



Cathy and Jill

JILL TO AL JULY 16, 1945 V-MAIL

Al darling --

After a week of waiting swooningly, I got my first letter from you today, dated July 4th. The last one I'd received last Monday was June 27, so you can imagine what happy hopeful thoughts were swarming through my curious brain. I must say that they were fast dispelled when I read your letter, which was a masterpiece of irrelevant and lousy information when placed in the context of the above mood. Oh it's not your fault, not altogether, anyway. You probably wrote letters in the interim which I'll get eventually. But it should serve as a lesson to us both that letters are not received in the sequence that they are sent, and for please God, if you are coming and going from someplace to another place, would you please repeat in your letter, or put in the heading, where you are or where you are going. Your letter starts out, "Leaving this place is not nearly as easy as it seems." You can imagine how my heart leapt at that. But by carefully fitting together the rest of the pieces, like that you expected to leave in a jeep with Martin, I judged that you were only heading south to rejoin your company. Which is a tribute to my intelligence, not yours. And in other circumstances I might have been interested in, perhaps even grateful for, the description you gave of German washing machines, but today I am pardonably impatient with it. Impatient indeed describes my general frame of mind. It is hard indeed to pass this beautiful summer weather without you, and knowing that it is nothing more than the goddam Army snafu that is keeping us apart. And especially now that the streets and ports are thronged with

returning servicemen, I feel especially gypped. Of course I'm not altogether without remorse at times for my self-centered attitude. I was listening to a description over the radio this morning of returning DP's in the city of Smolensk, and it would take a stronger citizen than me to keep from crying over the terrible wreckage wrought by the Nazis on people just like us -- young and who once had hope. But Jesus, Jackson, it's still no reason for you to be piffling away the years away from me.

Did Martin get home to the States first before his new assignment? That's what he wrote he was going to do. I wish to hell you would be more explicit about everything in your letters. There isn't any more censorship, is there? At least, your letters don't seem to be marked any more, by you or anybody else. I think I knew more about what you were doing at the height of the campaigns and various invasions in which you participated than I do now. At least I could dope out stuff from the papers then. Maybe I'll start shrouding my own activities in strict secrecy and then you'll know what it's like to play these interminable guessing games. Like today I arose at the hour of X plus two, deployed with a party of unknown strength to a secret beach head, maneuvered a while and then returned to the original base of operations, in a location known only to the higher command. In the afternoon the operation was repeated with increased forces of the same general character, and was terminated in mess at another position. So there. Now what do you know? Well this much: I love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 16, 1945

Dearest Jill,

I think this damned German weather must be a compensation for the so solid German character -- it's as fickle as the oft sung donna. Needless to add, it's raining now and it's cold. Maybe

tonight or tomorrow it'll be hot and sticky. I haven't done much here so far except eat. They really have a marvelous mess here, and as much as one can eat. I've been thinking a lot of you, too. Just a little while I had some of those moments where every memory and feeling comes to the surface and one is almost overwhelmed with dismay and desire. If I could only see you swinging along the street now I'd be the happiest man in the ETO. Without that, it's all contained within me. I know I'm not too prejudiced when I still regard you as the body beautiful. Granted all the months overseas has made my eyes wander at many a bicycle rider and girl working in the field, but a figure like yours is almost unique. I can remember it all too well to think otherwise. It is so useless to describe it in detail. When you know very well what passion you can arouse in me and when the details I can recall even off hand are infinite. Nor must you chide me with a preoccupation with your body -- surely I revel in it -- it's my luck to have that and everything else; why deny the moon because you have the sky full of stars. I can appreciate it all at once - perhaps that's why I'm your man. I don't waste any part of you -- your face, your legs, your wit or your intelligence. Nor do I need Sun Valley or the Edgewater Beach to stimulate my appetite. I can, as I have done, love you in a dingy room, not once, but many times, and if needs be, forever.

You can't imagine how keenly I'm attuned to the movement West. Forever is not too long to wait but tomorrow isn't too soon. Give Kathy a big kiss for me, please, and all my love to you.

Al

JILL TO AL JULY 17, 1945

Darling --

I got two more letters from you today, June 30 and July 6, and they were reasonably explicit, at least as to where you were and

where you were going (now, if I only had a map handy), so please forgive my snit of yesterday, in which I trounced you so soundly for being so mysterious. So please put it down to the vicissitudes of one who has waited too long, too hard, and for so much. And don't think I don't think it isn't as hard for you to wait as it is for me. Despite the tooting around the European countryside you've done, I can only guess that the wait is equally tedious for us both, despite Joan Kelley's expressed indignation over the lifting of the non-fraternization ban. I took Kathy over to see her today and she was very heat up over the above subject, to which I hadn't given a thought. She muttered angrily about the double standard and related subjects. I don't know what to think of the whole question of whether to fraternize or not, since I don't know what all the political implications are, and certainly that's the only basis on which it can be judged. I'll be damned if I know why, quote, it works such a hardship on wives and sweethearts here. If they are going to worry, how about all the belles dames of Sicily, Italy, North Africa, France, Belgium, etc. There was no ban on fraternizing with them. Well, Joan likes to get excited about things.

I finally got around to placing in an envelope two of the best enlargements of the California pictures Al * [footnote: *I meant Paul. Take it away, Sigmund!] took. I narrowed it down to two because I feel that in an enlargement, one should take all the artistic considerations of good photography in. If you want to see what I look like, there are millions of snapshots I've sent at one time or another. There was another one of me smiling, in which Ann and Paul were quite blurred and therefore superfluous and I'm going to see if I can get them cut out in the negative and just have an enlargement of mother and daughter DeG. That will be handled by Day, who took the whole batch of negatives back East with her to have made up.

Speaking of The Song of Bernadette which I didn't see and have no desire to, despite your good recommendation, Day and I did see a rather good little movie last week, The Very Thought of You, all about soldiers' wives and how they sweat it out. Parts of it were quite touching, despite the heavy hand of Hollywood,

and quite realistic -- the girl who had a baby while her husband was away, despite parental opposition, and her sister who chased around with other men while her husband was ditto. Oddly enough this last character did not meet death, jail or even divorce in the end -- her husband merely forgave her after a rugged scene. That's not like Hollywood usually. The only thing I didn't like was that all the men got back to see their women -- there was no character just left hanging by her thumbs like some sacks I know in real life. Mentioning no names of course.

I'm reading Willkie Collins again, being in the mood for Victoriana. The light summer weather I guess. Gosh this has been a summer for nice weather so far. Today I had a sweater on all day. I took Kathy and two other kids down to our close-by playground this morning, where they played and I ogled the Y supervisor, as comely a young man as ever invades this 4-F, low Alpine type neighborhood. He plays ball with the kids and teaches them checkers -- they even have tables and benches -- and altogether is a force for The Good, and you can be sure he doesn't ogle me back. Which is altogether all right, in conformance with my old phantasy of being invisible so I could wander down Michigan Avenue and stare at the people without being stared back at.

Then this afternoon we went out to South Shore to see Joan and Kathy had a rather miserable day. She was pretty tired anyway after our rather late hours last night, when we had dinner with Bernice over at her place, and she cried a lot. She insisted on getting into the playpen with Mike and then Mike, the most affable boy in the world, would proceed to wrestle amiably with her, only Kathy didn't think it was so funny. Mike is not nearly so bright or active or advanced as Kathy but he is pretty as hell and always has a bright sweet smile on his puss, so at least he isn't one of these sodden sullen big babies. Joan is lucky to have a baby like him. She certainly isn't very kind to either of her kids, to warrant such amiability on their part.

Kathy continues her mad infatuation with other people's children. She just loves going over to Bernice to see the baby,

and even tries to hold her, screaming "My baby" all the while. She hangs anxiously around the crib, patting the sheet gently and poking tentatively at the baby's face. Then she will start to tiptoe about sshing everybody and whispering and putting her finger over her lips, only there is a slight confusion there, because she puts her finger in her nose instead. She has also started the most dastardly habit of wanting all her large equipment with her when she goes to bed, so often she will be curled up with a baby buggy, the rocking horse and the baby bed all piled up in the crib with her, like at a rummage sale. Tonight she was so tired that she was satisfied to have only five or six blue blankets and a couple of dolls. After she's asleep I go in and sort out the stuff for war relief.

Look, what is your coming home contingent on? Do all the men in your company have to get disposed of first? Have they found new jobs for you to do, or are you still playing baseball? Can't you tell me anything at all, except the score between you and the 361st Cooks and Bakers Bn. Dodgers?

Well, I have to go to bed now. You know darling how much I love you. If you only knew how much I wanted to see you (and at that her voice tapered off into a thin scream).

000XXX

Jill

Thanks for the fifty. I'll thank you more when I see it. I'm not broke but I'd appreciate the extra dough to justify certain expenditures, like shoes and stuff, which I currently can't seem to fit in my 200+ budget.

AL TO JILL JULY 17, 1945 V-MAIL

My Darling Jill,

I'm back in one of those periods of auto-stimulation when none of your mail is coming through and I must invent things to say

out of a life that is excessively plain in any real sense. Tomorrow though we should have mail forwarded us through Seventh Army and I would be rendered happy. I say plain for our life because though completely comfortable, it is not busy just now and what would interest you, the details of the castle's architecture, the people around here, the plans for the control of information in Germany, the problems of non-fraternization, leave me flat and I can't even muster up the necessary enthusiasm for describing them even to you for whom I can almost always muster enthusiasm for anything. I can write more professions of love but somehow they too turn into sentimentalism and silliness when they are written down. What is a man left with? There is nothing new on points and home. I know it will come my turn to come home before most of the people here but so far the 85-pointers heading your way have been few enough. Patience then becomes the password for the remaining weeks, and since everything is shadowed over by the Great Voyage I have to stand on my head to amuse myself. I really don't mean to complain. Most are waiting under much worse conditions than I. I'll never admit they are missing as much, however. I can never believe other people are so seriously in love as we are. For one thing, most men don't have so many of their needs satisfied by their wives as I do. They can find qualities in other men I can find enough of only in you. Who else can dissect a character so beautifully? Or comment on the news so well. Or mix a salad so well. Or raise a baby like you.

Today I spent a little of the morning looking for the newly requisitioned billets the men just moved into. The Germans were moved out yesterday afternoon. The Burgermeister was told to get them out, and we had trucks on hand to expedite the process. They were moved in with other families nearby. Then I talked with Col. Harden for a while. He's a deep Southerner, very friendly, lots of malarkey, very eager to please our outfit. In the afternoon, Hogie and I drove over to Bad Homburg to pick up some orders and visit the officers' PX clothing store in Frankfurt where I wanted to buy a pair of dark greens but where they had none. I also wanted to buy a pair of those bronze

arrowheads to wear on the theatre ribbon that you get for making an assault landing and no one had any. Could you buy me one of those back home? And while you inquire, you might get me one of those little silver stars which signify five campaigns to be worn on the same ribbon. Send them to me along with a good book to make a sizeable package and a piece of parsley from your victory garden. And so to bed with Bret Harte's novel and a thousand dear thoughts of you.

Al

P.S. Dearest - I haven't changed my address because the new one is being altered shortly. It doesn't make much difference. I love you always, old bean!

JILL TO AL JULY 19, 1945

Al darling --

You're blessed by the sight of my handwriting for a change because I lent my typewriter to Lettie, a truly Christian act since I'm not too fond of her and she only today expressed the opinion that Kathy was spoiled, which I took issue with, if only on principle. Anyway I don't really think she's spoiled. She just has the brains to get her own way.

You may find Kathy's personality more difficult than I do (as long as we're on the subject) because it is more like yours. And while I am politically very socialized -- in pol. theory, I mean -- I have a secret admiration for the individual who competes effectively, as Kathy does and as you do, I suppose. So I'll be damned if I'll make her stop when she takes stuff from other kids. Let them get their own goddam dolls back if they want them so badly.

Anyway, I didn't write you last night because I was tired and puckered with the world. Mom said she got your check, only thought it was from Eddy until I mentioned it. I told her it might be a good idea to bank it for Vic but she said, oh Vic has stuff

put away for him anyway by Dad, which threw me into a secret fit since I still think you should have waited until the school term starts and Vic really starts needing things. This way Mom will spend it on girdles for Mamie. Oh well, it's not very important -- just something for me to get mad about when I feel like getting mad. But next time, if you're going to ask my advice, why don't you wait to hear it. And while I'm at it, let me enunciate another dictum which I think should rule our finances while you're away: unless you're broke, why don't you make contributions, loans and pay off debts and bets out of your own dough. Similarly make gifts - but don't ask me what I think first. Of course, the above doesn't apply to really big things - loans, bets, debts or gifts -you'd want to make. I just resent the trivia, which I have no part in, and which represents the price of a dress or a pair of shoes out of the bank account (my current *idée fixe*, as you see) and which doesn't make much difference to you one way or another.

I joined the Coop today - you know, the grocery on 57th. You pay \$10 to start out and then get rebates eventually on your food bills. The market isn't very cheap but they mean well, and my chief reason is that they have delivery service. If you were here I could send you out for a particularly heavy load (oh yeah, says Al) but this way it's absolutely impossible for me to buy more than a grape and still carry it and Kathy home too.

I was down to the lake both today and yesterday but the water was too dirty to go swimming. Kathy had a good time sitting on a rock right at the edge of the water and dipping her feet, for hours. I don't know why I'm so tired these days. I seem to do nothing but sleep. Anyway, I start out that way. But she cries in the middle of the night from her vaccination and cries in the morning and cries when she wakes up from her afternoon nap, and while I'm not conscious of minding it, apparently it makes me tired.

I guess this letter was rather ill-natured -- about the money I mean -- but I hope you understand the completely irrational attitude I take towards matters of finance, and at any rate,

indulge me the luxury of a little bitching at you. It's been so long since I've been able to get sore at someone I like for something. It's easy enough to get sore at someone you don't love but it isn't fun because they only get sore back and there's no resolution of the matter. But if you get sore at a lover, you sort of do it humorously, always with the end in view of getting back to bed, where you started from. Well, maybe this is all very neurotic. I shouldn't be a bit surprised.

I sent you those pictures today and also finished a silly Victorian novel. Now I'm going to take off my bathing suit and read a pocket book by Graham Greene.

All my love to you, sweetheart.

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 19, 1945

Dearest Jill,

It's a beautiful day here and I would feel very busy out except that I have a slight headache from too much smoking and drinking last night. I don't believe it was the drinking so much but it's that infernal habit of reaching for a cigarette when there's nothing else to do. One of my initial acts upon taking up with you again will be to cut down on the weed. I'll pay you a slight fee to club me when I reach for a Lucky, they say smoking hurts the appetite but I'm sure that if I ate any more I would die from it. The food is really good here and plentiful. It's not a bad place at all to wait to go home. For the last couple of days Col. Harden has been telling me with knitted brow how badly they need a CO for the Stuttgart business but I won't peep and sit there blandly and sympathetically.

Two wonderful characters blossomed out in the drinking last night -- A Capt. Bobby La Branche who looks like a con man from the gay nineties and is in charge of entertainment in our

sector, and Lt. Carney who isn't doing much now except waiting to go home. The latter is as pure an Irish type as you can find - thin, very dark, intellectual and brooding. He got very bitter last night while drunk and called down the wrath of God on his worldly enemies with long and horrible oaths. It was a beautiful piece of denunciation of the people and the system. La Branche was drunk but happy as a lark. He's a little guy with a receding hairline and bushy mustache. He specializes in funny stories and witty remarks, and dashes around like a rabbit. Two of our men have been assigned to him and enjoy it, Scott and Wagner, both of them cards in their own right. Wagner's initial interview went something like this: Wagner, his nose its usual ruddiness, walks in and salutes. La Branche "What's your name?" "Wagner, sir." "Good, you're in the music section." Wagner: "But sir, I want to deal with circuses". LaB. "Why is that?" W. "I understand shacking up with midgets isn't fraternizing." Both collapse foaming at the mouth.

Tomorrow morning I'm going to write you V-mail. They say air-mail is going by boat. I think of you always, dearest and can't wait to see you again.

Always your

Al

P.S. You're right about not meeting me in N.Y. It's far too much trouble and would be most uncomfortable. We could go there later, if you like. But all I'll do in N.Y. is dip in my feet on dry land for the running start.

JILL TO AL JULY 20-21, 1945 V-MAIL

(NOT REDUCED)

Darling --

I'm writing this sitting around in a wet bathing suit, waiting for

Kathy to go to sleep so I can sneak out and take a swim in the non-existent moonlight. The suit is wet because, though brand new, I decided to wash it to give it that shrunken look so dear to the heart of connoisseurs. I had to get a new suit because, though the summer is not half over, my white one is wearing out on the rocks. This one is red, two-piece, not very lovely but cheap and I wear them out too fast to get designer's models any more. Priscilla is over for dinner and we decided on this swimming project a short while ago. We spent most of the evening so far trying to wear Kathy out so that she'd go to bed early and only succeeded in wearing ourselves out.

We had a nice day, Kathy and I together. We went to get cigarettes at the hospital this morning and then went to the rocks at 53rd, where I rarely take her because I figure there's not enough for a baby to do there, though the swimming is a lot better for me, but she enjoyed herself thoroughly. All kinds of people played and talked to her while I went swimming to my heart's content, which isn't very much. This is the first time the water's been warm enough to stay in a while, but as a result, I noticed that my right arm is rather weak after being in a while. Well, it's a small complaint since the more I swim the more it will strengthen and in any case, it's not nearly so bad as your complaint with your shoulder.

Later -- the next day. We went last night, the two of us on one bike giggling and gasping, and immersed ourselves in the dark waters for a while. Anyway it was fun, more fun than a movie on a hot night and not taking so much time. Today it's been rainy and I've been piddling about the house but think I'll go swimming again anyway when Kathy wakes up from her nap this afternoon. No mail from you but a nice package of those little perfumes. They're so cute and the odors are so sweet and girlish I think I'll save them for Kathy. At any rate, I shan't open them for a long while, not until I've used up some of the other scents open now. Thanks loads, darling. It's a real nice gift. Day also sent me some stuff for Kathy -- mattress pads and stuff that I can't get here, and a super pair of saddle shoes from Spaulding's in New York. They look enormous but are very

comfortable and neat, and I hope you will find them an improvement for everyday wear over the white moccasins I used to be so addicted to. My wooden shoes give me legs like Dietrich but they are impossible to wear for more than ten steps, and of course very hazardous for climbing over the rocks down at the lake. And the cute play shoes you see in stores are no good for me at all because I wear them out in a week. Now I have to get Kathy another pair of shoes. She says her sandals hurt. Well, it's nice to have her verbalize instead of yelling for a change.

I just spoke to Mom and she said she heard over the radio that the 7th Army was coming home in September. I always distrust these second or third hand accounts but nonetheless welcome anything I can pin my hopes on. It seems a shame that we will be gypped out of this, our fourth summer apart, but now it is half way over and we seem to have survived. Actually I can't toss it off as glibly as that. I feel quite bitter about our separation and wonder if this bitterness is not seeping through my whole system, turning me into an old scowling woman before my time. I am perhaps more consciously resentful of the passage of time than most, because of my vanity and my erstwhile, now long lost position, of having been the baby of the family and then of any school class I was in. But that is only a small part, when taken in the total picture of my resentment at being separated from you. And it is something I know will pass when we see each other again -- all the lines and scowls at having been so long unloved and untouched in a physical sense will be erased by our first kiss. And if there is any sacrifice involved, of having given up a part of one's youth in the war, it will be something I shall one day be glad to have made, after the deed is only a memory, because there was so little I could do in this war, besides that, and compared to what so many others have done. But such noble sentiments don't keep me from snarling now.

That was my last piece of V-mail so I have to make this a regular air mail letter. The day still looks gloomy and I wish I could be-stir myself sufficiently to take advantage of it and do the huge ironing that confronts me. I also wish that Saturday

night was a better radio night so that I could have that to look forward to and speed me on with my allotted job. Instead I just feel like lounging about with a book. I just finished an elegant little mystery by Graham Greene, This Gun For Hire, much better, I think, than Ministry of Fear, more comprehensible. The man really writes beautifully, the way I would like to write if I were a small-scale professional. I find it hard to tell, when confronted with "a great deal of fine writing," to use Henry Fielding's sarcastic phrase, how much of it is sheer crap, so that therefore, when I do make a judgement, it's always a bit on the glib side.

Well, I think I will start that ironing after all. All my love to you, sweetheart, and my prayers that we'll be together soon.

OOOXXX

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 20, 1945 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

It's been a hot sunny morning and I was thinking of driving into Wiesbaden to try out the beautiful swimming pool they have perched on the side of a mountain overlooking the city this afternoon. But in the past few minutes the sky has clouded up and it may not end up a nice day after all. Yesterday afternoon would have been a good time to go but I had to drive into Shaef Headquarters (now USFET) in Frankfurt. It's an hour's drive from here. My object was to somehow get another man or two sent home. And I may have succeeded. At any rate, they promised faithfully to get all the men over 100 points home next month and perhaps a little more. It took a lot of maneuvering and chasing about but perhaps Crusenberry and Wiemert can be shipped in the next couple of days (128 and 109 points respectively). Those 85 points are really a good indication of how bad a man needs to get home, I've found, with rare

exceptions. After two years overseas, a non-professional soldier type beings to lose his former life and by his nature can't find any substitute in army life. He then is demoralized in the scientific, not the USO, sense of the word and his character and work show signs of wear and tear, especially in the ground forces where life goes on around the army and filters into it. The non-com gets so that he doesn't want to order the men around, the private gets so that he doesn't care about his own performance, and the junior officer gets to be a little of both. One sergeant who has been acting up lately, not in reference to orders but just drunkenness and a general to-hell-with-it attitude, told me this morning that he has been having difficulties with his wife. He has a child too. I guess he'll go back to a nice mess. He has ninety-five points and I hope I can squeeze him in somehow ahead of one of the hundred-pointers so that things won't get worse. I've often thought how lucky I am to have you and how wonderfully you've handled everything since I left. That's one reason why I can truthfully, even though seemingly paradoxically, say that I love you now more than ever before. You wonder, of course, about officers and points. So far, they are behind the men, but they are beginning to leave and we will be together before long, and I promise you to give you one great hell of a bender, to relieve you of all responsibilities to be charge of quarters myself [?], so that you can feel alive and free again of the strains and stresses you have borne too along with Kathy. I would like to give you a spiritual and physical charge account in my name, unlimited, anything you do to be my bother. It's all your expressive character deserves. That and a countless number and variety of kisses from your Al

AL TO JILL JULY 21, 1945

My Dearest Jill,

It's so beautiful an evening that I hardly dare think of you without committing a sort of suicide, albeit a suicide in the most spiritually Schopenhauer mood, where one is full of the world

and yet lacks the most precious item therein. I feel as alone as the big crow which just now alighted on a tall pine tree outside my window. He stands silhouetted against the sky, darkening now that it is half past nine, atop the highest branch a good hundred feet from the still pond which is at the base of the window. I doubt whether many rooms in the world open up on a more magnificent setting. From where I sit writing this I can look through the very wide window over the valley below where the Rhine runs. To my left, in the distance, is the junction of the Rhine and the Main at Mainz. There is a small island in the Rhine that follows as the river approaches Wiesbaden and then the river is concealed as it passes me by the hills rolling down from here to its basin. The moon is up, already at least forty degrees high and moving towards me with the passage of time. I wish it would settle on high and wait for you to arrive so that I could find you in its light and kiss you there forever, hearing no other call, feeling only its cool invitation to passion and rest. And let the twilight live on too so that I can see you without blinking under the blue, grey and rosette softness and feel you fresh and cool. I don't know which is the stronger, my inability or my will never to forget the evenings we have passed together doing nothing except loving each other. I simply cannot conceive of any pleasure greater than reaching for you with my hands and my lips, alone in the world and feeling your body beneath your light cotton dress give to me, divining with all my soul that I have everything I want. You can see why I would always be optimistic. It is your fault and you have no grounds for criticism. As long as I can achieve you I couldn't be anything else. It would be denying my happiness. You need never fear my forgetting you as long as beautiful things happen on earth, as long as the pines reflect themselves on the water, as long as the moon can fascinate, as long as wines sparkle and give warmth and as long as a refrain is carried on the breeze. And as long as there is a sight to see and a thought to be considered will I need your sympathy.

The crow is waiting for me to finish to fly home. It is getting too dark for him so I must send you a last kiss for tonight.

Always your Al

AL TO JILL JULY 22, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

Blimey if it isn't almost the end of July already and we are that much closer to each other. After all, someday soon they'll have to stop sending everybody on redeployment to the Pacific and make some room for the rest of us. Meanwhile my mood is a very angry one. And it's supported by the attitude of the men. Naturally the professional soldiers aren't interested in the high point men any more. Neither they nor their morale matters a damn to the winning of the war. The old horses are left out to starve. And the matter of the readjustment of the high-score men is being handled in a very obfuscatory manner. No one knows when he will go, what the exact quotas are, and there are many reports of 95 point-men getting back while 105-point men are left behind. I don't see why the whole thing can't be clarified. Now, too, they are talking of lowering the critical score. Why? To put on edge with dim hopes another couple of hundred thousands of men who have no chance of going back in the near future? One Meat Ball!

I'm getting fat and lazy here. There hasn't been much to do so far. This morning we had a showdown inspection of the men. I hope it's my last. I don't like to go snooping into the minutest possessions of other people. Tomorrow I'm going with Col. Harden to Brussels. I was scheduled to go on a mission to Bremen today but an officer from up there showed up and is taking care of the matter. We had steak for dinner yesterday, Sunday. I think we've had steak or chicken for the last five days running. Several of the men went down to Stuttgart to stay this morning, among them the only other two officers of the 6822 PW Detachment of which I'm the CO. However, the detachment is rapidly disappearing as a unit with my active cooperation though with sincere regrets for the times we've spent, and except for minor things, its mission is complete and it is merged into the 6871st District Information Control Command. Its

personnel are all being assigned to jobs within the latter. I have a few odds and ends to clear up and then I will be employed at various things by 6871st until my shipping ticket arrives.

I haven't had any mail from you in over a week. My last is dated July 2, a hell of a while ago. I'm hoping Villeneuve will bring some back today since he is passing by Seventh Army HQ on a trip. I sent a pair of binocular to you incidentally several days ago, German ones. By the way would you like to adopt a clever, fourteen-year old orphan boy of Italian, French, and German origin who speaks all three languages and is beginning to learn English. Unfortunately he wants to be a cowboy. He's bartender here now.

All my love, dearest and a kiss to Kat.

Al

JILL TO AL JULY 25, 1945 V-MAIL

Al darling -- I'm afraid I haven't been very good about writing you this week -- anyway, I seem to be constantly skipping days. Yesterday was the day of the Great Heat -- 98 degrees the man said, and it felt even worse because of the you-know-what. I had us down to the lake both in the morning and after supper for a while. Then, as I already hinted in my Monday letter, because I spoke of their arrival in town, the Pecks came over so I certainly didn't have a chance to write then. George looks very well although he walks with a decided limp. I naturally didn't ask him why. He said that he got pretty fair treatment in the camp, where he was for about seven months. He said he was far from being in first class physical condition when he got home two months ago, but that it would take more than six or seven months to undermine one's health really badly. He is surprised that you are not home yet and said that most of the OSS and PWB people he knew never stayed over more than 20 or 22 months, but that PWB had a reputation for lousing things up, at least

from his experience of it in Italy. Apparently he was captured on a patrol in northern Italy.

George hasn't changed much but by now, one must conclude that adult persons don't for the most part, in a war. I get fidgety and annoyed when civilians tell me what an adjustment it will be when you come home, or the men in general. Adjustment indeed. What the hell do they think we've been doing for the past 26 1/2 months? Or for the past four years for that matter? I must confess I fell into that abysmally stupid trap for a while too, thinking that I would get very old-maidish in my habits, living alone, but my few weeks experience with Ed and then again with Day showed me quite differently. Having one's family around is only a change from bad to good, and that doesn't come under the heading of adjustment.

I got your letter of July 17 yesterday but none today. God darling, I hope you're right that your time will come soon. Mom says she has a hunch it will be September. That's not very far off and if only one could bank on it. I lie abed nights thinking of some way to get you home. If only one could just walk up to a very important person and say, Here's five hundred bucks, how about getting me over there or getting him back. Or if only I could make some dastardly tale of illness or infidelity to speed you on your way home. Like Dear Al, I have decided to get a divorce so I can marry Etaoin Shrdlu, the laundryman who fluff dries my towels so well. But nobody would believe it, least of all you. Anyway it might not work and then it would only make things all the worse.

Kathy is in a mean mood today because she is very tired from yesterday's heat. Incidentally it cooled off miraculously. I took her down this morning again but the water was too dirty to go in. Last evening when we were down there we met Gert Goldsmith, the first time I'd seen her in years. She is well and asked all about you. She said somebody somewhere in Europe had seen you ride by on a bike and called but you went right on. I said that didn't sound like you, the bike part I meant. She is coming over for dinner some night next week. She is a very nice girl, I

always thought and still do. By an odd coincidence, Priscilla called up today and asked to spend next week here because her family is going out of town and her father would feel better if she weren't alone. I felt flattered that he considered my ungodly ways preferable to solitude. Anyway, the two girls would have a chance to meet one another, and Willie will probably be very uncomfortable about the whole thing, as he still takes his romance with Gert quite seriously. Boy, that's a piece of hometown gossip that could be re-published in Woman's Day, as an example of the typical cheerful little tidbit to tell the Man Overseas. None of those somber tidings for you, like Baby fell in the cistern last night. Do you have any suggestions as to how I should get her out?* Priscilla says that some of her women cases are so psychoneurotic they won't make a move without writing their husbands. That's me.

Mom is coming down tomorrow to spend the day, so maybe I'll get all my torn clothes patched up. I never get around to any domestic activities these days, I spent so much time down at the lake.

Well, I think I'll take a bath and wash off some of the axle grease. Kathy sends Daddy a big kiss -- she really recognizes your pictures now, and without prompting will open my wallet and point you out, or Ed -- I don't try to distinguish between you two because it would be too confusing. The good part is that she'd never seen the wallet pictures before, just some others I have around of you. If you have any bruises on your legs you have her deepest sympathy. The true hypochondriac, she goes around examining other people's wounds -- Gert had a beauty on her knee, and pointing sympathetically and saying, "It hurts." I'm sorry she learned that word because now everything hurts her, from morning to night. She also walks lightly over the rocks, yelling "Ow, Ow, ow", so that all the people turn around. Well, it's not hard to guess where she gets that from. But hell, I don't go around complaining everything hurts me.

So please, darling, come home soon and patch up our wounds.

All my love,

Jill

* The answer to that is -- leave her in. Then you'll have more free time (a specimen of the Running Gag in our culture)

AL TO JILL JULY 25, 1945

Dearest Love,

Time now to stop swearing and write you a letter instead. The swearing is directed firstly at the army Postal system which hasn't produced any mail for us in over a week except a small package which I dug up personally in Heidelberg yesterday. No letter from you was among them. I can't get through on the phone so far this morning to cuss various parties out and therefore my rage for the moment is more expressive than active. Secondly I'm irked at diverse administrative bodies who are supposed to have turned out orders regarding the company but so far as evident results are concerned may just as well be in a state of rigor mortis. Hop everything! Maybe God heard my lamentations. The phone just rang and the message center said some mail just came in and Villeneuve dashed over to get it. Damn! None for me.

I accompanied Col. Stanley, the CO here, down to Heidelberg yesterday. It was a hot ride. Seventh Army is there now and I talked with some old friends for a while. I enjoyed seeing Graham who is hanging around G-2 Intelligence Operations, and thinking mainly of getting home. He had a good expression for it. He said he had "stacked arms". I'm glad to know some clamor is being raised back home to get the high-pointers away from here. Some EM made his own survey of public opinion around here yesterday asking questions about the point system, and although a lot of disagreement was met on some points, one hundred per cent said the high point men weren't getting home fast enough. I can't vouch for the sampling but no one

disputes it, strangely enough. I wrote Buzzy yesterday.

I'm reading just now a very interesting book recently published called The Way Our People Lives by W. E. Woodward. I would make it one of the principal readings in any class on American history. It reads well and is completely devoid of the stupid spirit of DAR'ism. In addition I have my Bret Harte collection, of which I am on the Fourth Volume, having completed Ward of the Golden Gate, First Family of Tasajars. and a volume of short stories. I also read Mark Twain's Prince and the Pauper which is indeed a charming tale for all ages. And so are you.

A million kisses to you and Kathy.

Always your

Al

JILL TO AL JULY 26, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling -- Today certainly started off with a bang with the unexpectedly early morning final news that Churchill had been defeated. I let out a whoop and holler of delight and Kathy did likewise. Well, it looks as if we are the last bastion of conservatism among the big powers, although perhaps we were led around at the Conference by the Churchill slant. Maybe now we shan't take such an Empire view of things although I doubt whether we will change for a long time in our attitude toward European politics -- our deep suspicion of all political parties that aren't Republican or Democratic. I don't know whether I've mentioned it before, but I don't think much of our handling of the question of German political parties. I think we should let them stew and simmer, instead of repressing them altogether. Maybe out of the mess will come something better than Nazism. But this way, in a vacuum, the Germans will never be able to regenerate themselves politically. I saw the dumbest picture the other night -- Tomorrow The World. Maybe you saw it or heard of the play -- all about the little Nazi boy who came to this

country. Eventually he was cured by a combination of kindness and mild violence. Well, I don't think that's the solution to the whole German problem, of course. It's too big to throw out any pat solutions, but I think that if we were to let them suffer and starve by themselves, and repress their war-making potential, and give them a free hand to riot and revolt themselves into some kind of new and perhaps better political system.

Well, I guess God punished me for all that crap because all the fuses just blew out, not only for this apartment but for the entire building. After some delay, while we moody tenants shuffled our feet outside, contemplating acts of civil disobedience, the janitor, also a moody teep, fixed them.

This has altogether been a busy day: in celebration of our political victories, I took Kathy downtown this morning to get her a pair of shoes. We went to three department stores and found nothing to suit our fancy. So she will have to continue to go alternately barefoot and to wear the old scuffed brown ones from San Francisco. I got myself some white socks, however, to get with my new saddle shoes. Then I came home, with her in a snit, gave her lunch, did the laundry, dug up a sitter and went over to the lake by myself for three hours. I went with a girl I'm mildly friendly with. The water was wonderfully rough and windy, so instead of swimming we took a long bike ride along the lake front, out to the South Shore Country Club where you and I first started our romance. I gazed reverently at the now unrecognizable beach there -- I wish the Park Department would let well enough alone -- and then went back to 53rd for a chocolate sundae, also in memoriam. I gathered up Kathy from Mrs. Oppenheimer about five, then Mom came for a pre-arranged dinner, and I have been in a dither of shopping and eating and ironing (I always iron when Mom comes because then she sews the buttons on where they fell off in the machine) until now. Mom is out now at Buss's but I expect her back shortly to spend the night. You must think it silly that I pay a sitter for me to go no further than the rocks, where I go every day, but it is the only recreation I enjoy when I am tired. If I stay home, I am a slave to Kathy's schedule and I couldn't very well

sleep at any one else's house, and going downtown or to the movies is no fun at best, particularly on a nice day. I could learn some other sport, like tennis, but that would require application and regular sitting, which is a lot of trouble and expense. Horseback riding in the city doesn't interest me at all. It would if they had hot-shot stables here with good indoor rings as they do in New York, where I can practice maneuvers and jumping. So I am left with the lake. I would like sailing but don't have a boat, self-evidently.

Yesterday afternoon, after I wrote you and after Kathy woke up, I took her to this new little gallery on 57th Street, right near Goff house. It is run by a fellow named Snowden, a West Indian Negro, I think, who also cooks at an runs the Spic and Span hashery across the street. He has running the stuff of three young Chicagoans, as well as dealing in some pretty good prints. One of the guys is pretty good: he has some drawings that look like Grocz or Klee. I might get one, if I go back and still like it as well as I did, and if the artist comes down on the price. In any case, it will be better than that awful watercolor I got in L.A. from Mildred Zorne, and there I was motivated entirely by humanity and not by aesthetics.

The next night - July 27th. Mom came home just after that last period so I stopped and we fell to eating the blueberry pie she'd made here -- it was good though not as good as some she'd made because she says I have inferior shortening -- and discussing world politics. She expresses the general conservative sentiment in these states that Truman is good and maybe FD's death was for the best. I didn't argue with her but I don't agree, natch (as Vic would say). I am wary of Truman just because I do so much dislike his backing, like that louse John S. Knight who now owns the Chicago Daily News. However, I shall die marking an X in the Democratic column so I can't get too violent.

Mom stayed until lunch time today and I got a lot accomplished -- shopping for food for us both, a constructive haircut to trim away all the horrid ends left by that other vandal on 57th Street.

You see, Lucille had told me to go to this beauty parlor last month on 57th St. but I didn't listen to the name and went to the wrong one, which was the source of so much misery for at least three weeks until some of it grew back in. Well, I am safe now. You can come home any day now and find me with a decent, if not luxuriant growth on my head, and a reliable cutter to run too when the thing gets out of hand.

This afternoon I took Kathy down to the lake and the wind was still blowing the lake around magnificently. We enjoyed the view and were revived. I do get awfully tired from company, and so does she. And I'm going to have a lot more of it -- company, I mean, because Priscilla is coming tonight to spend some time here. I guess I told you that before. Well, one major source of irritation is temporarily removed -- the flat-footed Viennese from upstairs have gone away for three weeks on vacation. I wish they would never come back. The silence is divine. I don't think Priscilla will disturb it much because she, like me, leaps into bed at ten bells or before.

Sweetie, I'll mail this now and send back (*page*) 3 later. I love you.

3. I was talking with Lettie today that fund of misinformation, and she told me that it was possible now for civilians to get passage back overseas. This threw me into a fit, the thought that I could get to see you possibly, but I don't see how it's possible, because I haven't heard of any wives doing so. I would much rather it weren't possible than it were and I couldn't do it, because of the baby or something. The thing is, it would be hard to take a baby across and unlikely that they would permit just short visits, since I obviously couldn't leave Kathy for very long. I don't mean the trip itself would be hard on the baby but the food and housing shortage on the other side. Anyway, find out if there is any truth in this rumor that wives will be allowed across. Damn it, you know I'd do anything to see you, and I'm still so terribly afraid that something will happen to louse up your swift homeward passage. It is all a silly circle. If I hadn't had a baby I probably would have been able to get overseas by now in

some capacity or other -- Jerry's wife Ann has joined him in Rome at last -- but then if I did see you I would probably get pregnant and have to come home and not see you for a long while. Well, things are tough all over.

The typewriter just hit the lamp, ergo that shameful waste of space.

July 28, the afternoon of. Priscilla came in last night and Mom called to tell me to deliver a message to Mir, so by the time I got back -- they have no phone on account of the war -- I was too sleepy to write more. This is the non-stop letter of all time. Fortunately I mailed the first two pages when I went over to Mir's last night. I really should finish it and start anew or else stop writing altogether, like one of Priscilla's clients from the Red Cross, a woman who refuses to write her husband because he is sick in an Army hospital and when he comes home "won't be any good anyway, so why write him?" The man is also neurotic, Priscilla thinks, because he is in the hospital for an unexplained facial paralysis. Aren't you lucky to have such happy healthy dependents. (I pause now to see what is wrong with the typewriter. I have seen: Kathy stuffed a Nestle chocolate tidbit under the t-bar). There is absolutely nothing wrong with me expect that I won't wear shoes and there is ditto wrong with Kathy except that at present she is in bed yelling her lungs out, giving me this opportunity to write you in the afternoon. She woke up a couple of hours ago from her afternoon nap and since it was raining out, we messed around the house for a while, until she got so cranky I put her back to bed. The place is strewn with buttons and chocolates. I did manage to fix my new bathing suit, the ersatz wool one, so that the pants and bra won't fall off again, by a clever manipulation of tape and buttons. I am always so proud when I perform minor feats of handiwork like that. My wardrobe is also magnificent! amplified by (1) an unbecoming red dress that got too small for Priscilla and (2) the contents of the duffle bag that you sent me and which arrived today. It is always so exciting to open one of those things. I hope you let me use some of the things in it, namely, the one short-lined winter coat, which fits me fine, and the

British Army shirts and shorts. The shirt is just beautiful in material and design and makes a perfect coat to slip on over bathing suits. It reaches almost to my knees, but the waistline is just right and so are the shoulders. I consider this the great advantage of marrying within one's size range. It would be awful if you were seven feet tall and I a midget. I can wear Ed's clothes too, and used to wear Paul's. Tell me darling, by return V-mail, do you want those shorts? If not, I would very much like to have them re-made to fit me. They are much too big, naturally, the normal disparity between the male and female of the species, and I thought that if you didn't want them, they would make a chic pair of shorts for me. The alteration would be something enormous, though, so that if I did have them fixed, they would never fit you again. I am sure they are very becoming to you since you have a fine set of pins for a man, but they would probably be even better looking on me. I won't do anything until I hear from you, however. I assume that you don't mind my wearing the shirt since I won't do anything bad to it, like painting the house in it, the way I did with your old enlisted man fatigue jacket which I now use for a cover for my nakedness after swimming.

I didn't get any mail from you today, and that makes the third or fourth day in a row without it. That has been the pattern of mail for the past three weeks now -- I get a lot, three or four letters, at the beginning of the week but none thereafter. I used to get really excited about it, thinking that every weekend you would be home that Sunday night, by now I am resigned to it, as one of the frailties of the mail system.

I have your jacket on now, the bush jacket (I found the letter in which you said you were sending it and commented wily that you would like to wear it a bit after the war). Well, what I said still goes -- I'll take good care of it, wash it in Lux (as if I can buy any soap at all -- all you can find now is toilet soap which leaves a nice greasy film on the dishes), and iron it with my bare hands, heated over the gas stove.

Oh, I forgot to tell you, I've started putting Kathy on the can

again the past few days, with practically no results. This morning I got her to crap some, then she said "all through" and I took her off and she did the rest on the floor. It makes me so damned mad now because I know she knows what's right and wrong and she's just being stubborn because it is much easier and more comfortable for her to do it on the floor. Now I am starting a policy of expressing marked disapproval when she wets and stuff on the floor. She has gotten over her siege of constipation so unless it starts again, I don't think my being nasty about it will do any harm.

By now it's Saturday night and how I've lived this long is a miracle. I always get so worn out when I have to spend an afternoon indoors like this one. By six it cleared up beautifully and I took Kathy out for a walk to the corner dime store where I soothed myself in part by buying a new lipstick. But that's scant comfort when what I really need is You. And I have been feeling so damn libidinous lately -- the summer months, you know, and it really shows up when one has to spend some time indoors. My usual solution is to get up and bike my head off, but when the feeling is combined with fatigue or the inability to get outdoors, there's not a damn thing one can do about it. It's funny, I can feel sexy whether I'm tired, hungry, sick or have a broken leg -- at least, I can deduce the last possibility from the certainty of the others. I don't know whether I'm worse in that respect than other people, or whether other people are just inhibited. But don't ever let anybody hand you any crap about men being different. Look at me, a well brought up, reasonably well-behaved young woman and you'll know. Well, I think I'll take a tour around with the bike tonight and find a good absorbing spy story in the local drug store.

And in these troublous times I have to start being a chain smoker, at least, when I am writing to you. The thing is, I get absorbed in a sentence or a paragraph and the next thing I know, my cigarette is down to nothing and I have to start over again. I've lit four butts since the paragraph before last, and then got involved in cataloging your old letters and haven't had four decent puffs out of them.

Well, tomorrow I'll have a busy day because I imagine Bill will be coming down to see Priscilla and we'll have a picnic. I already got a lot of hot dogs for the occasion. She isn't staying here tonight but I think it's a good idea that she spend some time here, to curb my growing restlessness with a lot of girlish talk and also, by her presence, to afford me some nights off to go to the movies. It's sort of like having a younger sister around. I don't have to be as polite or deferential as I do with friends my own age, with whom I feel more competitive, for one reason or another. And we keep exchanging clothes, another sisterly pattern. Most of the other girls I know are either too fancy to do that, like Maxine, or else too fat, like Bea. My sister and I would probably do that if we lived in the same city, since she has conveniently grown into a size 12 during her many years of married life.

Well, this letter is getting silly and in any case, it has to stop sometime. It's going to take me all night to address the damn thing. And you, you big stoop, you'd better get home before I grow into a size 20 and am good for nothing, except making meatballs. I love you so damned much, darling -- it's the blight and joy of my life.

Always your --

Jill

[Picture of shaky woman on bicycle]: Sexy Jill on her bike.

AL TO JILL JULY 27, 1945 (A) V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

I hope this will be legible. It's a different typewriter than usual, and is generally used by Sgt. Villeneuve who is however on a trip this morning to USFET to try to find some mail for us. I haven't heard from you in almost two weeks, certainly a sad condition to be in. Nothing much has happened here. I have lots

of free time and there are enough amusements. Yesterday and the day before I spent the afternoon with several of the men down on the Rhine which is a drive of fifteen minutes from here. The water is cool but not too clean. However it is very pretty there and makes a very pleasant way of passing a couple of hours. And as you know, a little exercise and a short trip is enough to kill a day that stands between us. There are lots of barges sunk all along the river, testimonials or our jabos. Last evening, I ate early supper with Col. Harden about five-thirty and accompanied him and two others to a nearby golf course which the army has taken over. I didn't play, firstly because I'm not too hot a golfer and secondly because with the shortage of balls I didn't feel it right to borrow balls and then perhaps lose them, which even a good golfer is inclined to do on a course like this one. We got back around nine pretty tired. I had a drink in the bar and talked for a while with a couple of new officers and a Major here named Grabove who is an Alabaman and a clear-headed guy. Afterwards I went to my room, took a shower and read an issue of PM which I found around earlier in the day. For anyone who has any illusions about the world being all right, PM is certainly The Great Disillusioner. On the whole I find it very informative although I was somewhat peeved at a devious and lengthy article on anti-Semitism in the army where a PM writer had tried to make a mountain out of a molehill in the usual fashion and had been caught up even as far as the molehill was concerned and was trying to get out of it all with as profuse and rambling an analysis as one could hope to find. As a matter of fact, the army is remarkably free from anti-Semitism. The issue never comes up and I have seen far more men discriminated against because of the way they tied their tie than because of their Jewishness. I think that by accusing all and sundry of anti-Semitism, PM helps its enemies by a propaganda of universality, i.e. builds them a band-wagon to ride on.. Just as here publicizing violations and [?] dampens the enthusiasm of the enforcement authorities. I don't believe in tolerating the wrong attitudes for an instant, however. The Ives-Quinn Act is a good thing and constant investigation of subversive groups is necessary. Their activities should be exposed in the press too,

and condemned, but not in such a manner as to lead the general public into believing itself represented in the activities.

The British election results last night gave me pleasure. I was very surprised by the overwhelming nature of the Labor victory. It is certainly to the credit of the British people that they didn't succumb to hero worship and faced the problems of the future not with a relic of the past but with an appropriate solution.

Always my Love,

Al

AL TO JILL JULY 27, 1945 (B)

Darling Jill,

You can't say I don't go to desperate straits to amuse you. Here is a short story I wrote and bequeath to you. If you find it dull it may be because there's so little fiction in it. (It may be because of the writing too but we won't go into that.) It isn't nice, and in fact tends towards the "futility of it all" school of the other war at first glance, and as you know, I don't subscribe to that at all. But you can't get a world view into three pages. Or rather you can get it in, but you shouldn't expect it to represent the writer's constant philosophy. As for why I wrote it, I guess I wrote it for lack of any other creative activity and even a page or two of writing can skim off the top level of frustration until the next time. I think, too, that if I were to write at any length on war, only a small portion would be devoted to the front line.

We had liver for lunch today, the first time I've had it since America, I believe. It was good and reminiscent of the livers, hearts and kidneys you used to cook up on University Ave. And if you still think you can convert me into not eating the rest of the heart as cold cuts the next day, you are still in error. Do you remember our place on University as well as I do? I can still see the refrigerator very vividly and all the rest of the furniture only

slightly less vividly. It was really a very nice little apartment for us and it was too bad to lose it in many ways. Is the new place just as nice? I realize that being on the ground level we're still subject to the eyes of the outside world, but it was that way before too, if you will recall the time Oliver and Diane caught us napping, literally. It seems that we can never get above the first floor. But one of the first things we ought to do when I get back and we decide where we want to live for a long time is to find a real big place away from everybody and everything. That's how I want to live, letting the world knock before it comes in.

I spoke over the phone this morning to a Lt. in USFET at Frankfurt regarding our adjustment for the next month and he said there would be another quota at the beginning of the month, I suppose around the time you get this letter. There may be a chance on it.

Come what may, I love you for keeps. Give my Kathy a good hug and kiss for me. Just wait till she sees the prize package you have stored up for her over here.

Always

Al

JILL TO AL JULY 28, 1945

[Note - no date has been typed in: the number "28" is inked in.]

Darling Adjunct of the 6871st District Information Services

Control Command --

Greetings --

Since I'm in possession, as of today, of two very informative V-mails from you, the 13th and 15th of July, I know all about you and take back anything I might have berated you for concealing your movements. I pray that this is the next to the last step on

the way home for you -- I'm getting so that I think any move is for the best, whatever the case may really be.

I haven't been writing you much the last few days either -- I skipped yesterday because I spent it lapping up great doses of vitamin D at the lake. When I finally got home around eight with Kathy I was so tired of all the people -- one certainly leads an active social life down at the lake -- that I just lay in the darkened room for a while and then went to bed. Kathy has been leading peculiar hours the part couple of days which enabled me to keep her out all day yesterday. She wakes up at five or six -- I feed her in a high dudgeon, and then we both go back to sleep until ten or eleven. So I let her skip her nap and we took a picnic lunch down to the lake. We were with hordes of people, including Bill and Laura and Priscilla who joined us later with a lot of beer. So we ate and drank our supper down there too, Momma getting a good edge on, which is fun to wear off in swimming. This morning we repeated the performance except we came home for a late lunch and nap. The water has really been marvelous and I'm getting in all the swimming that I missed earlier in the season. Kathy even went in yesterday -- Virginia's husband, who is a lot stronger and more sure-footed than I, took her in and let her kick and splash around. She protested violently when it was time to come out, needless to say. I guess our dream of having a water baby is coming true. I tried taking her in today, but she is not as confident of my ability to hold her up, so we didn't stay in too long. But she is quite willing to let me go in by myself, and stand around with any stranger who will watch her, watching me delightedly.

Today ended up rather gruesomely at a tea given by Helen Stillman, the girl with whom Diane Kerner lives. There were five other women there, and four of us had babies between one and two. It wasn't as bad as it might have been, but I simply can't socialize and watch Kathy at the same time, so now I am quite tired out. Anyway I find I am never very interested in chatting for chatting's sake these days. I am too wrapped up in Kathy to do much else but watch her and respond to her needs or repress unfavorable conduct. I did manage to get into a brief argument

with Helen and another girl whose husband was in the ETO. They both would rather have their husband stay there than have them come home and go out again to the Pacific. I said that if I had to make the choice, I would rather you came home, even for those 30 days. Well, it was a theoretical discussion on my part, since I don't think you will ship out again if you do come home. But they couldn't see my point of view since both their husbands have been over less than a year.

Incidentally, Helen's husband, Cal Stillman, wrote her that he moved into quarters in some small town, the name of which I now forget, and found papers in the desk drawer signed by you. I wish I could remember what town it was. A strange coincidence, what? I also hear that George and Chris Peck are back in Chicago for a few days, before George moves on to an assignment in Washington. I'd like to see them, but don't feel up to entertaining and don't see any way out of it, if I do want to see them. I think I must be getting psycho-neurotic, I have such an aversion to seeing people if it takes any effort on my part. I guess it's because I've seen so many people these past few years that you've been away, and always the burden of talking or listening or making drinks is on me. I guess I always was happier when you were around to do the talking while I could just sit by and look nice and see that we got home at a decent hour so that we could go to bed. I still like parties where one can dance and say owlish things to the men in sight, which doesn't take any effort, but as for sitting and having discussions with anybody more vocal and profound than Priscilla and Bill or the women I meet at the playground or beach, well, it's not for me.

Kathy is getting to be such a hypochondriac. She's had a little scab on her leg from a mosquito bite, I think, and every night after she's been in bed a while she calls me in and points to it and says, "It hurts". Then I take her up, put a band-aid on it and she is a satisfied, even delighted, client. Of course by the next day the bandage has worn off and the performance is repeated. Joey is the same way about aspirin. He is always yelling that he has a headache, so he can have some. And of course he has

no more headache than fallen arches.

I'm just reading about the raid on Nazis in the American zone of occupation. It sounds like a very spectacular affair. I wonder if you had any part in it and how much you can tell about the whole thing.

Well, my psycho-neurotic fatigue is overtaking me again. And I see a beetle on the curtain that needs taking care of. I hope it's a beetle, that is. Darling, please come home soon. I need you so damn much and love you even more.

All my love --

Jill

P. S. I got the beetle [*drawing with arrow pointing*] Him

Color - black

Size - drawn to scale

JILL TO AL JULY 29, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling Al -- I am yawning mightily as I write this. Today has indeed been busy. I was aroused this morning at six by Kathy, then went back to sleep again after intravenous injections of soft-boiled eggs in both our bodies, then was aroused again by a special delivery letter for Priscilla. This made me terribly mad, one, because it woke me up, two, because the letter was not for me, three, because even if it had been for me, it was not from you. Then we got up and went to the lake and had a picnic lunch down there and eventually came home and then went back down again for a hot dog dinner with Priscilla and Bill. They are here now, busily ironing in the other room, and send you moderately loving greetings, as Bill would say.

Other than that, there is not much to write about, being as I just wrote you last night and have done nothing to further our mutual

life together today except breathe fresh air. Nor have I contributed to Kathy's except by giving her a good kick in the slats down at the lake today, much to my surprise, hers, and all the Sunday spectators. I don't know if it furthers the cause of discipline but it sure made me feel good. As you can guess, I am thoroughly tired of life as it is lived these days. I am tired of being alone, being with other people, seeing other people in love, being in love myself and not being able to do anything about it. My only hope is tomorrow morning's mail -- if I don't get some I'll be happy, thinking it significant, and if I do get some, at least I will be happy for that brief moment of reading for the first time when it sounds as if you were really talking to me. But damn it, darling, can't you do something about this underhanded conspiracy to keep us apart? By now you ought to be able to do something.

Oh, I was speaking to Mir the other day and she said that Buss said you should write him about teaching deals, also, that even if there weren't something here something might be rigged in other schools. Well, you do what you want. By now you probably guess my prejudice against the Chicago environs.

Oh, Kathy is making an apparently non-stop protest against being in bed. I've never heard her yell this much since she came of age. I'll be damned if I go in again and see what's the matter, since the previous three trips availed me naught. She's been awfully fussy again the past few days. I can't imagine what's the matter since I don't see any signs of new teeth. Maybe the same thing that's wrong with me -- she needs a man.

Well, darling, maybe I will go in and apply the aspirin treatment. Oh the troubles of us mothers. I love you sweetheart --

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 29, 1945

Sunday Morning

Dearest Love,

My head is a little enlarged this morning after a hard bout last night, which will undoubtedly take up most of the letter in describing. The menu I'm enclosing with this letter will give you an idea of dinner last evening. It was magnificent. The names beneath the courses are all names of officers here who have expressed opinions at various times on the dishes mentioned. Keller is a lieutenant who is mess officer and he does a fine job as you can see.

But you will be interested in the before-dinner episode as well. I was standing at the bar minding my own business over a glass of champagne and a civilian couple walked in, dressed in the uniform they sport, and introduced themselves. I didn't think anything of it, although the girl asked me if I had worked at the Pentagon building, to which I replied 'no' as politely as I could. But then her husband introduced her to someone else by her maiden name of Marion Harper and I remembered all. It's your old pal, Jill-Pill, of the Soc. Sci. Bldg and Science Research. She's been overseas in England quite a while, then Paris, and now for the time being with Shaef. Her husband, whose name is something like Hurdaines and is a psychologist, is a very tall, nice guy with a pretty good wit. They are friends of Col. Stanley whom they knew while he was working with Sam Stouffer in Washington, and came down to visit him. I talked with them quite a while before dinner and afterwards. Marion is wearing those slanting kind of glasses and I guess you would say she has blossomed out. They were married in Paris in April. I enjoyed talking of people like Stouffer, Jaffee, Shils and the others with them. Naturally all the while I was secretly chagrined that you couldn't be here instead. I am most happy that you never did get in with that group in Washington, however, even

though, it was tantalizing to think of you here instead of her and of how immeasurably nicer it would be.

The string ensemble for dinner and after was very good. The music from La Traviata was especially lovely. After eating, everyone (about forty officers, a British civilian woman, Marion, and the French wife of one officer) adjourned to the terrace for more music. A very pretty and seemingly intelligent Red Cross girl named Hammerstein and several other officers and male Red Cross people joined the gathering. The cognac and champagne flowed freely, as the newspapers say. About ten o'clock, Col. Harden, several other officers and myself drove into Wiesbaden to the bar of the 317 General Hospital where the drinking continued at an accelerated pace and where finally we all broke into song with the help of a huge warrant officer from the hospital who could really carry a tune. Col. Harden went around talking to everybody about the horrors of war, as is his wont and bragging about all of us. (He is alderman of Ward 7, Charlestown, S.C.) A major in our party named Russell told jokes in a fine cockney accent, and everyone harmonized. The climax of the evening was Lt. Horsey of Georgia's drunken rendition of a rebel song to end all rebel songs. There is no describing it and if I tell you that none of the other Southerners there had ever heard of it and high as they were, were embarrassed at the same time they were amused, you can realize the deep, bloody, almost forgotten history behind it. It was the most pure paean of hate I've ever heard, a complete fanatical denial in almost chant form of everything the Union represented. Bill Bunn and I are going to try to get the words from Horsey if he can recall them sober. When you hear the song, you can picture perfectly the sullen people standing by with gritting teeth as Sherman's men go marching by. There is nothing modern about the song at all.

After his stellar performance, Horsey subsided, we sang a few more songs and by putting on my hat, enlisted Boyle who was fairly sober or at any rate bored, moving briskly several times towards the door to create the illusion in bleary eyes that everyone was leaving, and misrepresenting people's intentions,

I initiated the return home which occurred around two o'clock. Back in my room I found two other captains occupying the other two beds, I having been alone previously, and went to sleep without disturbing them except to say hello to one who opened his eyes when the light went on. Both are here for a couple of days only. By coincidence all three captains in the room now are "De", De Marr, De Velbiss, and myself.

I got no mail from you yesterday as usual. It's been well over two weeks now and I am rendered ill-tempered a good part of each day by it. If I could only get my hands on the bastard that is holding it up between the Seventh Army APO and here, but one can never get the guilty ones in this modern world in anything. The last word from you is July 2's worn-out V-mail. But my luck should break any time now.

Headache or no, I think of you with the most tender thoughts this morning, as always. Seeing Harper has refreshed some memories of you, or ought I say rubbed salt in old wounds, and I am so much more lonely for you. Your situation is so much different from mine. You are constantly surrounded by things and people that recall our past, but I have subsisted on practically nothing all this time outside of your letters.

Well, one of these days I'll subsist on you, and if you think that doesn't mean eating you, you're mistaken.

Always your

Al

Big Kiss to Kathy

JILL TO AL JULY 30, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling -- Your V-mail of June 22nd that I got today (I was right - the mail always waits until Monday to come in) damn near broke my heart, because you finally and openly admit what I

long suspected, that the Army doesn't give a damn about the merit system in readjusting personnel. I also read in the paper today that Truman doesn't want families going over there "to settle in Europe." F... him and his sorority sister of a daughter (I can think of no better argument against him than that last). I also read that civilians no longer need permission of the War Dept. to go to Paris and places like that, although they still do to Germany and Italy. I wonder if you can find out anything more on your end about the possibility of my getting there, to Paris say. I know it sounds insane, but if I could go to Paris for a month or so, maybe you could get there. Your letter said you were going to Brussels for a little while, so maybe you could wangle even further trips. I don't know anything about transportation overseas, and don't know how I could find out, except by writing Daisy to look over the situation in New York, where most flights and boat trips originate. It would also necessitate my leaving Kathy, which would mean wangling something with Mom, who ordinarily doesn't feel up to taking care of such a young child for any length of time. It is all very impractical because I know you must want to see Kathy almost as much as you want to see me, but if I could leave her, I would, because I want to see you so much, even for a little while. Write me by return V-mail (it really does go much quicker than any other kind, I concede after all these months) what you think of this all. I would give anything in the world to see you. And if you think there is any merit in this idea, you might write Mom too, because I don't know where else I could leave Kathy for any length of time.

And in response to your wonderful aside "By the way how would you like to adopt a 10-year-old boy, etc." the answer is, of course, yes. I presume that he wouldn't come before you came, that is, so that we could arrange together for larger quarters and the details of his education. I don't know if you are serious or not. I don't see anything unfortunate in his wanting to be a cowboy. So do I. But I have often thought how nice it would be to take one or more of these children who have been deprived of so much. And I can't think of anything nicer than a half-grown

boy, viewing my predilection for younger brothers and my current aversion to the very young set which craps all over the floor. (Not that I wouldn't take one or more of those if they were handed to me -- but in that case, I'd like some husbandly assistance on the deal.)

I also got your letter of July 7 this morning, proving that airmail is not as airy as it sounds. It's swell if you get that medal -- I don't know whether I should express any more pleasure than that, no matter how much I feel, because I'm not sure how you feel about the Army's recognition of merit. I know you're wonderful and don't need a bunch of badges pinned on you to confirm this knowledge. And I guess you feel the same way about me feeling that way -- department of incoherence.

And you asked that ever provocative question, where the hell does the money go, darling, and I answer, as ever provocatively, Ich weiss es nicht, darling (spelling phonetically). However, to recapitulate, I haven't drawn on any of our saving accounts for household expenses or any other kind, except for bonds. I withdrew 3750 from the University Bank Account for bonds last fall. Then last spring when I was going to the coast, I withdrew 138.62 (which I figured didn't make much difference as about that part of the original deposit was from savings I'd made the summer I worked and lived with Mom), leaving and even C to cover checks drawn from Riggs and cashed at the bank there. At the Harris Trust we still have, plus interest, the 4000 I deposited there in 1944. At the Industrial National Bank we did have 5000. I said did, because here is a little secret, writ in blood. Day got behind in her household accounts, having lent somebody some money Walter didn't know about, so when she was here she asked me to lend her 1500, which I did, and which she said she would repay next December, when the unknown party of the third part will repay her. I'll put it in bonds then. But she died want to keep the whole thing in confidence, as they say. That leaves us with 3578.47 there to date, the odd numbers being the interest accrued. We have about 5000 in bonds at face value. I don't know the exact amount because I can't read the handwriting in the little book where I was keeping

a record of those things and don't want to take the time to add it up over again now. However, if you want to know the exact amount, either in maturity value or face, let me know and I'll make the addition. And now for the 64.33 (for interest) question -- where does my 200.33 go? I don't know if I wrote you this before, but living costs are very high now, particularly for food. I buy extravagantly because it can't be avoided with only two people here. There is waste to begin with, because I have only dribs and drabs of leftovers, buying in small quantities as I do, and it is hard to use them. Then one tends to buy the more expensive cuts for one or two persons - chops and round steak. And in the meat shortage, one buys what one can, and peculiarly enough, the few things in the stores are usually the better cuts of meat -- beefsteaks instead of liver, beef instead of pork. So I think that even if you were here, our food costs would not be higher. As it is, they run about 65-70 bucks a month, which is ridiculously high. I shall try to avoid some of that next month by eschewing the delicious delicatessen products of my gonof friends, the Nudelman's. Then, as I think I wrote you, I figure 60 a month for rent, utilities and phone, and another 25 for laundry, including diaper wash, and dry cleaning (I still do Kathy's and my dresses and underwear). Another eleven goes for the maid. Then I spend an average of 25 monthly for downtown dept. store items -- clothes for us both and household cotton goods, like dish towels which are all exorbitantly priced nowadays. Our doctor's bill must average 15 a month through the year, if not more. And another 15 at least for gifts and gratuities. Cigarettes and eating in drug stores probably runs about 5 a week, movies included, so one can figure 25 a month for that. (You might include drugs too, in that last item of miscellany). Well, if you add that up, that's where the 230 goes. Incidentally, I made no effort to get the figures to "fit" but they still do -- the grand total is 227. I think that I will try to keep a strict account for the month of August of all expenses, which I've heretofore found impossible to do with anything but food slips, and then really see where the money goes. However, that often gives one an erroneous impression, because stuff like doctor's bills don't come up monthly. Anyway, I will try to be

careful. But that's the trouble -- I am reasonably careful -- anyway, I'm not at all extravagant, though I'm considerably more free-handed than other girls I know, like Joan, who have a tighter budget and also lifelong habits of conservatism. But honestly darling, you don't have to send me money every month. I only wanted some if you wanted me to give to the Alumni fund or if you felt you simply had to get rid of it. And you don't have to buy me a fur coat ever. I hope we live in California, anyway, where I won't need one, and can just wear lush suits when we go to town.

Vic is spending the afternoon here, knocking off from his job at the bookstore. He was at Billings this morning for a general check-up, and he is in good shape, they said, although they gave him a formidable diet to stick to. I think he will, however, because he is very intent on reducing. But boy, I'm glad I'm not in his shoes -- I'd hate like hell to have to eat that little.

I'd better mail this, darling, before something happens like Kathy waking up to interrupt it anyway. I love you forever, dearest, and the amount should be enough to get us together soon, somehow.

OOOXXX

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 30, 1945 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

I certainly could use something in the way of a letter from you as inspiration for my own letters. That July 2 letter is still the latest and every time the mail clerk looks at me he blushes. I blush too but it is with rage. I sent Villeneuve down to Heidelberg again today to see what he can find in the way of mail for everybody and he is expect back any time. I haven't done much today so far and don't expect to do much more. Had a conference this morning to get some of the affairs of the

Company straightened out. The idea is to invigorate the Company, get ROOS transferred out in order to straighten out the records and property, appoint a low-point man to be my successor as soon as I'm put on the quota. So I wrote a memo on the subject. Another quota is coming up the end of this week incidentally. Always a chance, you know. As the ads say about the lottery, The trouble is that I don't know whether you are very depressed about all this delay or are patient or what since the mail is so goddammed fucked up.

For some reason I got to thinking about Kathy's middle name today and can't recall it for sure, but believe you mentioning it to be some atrocious thing like "Gale" once upon a time. It is hereby revoked and declared null and void. I am against fads and am all in favor of old-fashioned names, just like your mammy and pappy, old girl. I wasn't too sure of Kathryn instead of Katherine or Catherine which is what all the great Catherines of history were, like my mother. Maybe I'll launch a campaign to change that too later. Meanwhile I am open to discreet suggestion on a middle name. Nothing that wasn't a name or a literary allusion before 1900 will be accepted.

Happy days: Villeneuve just came in, his kindly weather-beaten face lit from ear to ear. He brought back mail. Three letters from you, my sweet, July 8, two, and one from July 11. It seems that earlier mail representing perhaps a week or so of letters was sent to Paris of all places and will be arriving here soon, but I am extremely happy to know that your haphazard life is still bumping along in the usual fashion and no new calamities need to be reported. I was advised, just as you say, that you can get another bond from the Treasury by filing an affidavit of some sort or posting a bond or something. Whatever gave you the idea of Crowell being from the publishing house of the same name apart from the facts of the identity of name and employment. They aren't even relatives. Your letters were full of Daisy and Walter. I think that it was a very good time for them to visit you, to wit, before I come home, and also because they are good company and also because they are relatives and I for one was always a little more glad to see relatives than other

people, all other things being equal. (I'm such a sentimentalist.) For God's sake cease and desist sending me De Tocqueville. I read him long ago and am not especially interested in reading any more of him.

Now I must quick like a rabbit reread your letters and dress for dinner. It is six-thirty and dinner is at seven. I agree that we must plan all-nights bouts when I return. What a time we'll have. I like to walk home at dawn or leave home for that matter.

Many tender kisses to you and Kathy.

Always

Al

JILL TO AL JULY 31, 1945

Darling --

I'm fresh out of V-mail so I'll have to use this not very satisfactory means of communication, as we both agree now. I got your letter of July 20 today and nearly split my sides over the dialogue between Wagner and the captain. I read it to Vic and he explained to me the meaning of that word latch, or whatever it was (he subsequently spilled grease all over your letter so it's in no shape for reference material now), though I had guessed it -- the word -- already.

I have just arisen from one of our formidable family gatherings - Dad was south and came over, and Vic was here, as well as Priscilla, not a member of the family but an eater nonetheless. I say formidable because I am still not up to the rigors of cooking, serving and cleaning up after a large dinner, and also nodding my head gracefully in between times, during conversations. Oh yes, and also jumping up and down and soothing Kathy, who has been in a perfect snit all day, for some reason or other.

A great bushel of books came from you today, as usual, all completely unreadable, because of language or interest barriers. However, the harmonica was a rare treat and surprise, and I have been blasting away at it ever since. Vice says you can only make chords on it, which partially explains my inability to play any tune but reveille. I don't know whether you are sending me shells or whether they just float in here, with the mosquitoes, but I have found two on the floor so far, one about an inch long with 43, dnh, st 4 on it, and the other with 43 on it, and a p and a c. Neither of them fit my 38. I don't know if they are alive or dead, or whether I will be much longer, for that matter. I'm so overwhelmed by the genuineness of the pate, it being the first time in my life that I can recall seeing the real McCoy, that I will probably save it in perpetuity.

A helluva storm is blowing up, after a particularly hot day, and it's very distracting. The windows are shaking and the trees sound as if they were about to fall down. We were going swimming after Dad left and he just did, but now I don't know. Right now we are discussing the possibilities of being hit by lightning. I suppose that if we're wrong, I should really make an effort to pen you a more ornate last letter. But I am being besieged on all sides by cries of "Shake it," "Make haste" and "Avast there." So I shall leave you hanging in suspense, "will she or won't she live to tomorrow, to buy more V-mail paper?" Anyway, darling, I do love you and think about you more than the limits allowed by Good Mental Hygiene for War Wives.

A million big kisses to you too.

OOOXXX

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 31, 1945 V-MAIL

Dearest Love,

The fickle postman has found me at last and I am in a joyous

welter of your letters. The latest is July 18 which at one fell swoop brings you a week nearer than yesterday. Then there are others, the blank form for recuperating the war bond, a New Yorker, an astounding announcement from the New Yorker that I have been given a subscription from my "Pals of the 42nd Ward" (sic!!!). Who in the world is behind that? Please tell me, if you can. Since when is the "bloody 42nd" giving subscriptions to the NYker? There were letters too from you for July 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 11. You can imagine my state after that barren period. But first of all my guilt must out. I didn't send that 50 bucks as I said I would. I don't know where it went. I began moving all over the countryside and now I am down to twenty or thirty bucks so I can't send it. However, on my word as a boy scout I shall send you 75 dollars in a couple of days, as soon as I get paid for July. And don't give the alumni fund anything, if you haven't already. As an additional penance, I shall send that too, but only after I hear whether you have acted already on the matter. Incidentally, all the expenses you cited but didn't sum up added to only 160 out of 233 but I will go no further and concede you the whole case plus costs.

I was down to USFET HQ today at Frankfurt and was told that if I miss this coming quota it will be by very little and I will almost surely be on the next. There's nothing for us to do save hold on for a little while longer, darling. In my stronger moments I feel like I've run a good race, where you always have just a little will, optimism, and force left for the last few yards. Other times, I feel just plain punk. No, I don't have to wait until all the men get home, but I do for those that are about on my level of points or a little below. I am a willing partner to your scheme to escape to the country for a while when we get back, but I wouldn't like to do it unless we could do it properly, not in a manner that would take endless red tape, minor worries, crowded trains, unwelcome companions and continual rushing around. Do you agree with me that as soon as we decide to stay in one region for a while, we ought to buy some land and make it our own way? I would get more fun and rest out of working on my own land than vacationing on someone else's.

Parts of last night and tonight were spent in seeing movies, last night Bell for Adano and tonight Hanover Square, which you already described to me and I found half corn and half pretty solid. The masquerade and burning of the body was a brilliant piece of ghastrliness. The Bell was a little too simple, but the settings were fine and the military authentic.

More tomorrow, dearest. It's almost midnight. I thought of you today when reading where Bret Harte wrote: "She would have passed for a pretty girl had she not suggested something more."

Always,

Al

End of July 1945 letters

