

**JILL TO AL JULY 2, 1945 V-MAIL**

Sweetheart --

Today was considerably brightened by getting three V-mails from you -- the 22nd, the 24th and 25th. I can hardly contain myself at your premonitions of home-coming. After your success in getting Radcliffe and Wilson back, I have renewed faith in your ability to circumvent the grim fate that has already kept us apart too long.

And as if to presage the moderately good news your letters contained (since obviously nothing can be really good news until I finally get *The Word*), the parcel postman, who comes earlier than the regular mailman, brought a great box full of things from you, odd objects, hardly describable within the limits of our language. In the first place there was that peculiar raincoat, of German origin, probably called a Volksgemeinschaftschlicker, in their more much scientific tongue. I had a helluva time with it until I finally caught on that there weren't any holes for arms. And then there were those dingy woollies and the big boots and the eminently practical objects, to be known henceforth in this house as Daddeesox. None of these things will be of the slightest use to me, you may be pleased to learn, since my feet aren't that big, except the Oriental table throw, which I promptly threw on the table. It's nice I guess, except that I'm no great fancier of Oriental art.

I've been leaping up and down all night like a jumping jack, trying to get our daughter to bed. I put her to bed, then she wets, then I completely denude her and change her, then I put her to bed and then it starts all over again. During one of these prolonged meetings we had, she exhibited a new and amazingly atavistic trick -- if you can recall our past performances. She suddenly decided it would be a delightful trick to lean her nose against mine and, pressing foreheads together, stare delightedly into the one eye my two converged into. Both our noses are bent and raw from this performance, and any chance that we might lose our respective sniffles is

gone forever, since we shall forever now re-infect one another. However, I long ago decided that a runny nose bespeaks nothing about the state of a child's health. It's just unattractive.

I didn't write you all weekend because I was tired and gloomy until Sunday, and then I dispelled the gloom partially by staying out at the beach all day with Kathy -- she was having a good time and rewarded my evil of depriving her of a nap by sleeping until nine this morning, so I got the first good night's sleep I've had since I was 10 years old. And last night I went to a crummy double feature with Virginia, while her husband popped in on Kathy at suitable intervals. One of the pictures was Hangover Square with Laird Cregar and it was exactly like The Lodger, same people, same locale. The only difference was in the choice of a murder weapon. The other film was too awful to speak about.

Vic is here now, in the bathroom, which I would very much like to use too. I fed him a pork chop dinner, a great novelty to us all, and he asked me to tell you that he thinks I am a good cook. I am puffed with pride. I also got a letter from Ed today, a fine indictment of the Mississippi weather. His life and routine down there must be a good deal like the stuff you took at Camp Davis. The interesting addition is that they have bedbugs, which I think is pretty dreadful for an Army outfit in the States, don't you?

Vic is now fixing the toilet, which periodically stops up. It's wonderful, having a man about the house, if only occasionally. He just looked over my shoulder and said I should underline the word man.

I wonder too about your coming back here to school, after the offer made by the Dean. Frankly I'm not too crazy about staying here. Perhaps if I hadn't been here for the two years you were away I might feel differently, might have a more idealized picture of the place. For one thing, I don't have the respect for the academic environment I used to have, after having adjusted to wartime values and after having seen the people who

remained behind in the academic circle. And then there is the whole business of the conditions of life here -- the housing shortage which will persist until Chicago is torn down or blown up several decades from now. This place is OK by the meager standards around here, but we couldn't stay in it if we wanted to expand our family circle. Oh, I guess it's mostly the idea of seeing the same old faces with the same old neuroses. Naturally I don't mean we have to light out the minute you get home. We could afford to spend months of loafing and having fun. But I'd hate the idea of being latched here for life. There are so many places I'd like to live in -- South American cities, California, Christ, even Tel-aviv. But not Chicago. I don't see much of Buss but I told Vic to buzz him on the teaching situation.

Joan was over today, with the news that Tom has finally shipped out, to Europe of all places. They were so sure he would go to the Pacific. He is going on a dismantling job, I think they call it -- airfields or something. He is pretty sore that he should be playing such an ignominious role in this war.

There are the most bloodcurdling stories in the newspapers these days about travel conditions, now that redeployment is in full force. Apparently it's worse now on trains than it's been any time since the war began. I thank my lucky stars that we are safely bedded down in Chicago. The government also urges the families of returning servicemen not to go to the East Coast to meet them, so unless you come home under unusual conditions, maybe I'd better stay right here. They said that we should be able to see the men faster that way. You would probably be sent to Sheridan, wouldn't you, anyway?

I'm reading The Postman Always Rings Twice. You know what kind of stuff that is. I don't know why I'm in such a rut of reading this kind of escapist stuff and I hope it doesn't mark a permanent decline of my literary interests. It's the hot weather, I keep telling myself, except that the weather hasn't been very hot. I was in the water yesterday for about two seconds and my skin practically peeled off from the chill.

Well darling, here is the end and time to say I love you. Lots of kisses too.

Jill

***JILL TO AL JULY 3, 1945 V-MAIL***

Darling -- I should say angel, for you certainly are being white about the bond deal, as per your letter of June 25. You don't know how I've cringed at the thought of what you might say. Maybe we can still do something about it if you can find the receipt. In any case, I'll write the Treasury Dept. the new information I've received.

I wish you could bring home some of the live stock you so appealingly describe, but maybe when you get here, we can pick up a little puppy, fawn or fox for Kathy. She is infatuated with animal life, even bugs, but so far I've hedged about the question of getting her any because it might be a little too much trouble while I'm still alone here. But maybe when you come home ...

Ed is still in basic training at Keesler Field, to answer your question. His address is Pvt. etc., 3704th AAFBU S d U (54), Class 607, Keesler Field, Miss. Quite a mouthful for such a slip of a boy. I guess I told you Vic was over last night for dinner. There is quite a difference between them in their attitude to Kathy. Ed was very Uncle-ish -- he played with her, gave me excellent advice when he thought I was in error, and altogether manifested a great deal of interest and affection for her. Vic gives her a jovial hello and then goes back to reading the paper. I think the answer is that Vic still finds himself and his alter ego Buss, the most interesting thing in life. That is OK if his egotism acts as the fuel for genuine creative drives, but it is still too early to say whether he is, or is not, a faddist, as you pointed out. I didn't see Hutchins V-D Day speech but I'll ask Bill about it. It seems as if Hutch is always taking the wrong tack, or

apparently so.

Kathy is taking her afternoon nap and I just finished a big wash. I'm trying to get things done early this week so that things will be reasonably clear when Day comes Thursday. Today is Tuesday and I'm in a welter of work. This morning I met Joan at the Post Exchange where we get our weekly ration of butts. She brought Mike with her and he is an astonishingly large and pretty lad, much bigger than Kathy though not nearly so advanced in any way. Incidentally, Tom last called her from Camp Patrick Henry. That brought a pang of reminiscence. Well, she's lucky she wasn't there with him. Newport News will ever stand out in my meager knowledge of persons and places as the world's worst.

Later in the evening -- Dad was just over, having had something to do on the south side. Kathy is very friendly with him and fed him the chocolate he had brought her, and he glows with pride over each mumbled word she lets fall. I wonder how she will be when she grows up, with an infancy surrounded by so many adoring people. It's probably a good thing she doesn't live with them all steadily because then she would be fearfully spoiled. I don't think she is very spoiled now. At least she obeys me in important matters like not walking into the street, and leaving the books alone.

God darling, I can't wait for the next few weeks or months to pass, whatever the time will be until you get home. I keep dreaming of all the things we will do together, though I haven't gotten much further than kissing and eating. Please make it soon. I love you --

Jill

***AL TO JILL JULY 3, 1945***

Darling Jill,

I have about three quarters of an hour in which to write you a

letter now, before I go about finding a car to take me to an airport for the return trip to Augsburg. I had meant to leave yesterday afternoon, but there were a couple of things yet to do this morning and I stayed over. It was good that I did for Tom, Shields and I had a fine time with two quarts of Scotch at Shields home. Tom got in a swell mood in the afternoon and by the time we went over for supper he was irrepressible. He got up in the mess hall in front of all the staid people and let out a yell that startled them out of their wits. Then he cleared away the chairs and did a tap dance with his famous bumps. It was all in honor of his return to the old country. We continued at a more sober pace after eating a good meal and ended up at one o'clock. This morning we didn't feel badly at all considering everything, which goes to prove how good Johnny Walker is. I was sad to see him go though. He's one of the few good friends I've made overseas. I know lots of people passably well but Tom I know extremely well. Because of a jam in air transport he'll most likely ride a boat back.

Now that I'm here in the center of things, I don't know much more than if I had stayed in bed. I guess I'll be bringing the outfit up here one of these days for its final disposition. I don't like it here. Too many offices and administrative people. Life is something like WMCA life back home. I hope I won't have to stay here long when I do arrive. There is no news on going home in the immediate future. It seems from the little information in the newspapers that redeployment is proceeding more rapidly than it was originally and pessimistically scheduled. However, these troops that are going to the Pacific afterwards have first priority on transport and then the flood of 85ers will follow. I do hope to see you before September, but, if anything happens and I can't, could you wait for me until October? I am very unhappy now with this waiting, so please don't accuse me of not exhausting all possibilities of returning.

I've seen Martin Herz several times while here. In fact this letter is being written on his typewriter. He just got his orders to go to Austria, for which he has been waiting. He'll be stationed there for some time in an as yet uncertain capacity. Last evening I

saw Hans Habe for a few minutes. I hadn't seen him since Italy, and he has grown a lot heavier. He was rather thin originally, you may remember. He's stationed farther north and heads up the German press section.

Constantine is around too in an administrative job. Right now he is rationing out some newly arrived liquor to the officers.

I hope I can get back in time for the big ball game tonight. We are playing the FA outfit we licked a week ago, this time on our home grounds. I ought to make it, since the plane leaves here at four-thirty and only takes an hour to get to Augsburg. That's very fast, two hundred and seventy miles, but the plane is a B-25 converted bomber and doesn't fool around much. I wish it would head West and not stop. I would be home tomorrow sometime. The company sends a car to pick me up at the airfield and that's how I get home to Strassberg. I hope there'll be some mail from you waiting for me there. It's almost three days so there should be something.

I heard from Johnny Anspacher that Bob Lochner is around these parts on a strategic bombing survey, still a civilian, drat him. He asked for me and said he might get down around where I am. He ought to find plenty to survey in these parts. Frankfurt is quite a mess.

All my love, sweetheart, as always. Give Kathy some really good kisses for me.

Best regards to the family.

Your wan lover,

Al

**JILL TO AL JULY 4, 1945 V-MAIL**

Darling --

Today is the 4th of July, as any fool can plainly see by reading the above date line. And I must be getting old, because I can view its coming and passing without a flicker of emotion, except when Vic hurls a firecracker three feet behind me. We spent the day as we do all Sundays and legal holidays, down at the lake. I took a lot of sandwiches and met Lucille and Klaus down there and they ate my sandwiches and I ate their hardboiled eggs and so did Kathy. The lake was frighteningly chilly, but Kathy insisted on my lowering her in to ankle depth -- where we go the rocks pile up so that there are some shallow places -- and enjoyed herself very much. I am trying to get her used to that part of the lake rather than the beach, because the beach is so dirty and crowded and I don't like sand much anyway. She seems to find a lot to do where we go. There is a water fountain where she can wash her hands to her heart's content, and she runs around and plays horse on me when she gets bored with other diversions. And she even let me go in the water for a brief swim while Lucy was holding her and Lucy reported that Kathy was delighted with the fact that I could swim. So am I, for that matter. We came home in the middle of the afternoon and took naps, and as I know she probably wouldn't want to go to bed early, I took her over to the Neugartens and we just got back a little while ago, about nine thirty. Life is so much nicer now that she is older and can go around with me. She loves visiting them because of their new baby and the minute she got in their house she yelled, "where's the baby", fairly distinctly too. She watched delightedly when the baby was being fed, but seems to have no memory of or desire for the bottle, although it was a scant four months ago that she gave it up. A lot of kids hang on to the bottle until they are two, and it's a great battle getting it away from them. Bea and I decided that Kathy was about average in verbal development, far advanced in motor coordination and self-feeding, and of course, on toilet training, she's just nil. I've decided definitely to let it go entirely until she wants to use the can herself. And in one way it's working out



very well, because she is less constipated than she ever was, when we were discussing the matter and making half-hearted attempts to catch her at the time she was supposed to go. Now she goes when she wants to, I clean it up, and that's that.

I've been reading around in the European anthology edited by Klaus Mann, and there are some good things in it, particularly in the Czech section. There's a story about Shreik I hadn't read before -- I wish one could get more things about that wonderful soldier in English translation. Now I've borrowed Apartment in Athens from Bea and am anxious to get started on it. Tomorrow Day is coming, on a noon train, so I'll have plenty of time to arrange the house and my emotions before she comes. I'll be glad to see her, but it's funny, I'm not the least bit excited. I think that's part of growing older too, one gets so used to saying goodbye and hello to people after or before long separations. That applies to all except you. I don't think I'll be able to contain myself then.

All love,

OOOXXX

Jill

***AL TO JILL JULY 4, 1945***

Dearest Jill,

Leaving this place is not nearly as easy as it seems. I was out to the airport yesterday to catch the plane but there was no plane there to catch and I returned empty-handed. There was one going to Paris and another to Brussels so that I was sorely tempted, but instead I returned, and now must spend another day here. If the weather isn't impeccably beautiful tomorrow morning, I'm going to return in a jeep with Martin who is proceeding to Italy and then Austria. He will spend the night at Strassberg with us.

After dinner last night I walked around the town (Bad Homburg) with Della Chiappa's British girl secretary and we must have covered several miles through the parks and the prosperous residential sections. She is a smallish, pleasant girl with pretty blue eyes and will laugh at anything, no matter how inane, a thing which can be a vice as well as a virtue. When we got back, we joined several others at the newly opened officer's bar, where I had a coca cola for the first time in years and talked a good while with a British colonel who is now stationed with 21st Army Group with Arthur Galsworthy and Rae Heycock. Thus passed the evening and it was a welcome thing not to have spent it in solitary because the room I've been put up in is very bare and uncomfortable and there is damned little to do around here without all the little gadgets I've accumulated to make my life bearable over here. I'm short on clothing too since I had planned to spend only one night here and instead have spent three what with weather and work. Everything was in a little leather briefcase I picked up along the line. This afternoon of the glorious Fourth I went over to Constantine's house and he provided me with a fresh change of underwear and socks and a hot shower, towel and soap provided. Now I feel really very well and can contemplate the future with equanimity.

The houses around here are really well put together. They are new for the most part and are superior to the American houses of the same age in plumbing and design, I would say. I've noticed one with the compartmented bathroom which I thought would be just the thing to keep you out of my hair when I'm trying to shave (not seriously, because I like you around, but you know what you like to do). They are all possessed of ample gardens with vegetables and fruit trees growing, and some of the furniture is well made. There are plenty of electrical appliances, such as washing machines, etc. Constantine's basement has a washing machine, a rinser and a dryer, all of them simple and very effective machines. The washer and dryer operate on the rotary principle and do a good job which is easy on the clothes. I know because we put through my underwear while we were at it. All of these devices serve to convince the

conquering armies of the unpardonable aggression of the Germans.

18:30 (6:30 !), I forget to mention the funniest aspect of the evening. Allied girls can't get out of the compound without an armed male escort. Nor can allied civilians. And so none of those poor people can get out without a soldier in this part of Germany. It's very humiliating for the OWI people; some imp of the Provost Marshall, doubtless.

It's a dull, leisurely day here. I found a mystery story around and will either read that tonight or go to a movie called "And - tomorrow" or some such silly allusionary title. I called up the company a while ago and everything is going along all right down there. To my surprise, two of the men turned up here this morning saying that their 2 1/2 ton truck broke down in Frankfurt. Another one is on its way now to drop it back down, and the men are off enjoying the wait around here somewhere.

I'm going over to supper now. One of my strongest motives to get back are the four letters from you which I was told were waiting for me. I love you four times over for them. Many, many kisses to you and Kathy, darling.

Always your

Al

***AL TO JILL JULY 6, 1945***

Jill, My Darling,

I am dizzied and delighted by your letters of the last two days. There are so many of them and they are so nice (and so are you). I arrived back from Bad Homberg yesterday about four thirty by jeep with Martin and found letters from you, one from Earl Johnson, a New Yorker, and one from Aaron Zolot who is up near Frankfurt now. But in the heat of my return I didn't have

time to sit down to a letter in reply. There was a mass of bulletins, regulations, and details piled up on the desk, last night was pay-day, and I had to arrange a couple of trips for today, one to get Martin to Italy, another to send several men to Bad Homberg on TD and so forth. But I am happy, very happy to have your letters after a scant three days of abstinence. Now this morning came two more dated the 25th and 27th, and wonder of wonders and joy of joys, came two more this afternoon, June 28 and 30. Wonderful month, that June. All sorts of letters from you. Just to think that I am only six days behind my real life makes me feel almost human again. Excuse me while I read all the letters over again.

Later: I will now discuss the final aspects of my trip up North. As I said in my last letter to you, I was looking forward to a quiet evening and then a jeep ride in the morning instead of sweating out the plane another day. The last worked, but the former turned into a nice little party. Col. Best was talking to two British women at the bar of the house where I was staying. (He is from 12th Army Group, British) and I joined them after writing you. The Colonel is a gay old dog and suggested a ride out to a famous castle nearby which was converted into an officer's club. So we went over to have dinner and after that we drove in the monstrous looking car of his over to the castle. There we drank a couple bottles of champagne and wine with two paratroop officers who seemed to be the only other party taking advantage of the really magnificent surroundings. We turned up the radio, danced a little, drank, smoked and talked. The two women were very interesting. One was of Russian birth, thirtyish, world-travelled and too too. I imagine she was quite a social lioness in England. It was a little dark to drag the horses out of the stables to see what she had learned in all the hunts she liked to talk about. She spoke perfect German and good French. I think she is a little panicked by the evidences of age in her blond hair and face and perhaps a little resentful of youngish, uninterested men who will trade a corpus for a connection anytime. The paratroopers' companions were not very attractive English girls, on the dark and stumpy sides. The second girl with us came,

rather unbelievably, from Iceland. She had married a British soldier who had been stationed there and come with him to England whence he had departed for India almost three years ago. She was an excellent dancer, didn't have any of the hops and bounces that Europeans can't escape from when they dance to American music. She said they always danced American at the University of Iceland. I was very much impressed by her stories of life in Iceland before the invasion. Practically a Utopia, I believe, no crimes, no jails, no beggars, everybody related in some fashion, a good educational system, a working democracy. I in turn pointed out her own case and commented that it seemed that man or woman could no more tolerate a perfect society than he could the Garden of Eden. If the dragon didn't come out to search its victims, knights would venture into the caves after it. If salesmen didn't roam the countryside to seduce farmers' daughters, the maidens would migrate to their urban haunts. And I added, because I was struck by her intelligence and grasp of people, that I thought there was a great deal of validity in the theory of unity of all matter and all souls, that he who understood the atom might well understand all matter, and he who understood himself could well understand all men, that Middletown is the World and the World is Middletown. I think she appreciated that, because she was self-assured and yet treated, with her strange accent and background, as an outsider in the English world. People don't generally stop to consider that so many of the great teachers of mankind learned their lessons in hovels and hamlets.

We arrived back about midnight and although very tired I managed to wake up at exactly six-twenty seven the following morning, which gave me all the time I needed to don my clothes and meet Herz at six-thirty. The drive back was fast and uneventful, autobahn practically all the way, some of the route through the very pretty rolling country between Heidelberg and here. The American engineers have done a fine job of repairing blown bridges. One of the sights we are beginning to see on the roads now is transport bearing men westwards, with signs

scrawled on the sides of trucks saying "Good-bye Germany, hello America" or "States bound! Don't Delay!" and happy men crowded into them, dangling their legs over the rear buckboards and grinning happily at the people they pass.

I will answer your letters in more detail tomorrow morning, but I'll say now that I will send you some of the cash I have on hand, say about fifty dollars. I'm sorry I got your opinion on giving money to the folks too late to stop a check I had mailed to them for fifty dollars out of last month's pay. You and Kathy will have to take it out in spaghetti dinners when you run short of funds.

Graham, a G-2 major was over for lunch and I showed him your pictures, or rather, all he had to do was to look around the room where there are several displayed, and he thinks you are very attractive. Naturally I couldn't tell him the half of it. Your body has to be viewed from close up to truly appreciate it (drool, drool). And so in that fine state I leave you, with all the passionate kisses that inferior paper can carry.

Always your

Al

P.S. A couple of days ago I made a comment on the advantages of sounds over words. Since then, in reading Gorki's essay on Tolstoy, I came across these words of Tolstoy: "There is more soul in a sound than in a thought. A thought is like a purse - it contains pennies, mere trifles, while a sound remains unsoiled - pure through and through."

***JILL TO AL JULY 7, 1945***

Darling --

After all the augurs and portents I've given you, you can guess why you haven't heard from me for the past couple of days. Daisy came on Thursday, and tonight, Saturday night, is the first

time I've had a chance to sit down and write you. Well, you know the vicissitudes of family life, the interminable din and cooking. Walter came yesterday and it seems that I've done nothing but cook and shop for food. It's good practice, I guess, for when you come home, but I've found myself sadly inefficient, like tonight serving up a one and a half steak for five people (Daisy, Walter, Mom, Vic and me -- Dad had a concert and couldn't come). Well, we also had spaghetti so nobody came away hungry exactly.

Last night I got a sitter and Walter took us to Don the Beachcomber's, which has good oriental food, not exactly Chinese, but better. But it never fills one up. We got home pretty early and that was that. Not exactly a gala drunken occasion.

And Kathy has been alternately showing off and breaking down into fits of temper at all these rivers of people. (I only do the latter.) However, she has managed to add several dolls to her collection as well as a genuine small doll buggy. She has the most enormous maternal feelings for one her size -- she's always peeking into real babies' buggies, usually with disastrous results, like a kick in the teeth. So when we went into a hardware store the other day and she saw this little buggy, she was naturally charmed, thinking it was her own because it was unattended, until I showed up. My very presence, implying the dread negative authority, was enough to send her into a tantrum all over the floor, till finally Day and I said, oh hell, let's buy it for her. Which we did, except that she then couldn't believe it was hers, and kept falling into a fit every time I suggested she wheel the damn thing out and depart. Finally I piled all my belongings and groceries into it and she caught on and proudly wheeled it home, dancing and singing and wetting her pants with glee.

I haven't heard from you since Tuesday, before the 4th of July. Of course this is only Saturday but I keep thinking it may augur something. God darling, I miss you something fierce. Even with a houseful of people one can be lonely. This afternoon I left them with the baby and cruised down to the lake, where I lay on

my stomach on the grass and dreamed of you. And I can't help viewing with resentment the other lovers who walk hand in hand down along the rocks, apparently mindless of their great good fortune. I can only pray that you'll be back by the end of this summer, so that we can do the same thing. Of course I don't know how Kathy will fit into that picture. Maybe we can get an Atlantic City beach chair and she will wheel us both, from time to time peering solicitously into our faces and yelling "My baby", or wrenching us from our seats and hurling us to the rocks when she's decided she's had enough. As I said, she's put on a fine performance for Day and Walter but I don't approve of it one bit. She is far too exhibitionistic as it is to have such a constant audience around gurgling with appreciation at her every move. It will probably take me three weeks to unspoil her and to replace all that good Chicago dirt Daisy so assiduously tries to wash off.

Walter is leaving tomorrow and I will try not to sigh with relief (God, I hope these mails aren't censored by one of his buddies in G-2). For the first day or two he was relatively restrained, in his new surroundings, but by today he was blowing it off, and while I did the dishes tonight I could hear him giving Vic an earful. Vic was taking it well but I wonder what his boyish intelligence really makes of it. Well, this is where you came in. I won't try your supreme amiability with further details.

Oh, I got a form from the Treasury Department to fill out today, re that bond, so perhaps all is not lost. Now, if I can just keep from losing that form.

Oh, Walter and Daisy seem to be favorably impressed with Chicago's summer scenic grandeur, particularly the lake front. I don't know what that proves especially.

The little time I've had to read, I've been alternately puzzled and gripped by that Greenway Wescott thing, Apartment in Athens. I'll have to finish it first before I dare suggest it for your required reading list. I asked Vic to get, at 20% discount, Democracy in the United States by de Tocqueville for you. It's in a new good



edition, I hear, and thought you might like it. I don't know whether to send you books at this late date or not, but probably will anyway, trusting to luck that you won't get them there but that they will catch up with you here. Except that you won't have much time to reach when you get here. You'll be too busy fending off lap leaps made at you by a semi-blonde, 5'6", weight 119 pounds at the last count.

Darling, please forgive me for writing you so inadequately of late. I still love you more than anyone can believe.

OOOXXX

Jill

***AL TO JILL JULY 7, 1945***

Dearest Jill,

I promised last evening to write you again this morning, and Lo! I write. After dinner I did a little work and afterwards drove down to the villa occupied by the French mission to the Seventh Army, some ten miles away. I had met Pregre, who is now attached to them after leaving us, on the way back from Bad Homburg (or Humbug as we call it) and he had invited me to dine with them at eight. Naturally I wasn't very hungry after eating here so I got there late, missed the entree and got in on the omelette and dessert, plus the assorted beverages. Present were Commandant Lambert, Pregre, Simone Thomas, back from Paris as a Sous-Lieutenant and looking very well in uniform, a French Aspirant (WO), two French lieutenants, one of whom I met some time ago and who, as you recall my writing you, went to the U. and lived at Int. House, and finally Major Ogden, who is from G-2 here.

After dinner we sat around for a while and played around with a guitar and accordion they had, neither of which anyone knew how to play. We returned here about eleven-thirty, Scott driving (he's out of he hospital now) and I turned in after reading your

last four letters carefully. This morning I slept late, until eight-thirty, had a light breakfast of juice, hash and dehydrated omelette and coffee and have been reading documents and taking care of administrative details ever since.

Herz was correct in saying that the dissolution of the detachment was in progress. I never wrote you so much, but I tried to imply that in telling you how I was sending personnel here and there. However, we are still going strong, and though I am always expecting definite orders, they seem never to be forthcoming. None of this affects my chances of getting back, which are almost entirely dependent on army policy with reference to the over 85 pointers in the ETO. If they start mass shipments I will be home soon. But if they allow only a trickle, it may be two or three months, with the breaks influencing the time considerably. My extra five points, incidentally, come from a Bronze Star Medal, which I count as a pretty sure thing since I was recommended months ago and nothing adverse has come back, but which I hadn't told you about because the official award has not been made.

I'm afraid you can't terrorize me with your complaints about your income. I'm sure that if you needed money, you could draw on any one of several bank books. That means that you think I may not be giving up my fair share of my pay to you, shades of the comic strips! You're probably right, so the first finance office I get to I'll send this fifty bucks I mentioned in my last letter, and come the end of the month I'll send you some more. Christ knows what you do with 233.00 dollars a month. How many families are we supporting? None of your amusements are expensive ones. You hardly ever go to the theatre. You can't buy steaks anymore. How much does Kathy throw down the toilet? How much does the cleaning woman rake up from the floor? I'd like to see a good explanation of where all the dough goes in one month just for a big girl and a little girl. You won't even tell me how much money you have in the banks over there or how much money you've been drawing from the banks. Still you ask for an accounting of my meager funds.

Please don't take me seriously, darling. I could hardly find a more generous person anywhere than yourself and any financial errors you make are errors of omission rather than of design. I love you very much and will buy you a fur coat when I get back. It will be time to be thinking of a fur coat, and then you can spend all your time either wrapped up in a mink or in me.

I'll write you again tomorrow. For now a thousand kisses and all my love to you and Kathy.

Always your

Al

**S**IMONE disappears, and reappears in a couple of weeks, Lieutenant Thomas, in a chic French Army uniform. Soon enough, her uniform becomes rumpled. She's not the dressy type. She brings him a copy of *Madame Bovary* but the French is too difficult to hold his interest. Besides, he had read it in English translation. They go on a deer hunt. They fan out. A nice but jealous French lieutenant is next to him; he is just the type who would be good for Simone, upper class, well-educated, sensitive, he even looks like her brother, husky, blonde, and smiling; still, the Captain keeps well to the right and two paces behind the man: accidents can happen. No deer.

Right near Schloss de Grazia are deer, they practically eat out of your hand. On a solitary walk one day he decides to hunt them with just his .45 automatic, and after several futile shots concludes that the famous Colt 45 cal. automatic is as inaccurate a weapon as was ever strapped to a man's body and impressively pulled and fired. It's a weapon that lives in myth. War is governed largely by myth, costly blunders, and unreliable history, or am I repeating myself?

### **JILL TO AL JULY 8, 1945 V-MAIL**

Al darling -- I'm starting to write this to you while my stomach clamors for food, so I don't know exactly what the results will be. Day is just on her way down Nudelman's alley for a dill pickle

and a slab of pastrami, one of our ancestral dishes. Today I made them lentil soup for lunch so you can see I am really throwing the book at them. Walter left late this afternoon, incidentally, retreating behind an ongoing verbal barrage unequalled in the history of elocution. I am more than a little tired tonight. Kathy has been waking up at night and I have to get up and change her, and then remember, at four in the morning, to take the bike in from the alley. Actually it's not an unpleasant experience tiptoeing out into the blackness, sniffing the fresh night air. If I weren't so damned conventional about my nightly rest, which I never seem to get anyway, I would probably spend the night walking and sniffing. When you come home we should really plan on an all-night drunk some time, swimming at four in the morning and stuff. Only it will be complicated by having to get a sitter to stay all night, and then how will we be able to come home and tear the bed apart unrestrained?

I took Kathy down to the lake this morning while Walter brisked over the telephone at various airline companies, trying to snag himself a class 2 priority, and it was very pleasant. I actually went into the water before her very eyes and she didn't object but only laughed. I had been rather worried that Kathy would be jealous of my affinity for the water. Some nice people watched her while I went in. The water is still too damn cold.

I dreamt last night that you landed on the shores of the United States in New Hampshire, which has no shoreline as I recall, and Budd and Ed took a train to get you from there. I wasn't allowed along for some reason but I was nonetheless very happy you were home, although rather skeptical of the truth of the whole matter. This whole dream is fraught with all kinds of significance, I know, and I will pay you 10 bucks an hour not to analyze it. But damn it, how I miss you after dreams like that. I am getting more resentful by the minute that you are not home.

You should see Walter trying to boss Kathy around, like taking a lipstick from her that is actually hers by inheritance from me. It's a nice empty case and she uses it to mimic me. I could fill him full of grapeseed. It's a good thing they don't have children. Oh

incidentally, they all send their fond greetings, I'm quoting, and Walter will set you up in the zipper and nutmeg grinder business after the war.

My God, I'm getting hungrier by the minute. Well, this letter was only an excuse to tell you that I love you and miss you, possibly more than life itself.

Always your - Jill

***JILL TO AL JULY 10, 1945***

Darling --

You know, I just remembered, the most mysterious thing happened the other day. I got a notice in the mailbox, for I was out in the morning, that a package addressed to Capt. Alfred etc. was delivered but I wasn't home so I presume they took it back. But they haven't brought it back so I wonder if they haven't sent it back to you. Well, I'll talk to the mailman tomorrow. And that's a heck of a way to start out a letter.

Actually there's not so much to write about, although there must be or I wouldn't have started out in the big paper, cursing Unk's sheets for their paucity of space. We spent a quiet evening at home last night, I crawling into bed from exhaustion at 8:30 and finishing Apartment in Athens there. I guess you should read it, just to see what the fairly talented young men of our generation (Koestler and now Wescott) are making in the way of literature out of this war. Surely this book is literary -- he writes with superb ease and simplicity. But I am not so sure that he states the nature of the German problem correctly, although I don't know what the correct statement is. The story is about a family in Athens in 1943, and their life when a German captain moves in with them. The German is hard and soft alternately, and Wescott means that to be the analogy of the German nation -- sympathetic and preying on the mercies of the Allies when they are down, beasts when they are conquerors. I hate the

Germans as much as the next one, but I don't think that the problems of war and fascism are unique with the German nation, as Wescott makes it out. Wescott says nothing about the Greeks' own political difficulties before Naziism, about the anti-Democratic forces within their own state or within those of the Allies. Interesting enough, in common with Arrival and Departure, he also makes the antagonists of the Nazis, in this case the Greek family, the weaklings of the story. I don't know why this is psychologically, although it makes an effective literary device, since in the end they grow strong.

Well, enough of book reviews of books you haven't read. You must be fascinated. Tonight I shall read The Thin Man, and complete my study of the works of Dashiell Hammet and James Cain. They exert a kind of morbid fascination on me, the fatal appeal of watching good writers deal with psychological, political and literary trivia.

Day took Kathy for a walk this morning while I went to the rocks, where the waves were dashing too high to make swimming inviting or even possible. Having Day has been a great boon, since at this very moment she is doing some sewing for me, and generally, I've been able to get away from a few household responsibilities, like morning shopping tours with the baby. This afternoon we got a sitter and went downtown for lunch and shopped for shoes for me. I got a frightening looking pair of sandals with two-inch wooden soles, probably a lot like the ones the gals in Europe wear. They are terribly flattering, the bulk making one's legs look dainty as match sticks, but I pity any one who has to wear them for more than a walk to the basement to get out the bike. They are good for bike riding because I tend to drag my feet instead of breaking and thus wear out all my leather soled shoes. But I shouldn't want to pay six bucks for all that impractical chic in inflated French francs.

In memory of your announcement that Mr. Crowell was going home, I finally exerted myself to see why his name seemed so familiar to me, and found at least two political science books in your library published by his company. Knowing him might make

life easier, mightn't it, if you were looking for somebody to publish anything you might ever write? We're lucky in that respect, that if you ever wanted to knock off a year or so writing a book, we could swing it financially. What's the publishing business like anyway? Did you ever talk about it together? It sounds like an easy way to keep the babies in bananas, at least from the Rosalind Russell movies I've seen (and loathed) -- if you're not just a proofreader. I often wonder what my role would be if you started to write a book. I probably would want to limit it to bringing you your cold mutton on a tray, because I remember how difficult it is to edit anybody's work unless one is a professional, most of all one's husband's, since intellectual differences usually resolve into knock-down and drag-out personal feuds, like why Momma doesn't wear high heels more.

I've had a helluva lot of interruptions since I started this great work so I think I'll stop, so it may all be for the best, i.e., if I go much further I'll go too far. Mom called and Joan called and Virginia dropped by -- she is lending Day her kid's bike so that we can get around faster. Day walks at the most astonishingly slow rate of speed. It literally makes my back ache to keep down to her.

Anyway, darling, I love you terribly much and wish to hell you were home so I could show you. Oh, Mom said she read your letter to Ed and you still said you'd be home by the end of summer, maybe. Oh boy, if it were only true.

OOOXXX

Jill

***JILL TO AL JULY 11, 1945***

Darling --

Here is some more literature for you to read and edit. Re bond. Send it back to me as soon as you can and I will have it notarized and send it to the Treasury Department. Since I

wasn't sure of the Form of Registration or the Issuing Agent, I just penciled in lightly what I thought was the correct answer and left it to you to give the definitive answer, if you can remember any better than I can. Also sign your name in the various other X'd spaces (don't I make things easy for you -- oh yeah). The Treasury Department also sent the Statement of Issuing Agent for you to fill out, under the impression that you had bought them overseas. I'm just sending it to be sure although I'm under the impression that you sent directly away for them. Read everything, write everything and keep your peace, and I will sweat it out in blood and love for you when you come home.

No letter from you today, but Mom said your letter to Ed was dated the 29th, so I can be sure that nothing has happened up through that date. Needless to say, every day I live for the mailman and The Word. I've started daydreaming about what we should do when you come home, and wonder if you agree with me -- that it would be nice to take a little short trip somewhere in the country where we can be alone and sleep a lot, just as if we were on a honeymoon. We've never done anything like that, and I think it would be fun. If we stay here and stay up late every night and then I have to get up and feed the baby at seven I'm sure I will be a dead duck within a week. But it will be hard leaving Kathy, I mean just from our point of view since Mom would certainly take her but maybe we could anyway. I'm afraid that you will not be altogether pleasantly surprised at the way life revolves around a baby in a baby's house, and I want to have some time and fun with you alone, and still not be always dashing back to relieve sitters.

Day has been borrowing Virginia's bike so today we wheeled down to Gardner in the morning and met Joan and her kids and bought the weekly ration of cigarettes, and then this afternoon we went down to the beach with Mir and Joey -- quite an impressive caravan with three bikes and two babies, wobbling all over the streets. The beach at Jackson Park is simply awful although the kids enjoy themselves -- dirty and pebbly and full of noisy kids including our own. I much prefer the rocks. They



have much better sand, too, at the playground they've fixed up at that empty lot we used to track through on the corner. Just within the past two weeks they -- the Y and the Park Department, I guess -- installed two sandboxes and two baby swings, as well as seesaws and ball equipment for the other kids, and a jungle gym too. It's still full of glass but very convenient for us here, and Kathy and Joe love it. It's just dull for the mothers, sitting at the edge of the sandboxes, sweating under the hot sun.

Kathy has been so sweet the past couple of days. She was rather fussy the first few days Day was here, especially with Walter, because she wasn't used to so much company, but now she is poised and secure and sweet again. She's said some more words lately too -- Day, or Daisee, and "it's dirty", and something we hope is "Sure" but may be "shit". Now I'm convinced I'll have to watch my language. And she has a charming habit now, of when you are resting at the beach, of climbing on your stomach and banging your head against the sand or, if you are less lucky, the rocks. She drags me all over the place now too, grabbing my hand with vehemence. And how I miss a man in the family -- she has finally discovered the charm of piggy-back riding and is forever climbing up my back like a monkey, and diving off when she hits my shoulder. Some day I'm not going to grab her on the way down and then I'll have more free time.

Well darling, it's time for bed again and the time I miss you most. I love you, always.

Jill

***AL TO JILL JULY 12, 1945***

Dearest Love,

I am hopelessly ashamed at not having written you the last two or three days, the longest non-writing period in many a moon. A

British major showed up at the Schloss one evening and engaged me in conversation the better part of the evening. The evening before last was spent with him again (his car broke down) and Simone Thomas and Captain François, the latter a beautiful young French captain who is now quitting the army (he hopes) to go into motion pictures in Paris as an assistant director, although actually he would be simply stunning on the screen. Major Lambert is in charge of entertainment in the British part of Germany and is cruising the Southland for talent. He's really after Bruno Walter and Joachim, who is in Munich I believe. He's very talkative and queer but has a good heart, I think. He's been around the British War Office too long -- an environment corresponding to our Pentagon Building. The time was further complicated by a trip to Heidelberg I made by command car. It takes five to six hours to get there from Strassberg. And it is very tiring even though a larger part of the trip is by Autobahn. Yesterday morning I was supposed to fly to Bad Homburg to arrange for moving the outfit, but, as luck would have it, the weather was foul and I had to drive. We got in at suppertime last night and after a drink of cognac with Scott, I found a room and went to sleep. No, I didn't, come to think of it - I forgot to mention a stuffy cocktail party between the cognac and dinner. I bumped into it while looking for a room and was invited in. The participants were all British and as I walked in, they all looked up and stared. Finally I thought I ought to break the trance and said "Who has the crystal ball?" but no one caught on. They weren't very subjective, I'm afraid.

Now this morning, I'm waiting for a Lt. Col. Stanley to come in. I think the unit will be attached to his Information Control Command which is set up a few miles south of here. It's better than going to Munich which is too far from everything. Here I ought to be better able to keep an eye on the migration westwards. I don't think the situation will be changed much as far as readjustment is concerned by our being up here. It may even be bettered.

Meanwhile I try to console myself with the thought of how short the remaining time is in comparison with the time already

served and the abundance of time with you in the future. Theoretically, I suppose it is impossible that I love you more now than when I left you, but actually somehow I feel I do. And in token of all this vast love, you can stop straining yourself ten minutes a day because it don't make no difference nohow.

I almost forgot to mention my greatest joy of the past three days and the joy as well of everyone I've spoken to since, to wit, Kathy's pictures. They are unspeakably beautiful and I was astounded at how large she has grown and how much she looks like a beautiful young lady. It's good you put the well-done crying picture or else I would think her too angelic.

Thank you a million times for them. Everybody says they are some of the best they've ever seen. They are my best, and I can hardly keep from looking at them all of the time.

All my love to you, darling.

Your

Al

**N**OW to finish with World War II. Our Captain receives the expected formal orders to merge his troop with higher headquarters. The Information Control Command is located a few miles south of Bad Homburg and not far from Wiesbaden, at Schloss Hohenbuchau, a spa reported to be a marvel of luxury. He has not been there, but has maps and knows that its signs will be picked up as his column approaches.

With a certain sadness -- although every move is advertised as leading to home -- they ready themselves for the trek. This is their last day as a free outfit and the last move together. The courtyard echoes to a great roar as all the vehicles start up their motors. Inside, the rooms are impersonally bare, the kitchen ammoniacally clean. The American flag has been lowered and packed away. All windows and doors are closed. Schloss Strassberg belongs now to nobody and anybody; the gnomish villagers are probably crouched to spring upon it. The

Captain's command car this once is last to leave. He overtakes the front of the column as it begins to make its sharp right turn. He twists his head and watches as the noses of the vehicles appear one by one, until finally the full convoy stretches out on the long descent to the plain below.

Arriving midday, they drive all dusty and noisy into the compound of the Information Command. A few yards to the left is a magnificent lodge. A glance tells him that the officers have crowded around the windows from their lunch table to watch the famous old team dismount. "Damn," he thinks, "we're not ready to go on show! They'll get a bad first impression, these fucking voyeurs!" He beckons to First Sgt. Taubert, who never moves fast but like a dreadnought, and says in urgent tones, "Sergeant, let's get them out of the vehicles, all of them, and lined up, for instructions and dismissal, full attention." "Let's go, men, snap shit," he snarls, *sotto voce*, surprising the nonchalant soldiers. They hasten into a fairly neat row, straighten up and render fair semblance of well-drilled soldiers at attention. He pretends to take a report from the Sergeant, orders "Dismiss the Company," and Taubert, who manages an about-face without stumbling, dismisses them properly.

That's fine for them, they just hang around now; but their Captain has to find out what to do with them and that means, since no one is coming out to help him, finding the entrance to the dining room, walking stiffly up to the head of the table, having spotted there a Colonel whom he presumes to be the Commander, throwing a freshly cut salute at him and reporting the company's arrival in proper army style, third person and all. It is appreciated. The quite unmilitary and inexperienced group at the table feel good about having this weatherbeaten crowd bring in a breath of the real War that has eluded them, the War that is already becoming a memory even before they could take part in it.

The High Life begins in the castle above Georgenborn. Full dress at all times except during outdoor recreation. Shiny vehicles. A private room and bath. A quartet playing the quintessential repertoire at cocktails and dinner. Meals served by white-jacketed German waiters. The menu as it once had been, with venison, wild boar, Black

Forest tort, strong coffee, fine wines, cordials. Bad Homburg, a sumptuous spa, is nearby. His snobbish British friends should be here to appreciate it; Robbie by now has repossessed his tuna fishery on Elba; he would call all of this, like the "Corny Beef" Hotel Corneille in Algiers, "Bad Hamburger" or "'Bah, Humbug!"

Lt. Simone Thomas comes up to visit from Seventh Army Headquarters and charms the officers, especially the quaint South Carolinian, Lt. Col. Hardin, who is typical of the close acquaintances of the Captain, so it would seem, not highly educated or intellectual, good-humored, interested in and not hostile to the world about, and bearing a regional or ethnic stamp. A recipe that cooks up guys like Tom Crowell. Col. Hardin has a Lt. Horsey as sidekick, a little large-spectacled guy -- both of them are ugly -- who, when in the cups, delights the Captain by chanting a poem from the uttermost recesses of the unreconstructed Confederacy, beginning "Ah hates the Constitution.." (Col. Hardin smiles apologetically over his unconscious ventriloquy.)



Simone Thomas with Lt. Colonel Hardin in Bad Homburg.

Col. J.B. Stanley is in charge, a sweet character. He has a bosom companion, a stage beauty named Maggie Hammerstein. The only other pretty woman around is an Icelander, faithful to a husband who has disappeared into the British navy somewhere, and with whom the Captain becomes friend and demi-lover as the days and cocktail hours pass. He has a lot of time to read, for he is still carried as Commanding Officer of the Seventh Army Team, largely inoperative. He has stated firmly to all and sundry that he will escape to the Big PX upon his first opportunity.

He dropped in upon the men of his company from time to time. The distance between them was growing within the larger framework of the Information Command. They were well fixed and awaiting the call to go home. Jill had written with some concern as to whether he had achieved the 85 points -- five for this and five for that campaign, and for a medal, and a landing, and a wife and a child and a wound and a couple of other merits and hardships, like being over a long time -- that were supposed magically to transport a soldier home; he had 120 points and could have claimed even more; there were only a few thousands like him in the European Theater; practically all of his men had the 85 points. He was beginning to send the worst cases home, holding his own worst case back a bit. The several who wished to stay had already been well assigned.

The G.I. Bill was hardly exciting to the men, nor even to him, strange to say, who had approached within hailing distance of a doctor's degree. It came rather late, and was not fully appreciated: its offer of a college education with full tuition and allowances for living and books, a perfect generous act of the Congress that did more than anything else to smooth out, lengthen, and make profitable the otherwise dismal period of refitting socially the veteran. But the men long overseas felt themselves beyond the exciting promises of veteranship. Finding a job and a girl and knocking around: these seemed all of the good life that most men would admit to. They were already talking about the good old days at Schloss Strassberg.

When Simone Thomas put in an appearance all cheery with a thoroughbred dachshund in tow, they gave her big brotherly smiles; and when the Captain was left with the dachshund, and the massively muscled low-slung beast tripped him and dashed off into the woods, they did not laugh and jest but joined in seriously combing the woods in search of the animal. It was not to be found. He tells Simone that he will send her a real American dog after he gets back home. He does not; but they do meet again.

**AL TO JILL JULY 13, 1945 V-MAIL**

Darling Jill,

I am a veritable bastard for not having written much these past several days. I wrote you yesterday from Bad Homburg but didn't have an airmail stamp, so it may be delayed in reaching you. This morning was uneventful, and this afternoon I came back to Strassberg, where I am spending my last evening. Tomorrow morning at seven we pull out in convoy for Wiesbaden where we will join up with the 6871st District Information Services Control Command, which will be very glad to have us and which has a spacious hotel and castle. It's a long drive and I don't expect to get there before four in the afternoon. We'll have breakfast at six-thirty, I'll inspect the schloss at six-forty-five to see that it's left in fairly good shape for the battalion that is moving in right on our heels, and then we'll take off. Lena is staying behind. She was given her choice of going into a DP camp or staying on with the unit to follow us and she naturally preferred the latter until such time as she can be reasonably sure of getting to Odessa without delay en route. The Belgian mother was brought to the hospital while I was away and had a still birth, about the fifth or sixth she's had. They'll be left behind too and will probably move back to Belgique one of these days soon. He's done a good job for us, and I've written him a letter of recommendation, and now must write another one for Lena to explain to the OGPU her activities post-bellum.

I'm kind of tired, mostly because of the rough plane ride which left my stomach in a bad way. I held on to the good lunch I had but it was a struggle that had me sweating. Fortunately the trip only took an hour. Damn, but I'm sick of travel of all kinds. From plane to car, I feel it's out of the frying pan into the fire. Tomorrow I have lots of more bumps ahead of me. I pray God that this will be the last move before I go home. And then, even though you are the most wonderful girl in the world, please don't try to get me on the move.

Your letter of July 2, the latest, was waiting for me here. That package containing all that miscellaneous junk certainly arrived in short order. I'm glad you find it interesting. It was a pleasure to get rid of it. There are a couple more on the way too. Kathy's pictures are still going strong here. Everybody loves them. The Stars and Stripes announced today that already 500,000 men had been sent to the US. At that rate I can't help but be back in another month or two. I almost burst into song when I merely think of the possibility. "Don't Fence Me In" at the moment. Tell Mom I enjoyed her letter and will write her as soon as we are settled.

All my love and a thousand kisses to you, my dearest.

Al

***JILL TO AL JULY 29, 1945***

*[Note: date incorrect]*

Darling --

I got your letter of June 27 today, and, disappointed as I was to find no more news of homecoming in it, I was pleased to hear of your singular successes on the diamond, to follow the brilliantly unique vernacular of the sportswriters. Anyway I'm glad you're getting the fresh air. We had some today too, down to the lake this afternoon, Day on a neighbor's bike, where we met Bill and Priscilla. Bill is still on his vacation I guess. I told him you told me to tell him to send an analysis of Hutch's speech and he laughed scoffingly, saying you were always the scoffer.

I'm really tired for some reason or other, maybe the imminence of the curse though I don't know when I get it. All I know is that I can't be so tired for mere natural reasons. So forgive the shortness and disjointedness of this letter. I did want to write you most every day these days so that you won't think you've lost favor with me just because my family is around.



Gosh darling, I don't know what to do about the Alumni fund. It seems steep for me to fork out of my current income, what with clothes for Kathy and me coming up, although of course it's up to you to give what you want to your own school. Can't you swing it on your own cut of the swag? I'm tempted to cut the offer down to five if I have to do it myself. At any rate, I have to wait until I pay this month's bills to see how much is left over. I'm going down town tomorrow and I have to get new high heeled brown and whites, the pair I got before our marriage being sadly in disuse. Incidentally, I kept track of my food bills last month, and I spent 61 bucks for food, not including beer or eating out, which we do occasionally at some drug store. That's a helluva lot, and I really think the cost of living has risen a lot in the past two years, because I shop fairly economically, i. e., at chain stores. Of course there's a lot of waste with one person, but even so. Then it costs me 55 to run the house -- rent and utilities -- another 25 for laundry (sheets and diapers) and maid (twice a month) and about ten a month for doctor and drugs. Well, I haven't totted that up but it ain't hay. So what's left of the 233.33 goes for clothes, sodas, movies, luncheons with Mom, presents for people, new mops and soap flakes. And toys for Kathy. That last is a big item. I don't think I'm getting her a lot, but it seems I can't resist a doll for her here or a Tootsie Toy there.

She got vaccinated today and it's not nearly as grave a procedure as I had imagined it to be. They just scratch her arm, rub in the vaccine, and then you wait a week to see what develops. I thought I would have a fussy screaming baby on my hands tonight but she's been very gay indeed.

God darling, I can't keep my eyes open any more. I love you truly and will write more tomorrow, after I get my new shoes. Day is lending me a coupon, the fourth one I've borrowed in this ration period. That's another thing -- Kathy's had four pairs of shoes since she started to walk. Well, that's neither hence nor thence.

I love you, -- Jill

**JILL TO AL JULY 14, 1945 V-MAIL**

Darling --

I have [*not*] written to you for two days because of the exigencies of family life -- a big dinner Thursday night and movies with Day last night -- and I haven't heard from you since Monday and today is Saturday. That letter was dated June 27. So naturally I'm in a fever of wondering and hope. Maybe it's just the mail being screwed up as usual. Speaking of them, I got a notice that your package was residing peacefully at the Cottage Grove post office down at 48th, so I cycled down there Thursday with Kathy, and found it was much too big and heavy to cart home with the baby too. I pleased with them to send it out again and they did Friday morning, only I had to go downtown and I forgot to tell Day to wait for it, so it went back to the post office again. I was in a snit and a fever, but Vic came to my rescue and biked over in the afternoon and got it. I took off the cords and peaked inside but when I saw it was all neatly wrapped up papers, I closed my eyes, bandaged Vic's and we shoved it into the securely locked hall closet, where it may reside in peace for the next fifty years.

There's been a lot of flurring around here. Thursday I worked like a dog over the laundry and then, since I'd gotten a big roast of lamb, invited Mir and Buss and Vic for dinner, and we had much of it. Yesterday Day was supposed to leave, and she got all neatly packed and we started to call the cab at two and then she looked at her ticket and it was dated the 12th. Since yesterday was Friday the 13th, it became all too apparent all too quickly that she had made a serious error of judgement. She called Walter in New York right away in a great anguish, and he

was sore as hell, having been meeting trains all morning. Well, after three more long distance calls, undoubtedly unnecessary, and innumerable local calls, she finally got a reservation to leave this morning, which she did. Kathy and I went over to the Englewood Station with her because I knew the baby would enjoy the trains, which she did. I was sorry to see Day go because we really did have a very nice time together, after Walter left, anyway, but I am fatigued beyond human endurance today, and Kathy and I ended up the day in mutual hysteria. I'm going to bed right after I finish this letter and feel as if I could sleep for a week, although she'd probably get me up at six in the morning. She cried last night and I had to get up to soothe her. Her vaccination is taking and I think that upsets her a little. Added to my other woes, my bike has a flat tire and it is now lying in about fifteen pieces on the dining room floor. It's moments like these that I feel like handing in my resignation and hopping a fast freight to Alaska.

Well, I think I'll go to bed and stop complaining. Tomorrow will undoubtedly be a better day except that it's Sunday and no mail from you. But I love you anyway, any day, too.

Always,

Your Jill

***JILL TO AL JULY 15, 1945 (A) V-MAIL***

Darling -- Today is Sunday, and upon re-reading the letter I wrote you last night, I find that the improvement in the conditions of my life I so wanly hoped for then have taken place, in part. The morning started out badly, forsooth, with my having to rise in the middle of the night to change and soothe Kathy, and again early this morning, to give her breakfast. The next several hours I spent alternately yelling at her and trying to read the Sunday papers. Finally I bowed to the inevitable, and dressed us both and got outside into the alley, where I met

three males, two small boys from the block and a full-sized male who has a car and therefore patching equipment, and among the four of us, we managed to get the tire patched and the wheel back on. That made me feel much better, and then two little girls came along and took Kathy to the playground. I was thus enabled to get a little shopping done because tonight we -- the Bergquists gals and Bill -- have a big picnic on. Kathy and I are going to meet them down at the lake in a little while. I just finished a long session in the kitchen, making sandwiches and a good potato salad -- for a novice like me -- and still in a fever of work, I even managed to but the back door lock back in. In my two years of tenancy here I have only had a working back door key for two months, after which Virginia lost it with the rest of my keys. Finally, about a month ago, I got up enough energy to unscrew the lock and take it to a locksmith who made keys. I got the lock back three weeks ago but never got around to putting it back in again until today. I tell you all these things, not to point out any particular weakness on my part, but to indicate the various domestic vicissitudes that confront a woman alone. I find myself doing all sorts of things that no other woman does, because she either has a maid, more power than I have with the janitor, or a husband. I know it's good for me, but, having spent the first 24 years of my life with no responsibility at all, I find the consistent stream of duties I now have rather taxing at times. And I shrewdly -- and shrewishly -- point them out to you now so that when you come home, you will say, "Now darling let me do it for you," instead of "Look, you little punk, you've gotten along fine for two years in your appointed mission, let me alone and let me read." Anyway, that's what I hope, because right now I'm damned tired.

I was having a fine daydream a while back whilst doing the dishes, concerning your coming home. Inasmuch as I haven't heard from Mom for a couple of days, because of my inability to find time to call her and my inability to hear the phone if she were calling me (there's a muffler on it and unless you stand right near it, you can't hear), I thought maybe you had called me and I couldn't hear it, and then you'd called Mom to get in touch

with me. At that point the doorbell rang and I rushed to answer it, pale with anticipation, but it was only Fritz and Bea. Then I called Mom but there was no answer, so for all I know, you may be in Toledo, speeding on your homeward path. Well, I'm not really as much of a snowbird as I sound, but it is fun to fantasize. And here is the end, and I still haven't told you how much I love you. I do, terribly.

Jill

***JILL TO AL JULY 15, 1945 (B) V-MAIL***

Darling -- Even though I wrote you a V-mail earlier today, I think I'll write you again, to work off some of my excess food and libido. We had a nice picnic dinner down at the lake. It was very cool and windy, so even though it was too rough to go in the water, we all developed a good appetite from inhaling the sea breezes. Dr. Bergquist came too, but didn't eat enough to keep the rest of us from stuffing like pigs. Bill brought a lot of hot dogs and the gals brought pickles and cokes. Kathy ate potato salad, green olives, cheese, bread, cake and drank a half a bottle of coke. When she got home she cried and I eventually discovered she wanted milk. Then she cried some more after she finished the milk and I eventually ascertained she wanted apple sauce. Then she was satisfied and I put her to bed and we both were happy. On the way over we had a sad accident under the IC underpass. Her doll fell out of the bike basket. But I stopped and walked back for it and she was very much relieved. On the way home the streets were quiet so we sang happily, me beeping a Vienna waltz, and Kathy clearing her throat strenuously every few bars to help me out. Occasionally she would also lark happily "Shit, shit, shit". Now don't blame me, blame the English language. I've only used the word once or twice in front of her. It's not my fault if it sounds nice to babies.

Kathy really acts nicely on these occasions. She's so self-sufficient yet affectionate, and as indicated above, is not very hard to feed. Today a 14-month-old baby came along and they

hugged and kissed -- the other child was really very bright for her age -- and Kathy, to my surprise, watched interestedly for a little while the other child played with Kathy's doll. Then she took it away. At least I was gratified to note that her possessive impulses don't surpass everything else.

God the Point is a shambles on weekends. I can remember when we first went there it used to be quite deserted, at least enough to permit you to take indecent liberties, as they say in police courts, with me after it got dark. Now if you so much as grabbed at my ankle you'd probably be hauled in, if only because in the crush you got somebody else's leg.

Gosh I'm sleepy. I think I'll go to bed now with The Thin Man, really quite a dull book but necessary if I am to become America's foremost critic of James Cain and Dashiell Hammett, both dull boys for that matter.

And to you goes the Jimmy Fidler Award of Meritorious Service (I'm listening to the radio again). And my love,

Jill

***AL TO JILL JULY 15, 1945 V-MAIL***

Dearest Jill,

It's a hot dead Sunday at our new location. We haven't half set up yet but no one works on Sunday around here and we are waiting for tomorrow to plunge into our reorganization. The men are badly housed for these first two nights, since we came suddenly and unexpectedly, but they have adapted themselves by spreading over the grounds under the trees. Some are playing poker. I noticed them when I was out there just now. Others are lying on their cots in the open. Several are playing horseshoes. Others are just talking. A few went in on pass to see Wiesbaden which is a very pretty city save where it has been bombed. Lt. Col. Harden, the exec. here, took me in this morning to show me some of the sights. There is the finest, most beautiful swimming pool I have ever seen operated by the

army, and a tremendous Red Cross Club for the men. We are more or less isolated here, up on a hill several miles from town, but the beauty of our surroundings and billets justifies it. As long as the mail comes through I don't give much of a damn where I am in Germany, and it comes through well here.

Yesterday was a completely exhausting day. It took our convoy twelve hours to make the trip and it was a hot day, with lots of traffic on the roads, a good deal of it stuff being redeployed home. But they were very glad to see us when we arrived here about seven-thirty and went to great lengths to provide us a delicious hot meal. We looked like hell and the officers were dressed in blouses here for the evening meal. Several cut short their meal to help us get settled for the moment and made a great fuss over the men which some appreciated and some were too skeptical to appreciate. I think though that it will be very nice here. The CO has promised to declare no one essential no matter how good a job they do (ironical!) and that will spur everyone to work well. The men have some prestige too, from the campaigns and from being over so much longer than practically all of the men in this outfit. That will help readjust them or perhaps to readjust the men here for that matter. I slept well last night in my new bed after a warm delightful shower in a room which was grandiose and only lacked you to be my perfect bathroom. The mess here is the best I've ever seen in the army. The food is prepared as in only the best restaurants back home. The roast lamb this noon was almost as good as yours, ante-bellum, that is. You're getting to be quite a braggart about your cuisine lately, incidentally, with the aid of those omnivorous brothers of mine. Are you dreaming of the coming long cool evenings with me, darling? I am. Dear Jill, how much I love and want you!

for always. Al

*End of July (first of two parts) 1945 letters*

