisses and which were mine, and she has developed a rash. I hope there is no cause and effect here. Now she is plastered with calamine lotion and looks like a baby ghost or a ghost baby. I have no fear, though. They all get rashes, the doctor says. It goes and it comes, with the wind from the stockyards no doubt.

OOOXXXX

Jill

AL TO JILL JANUARY 31, 1944 V-MAIL

Jill, my love -

I think your birthday is coming soon, Feb. 12th or something like that, isn't it. Many kisses for the occasion, even if I don't recall the exact day. I couldn't remember you any more on that particular day than on any other, and if I were of a mind to send you tokens of my love (as I am) I would be sorely pressed. The environment I spend most of my time in affords little except shattered tree stumps and crumbled stone. A remarkably fast letter came yesterday from Eddie, dated January 21st. I was sorry it wasn't from you but he assured me you were looking very well and everything was running along nicely enough. The letter was most literate, incidentally, and entirely adult. He is really the finest type of young man - he offers excuses, he knows himself very well and candidly, he is very unassuming and honest. His complete unpretentiousness makes me defenseless; there is no attempt to impress an older brother with other than the truth, which impresses me more than anything. I am very proud of him and hope he finds outlets open for his activities, which are not of the precocious, flashing type. He hasn't found his principal field of interest yet, though I remember him liking math and biology pretty well. I wonder if now he isn't at some sort of an impasse due to some in the family, particularly inclining in that direction and therefore failing to provide him with any glimmer that his efforts ought to go in that direction. I have a feeling that this is why the spark is lacking.

I haven't had much to do today, like yesterday and the day before. Last night, I had to drive to a place in an evil blackout, but found when I got there that there was a good film showing, so that after delivering an order, I joined the group of men clustered about the mobile film unit. It was Humphrey Bogart in Action in the North Atlantic, and rates a top in swift action and nobility of purpose. We enjoyed it a lot, "we" meaning another visiting fireman I had in tow, a guy named Kaufman. Kaufman, who saw Jerry recently, said he was pretty well placed as head

of our biggest radio station, and probably will stay put there for a while. On the road this morning I met Brown Roberts who is in these parts with a photographer from Life. He still has the moustache which we grew together and I'm urging him to keep it.

Apparently not only Bill and him were surprised by tonettes. Yesterday Ferla got, not one, but sixteen tonettes from Special Services. Everybody is playing bad tunes madly. He also got some books which are good ones, including one of Thurber's short prose essays which I have escaped into hiding with.

But on the whole, life is a very dull thing without you, sweetheart. I won't really feel fully alive until I can hold you tightly and tell you how much I have dreamt about you and missed you. And if little Kathy gets in the middle, that's too bad. She'll have to get kissed and hugged, too.

All my love, dearest.

Al

End of January 1944 letters

