

JILL TO AL MARCH 2, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart -- Gosh, I was all ready to answer your letters of the 13, 15, 16 and 20 which came today and take a lot of answering and then I started to water the plants (I have WATER PLANTS written all over the calendar in the kitchen and so when I write letters in the kitchen which I am doing now and do very seldom and happen to look up to see what date it is, which I did now, why then I am reminded to water the plants). Anyway, I watered a plant, only I watered the Public Papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt instead and now I have forgotten everything in my chagrin. I guess it will dry though.

Your letters were fine as they always are. The bar sounds swell, wish I could be there. You know, Bill showed me your letter in which you mentioned an ocarina so I asked him what it was. He said, a sweet potato. Dissonant sweet potato, I mused. He certainly picks funny adjectives sometimes. Bill stared at me in amazement and I said, Do you think he means the sweet potatoes they get are rotten? Well, now I know what an ocarina is. A musical instrument, yes? Gosh, Oliver just called, he is coming over with Diane so I won't be able to make this a long one. I'll just answer points as they arise in my mind. Kathy takes even more cod liver oil than ever now, only it isn't cod liver oil, it's Percomorph, I think that's shark liver oil, and if anything, it smells worse than cod. I got some in my baked beans today by mistake -- I guess I didn't wash out the pot I was boiling the eye dropper in very well, and it certainly was terrible. She takes it like a man and makes a face like a monkey. She also eats cereal twice a day. Sometimes she needs coaxing -- she makes horrible faces and spits it at me, and then I give her the bottle to soothe her, and then take the bottle away real fast and substitute the spoon. This stratagem, strange to say, works. After a while, when we get close to the bottom of the cereal glass and also to mother's breaking point, I just keep shoveling it in helter-skelter even though I know most of it goes on her shirt or on me. After a while the bottom of the glass becomes an end in itself. I don't give a damn where the cereal lands as long as we get finished. But I guess she gets away with most of it.

Were you sarcastic about our dear friend Turkey and do you know, I never heard about that cigarette scandal? Maybe it wasn't publicized here or more likely, that was the day the cleaning woman lined the floors with the Sun before I got a chance to read it. I'd go to the movies every day to see your sublime face in the newsreels, were it not for our little dove. As it is, I haven't seen a movie since the nurse left and don't expect to see one until she gets off the ten o'clock bottle. Your letters in quantity and quality satisfy me as completely as anything less than your complete presence would. I think you do magnificently by me, even when you accuse me of superficial thinking, a vice of my sex, I might add. We're so loused up with practicalities you know. Speaking of practicalities, I started fretting about the insurance again today. Just a way of passing the time when she is napping and I can't. Why don't you make it out in her name? No kidding, it will make me feel somewhat more secure, perish forbid. My money is all tied up for a while more, I don't know exactly why, and I think Kathy ought to have it anyway. What a loathsome note to end on -- I'm really not worried, just bitching around.

Gosh, I love you. More tomorrow.

Always your Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 2, 1944 V-MAIL

Dear Love,

For my most preferred flower, I would fain smell thee, but instead this morning I stooped over a scrubby first-Springer which had scarcely an odor to recommend it save that of the wet earth. Withal I am refreshed sufficiently to write a letter or two. I knew all about what you were doing on February 20, mainly because I got a letter from you a while ago dated that day. Principally you were feeding Kathy's lovely little face and brooding over problems of cereal-cooking which are shortly to arise. I am in no position to sympathize enough with the terrible

complexity of an infant's appetite, since I would like very much to feed someone's face besides my own for a change. My face doesn't like me either, apparently, since it has acquired the barber's itch, as that romantic affliction is appropriately called. An itinerant barber-boy gave it to me several days ago when he called at the bivouac to give haircuts. It is a rash on my left cheek which at the moment is covered with white salve and considerable beard. Just another incident to keep life interesting, and itchy. A couple of Spits are zooming around the place, as if they thought we weren't friends, which is also interesting and disquieting. Pilots don't see very well when they go fast. Besides itching, cocking an ear at the planes and thinking of you in terms of flowers, I'm impressed by the crisis in Finnish policy. I think their withdrawal is imminent, and Germany will have been "betrayed" by another ally. The others should follow soon. The Russian terms are most generous. Again there will be two schools, one pointing out how generous and nice she is, the other warning that she is doing it to pull a fast one on the other border countries. Who can disprove the last? It's a way of looking at life.

Your shedding-a-tear story I found amusing. If you had only known! I think I was in Chicago when war was declared, just returned from Europe. I had had a pleasant trip, I had dislocated my shoulder, I had met two very attractive girls aboard ship, I had seen a small part of the great lethargy that was France's and England's, I wanted to aid the allies immediately though I didn't worry a lot about their ability to help themselves, and I wasn't greatly enthused about the coming year's studies. I had no money, having squandered my few dollars abroad, about \$69, I think, but I had some research work to do, and as the academic year went on, I found my work more interesting than the lectures, as it in fact was, I'm sure. When Spring came and early Summer, four years ago, you came too. The remarkable part of this recitation of years ago is that I have hardly ever tried to recall a past beyond you. Even this was a little difficult. Nor can I even think of a future without you. If I were rational, I should ask myself how this complete symbiosis

is possible, given two separate independent bodies to begin with. But it delights me more than it confounds me.

All love from your Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 3, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Another letter from you today dated the 20th, a record day it seems for literary output (unless you have the dates mixed). Gosh, it seems we're or rather, you, are still no closer to Cassino than when it was written. It must be maddening. As you say, even the papers here forget about Cassino for a while. Its importance is minimized or, in the case of my favorite rag, the Sun, completely pushed off the pages by the damndest other events. Like today, an ill-tempered librarian was killed by an even more ill-tempered negro in the National Cathedral in Washington. That's the one up Wisconsin Ave. that Mr. Singleton was the pillar of. God, you'd think that the millennium had come from the headlines in the Sun.

At Kathy's present rate of growth, or rather, her pre-natal rate (fects, I'm telling you, fects) she would reach the size of the sun at maturity. She gets fatter and I get thinner. It's positively obscene. Actually, I weight 124 with funny shoes on, but I'd like to weigh more, just out of perversity. Correct, her hair is brown and fuzzy, her complexion flawless and tan. She really has beautiful skin. I could simper and say I use Ivory and thereby win a big cash prize but to tell the truth I never use water on her face at all, not since she had a rash about a month ago. I douse her with olive oil, gnashing my teeth all the while since it tastes a lot better in salad than on her, and as a result, she always has a faint aura about her, like zucchini. I wonder if you'll be able to appreciate all the miracles about her -- things that seem so miraculous to me. Possibly not, but then, when we have another child, you'll think a lot of things are wonderful that I'll be completely blasé about. For instance, there's the primary

miracle, which fortunately for my peace of mind no longer appears as such, that she's able to live the night without my standing by with monitor and pediatrician. Apparently - I've discussed this with Mir and another gal -- every new mother feels that way the first week she's alone with the baby. I don't know what peculiar psychology it is that makes the mother think the child will stop breathing the minute the lights are out. But, to quote our famous friend Mr. Marquand, there it is. Then there is the miracle of the cereal. Leave us face it (remind me to send you that song, same title) -- even the hungriest little gal, and ours is, resists taking things off a spoon at some time or another. As a result I still have cereal on my shin bones from this morning. And tonight's feeding is on a blanket, the floor, the baby's nightshirt and my forearms. She still gets some of it down her. That's the miracle. And then there are the assorted miracles of the smile, the laugh, the coo, the boisterous laugh and the general ability to stay awake alone for long periods of time without crying. She really is a non-crying baby, though when she does get sore, like today when she was hungry and I gave her a bath first, she gets purple and her eyes get wet and red from crying. But as soon as I immerse her in the little tub, her expression changes through apprehensiveness finally to a big smile. She likes the water. Then when I take her out and start to dry her she yells again. You bet I'm a little heroine. With bottles exploding to the right and left of me -- sink me if I know why they don't make them of Pyrex -- not that I haven't exploded all my Pyrex (for victory) pots and pans too -- babies spitting, electric bottle warmers hissing, bells clanging, furniture repairmen assaulting my gate by the dawn's early light, I could join the infantry without so much as a quiver. A quiver of arrows, I'm speaking about.

More gifts too. Day sent me a swish mattress for the carriage and a baby john seat, called (and hold your nose on this one) Little Toidey. This is for use much later on of course. I am not one of that rather dated school of motherhood that starts training the baby at three months, then re-training them at six, nine and twelve months, and then ending up at a child

psychiatrist because their child craps in his pants at six years.

I sent you a stupid column by Lippman, overwhelmed by your enthusiasm for the first one. Now I realize how essentially I disagree with his criticism of the President and Mr. Morgenthau.

Did I tell you Bob Cook and Gerson got engaged? Well they did. I don't know when they are going to get married and neither do they. They're silly to wait, I think. So little time and all that.

I had to get up & make dinner and now I'm in the middle of sterilizing bottles for formula. Ten minutes on each side, or something. Dinner, incidentally, is a misnomer for the hideous conglomeration of scrambled eggs & brussels sprouts I just had. Lacking time and company, I am that amazing phenomenon of the plant world, a DeGrazia without appetite. I'm even afraid I'll forget how to cook by the time you come home. For me cooking is art, or an amateur venture into it. I need time, singleness of purpose which can only be achieved through leisure time, and the possibility of an appreciative audience. And I have none of them. I've lost my fantastic appetite that I had during & directly after pregnancy. All I have left is an eccentricity of taste, which includes a revulsion for all the things I used to hold dear - fruits, vegetables, meats, yeah, everything except bananas, eggs and your ear. And sadly, two of those items are deprived me by the war. I don't know why - every time I announce smugly that the baby never cries, she goes into a snit. She's yelling now - it's 9:30 and I guess I'll have to feed her & postpone mailing this till tomorrow.

All my love to you, dearest darling. As always, your

Jill (and crying Kathy)

AL TO JILL MARCH 3, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

Already another dull day is well on its way to nothingness. I did hardly anything except drive along slippery roads, talk to a couple of people and get paid. Oh yes, I did drink a glass of beer at a British mess, Canadian beer, the first of any kind I've had in a long time, and I enjoyed it. Your letter of February 6 was waiting for me when I got back. You weren't in an elated mood but I know from your later letters that it wasn't too long-lasting. I think we're both, as a matter of fact, slipping into a sort of glum Weltanschauung, and not for good enough reason. Forgetting the world and all its troubles, just on the personal level, we should be happier rather than more sorrowful as time goes on, even though we are still apart, granted that the limit of our separation is, as far as we are concerned, a set and unchangeable thing, as I think it is. To turn from that clumsy sentence into images. Picture how much closer we are today to our true happiness than we were ten months ago, how much more assured we are of our future, how better we feel today than when we parted then, how much we have both experienced and learned in a complementary way, and how unshaken and unperturbed our love is for one another. Certainly this life lacks an edge; it is a dull grind. But it is that just because there is a great deal in store for us. We shouldn't let the dullness become hopelessness, nor the hardships and rebuffs a pessimistic philosophy regarding personal relations. I confess it is difficult at times, granted the tangled problems that present themselves and the sights and experiences which are part of the war, to keep from a pessimism concerning the world. But the effect of these last spells is to make me even more optimistic concerning you. I think we can both say that never since we've known and loved each other has our happiness potential been so high, not the actuality perhaps, but the potential with all its physical connotations of force in suspension and power in being.

It has been raining on and off now for three or four days. It feels

like the drop-by-drop Chinese water torture from inside the tents. Life is very comfortable on the whole these days though, despite the heavy beachhead fighting. The beachhead is undoubtedly one of the greatest trials the American armed forces have ever been through. It's like a bird cage into which the enemy can poke his fingers anywhere. But already he's been bit and bit badly. I think everything will go all right. The desperate attention the Germans are paying to this front makes me think their leaders are very much afraid of an Allied push North into Italy for morale reasons.

Tell me, darling, if you think one sheet like this is not enough to be considered a letter. I try generally to write more. At least I think of you a lot more than I write. I've even been known in a moment of idolatry to kiss your picture. All my love always, Love to Kathy XXX AI /AI

AL TO JILL MARCH 4, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

Your letter of February 11, with the first four pictures came today, and I enjoyed them perhaps more than any of the others I received. You looked most beautiful and desirable. I had to break the routine in the tent by swearing out loud I was so struck with what I had to be missing for the army and the war. No need for you to have reminded me of the return of the encirclable waist. I never saw a more lissome body. You'll forgive, I'm sure, my neglect of Kathy in all these remarks. There is no use my saying that I prefer her picture to yours, because I don't, although a picture with both of you is always better than one alone. Back to the original point, you looked sad in one, almost heart-breaking, but that was made up for by the one where you were smiling from ear to ear, a remarkable photo. You were very cheery all right, but my favorite of course was the one in half profile, looking at the baby, and exhibiting the bust and the waist about which the less said the better for

my peace of mind. Well, I'm sure it will be even better in several months. Confidentially, I think the soldiers will pile themselves up in a slaving heap when they get ashore.

I did a hard day's work today finishing off a report and ate two extraordinary good meals, one with steak, the other with roast pork. The slower the front progresses, the better the food gets, which is as it should be, I suppose. It's been raining hard all day. I hope tomorrow will be nice, since I am conducting a truckload of our men on a Cook's recreational tour. We are taking along C ration for our picnic lunch. No doubt I'm going to have a devil of a time keeping them together and out of some wine cellars. Some of them haven't left the bivouacs of the team for a couple of months.

Yesterday I had room in my jeep and gave a lift to a boy of about fifteen who was going home from school. It was an agricultural school with about twelve students left, part requisitioned by troops, and part destroyed by bombs. He pointed out where he used to live as we went by. It's a nice house but unfortunately sliced neatly down the middle. His family is now living in a local railroad station. He hitches rides three days a week to school and expects to go to some college next year.

I'm eager to hear all the news from Daisy and Buzz and family. I know you won't let me down on the gossip which is sure to come out of it all. I've finally finished all of the copies of the Daily News up until last November. I'm dying to see what happened in December. At the moment, I ought to clean the mud off of my boots so that I can start the morrow with a clean slate. It's like chiseling away on solid rock. What a nuisance the great mother earth is at times! Keep your chin up darling. I'd rather clean Kathy than my boots. And when I come back I'll give you a pat on the cheek that will be a prelude instead of a parting.

All my love and resume kissing Kathy for me.

Your Al XXOO

IT may be best here to extract from his report of March 5, 1944 to "D Section", Naples, through regular Fifth Army channels, the section that deals with the bombardment. The document, as can be seen, is carefully drawn; for he is treading on dangerous ground; the Abbey Affair is being suppressed. It will continue to be censored for a long time. On March 9, in answer to an inquiry from the British Foreign Office, General Wilson, the Mediterranean Commander, submits evidence and claims that the Abbey has been part of the Germans' main line of defense. By then, every concerned officer on the ground at Cassino and Naples knew that the Germans had respected the Abbey to the best of their ability, and in fact, that they benefitted from letting it stand unoccupied, for there was little to be gained by firing from exposed windows.

REPORT ON THE ABBEY AFFAIR:

Dates: Weeks previous to February 15, the Abbey was under observation. Our men stopped several hundred yards from it under machine-gun fire, about a week previous. There were widespread reports of German use and occupation. These reports so lacked confirmation that on February 13, the Command was still not sure and draft of leaflet was so worded.

Types of [here scratched out in original:rumors] reports: Flashing of glasses seen; Mg fire reported received; Germans seen running about. [Here, in the original, he has scratched out, probably as provocative, the words, Mere dogmatic supposition:]SP gunfire reported. Received Italian reports that it was fortified by the Germans. The Germans were at least using the shelter of its walls. At least 16 shell holes existed in the Abbey previous to all-out assault. Civilians in Abbey variously estimated at 1,000 - 3,000. January [Note: February] 13, in the evening, Mr. Clark got call from II Corps to draft leaflet. It was approved same evening by the C.S. (Chief of Staff), translated into Italian and fired next day at 13:00. Morning of February 15, all-out assault began.

Inside story of Abbey: First man to cross the lines appeared about 0200 hours on February 16, a group of about 8 at 12:00 at the

CIC, two miles from Cassino. He was about thirty, wounded in the head and somewhat bruised. He said among other things: The Germans closed the gates after the leaflet was received, just as they had been doing all along. This was due, I think, as much to stupidity on the part of the German guard as to any other command. He said the leaflet was "Scheiss." Even on the day after the bombing the guard kept the gate locked. For two weeks the Germans had been outside the gates. There was not a single German in any part of the Abbey. There was no OP, no SP gun, no MG. Once two Germans and an interpreter, probably German, came to the Abbey grounds and spoke with the priests, who totalled six in all. The Italians went for 17 days with hardly any food. Water was hard to get since any one who wandered out came under Allied fire. There were some dead and wounded before the big bombings. A German Red Cross man came in to perform an amputation. There was no medicine at all in the Monastery, except for a little ointment. The civilians were allowed access to the whole Abbey, save a section which was near our forward lines on the slope, down to the town. The reason given for this is that the Americans would see the figures and think them German. This would bring on the destruction of the place.

The warning was known to every single person, through at least two leaflets which were blown into the Abbey. This was fortunate since no one wandered out at all and the leaflets were dropped over the Abbey and not into it. The people only half-believed it. There, several voices were heard, - one which thought it was phony. (For example, it said that the leaflet was not signed by anyone.); one, that it was not meant to be carried out; another that they would be safe despite the bombardment which was not expected to be so heavy; and finally the voice of those who would have liked to get out but realized the terrible danger involved for anyone who stepped outside. The German soldier(s?) outside told them to stay. The bombings began next morning to the consternation of all.

The bombings killed, wounded many. There were many who were in the upper reaches of the Abbey and did not get down to the cellars in time. When afterwards, they started to run from the Abbey in panic, the Allied artillery-observers mistook them for Germans and ordered them fired upon by air-burst shrapnel. In the night of the 15th,

some got away; the morning afterwards, the Germans opened the gates. On the afternoon of the 16th, there were successive air assaults again. Artillery fire on the Abbey was continuous.

One woman, a land-owner, who spoke intelligently and restrainedly, whose husband had been killed next to her, said she passed some German soldiers on the way through the lines. The terrific blasting of our artillery and air force was felt in the area around the Abbey, and she remembered one German soldier clinging in a shell crater, sobbing convulsively. Despite her own terror, she cracked at him: "Why don't you stop crying and come with me, if you feel that way about it?"

The interrogation of the others that escaped failed to reveal striking new facts. It was not possible from these people to tell how close to the Abbey German positions actually were. The number of dead and wounded cannot be ascertained. Most of the refugees seem to have escaped into the German lines.

The Lieutenant's report does survive. It is read and forwarded, "D Section" to both Army Headquarters, 15th Army Group and ultimately to London and Washington. And it ends up in secret archives until an official British inquiry quotes it in 1949. The evidence in its favor mounts steadily -- from the friars, the Church records, German witnesses, a scholar. In 1969, a United States Government document will get around to admitting that the Germans were not in the Abbey.

JILL TO AL MARCH 5 (?), 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart --

I bet you can always tell my V-mail from the number of misprints in the address. I am very sleepy. I have just arisen from the couch vowing never to lie down with a DeGrazia again. I was taking a nap and heard Kathy call out so I jumped up, thinking to seize the day and fit in her juice, made the orange juice and rushed to her side. Of course, by that time she was sound asleep again so I have to rattle around in her room, under the

pretense of letting her awake naturally, which she did as I banged the last bureau door shut. Then I gave her her juice, which is easier said than done, to coin a phrase, getting more and more sleepy all the while. So I just stretched out on the couch with her beside me. One thing led to another and finally I was on the floor. I don't know how a little thing of 12 and a half pounds can out-manuever my 120, but she did. Now she is sprawled out on the couch, true DeG style, cooing and examining her finger nails. She takes nearly half a cup of orange juice now and it takes a lot of patience to get it down her, because a third of the way through she gets bored and wants to stop. Then I stop and let her play and burp her for a while, and then start up again. It usually works, though I may have to stop two or three times like that during the process. The same thing works with giving her cereal, except in the breaks there I let her suck on the bottle. I guess spoon feeding is tedious and unsatisfactory, basically, at her age, even though it fills her up and, as Virginia (my neighbor) so cogently pointed out, the baby is impressed with the essential good will of the act of offering her the spoon. Do you want to hear her schedule, which I hasten to add, I modify every day, according to how late she sleeps. Anyway, here it is as the pediatrician laid it down. Six -- milk. Eight AM orange juice and percomorph (I have never given her anything at this time in the whole history of having her. If she's had her bottle at six, I am asleep at this time. Only God knows what she is doing or wanting). 9:30 bath; 120 - bottle. Two - bottle. Six - bottle and cereal (oh yes, she was supposed to get cereal at ten too). Ten - bottle. Somewhere in there I squeeze in the orange juice, depending on when we are both awake. I also sometimes give her her bath at one-thirty. Actually, I don't keep to any of this unless she just happens to wake up at six. If she wakes up at eight, like this morning, everything is moved up an hour or less, depending on when she gets hungry during the day. I think it's harder to be flexible than to be rigid, because you have to know your baby in the former case. It's like monkey business in an automobile. You just can't shoot through flaming hoops in a car you've never driven before. But I'll be damned if I'll get up at six if the baby

isn't up, particularly on these dank March mornings. Gosh, last night I just couldn't get to sleep. I just lay there and itched and thought of you. I don't know if you'd interpret this as diffused sexuality. Anyway, about 1:30 I got up, took a shower and washed my hair and whatever it was, sex or Cooney's old fleas, it washed away. But I am sick of not sleeping and itching and sleeping alone. Whether or not they are actually related, they are all tied together in my mind and I wish you were here to scratch me to sleep.

All of our love to you, darling. Kathy sends a spitty kiss. Jill

JILL TO AL MARCH 6, 1944 V-MAIL

My only sweetheart --

I just opened and read two V-mails from you, Feb. 22 and 23, in which, among other things, you declared your intentions to join the Navy. I know a man in this building who has a power-saw and I shall start building you a catboat to prepare you for that end. Of course the catboat I had when I was 14 did not have hot and cold running water and if you wanted to go to the john you had to go swimming but I'm sure that such structural deficiencies can be remedied. The man, Virginia's husband, went to the Bauhaus and they can do anything. Truly was I glad you got the pictures. As I've told you, the post office has been threatening us so about sending Air Mail instead of V-mail I was sure they would throw those letters away just to set an example. This is really March 6. I started to write this yesterday and got no further than the date. I took the baby for a walk in the afternoon to see the Blesenthals. Maxine's father died about six weeks ago and naturally they have felt very badly about it. Then in the evening I had dinner with Bernice -- Fritz is away again on business -- and what with talking, listening to the radio and reading the New Republic, it was feeding time and bedtime again before I got to this, and then it was too late. Bernice is saving all her New Republics for you since November. I shall

send them to you in one fell swoop when she is all finished with them. Yesterday morning was spent, interestingly, in violation of all the dictates of modern pediatrics. Kathy didn't wake up till eight. I fed her and made formula and then, as all four of our feet were very cold, I took her into bed with me and we both fell asleep until noon. She is very difficult to sleep with as she keeps falling into the hollow that my weight makes in the bed. Then I edge over and pretty soon I am out of the bed, as it is a very narrow bed anyway. (We'll use the inadoor one when you come back.) But somehow we managed. Of course, any doctor will tell you that a mother should never sleep with a baby. It gives the babies germs and heavens knows what. And no baby should have her ten o'clock bottle at twelve. But supposing the baby likes all these things, doctor? I guess the two of us shall continue to conduct ourselves like inmates of a bordello until you return to put some law and order into our lives. I'll bet. Mir and Buss are going back to Washington today. The weather has been so bad that they never could get south and Joey picked up some germ and has not been feeling very well and has had to live exclusively on jello. I just spoke to Mir and said goodbye to them. It's too bad I couldn't have seen more of her so we could compare notes on modern child care. Mir is of the school of thought that gives a child spaghetti, which is in a class with my going to bed with Kathy.

I have a shamefaced confession to make. I have been collecting chocolate bars to send you. It really is a collector's task because most stores don't have them at all and the ones that do will only sell a few. I got together about a dozen nickel bars -- nickel bars being what they are these day, they are not enough to make a mouthful for you -- and intend to go on with the collection. Unfortunately, at odd intervals I too get smitten with a desire for chocolate, so it is getting to be a losing fight, like the fairy book frog who jumps up a well one foot and slides back two. But do not despair. You'll get them someday. Anyway, this is my unsubtle revenge on you for taking my razor with you. I still can't figure out why you always get such a passion for my razors, with the assortment you have already. At any rate, I

have spent the past ten months looking for another razor. I had bought a plastic one at the Quantico PX but it broke a long while ago, plastics being what they are, and it was only yesterday that I uncovered a small supply at Walgreen's. In the interim I think I have said "Have you got a razor" to every licensed pharmacist between here and New York. The one I got at Walgreen's has a plastic handle and a metal top. Maybe that will work. I doubt it.

As long as you persist in regarding me as a bush-league Joan of Arc, I guess I am entitled to a couple of war aims too. They are, or it is, simply this: I'd like to go somewhere where we can lay -- and I used the word advisedly -- in the sun without any clothes on and get a good sunburn. That is all. Oh, I guess I have a few minor goals too, like finding an A & P with delivery service, a dry cleaner with same, some aluminum pots and pans, 8.25 hours of sleep every night for a month, a lastex bathing suit like the one you lost for me at Glenn Park, a few good martinis. But none of that is very important compared to the prime aim of you and a suntan. Oh yes, and I would like to be treated like fragile womanhood. I won't say again, because I never was treated like that. But it would be nice for somebody to start. People around here think I am a female Buck Rogers, capable of the most astounding flights into inter-stellar space. After the baby was born, several asked me lightly how I came home from the hospital, did Cooney haul me on a sled? Your mother is always rooting for me to come north, presumably with Kathy strapped to my back. If it is a question of Bernice, unencumbered, going to the store, or Jill with baby carriage going, it is always Jill who goes. People say well, naturally, Kathy is big and fat, look at you, you're so healthy. Well, the hell with them. I am not healthy. I am not fat. I am not strong. Please lift me gently. I might break. Actually, I guess, I am all of those things but I certainly won't be for very long if my children and the father of my children work on the assumption that I'm a superwoman. You might as well face it -- I'm going to agitate for a full-time cleaning woman the first day I see a glint of solvency in your paycheck, if anybody besides the United States Army

will ever pay you for anything.

I stopped completely nursing the baby about two days ago and am visibly fatter since then. Now I have to start doing exercises to distribute the stuff equably. If it isn't one thing it's another. Gosh Kathy is fat. She's much bigger than in those pictures, longer, bigger feet, fatter cheeks, wider smile. I am terribly fond of her.

Well, I ought to eat lunch now. It's raining again and god knows what I'll eat unless I borrow some bread from Virginia. It's like being snowbound in the Canadian wilds, this business of having a little baby. Oh well, anyway I'm indoors and it's warm. I wish I were with you to keep you warm. Maybe you'd let me sleep too. I can just see you getting up at dawn and away in your jeep, leaving me artistically arranged in your sleeping bag.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 6, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

Your letter of the 21 and 23rd have come and been duly ravished. I got one from Bill Steinbrecher too, proposing marriage to you know whom, and giving the latest reports on the whereabouts of various friends. He rendered the most flowery report on Kathy's virtues, most embarrassing to one who is skeptical of virtues, though amusing and pleasant to hear. Your own descriptions are less romantic and far more pleasing. Moreover the evidence you present for her "genius" is rendered thereby more convincing. I never said she wasn't. We are most fortunate in having such a baby and with so little harm to yourself. Even our being together would not have prevented a number of things from happening which might have happened. Yet here we are thousands of miles apart and everything is going along nicely save that we are so far apart; you are comfortable, we have a nice baby, and the war is undoubtedly

being won, no matter how imperceptibly.

And I, as if modern ruins are nothing, have seen the ruins of Pompeii. I had grave doubts that I would ever get my brood of wild men back to the bivouac, but everything worked out perfectly and they had a good time. They also walked their feet to nubbins and saw wonderful sights. They especially enjoyed pictorial evidences on the walls of various buildings that showed Romans quite as lewd and adept at sex as themselves, or principally as they would like to be. They took many pictures, some of striking scenes of Vesuvius beyond the ruins, others of the bay, and some of men in funny poses, such as Bartok the cook, a great cigar jutting out of his mouth, engaged in hurling a discus atop an ancient column. I hope I can get a couple of them to send back. We found a bad restaurant where we ate lunch and drank some good wine. Late in the afternoon we drove a little ways into the Sorrento peninsula from where we could get a fine view of the whole world, it seemed. Finally I rounded up a couple of stragglers from a bar, three from a restaurant, and put them all in the back of the truck. I gave them a bottle of wine to take their minds off the bumpy trip and we started the drive back in the middle of a rain-snowstorm which had held off just long enough.

The thing what struck me most about Pompeii was the sameness of our culture to theirs, or rather the common culture we possess. Without a great deal of difficulty, we could move right into Pompeii as it was and adjust ourselves, as far as the basic parts of the culture are concerned. Of course there is the airplane and a number of other doo-dads which add gloss to life. It is cheering to see visibly the indestructibility of man's nature. It is a good barrier to emotional confusion at all the complexity of events.

On the other hand, the unity of Roman-Greco culture is most evident. The arch, the column, and the whole town layout is like from one mind. Contrast that with the hodge-podge of styles and influences you find in an American city: And yet I think I prefer the variety of styles to live among.

I just finished playing a game of chess with Martin which I lost. Neither of us plays too well with the result that it becomes a battle of attrition until the kings themselves have to come out to checkmate each other.

You will be pleased and astonished to learn that we are now getting Coca-Cola on a special Coke rationing card. Three bottles per week is the ration. So yesterday I tasted my first Coke in a number of months and liked it more than ever. I'm sure that the army could avoid a lot of drunkenness among soldiers if they got enough Coca-Cola syrup over here and ran some coffee and doughnut stands along the roads and in the cities. Lots of men drink wine and cognac because there is nothing else to drink. It would also save them a good deal of money. It may sound silly but I think it would really work.

I am reading a book at present on Russian foreign policy by somebody named David Dallin and it has a lot of new material in it although I don't think much of the ideas he puts out. I am also reading a book of mystery stories by G. K. Chesterton starring a Priest-detective named Father Brown. They are well written and just the thing to go to sleep on, about ten pages each. I'm sure all of this time could be spent more profitably and more enjoyably with you but anyway the more I know about these books when I get back, the more time I can devote to amusing parlor games with you.

I was glad to learn you are not particularly worried about finances. I have very little idea how much Kathy has cost in money, though I feel she'd be cheap at any price. I'm glad to know that reserve which we somehow acquired is covering everything very well. I scarcely ever think about money these days; I've forgotten what a vital part of the home economy it is. Men spend money here for the most worthless junk. Most of my fifty dollars goes for PX supplies, dinners in restaurants every now and then, drinks at our home-made bar, barbers and launderers. Lately I haven't spent so much on air-mail stamps which take a dollar each month. I seem to have to get a couple of articles of clothing each month, too, socks or handkerchiefs

or shoes soled. I should add also the donations to wandering minstrels who can sing "Non ti scordate me" and "Torna a Sorrento" well.

I think I shall start saving now to buy you tickets for the best musical in New York. Since the summer is always dull on Broadway I shall have to make it either this spring or this fall. We can give Kathy a clean diaper and a book on the growing child to amuse herself with while we're away.

Kiss her for me, darling. All my love to you. Your Al

AL TO JILL MARCH 7, 1944

Darling Jill,

The passing of another day finds me with scarcely anything to say and yet I start off on this blank sheet with high hopes. Perhaps I can manage to write some sort of a letter. At least you know that I am still well, eating much and good food, and thinking of you always. There will be no one who can compete with you in attention even with these vast distances. There seems to be a natural law to the effect that when things are tough I think of you as well as when everything is humdrum. I am in the latter stage now, and lo and behold, I love you profoundly. Even my daughter should love you immeasurably if she takes after me. And if she clings to you hungrily, that's me.

I got a short note from Jerry today via somebody passing through. He got my last note and says he has an unanswered letter from you bothering him. Everything goes well with him, I gather.

Liv Hartley keeps getting good books on foreign affairs. He is very much interested in foreign relations, having written a couple of things on the subject and worked at them for most of his working life which I don't think has been very long, inasmuch as he has an income from other sources. He is very difficult to

discuss things with on practically anything. Today we got into a complicated business about the American position in the Mediterranean and could come to no agreement at all. But I'm sure he is just the thing for ladies' clubs.

As soon as I can get a box, I'm going to send a few more books home. Then perhaps I can make you as happy by sending no more home for the duration. Me or nothing, eh?

I'm enclosing a couple of paintings clipped from one of those old newspapers I got. I think the one of the hamburger stand is one of the best America has produced. I wish you would buy a copy in colors if you ever come across one. I also ate at the very table in that painting of the Chinese restaurant. The guy has got a pure American sense of realistic romance. I hope the colors aren't a disappointing let-down. What do you think of my preference?

Tomorrow I ought to get my card applying for an absentee ballot. The failure of Congress to act on the soldiers' ballot has had a very bad effect over here. Unfortunately, too often the men do not know the significance of the opposition to it or even the names of the congressmen for or against it. Every soldier is itching to pitch into American life after the war, including Public life, but damn few keep up with what is going on and have experience of value to offer. Perhaps the strains of war will produce in them a deus ex machina, who knows. I hope so.

Today was a beautiful, brisk day. I got in some good exercise chopping wood, pushing the car which wouldn't start, carting my bedding roll about, craning my neck at a couple of German planes which were leaving beautiful vapor trails against the sky, firing my gun at a couple of tin cans, and falling into a creek not once but twice with my clothes on. The last seems insane, I know, but I had to get across a swollen creek twice and each time I just didn't make the jump. The first time I braced myself against a half-submerged tree for the jump and the tree submerged completely. The second time, I brushed against a branch midway in the air and that slowed the leap up. Both

times, however, I got only my pants and shoes wet apart from a little wetting of my field jacket.

It wasn't nearly as much fun as wading with you, darling. It was cold and the walk home spongy.

I was trying to think of what language Kathy should learn first. It would be nice if she could learn one as soon as she learned English, though it would be difficult to find the right teacher. The only three which are worth going to some length for special instruction I think are Spanish, French and Russian. You are my teacher on affairs of the infant. At what age does the baby begin to learn words? I think I said awful things at eight months or some fantastic age.

My deepest love, as always,

Al

AL TO JILL MARCH 8, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

It's hard to say whether I'd prefer you in the distressing conditions of my dream last night or just confidently and happily at this distance. I never had such an exhausting and desperate time in my life. It seems that everyone except your true-blue self was trying to saddle one woman or another on me despite my own violent efforts to get my only Jill. They actually married me off, these unnamed bastards, to some dark and sexy girl, but no sooner had their backs turned when I was off in pursuit of you. I found you too, in your very tastefully furnished apartment and I remember commenting to myself on how typical it was of you to have good taste in interior decorating. Not many times in my life have I been so single-mindedly determined to achieve an objective. I finally won as great a triumph as a dream ever allows, but I was still happy in the morning to have the full consciousness that you weren't lost to me in the bright life of the

fully conscious day. The only compensation the dream had, and I admit its merit, was that I was physically close enough to you to have some anticipatory thrills of catching you finally. Now there are all the bounds of conscience and just law between us. The distance is nothing, a matter of a day or so by air.

Hardly anything of importance has happened to me in the last day. I had lunch at a nearby hospital today with a guy named Stillerman who is a medic captain. He recognized me from the U. of C. when I went in there one day for a dental examination. He played in the school orchestra. They have a very nice group of doctors and nurses there. I enjoyed especially talking with their psychiatrist about the neurotic cases that come in. He had very little in the way of startling discoveries to offer. The psychiatric literature up to the war knew pretty well what was coming, kinds of cases, numbers and treatment. The major difference is probably in the indulgent rather than hostile treatment that is given most of the cases from the front, as contrasted to the last war. The whole thing is tied up very closely to morale, as he was quick to admit, though he wasn't too precise about defining morale. I think I have more occasion in my job to be precise about that, or at least am more inclined to be.

In regard to the dental examination, nothing was found wrong. Imagine visiting a dentist and him saying that not even a little filling was needed. I suppose you are like that too now that you had all that painful work done before you became a MOTHER. I read a charming book last night from cover to cover, called Mother's Bank Account which, though I was initially repelled by the whole homey idea, I liked a lot. It is about little girls too and I have suddenly developed a great liking for little girls, especially my own. I am perhaps as you say ignorant of the minds of girls, but sometimes I am struck with the greatest sympathy with what goes on inside them. I liked Thomas Mann's story "Disorder and Early Sorrow" very much, particularly because it did such a delicate gentle characterization of a young girl, and that was before I even thought of having one. Again I must tell you that I

treasure your pictures beyond anything. Kiss my Kathy, dearest.

Always your love - Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 9, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

I'm abashed and ashamed that two days have gone by without my writing you. My social life has suddenly blossomed forth, like toadstools. I choose such a repulsive analogy because whereas before I might have welcomed company, now I'm not sure that I don't prefer the uneventfulness of life à deux with Kathy to the schizophrenia I suffer when I have company. Johnny Hess is in town with wife Jane on leave. They were over with Julie the other afternoon, and everything was very gay and beery, for them, anyway. For me it consisted of a wild non-stop dash between icebox for beer, living room for snatches of conversation and Kathy's room for feedings, diaperings and general soothings of the baby's wounded feelings. She's such a social little animal that the minute she gets more attention or more conversation directed at her than she is used to having, she gets over-tired and cries more than is her wont. This of course always occurs when I have company, whom I have usually told that, "Oh no, the baby doesn't cry at all." Which is quite true, when we're alone. Gosh, there isn't any doubt about it. One really has to give one's life over to the baby, at this stage anyway. I really don't mind it. She is always a source of interest, leisure and amusement to me. Even when she craps she's charming -- her exertions during and her evident pleasure afterwards. But I can't exactly break off diplomatic relations with everybody I know, and as long as I have friends or family, I'll continue to have this awful feeling of being divided, violently, in attention. Virginia and Joan, both old hands, say I should get used to it, the way one does to a long painful session at the dentist. It keeps up for years, at least until the kids are ready for

college.

I guess you're really more interested in Johnny than in the tortuous mechanics of my entertaining him. Well, he's very well, handsomer than ever in his uniform, still amusing, bumptious, confused and envious of anybody who can get overseas. I had met his wife before. She's that big big girl, with a very beautiful face. She's the one Buss didn't like, but then I think Buss never likes fairly sophisticated women. The barefoot boy from the OSS. I'll probably see them again before they leave, and, if I can leave Kathy with not too black a conscience for a few hours, go out with them. I guess that will entail bringing her up north for an evening and calling for her. You see, there is nobody around here I can leave her with. Everybody has colds, other children, or I don't like them very well to begin with. Bernice has had the flu for two months now and besides, though she loves Kathy, she has a habit of acting imposed upon at the slightest pretext. If the weather were better I wouldn't mind not having a faithful companion for Kathy, but as it is, it's been too bad to take her out and as a result I can't get out myself, except for hurried nervous trips to the corner for this or that, in which I nearly always come close to being run over in my frantic haste. I think Kathy is safer than I am when we are parted. Oh yes, yesterday I dashed downtown in the afternoon - Dotty the colored gal was here - to register for voting and also for a job as judge or clerk on election day (if I can get Mom to stay with the baby). I am still interested in local politics and since they are so short of help this year they can't even get patronage people to take those jobs, I thought I might as well seize the day, and job. I dropped into Hodes' office for a few minutes. Rubin wasn't around but I chatted with the secretary, a girl I always loathed. Everybody who hasn't seen me for a couple of years, like Johnny and this girl, remark on how well I look. I don't see how I can, sleepless and confined as I am, but I guess I'm one of those women that motherhood causes to blossom forth, and look younger. I'm sure I can't notice it in myself. All I note when I look in the mirror is that my hair needs washing.

I guess that brings you up to date on my activities. I'm brought

up to date on yours by two-line stories in the papers that mud and rain are slowing up operations in the Cassino area. But I'm sure one couldn't be more pessimistic over military operations in your area than one can over the ridiculous, selfish, downright dangerous behavior of our national legislature. I suppose that a congressman is no better than his constituents, and that the hopelessly short-sighted behavior of these men in power is, if not in specific instances, the will of the people, a reflection of the general tone of the nation - a tone for which the word decadence is as good a catch-all epithet as any. I don't disagree with you that one shouldn't put too much faith in the instinctive wisdom of the fighting man. Such nobility as he possesses is probably fortuitous in most cases. I'm beginning to think that America as a whole is losing whatever chance it ever had to be the savior of the world, in as literal a sense as you want to take that. Maybe the new countries - Russia and China (though the latter is certainly run by a bunch of thieves too) offer some hope for the future. Maybe civilized, battered Britain has the answer. I'm sure I don't know. Maybe the only hope is for isolated family units like ours to hole ourselves up if we ever do get together and act like Christians in caves. I was interested in your aside about national humility and Russia. Please expand.

To return to the subject closest to our hearts, next to each other, Kathy has gained a lot more weight and looks like a four-month-old baby. Nobody who sees her and who is in the know can believe that she is as young as she is. She really is a beautiful kid - her features, which are quite well defined now, are perfect, yet she has an impish quality about her face that will save her from the staleness of mere beauty. I don't see how she can grow up to be anything but an extremely attractive girl, although they tell me they change a lot. I hope I'm not becoming obsessed by the apparent - to me, anyway - charm of our child. I really don't think she is spoiled or that, at her age, it is possible to give them too much care. It's ridiculous to pretend that she is anything but utterly helpless and dependent upon me, so, lacking any other real object for love and attention, since you are away, I might as well devote all my energies to her. I'm

supposed to go to a baby shower tonight for a pregnant woman in the building and to a real party at Virginia's a couple of Saturday nights hence, but I don't see how I'll manage, though I would very much like to go to Virginia's party - most of her friends are artists.

Oh hell, the end. And I love you so.

Jill (& Kathy)

AL TO JILL MARCH 9, 1944

Dearest Jill,

My yesterday's v-mail was dated the seventh, though it should have been the eighth. I don't suppose it really matters if it were dated the first or the twentieth anyhow. The only noticeable change has been a slight revival of Spring. It is coming more or less, more because chill winds don't blow and the sun shines more, less because rains are still frequent and fires must be lit to be completely comfortable. I have a very nice one now, actually. It may also amaze you to know that we have now got electric light in our tent, product of a generator whose warlike function concerns radio but which can be used equally well to give light.

I've just about finished that book *Russia and Post-war Europe*. It is interesting but not greatly convincing or even strikingly novel. Its main point seems to be to prove Russia is not completely altruistic which hardly any one believes or ought to believe anyway. I'm sure you would enjoy reading it, too, because of the large amount of incidental information and interesting articles and speeches it quotes. I hope the book of Borgese gets here soon, as well as those *New Yorkers*. I haven't seen any of them since before Christmas. I've been reading Herz' clippings which take care of that situation adequately enough without troubling you.

This morning for breakfast we had two fresh eggs each, sunny side up. They're the first I've had in some time. Perhaps as a result, I became active enough this afternoon to put up a volleyball net and start a game. A very pale amusement but very good relaxation.

I have now a wooden box, twin to the one I sent you before, full of your letters and pictures. Though I'd find it hard to separate from them, I must look for ways and means of sending them back to you to save for me. Nothing can induce me to destroy them, if perchance you are of such a mind. If this war keeps on much longer my love will become a fetish. Jill to me will be letters, pictures, clippings and candy. I will be shocked to find there is a flesh-and-blood woman of that name. Of course I recover from shock very easily. In fact that is one shock to be undergone at all costs. The shock treatment, I should advise you, is to simulate great love for the victim, kiss him often, ply him with hearty food and good coffee, let him play with the baby and let him visit a clean, light bathroom often, not paying heed to the delighted animal sounds that are emitted in cases of this kind. As the patient convalesces, this treatment should continue to prevent relapses and should be supplemented by dry martinis, walks in the fresh air, dancing the rhumba, and clever remarks to resuscitate his sense of humor. The cure is inevitable. After that he is just normally troublesome.

I've just worked out, after considerable mulling about a theory for American Foreign policy. I think I shall put it down in words, for my own edification and perhaps yours. But not now. I am too moved by thoughts of you to do aught save stir about restlessly.

Take care of yourself, my only love. And of Kathy, too.

Your Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 10, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart darling --

No letter from you for several days now, but I don't mind excessively - at least I'm not worried. I know you love me and the chances are that you are safe though probably wet and cold. It is very cold here for March. I just got back from taking Kathy with me shopping, and since I still run around in ankle socks and no hat, while she is snug in what they call a bunty (bunting?) I was a good deal less comfortable than she. I'm up at Bernice's now with her, using her typewriter which seems to come out better than mine. The baby is on the bed, after we both unsuccessfully tried to give her juice. She is going through a period of mild retrogression now, in which she steadfastly refuses to take things off a spoon. I refuse to fight with her, so have started giving her her cereal out of the bottle, which is possible if you punch a big enough hole in the nipple. I'm not worried about this because she is still pretty young to be taking anything off a spoon and is entitled to a spell of acting infantile (!). She is getting to be the belle of the neighborhood. Even the old man who was the caretaker of the Kenwood Gardens slum in its pre-fire days stopped and admired her. The proud mother, that's me. It's quite a new and different role for one who thought her chief claim to neighborhood fame was her legs.

I sent you today a manila envelope containing some columns by Grafton which I've just been pulling out of the Sun this week at random. The point of the envelope to begin with was to send you the sheet music of a song now in circulation among devotees of Duffy's Tavern, that radio program I might have told you about. Maybe you can pick out the tune on your tonette. I sing it to Kathy occasionally. It's sort of funny, I think. Buss claims that it's great music, from the standpoint of harmonics. I wouldn't know.

It's hard as hell to write this, I'm ashamed to say. Bea keeps consulting me on the grave problems of what we are to eat for dinner. We are torn between opening up a dubious looking can

of French Fried onions or sending me up to Virginia's to borrow some fresh potatoes. Naturally, I am on the side of the can. Other items which may or may not be on the menu are liver, chocolate pudding and wilted lettuce. I should have stood in bed. Maybe this grim recital will quell your passion for civilian food, at least as turned out by this masterless hand. I think I make a better mistress than cook, although maybe facility in that realm may depend on keeping one's hand in, so to speak. We'll see when you come back. Anyway, please be patient with me in the former sphere. I'll save the sawbuck I'm supposed to get on election day and buy you dinner at Ray's steakhouse. Then you can buy me dinner at Pierre's, for having a baby. Then I'll buy you dinner at Barney's Seafood for winning the war. Then you can buy me dinner for letting my hair grow. And so on through the years. God, darling, what I would give to see you soon, with or without the gustatorial trimmings. Maybe you shouldn't have sent me that big picture. You look too good to be true. Your child is uttering sounds. I guess I'll have to feed her first. All my love to you ,darling --- Always,

Cartoon: Lady with baby carriage. Dog with question mark. 3 birds and 1 beast [caption:] The birds and beasts fleeing before their approach.

AL TO JILL MARCH 10, 1944 V-MAIL

Jill, my dear love -

I can hardly be expected to pour forth all the tender thoughts of this day while Dabinette is showing off an Indian War Dance. He is what you would call a "big oaf". I am continually amazed by how fast and inevitably time flows by, leaving less and less time before I can hold you in my arms again. As a goal to life, that isn't half bad. Many a life has been spent in far less worthwhile pursuit. I think you ought to feel sorry rather than angry at the less-in-love couples you see about. Certainly, the evidence our parting has brought out, that we are abysmally devoted and

committed to each other, compares with perhaps only one or two chief other revelations in life. If you build the not untenable belief that there are only two or three great critical things in life, the exploitation of the gamut of each can only [*enrich?*] its appreciation. The wistfulness and dullness with which I greet the day acts as does the dentist's drill on a caried tooth; it explores the cavity, cleans it, and prepares it for the fullness to come.

I'm sure only yourself and your alter ego, Kathryn, can understand how much I love you, because you love me too. I know I need not rely on words to prove it either, since it is very clear to me that I loved you dating practically from the first lunch we ate together and far before I could get myself to use what was to me the feared word "love".

Last night I played two games of chess with a sergeant here named Erman, one of which I won. I enjoy chess a lot, even though I play in a sort of "hand to mouth" fashion. With a couple of games a week, I may improve. We have a world expert here, that is, one of the world's best thousand, a sergeant named Harrari, who is also one of the world's biggest clowns. He gave us some pointers. He plays groups of people while blindfolded. In civilian life, he was a screenwriter, author of Sun Valley Serenade and things like that. Erman was a scenic designer and knows Lanz of Salzburg, incidentally.

Item of army interest: the army has, not far away, an army mobile bath and clothing exchange unit where any soldier who happens to come along can go in, take a bath, get a towel, and as he comes out be fitted with clean, fresh, and at least as good clothing from head to foot. If he is particularly proud of his clothing, while he is in the bath, they put a capsule of disinfectant among his clothes. I thought you'd be interested in this particular amazing story from the QM.

The first sergeant is also writing a letter now and he asked me when I thought we'd get home. He wanted to tell his wife something. I said to tell her he'd see her in July. I wish it were

before the day I first met you so that we could declare a holiday then. That's as good an anniversary as any. However, I'm willing to bet money that we'll do some swimming together later this year.

I haven't had my G-E report on Kathy for three days now. A couple more days and she'll be writing it herself. Tell her all is forgiven, and that her mark is always happily received.

I am yours, as always.

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 11, 1944 V-MAIL

[Note: Considering the dates of the V-mails she received from Al, this whole date series may be incorrect]

Darling --

The three V-mails I wrote you yesterday are still lying hot on my desk when the mailman brings me five little V-mails of yours, march 30, 31, the second half of April 2 (leaving me in great suspense over the first half), and April 3. Quite a tasty morsel to down with my greasy bacon and eggs and that odd brew made in our little pot, nominally known as coffee. I can't say that I view with dismay what must be your removal from active fronts to the rear, if you can call what I guess to be Naples the rear. I know it isn't fair to all the other men, but I'm grateful for this small momentary assurance that you are somewhere that a malign enemy can't get at you quite so easily. Sometimes I have the feeling that the joy of seeing you again will be more than any human being deserves in one lifetime, and that therefore some evil fate keeps trying to step in and mess things up. Ergo my wish to reduce the statistical chances of that happening. You are quite right: that we have more and therefore miss more than many other people. And I was very happy to hear that the Army has a system of limits for overseas service. I thought it only

applied to flying members of the Air Corps, you know, missions or whatever they call them. Now I know that even if God has abandoned the human race, which He has every right to do considering how badly we behave, and this war turns out to be another hundred years one, there is still some chance of my seeing you again before you reach the age of retirement from service. If you do come back and get re-assigned to some camp here, naturally Kathy and I shall abandon toaster, roaster and defective plumbing in a thrice and resume the happy role of camp followers. I use the word resume for her too, for after all she did have a brief spell of it, even if she was too young to have even the most remote contact with the military environment, i.e., by kicking mother's stomach as said stomach was leaning against a slot machine in an officer's club. Sometimes I amuse her with a Homeric chant about her travels in foetus form -- the thousand miles she covered in a defective Chevrolet (don't tell Herz), the cool plunges she took in the lake last summer, during which she aided and abetted her mother's DeGrazia-perfected crawl by kicking a little on her own hook, the bike rides and collisions, the miles of floor she helped varnish and the ceiling-wards trips in which she helped me hang curtains. She's had a busy life and is it any wonder, therefore, that she is more appreciative and perceptive of her environment than the ordinary young infant?

Odd coincidence, your seeing Gert's father. Bill and I were talking about him just this last Sunday. Oh you kid. Now I'm a literary agent. I await the receipt of Charlton's ms. with terror. I'll contact Laura B about it. She is getting way up in the slummy reaches of Coronet mag. and probably knows all about disposing of literary output. From your descriptions of heckling cows and hounding bird life, I see it is all of one pattern -- you are up to your old tricks of bedeviling animal life, your wife included. Seriously, I'll be glad to do what I can and am this minute going to a) collect Bernice's old New Republics (she is still away because her father just died, according to a letter I just got from Fritz, and b) call the U. about Stouffer's address.

Kathy is awake, I note from the sound of her rattling beads. Isn't

she smart to signal me in so many singular ways? We both slept till ten this morning because it was raining and dark and now we are hopelessly off schedule. I guess I won't get to vote at all today, the weather being what it is. No great loss -- there is absolutely no contest on the Democratic ballot. Courtney is unopposed for governor, Douglas's wife Emily Taft D. is the candidate for Rep. at large and Hodes is war committeeman, also unopposed.

I had to leave this to take care of Kathy and clean up the place, which inevitably looks as if a bomb had hit it in the morning. I try to be neat but with all the tiny objects floating around and constantly getting dirty, it really takes a concerted daily effort to prevent chaos from our door. I called up the University -- got several offices, one, something to do with the Trustees, giving Stouffer's address at 25 Quincy St., Chevy Chase, Md., and the other, Sociology, which I should have gotten in the first place, giving his address as Research Branch, HQ Army Supply (or maybe it was Service) Forces, War Department, Washington, D.C. Take your cherche. It's free. Kathy is once more asleep after a bath and meal. She is so cute in her little tub. She loves the water and leans against the sloping sides of the tub like Claudette Colbert in a milk bath (courtesy of DeMille productions). She balances very nicely that way but naturally I keep a light restraining hand on her bottom section, to keep her from sliding under, in case. She laughs when I splash water on her and altogether gives great promise to be a fitting partner to our aquatic activities. If the lake isn't too dirty this summer maybe I'll take her in with me.

My paper woes have abated for the time being. The checkbook seems to be under control, a very temporary phenomenon, I don't delude myself otherwise. Oh about filing, you know your big tin filing case. Well, the Bredindick's want to buy it because Hin needs a file for all his ingenious ideas (that never work, adds Virginia, the perfect wife). They'd like to buy yours because at Sears they cost 40 bucks but I said I didn't think you would like to sell it. Besides, where would you file all your ingenious ideas that do work. But if you do want to sell it, on the

strength of copping another one from the Political Science Dept. after the war, I could probably get 20 or 25 for it. Makes no difference to me. Money means nothing since I don't have the time to spend it anyway.

Kathy just woke up with the most horrifying series of yells. I burped her and held her for a while and she really kept up the yelling quite a long time. She's finally quiet and back in her bed again but it really scares and puzzles me when she does that, which is quite infrequent. It must be gas or else a bad dream which scares her so she keeps yelling for a while. She looks so healthy I know it can't be a sudden attack of whatever infants get. She also looks quite immaculate after her bath, quite alluring in fact, with her shining pink-tan cheeks and white nighties. That, like the checkbook, is a quite transitory, if gratifying state of being.

All love to you darling.

I won't appall you by letting this run on to four pages. OOOXXX
Jill

[top margin] What a waste of space! Especially when I never have enough down at the bottom! I love you I love you I love you.

JILL TO AL MARCH 12, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

I woke up this morning to soft warm smells and sparrows chattering and to the sad realization that spring was here again. Contrary to popular legend, I find the first touch of spring a time for a certain sorrow, this year mostly because I can remember so clearly last spring, when you were here. But always spring has brought a vague nostalgia, a longing for joys that never existed, like in a dream. And then, because it signifies renewal more than any other season, it ticks off the years, always a sad

process, no matter how young one is. Or perhaps because one is young and still full of hope, the process is doubly sad. As well as I can remember them, these were my meditations in bed this morning, the bed to which I returned after feeding Kathy. Actually, the mood was not sustained for very long, what with one thing and another -- the weather turning cold, my getting involved in formula-making and the Sunday paper and a long talk with Diane about baby clothing (a very complicated subject, fraught with semantic perils -- like what is the difference between a bunty, bunting, snuggle-bunny, sleepyrobe, comfyrobe?) But weather or no weather, I can't forget that spring is here and you are not. But at least this year the presence of Kathy saves me from my annual harsh attempt at self-discipline, to whittle the questions either on a conscious or unconscious level -- here it is another spring and what have you done? One thing I haven't done is to learn how to type any better than I was able to at age ten ... I spoke to Ed this morning on the phone, having seen something about a revived ASTP in the paper. He says that at the urging of Buss and you he is pretty much decided about going to the University this June. I think that's swell. It would be wonderful if Mom would let him stay down here with me, at least during the week. He could have the living room as his own room -- with a screen there would be some privacy, at least as much as we all had last summer, when nobody thought twice about crashing about in each other's rooms -- and it would be fine for me. I could get out to the movies once in a while without having to hire the nursing staff of Michael Rils to stay with the baby. Suggest it to Mom as if it has occurred to you independently. I also mumbled something to Ed about not worrying about the money if he didn't get a scholarship.

Tomorrow night I'm to go out with Johnny and Jane (Hess) and Diane offered to take the baby. I had previously overlooked this source, but am taking advantage of it, with only slight qualms, as after all, Diane will expect to leave her baby with me sometimes, and therefore will be doubly careful of Kathy. But still it's trouble dragging her over there, though it's only to 53rd

and Kimbark, and having to get home at a respectable hour, like eleven.

I didn't get a chance to write you yesterday. I'm trying to be faithful about taking Kathy out every day, now that it's warming up some. She seems to sleep and eat a bit better for the fresh air. At least, if I take her out around noon, she is so tired after the afternoon feeding that she has a nice nap and then so do I. Then last night MacEldowney dropped over with a Lt. Levy from Air Corps Administration. He is living in the apartment Stud and Bobby Ruml had at the back of Warner's house, the one I had thought about taking until Mrs. Warner a-socially wanted to keep the rent up to 65. What a cutesy set-up, except that he wants to get out, too. Mac has certainly gone or come a long way since I first knew her. Lt. Levy indeed! As a matter of fact, he wasn't very nice. The kind I used to know at Yale. But gentiles are often strangely or not so strangely, come to think, uninformed on the subject of mobility in the out-group.

Kathy is lying on the couch as I am writing this, having a nice time with her hands and things. I pushed the cocktail table up next to the section of the couch she is lying on. They always make their first flip-flop from back to stomach when you have them in an unprotected spot, I hear. She is in a very jolly mood today, unlike last night when she cried more than her wont. She always does when I have company, particularly when Mac comes over. What a fiend. I had her over to the Kerners around noon and she cried a little there, but that was after Oliver had played with her quite a bit. Diane is having her baby in June. Despite all her eccentricities I think she will be a good mother. She is very sensible about things we have talked about, and her only anxiety is about her weight, which was exactly and the only thing I worried about too. These vain women.

DEAR DADDY ** I HAVE HICCUPS *** YOUR LOVING
DAUGHTER, KATHY

I thought I could bat that out with her foot, but the position proved untenable, as they say. Anyway, the sentiments are

hers, if the exact expression fails. She is starting to fuss now. I guess the hiccups depress her. She has them very frequently, about an hour after every feeding. I mean they start about an hour afterwards. They don't last that long.

I read a silly book this weekend, by Ludwig Betelman's, entitled *Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep*. He writes beautifully, but it doesn't end up to be a novel, just a series of vignettes and subtle anecdotes about life in the upper reaches of international society. My income tax is driving me nuts. I guess nothing would please me this weekend. I can figure out mine, with only a reasonable degree of difficulty, like that experienced in integrating a quadratic equation, but I'll be damned if I know what to do with yours. I have a feeling the government owes you money for what you paid in 1942 on your civilian salary those first two months. But how to get it back or find out about it all without going to a government accountant beats me. And if I go to a government accountant it will take all day and I can't leave the baby that long. It's a wonder I don't get sore at you. First you knock me up and then you leave me with you income tax to figure out. If you wanted to guarantee the complete absorption of my time and energies, to the exclusion of all others, you couldn't have picked a better way. It's a good thing that I know it wasn't deliberate, at least, the item of the first part wasn't.

But I love you anyway (she said a bit testily). At least you don't write radio programs. A girl who couldn't have been more than 12 just told me she got her pin-up boy with her yummy Woodbury soap complexion. I can't kiss you right now, dearest. I have to retch.

But love and kisses anyway. Always -- Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 12, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest,

The morning is damp enough to send you many wet kisses,

mere shadows of our once-enjoyed underwater ones. Yesterday's letter, which I enjoyed rather than answered last night, described you fiendishly squirting milk on defenseless infants, to wit, my only precious Kathy. For that, I shall have to get you down and blow in your face. Preferably after emptying one of your garlic-rubbed salad bowls. I'm happy to hear that you had such a nice time with Day and that she got along well with everyone. You must have felt a little lonely after she left, though loneliness is hardly a new feeling in our lives. I think this Spring will be a very lonely one for both of us. I think also that we'll take it in stride as we have other like periods. Perhaps, one day soon, there will be great, good news that can help sweep us along through our remaining days apart.

Meanwhile I console myself with reading, eating, playing chess and working. I'm taking in Lippmann's U. S. Foreign Policy at the moment; enjoyable and simple it is, somewhat limited in scope as far as I've gotten.

I saw some most pathetic refugees yesterday being evacuated from the front area. They ranged from an old woman who was ninety to a baby of one month. All they had, they carried with them. Several had a chicken tied up or squawking on the end of a string. Very depressing, the worst sight of the war in my mind.

It's very kind of you to collect candy and cigars for me. A more unreasonable wife who didn't like cigar-smoking might obstruct the delivery. We are allowed, now that PX supplies are ample, one bar of chocolate a week. Much to my chagrin, yesterday, after I had hoarded my coke ticket and not succumbed to temptation, I discovered that the week was up and I couldn't get the week's ration anymore. Today I'm going to go down and drink up all three of this week's ration.

I'm going to send you a couple of pictures we took at *[censored]* one of these days in part payment of your noble work in sending me photos. If I succumbed to my real interests, I would spend all my time thumbing through them or showing them to sympathetic-looking people.

Did I even write how I appreciated your efforts at keeping up correspondence with people. I barely get off an extra letter a week. I'll bet there's a revolution brewing at 1235. I still have no idea of what work Buzz will be doing.

Brown Roberts has been here, with us the last few days, doing some work on the French. He's the good-looking, dark guy with the mustache (not me) in that Sicilian group picture. Incidentally, Heycock will be in on the English show and Habe is training troops in the U.S . My love to Kathryn. And to you everything good.

Your Al

AL TO JILL MARCH 13, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

Honestly, if you keep sending me pictures of your beautiful self, I'll head home some day in the first canoe I find. The four that arrived yesterday were superb. Both of you and Kathy. You need not have pointed out such an obvious fact as your waistline. Its particular slenderness and beauty hit me square between the eyes, and, in fact, the sum total of your characteristics was overwhelming. I think the picture of you with the buggy was one of the cutest you've ever taken. It has an air about it of bringing up children as a test of wit and charm, from which you had emerged triumphant. I really love you in that picture, too much to say readily. Everyone else says you're a beautiful girl too.

I know now, too, that Kathy is eating cereal and it, if anything, makes her temper more agreeable. She recognizes you, too, and makes like cooey when she sees you. Or makes like me, no difference. She is really beginning to look like a big girl in the pictures too. Don't pay any attention to Mom if you think that what she wants to do will disrupt your schedule. Maybe she doesn't realize how you crave sleep in the right amounts. You

certainly do have a greater burden than Mir.

I found your discussion of income tax problems highly amusing especially since you didn't ask me to do anything. You shouldn't pass the buck to me, though, for having to fill it out. You know I would never have you strain your tousled head over such a thing, if you didn't feel the same compulsion to get it over with. I'd be happy to wait for my return so that we could get tight and figure it out together.

Too bad they didn't publish my picture or at least some pictures along with that article you found with my name in it. You didn't see any newsreel film of a cannon going off with me under a camouflage net, did you? With your network of Hyde Park spies, I'm sure you would have been informed if it had been shown.

Thanks again for the clippings. Three envelopes of them arrived yesterday. But I know they're trouble for you and wish you wouldn't send any more. I have enough current events here now to keep me occupied. A big kiss though, for being so nice about sending them. You are indeed the best of all possible wives.

There was a fierce wind last night in these parts. I could hardly concentrate on losing two chess games to Crowell, since I was listening for the first rip of the failing canvas. The rain which had preceded the wind (a great artillery - infantry team had loosened the ground around the tent-pegs). Like an expectant refugee I had packed all my loose odds and ends in waterproof bags, had put all your letters in a box and shut it, and sat around expecting the worst. Along towards morning, the wind died down, however.

Since I have a minor infection on my left cheek, I'm not supposed to shave. Consequently, in the past several days, I've developed an embryonic beard, mustache and side-burns. I think that the infection is clearing up, and one of these days, I won't be able to postpone shaving.

I got a letter from Vic yesterday which didn't even mention his

trumpet, mirabile dictu. It did point out that he was now on the side of the law as a school marshal. Which I suppose is a fine example of the marxist definition of the State as legalized brigandage.

Sorry I can't be of any help with your problems of shopping, accounting and baby-tending. I'll be glad to run the first thousand errands for you when I get back. I'll even kiss Kathy for you, thus saving another hour or two. But I insist on kissing you, and you alone, time be handed.

Your loving

AL

JILL TO AL MARCH 14, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart --

It's raining here too, real rain and also letters from you, Feb. 29, 1 and 2. As usual, I am at a loss to put down all the answers to questions you asked, and all the things they generally bring to mind, as I frantically read them between feedings (Kathy's, not mine) and think about them during feedings. My reaction always at the end of reading your letters is a schoolgirlish lovesick sigh, with some bobbysock expletive like "He's terrific, he's out of this world!" Between loving you and loving Kathy, sometimes I think I'm just going to bust. Did you ever get that feeling -- so full of really violently benign emotions for someone else that you want to explode. It's hard to explain -- sort of the pleasant, positive counterpart of a broken heart. I spent the evening with John and Jane last night, and as ever, when I see two happily married people, my thoughts fly to us -- to the happiness we'll have together soon. But of course, I'm not free from chagrin that we can't have it now. It was a pleasant evening, as pleasant as I can have away from you and Kathy. John called for me about seven and we brought Kathy over to the Kerners, who live about a block from here (53rd and Kimbark). Then we went to the

Whitehall and joined Julie and Karl and Jane and then went to a place called the Radio Club -- very good food. I had goose and a martini cocktail, the latter notable since it's the first I've had almost since we left Washington. Last summer or maybe it was Christmas day -- my time is all confused in the pre-Kathy era -- I made some for your family out of bad Vermouth and worse gin, so that doesn't count. Naturally I rushed to the phone as soon as dinner was over to be greeted by the not surprising news that Kathy was crying, so we dropped Carl and Julie off and came South. Kathy is apparently easily upset by changes and strangers, so we came home, put her to bed, and proceeded to talk and eat salami until 2:30. I like Jane very much. We're somewhat the same type of girl, or at least I was more like that pre-Kathy. Motherhood has sweetened me up some, at least in the eyes of the general public -- you know better, having to read some of my more ill-natured and obscene outpourings. But Jane is bright, sophisticated and not as deluded about herself as most people are about themselves. And a very good-looking girl too, in an extremely large way. It was fun having them, particularly in the wee hours, the only time that I am free from the insistent, if quite natural, demands of our child. One thing in her favor, even though it may take forever to get through that last feeding, once she gets to sleep, she stays that way until morning. This morning she was so tired, poor mite, from all the pillar-to-post activity of last night she slept until nine. Therefore we are foully off schedule today. Maybe she needed just such a minor jolt to bring her around to her initial favorable attitudes towards cereal. I guess I wrote you how much she liked it at first. Well, the past week she has been very reluctant to take it off a spoon and when I thinned it down and put it in the bottle she would take it, but the bottle nipple would get clogged every two seconds, causing me to jump up and ruin all the needles and nail scissors in the house, and also my disposition. You should have heard some of the things that I said! I really shall have to be more careful in a little while, since it won't be long before she starts understanding and repeating, at the rate she's developing now. Anyway, last night and this morning she started taking cereal off a spoon again and you don't know what

a lift that gives this harassed mother. Incidentally, you don't have to cook this kind of cereal. Just add some of her formula to it and it gets kind of paste-like. Thank God for little favors. Kathy is growing so fast that I think I can even make some generalizations about her personality now. As I've told you, she's unusually social and receptive to social stimuli -- always smiling when you talk to her, laughing and kicking. The negative side of that is her tendency to get over-tired and fretful. This happens most noticeably when there is company or when she is dumped on other people like last night. But it's apparent even when she's alone with me. She loves having me around and she kicks and shows off like crazy, but after a while the kicking and movements of the body seem to become uncontrolled, as if she got all wound up and would like to stop but can't. Then she starts to cry until she finally falls to sleep exhausted. Believe me, this is a distinctive behavior pattern. In the first place, everybody tells me that never have *[they]* seen such an alert, sociable child in one her age. And I've observed the incidence and pattern of her crying spells sufficiently now to think that it is all part of the same business -- an extremely alert and sensitive nervous system. It's understandable that we would have a child like that, since we're that kind of adult, both of us. My problem -- and yours when you come home -- is to give her just enough stimulation to develop her, but to keep it down so she won't get all strung up. That's a hard thing to do because the tendency is of course to play along with her, but that always ends up by being too much. I'm glad she's that kind of child -- I wouldn't have liked a cow - but it has its problems as you can see already. Fortunately, she is a magnificent physical specimen -- fat and big and so far totally resistant to the plagues of infants like cold and colic - so she has the physiological padding for a set of nerves you'd usually expect to find in small wiry children. It's funny, Day told me that I wasn't that kind of child at all -- I was large and very pretty and everybody wanted to make love to me, but I rejected all advances and just lay moodily in my crib. Mom says you were small and bright. I guess Kathy combines the best features of us both, so far as infancy goes anyway. She is starting to raise up on her arms when she is

lying on her stomach, which she couldn't do before. And her head doesn't wobble at all now when I hold her. She peers around and stares at all kinds of things, the damndest things that wouldn't interest you or me at all, like the icebox. Incidentally, Daisy admitted, with what feelings I can't imagine, that she didn't look like an Oppenheim or Walter at all -- she was truly graven in your image. But then Day now admits you are quite a boy and quite a suitable mate for me. Sure, Kathy burped at her. She burps at everybody. Her hair was getting a little lighter but her eyes are still a funny color. She's crying a little now. I'll be back. Search me. First she yips and then she goes back to sleep. Apparently at this stage they start wanting a change of scenery. I find I'm much less aware of her crying when I can take her out. She lies in the buggy and looks up and though I'm sure she can't see much it seems to satisfy her and send her into a deep, cry-less sleep.

I'm finally getting together enough candy to send you. Yesterday I added to the collection with a box of eleven-cent cigars -- I nearly dropped dead when I had to fork over three dollars for it - - I was under the vague impression a box of cigars cost little more than a pack of cigarettes -- and three Hershey bars. Of course, I had to sleep with the druggist's brother, who only has one eye, to get the Hershey bars, but I'm sure you won't mind. The other candy in the collection is of a lesser breed or breeds, garnered from local liquor stores (of all places), markets and taverns. I'm going back to the drugstore tomorrow. Maybe if the druggist is there I'll get some Nestle's with nuts. The quip, foul as it is, was unintentional. I also have some New Yorkers and New Republics I'll get out to you some time soon. Ask me for some more.

I guess I told you, an odd character is coming around this Saturday to take Kathy's picture. He's a door-to-door photographer. I have him fifty cents on account when he showed up a couple of weeks ago so I presume he is obliged to come back. I don't know if he'll take mine too. I think I'll go to a regular good photographer if he doesn't, when I can get some time off. I got a notice yesterday from the Election

Commissioners, appointing me a judge or clerk on election day here, April 11. This involves canvassing the precinct this weekend, to check up on registrations. I didn't know I'd have to do that too. Oh well, I'll take the buggy and baby with me -- a new twist the war gives to political canvassing. "Madame, did you vote from this address last year? Excuse me, the baby is crying. I'll be right back."

I'm sorry you have barber's itch. Your itch is my itch, so the marriage vows go. It sounds awful and infectious, like cholera or clap. Please make them take it away. Speaking of plagues, Julie Harrison dropped around yesterday with her baby. Not that I have any objection to Julie, who is a sweet unhappy girl, but she lives in the most unspeakable shambles and announced freely that she had to move out, the bedbugs were taking over. I'm simply psychotic about bedbugs and was nervous as one while she was here. I could practically see them jumping out of her skin. I examined the chair she sat in after she left, feeling like a heel all the while. Furthermore, her child, though a large good-looking kid -- he's eight months old now and can stand up, very unusual I think -- is an awfully dirty ill-smelling child. I don't want to be over-anxious about the subject of cleanliness and babies, but gosh, he doesn't have to smell. It beats me how these neurotic girls can have such nice babies. Tony is really very healthy and advanced, bedbugs or no. Still, there are minimum standards of cleanliness one ought to maintain with kids, without being fussy that is. I hope you don't think I am.

Gosh, here it is the end again. And I still haven't told you for the millionth time how wonderful you are and how much I love you.

Always,

Jill

PPSS The mailman just took a 3-page V-mail from me to you, & left me your letter of March 3. I hadn't intended to write more, but have to. Yes yes, you are right about our potential

happiness. Very well put the whole thing was too. Funny thing but John used the same expression last night. We were talking - you know - here we are after all these years, everybody married off and happy. Correction, I said, how can Al & I be happy, and John said, Well at least you're potentially so, & that's awfully important. And so it is. I know what I want now - you (& your children - well, that's part of you), which I didn't know the preceding 24 years. Oh happy day when I have you! True, I was depressed for a while but it's pretty much gone. I don't know if I explained to you why I got so low. I figure it this way. There was all that euphoria of pregnancy, along with the subconscious idea that first came the baby, then came Al. And then the baby came and you didn't. And I was horrified with the realization that your absence didn't have the neat finite quality that pregnancy had. But now I'll wait and hope and find some pleasure in the antics of our child, much in the memory & hope of you. And for the rest, I'll just have to learn to be patient. I'll love you always - that will be enough time, perhaps, to show you.

Jill

P.S. Kathy wiggles her mouth up & down in her sleep, just like you. She also sleeps with the soles of her feet together. *[little drawing]*

AL TO JILL MARCH 14 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill - my great love, xxx

I want to do nothing at the moment than to write you a letter; the occasion for this paean (?) is the lot of magazines and the book that have just arrived. Nothing but a sweetheart like you could have torn me from them just now. The word has spread rapidly and already the morale level of the camp is raised considerably. Imagine, if you can, a happier man than me with one of Hartley's very good cigars and a fresh copy of the New Yorker. The incomparable collection of cartoons in the little edition was passed from hand to hand at the dinner table tonight, making a

lot of grinning jack-o-lanterns out of everyone. The two Italian officers thought the series of cartoons on the traitorous carrier pigeon, *omnia vincit amor*, was tops, and who didn't agree. My great labor of love, the perusal of them one by one, will commence immediately after I finish writing you. Only after that, I must emphasize, for, after all, are you not the prime mover, the Venus who is also Ceres? First the oblation, then the indulgence. So thank you, darling, and since I know that such gifts involve considerable disagreeable effort at a time when your life must be filled with too much of that already, you don't have to bother again for some time.

I have just finished, in the nick of time, Lippmann's book on U. S. Foreign Policy. It was good, direct, very simple, capable of as universal comprehension as Willkie's book, and just a bit slighting of the very real human forces which are blocking the sort of direct policies he advocates. His analogous term, nuclear alliance, is very useful and suggestive though a sort of synonym for the policy he considers ineffective, balance of power, the pivot of British historical diplomacy. He shuts the front door on the idea, so to speak, and lets it in the back. I am not, however, in disagreement with the term. Only, by using a new word, you do not destroy the by-products of the old, although, to your immense relief, you can neglect them. He does, too, fail to discuss at length what may be a forceful Soviet policy, namely to create a new left and strong Germany. Dallin's book makes a strong point of that. (This vague critique, I am sure, will either enrage you or cause you to read the book) (Scusatemi, but becoming a subject of my dialectic is like getting slapped with a wet towel, part of the human bondage of marriage.)

I took a walk this afternoon, which was bright and sunny, and got into chance conversation with some contadini who were going to town from their work in the fields. I had stopped to shoot at a couple of tin cans, and one of them opened the conversation with "That's all right!" after I had hit a can at a good distance. Knowing that you can always get sympathy from an Italian, if little else, I showed them the picture of you and Kathy I carry in my wallet. They appreciated the pathos of our

situation appropriately and we parted good friends, and very much anti-Tedeschi.

Corporal Leo Hofberg got a big salami from home yesterday and we made a good tea out of it. He also got some anchovy paste, an unheard of delicacy. Leo is a good kid, somewhat of a baby, but very intelligent. He spent ten years in Europe and speaks several languages, besides which he knows a good deal about politics. It is really a shame that such sterling qualities should be rendered socially somewhat ineffective by a dependent home environment. I've known a number like him.

I have to take the most horrible beratings from Sgt. Harrari because of my ineptness at chess. He doesn't quite call me a Schlemiel, although my identification with that group in his mind is rather obvious. The other day he sent home (where his agent lives) fifteen hundred dollar of gin rummy winnings which he won in Africa before coming over. He is a sort of lonesome polecat, looking somewhat like the "Joe" of Mauldin's cartoons, because he has found no expert chess player in these parts. In Tunis, he enjoyed especially playing two Sheiks, who, Harrari admitted generously enough, were "pretty good, considering how few books on chess were written in Arabic." I nearly collapsed on that remark.

Your affection for little Barnaby is mine also. The naive comment of the little dog, "Where can you find a laundry wagon?" and the silly Uncle O'Malley who laid down his drink, cigar, and cue, to advise people on a healthy life are good examples of what is funny about the strip.

A captain from OSS was around for a couple days who was a U. of C. graduate and a Kansas editor, a good combination. He was interested in a manual I just got together on our work. The sight that struck him most at the front was the sight of Britishers playing soccer a thousand yards from the outpost lines. The front is always incredible to people when they see it for the first time. Somehow, the stories about war lead us to believe that everything natural, wholesome and ordinary about life,

whenever and wherever death comes back from his holiday, is killed. That game is just what the structural steel worker does when he eats his lunch nonchalantly atop a soaring girder. Some days ago, Brownie Roberts was looking out of his hole at some enemy shells dropping. Two Americans were playing craps and wouldn't stop for anything until the one had shot his point. A shell burst near the sunken road in which they were playing and hit the man shooting in both forearms -- the wages of sin.

As soon as I can get to a post office, I'm going to send you a German first-aid kit. I finally have it wrapped and addressed. I think you will find in it the answer to a first-aid worker's prayer. I picked it up in a German truck which had been hit by a shell.

Please give Kathy an extra big kiss for me for having such a wonderful mother. Do you think she understands how very desirable you are and that any scarcity of male affection is only voluntary abstinence and temporary. And that you in fact have a fanatical devotee who would rather kiss you than live?

As always, your

Al / Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 15, 1944

Sweetheart --

March 15 and all is shambles on Ridgewood Ct. Virginia just called me up in desperation -- Hin, her husband, wasn't coming home and forgot to leave her the money to pay the tax, would I write her a check? Your little wife is also smitten with dread and conscience. I finally filed mine, ascertaining with much difficulty on my own hook that they owe me money, 8/90, what I paid out at Teletype this summer. But forgive me, dearest, I did not, could not file yours. I had a feeling that they owed you money too and that you have all sorts of deductibles, but how to find

out? It would have cost me the extent of what they owe you to hire a girl to stay with the baby and then hire a lawyer to find out the truth. So as long as you can leave it go (we filed separately last year too, anyway) I thought I might as well. I'm sure the government will smile kindly at the defection, if any exists, of a harassed and solitary young mother. I hope you will too.

Speaking of defections, are you doing anything about your insurance. One more argument in favor of your changing it now -- presumably we'll want to keep up the policy after the war since the rates are slightly lower than private companies and I believe the government will make, as it did in the last war, provision for vets' continuing their policies. I've always admired your concern for your family but you should remember that I'm as dependent as they are now, if not more so, having a very young child whom I'd rather take care of myself than leave with Mom and get a job. No fooling -- my Dad's money isn't enough to ever provide me with an income. It's just good for one big splash like a house, boat or expensive car. To be sure the same argument can be made for a relatively small policy, but it just postpones the day when I would have to work. Sorry to be so grim, but I have a feeling you never looked at the problem this way. Furthermore, with all my education, my earning problem isn't so high, or won't be, after the war when all the civil service jobs will vanish with the wind. I'm not a secretary, you know, and it's the only steady source of employment for a woman. I hope you don't think I'm being unreasonable and selfish. I think I was pretty decent in the past about your helping them when we had only ourselves to think about, and I'm willing to do things for Ed now, but frankly, Kathy's a lot more important to me now than anybody else, besides you of course.

I got your letter of March 4 today. Glad you got the pictures, half of them anyway, the good half, I think. Gosh, I heard some news a little while back about your bombing the hell out of Cassino and want to mail this and pick up a News before she wakes up. I love you a lot and always will --

Jill



During the Battle of Cassino: the Propaganda Group with nurses.



During the Battle of Cassino: the Propaganda Group with nurses.



“Duke Ellington”

the malaise that has been afflicting everyone here. His wife is on the stage and has gone on a road trip, which further lowers his morale. But he is good company.

I mentioned also "Duke" Ellington, who is a most scandalous drunkard. He has a lot of charm and sincerity, but has an immense fondness for wrestling when tight. The results are generally disastrous for him. He is hard to put to bed, stumbles all over the tent, knocking over the stove, falling into mud holes and tearing out the vital tent supports. Then he insists on having conversations with people who have been sleeping which sound like pages out of "Finnegan's Wake."

As you can see, the British army paper takes sides on issues, unlike ours. Incidentally, the Eighth Army News is no more. Charlton will be doing some other work (but not hard). I sent him the article on his newspaper which you sent me long ago.

How I wish we would get going here, or anywhere. The Russians are doing marvelously, but if the Germans insist on fighting to the end, a Second Front is obviously in order.

Meanwhile I continue to love you with all the passion of my hungry frame. I would eat C-rations for a week for one kiss from you tonight. No I wouldn't either. One kiss, alone, would drive me mad. When I kiss you, I want it to be part of an interminable series.

Give Kathy a hug for me, dearest.

Your, Al

WHEN all other tactics have failed, exactly a month after the first assault, on March 15, a huge air armada attacks the town of Cassino, hurling down 1200 tons of bombs in the single assault. Our Hero is again there. As awful a sight as anything else is the flight that he observes coming in from the Southeast and not waiting to reach Cassino, but, coming upon the town of Venafro, there release their bombs upon French and American troops and the civil population. The towns must have looked alike to the flight leader; but, too, he read his maps badly and had not been briefed well nor watched the flights ahead of him and the smoke of their bombings. Hundreds must be dying in the bursts before his eyes, thinks Our Lieutenant. Had such an accident happened to American, or even British, troops, rather than to French troops in one case, to Indian troops in another, and twice to Italian civilians, more criticism would have fallen upon the generals from home, despite the heavy censorship. Now once again the debris suits the defenders nicely, the attackers have had to withdraw and then return, and once more they are mowed down, and must retreat. Thus phases three and four end in fresh disasters for the Allies.

After the destruction of the Abbey, the American newspapers are quick to justify the Army's action. The *New York Times* carries a five-column headline: "U.S. Blasts Nazis in Mt. Cassino Abbey!", then a three-column picture headed "Historic Abbey Turned by Nazis into Fortress Before Their Rout!", and several captions above the story itself: "200 Germans Flee," "226 Bombers Alternate with Artillery to Rout Enemy!", "Monastery is Wrecked!" The news report is credited to C. L. Sulzberger, who is at the Cassino Front representing the *Times*; the Lieutenant encounters him only once, and, after a few words of casual conversation, deems him a conceited and unpleasant fellow.

The same correspondent had been headlined on his January 29 despatch provocatively: "Clark Order prohibits 5th Army from Attacking Church Property! Courtesy to Vatican Handicaps Advance as Enemy is Said to Use Religious Sites for Artillery Observation!", and writes that "many lives may be lost" in consequence. (The use of the word 'courtesy' in this context is probably as poisonous a thrust as General Clark ever receives.)

The presence of a great many civilians and monks is known to Army headquarters and hardly a secret, but their fate is buried like many of the civilians themselves. Indeed, the Officer briefing the heavy bomber crews prior to the action exhorts the crews to recall how the enemy had used mosques and churches in Africa to protect their skins, and tells them that the Abbey is alive with German troops and that no civilians are inside the place. Some 144 Flying Fortresses are involved, these from Foggia. Another 22 medium bombers come in from Sardinia later, and there occurs still another bombing of the Abbey ruins the next day by 59 fighter-bombers. The briefing officer for this last occasion tells his crews that the substructure of the ruined Abbey is still alive with German troops. In all, some 500 tons of bombs are dropped upon the magnificent structure, the heaviest bombardment ever to occur of a single point target. The official Army Air Force Diary concludes, "This medieval fortress has been gutted and now lies in ruins. It is difficult to see how any of the occupants of the building could have survived the weighty attack." The Air Force generals are delighted to display their capabilities.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt calls a press conference the same afternoon as the bombing to say that he has read accounts of it in the afternoon newspapers and that these had shown how the Abbey was being used by the Germans: "It was a German strongpoint -- had artillery and everything up there in the Abbey."

Not one German soldier is killed in the bombings. A couple of hundreds of Italian men, women and children are ripped apart, blasted to death, crushed, the rest miraculously escape, many with wounds. The monks, save for one who chooses to abandon himself to the destruction, are preserved. All of these have weathered the devastation. There is a strictly military lesson here, on the coordination of bombing and ground operations, on the proper weighing of intelligence, on the control of riotous rumor, on the limits of bombing even of the heaviest kind, all considerations of morality aside; but the Air Force refuses to acknowledge the facts, much less reconsider some of its tactics and procedures.

Moreover, it is not as if this kind of bombing comes free of cost. The Mediterranean Allied Air Force, with its aircraft to the number of 4000, is composed of 315,000 men who use equipment and supplies extravagantly, as much all told as the whole of the Fifth Army. They are not employed 100% in support of the Cassino campaign, true enough; a larger part of their effort goes directly to bomb targets in Germany and occasionally to the Balkans and Central Europe.

Could one argue that this immense Army of the Air, on the occasions of its two attacks upon Cassino, is, in net terms, fighting on the side of the Germans? In each case, the net casualties are friendly soldiers (never mind the friendly civilians), the huge costs of the operations are Allied, the military damages are to the tactical advantage of the enemy, and the destruction of art and culture is a propaganda victory for the enemy and is to the detriment of mankind. So the answer must be affirmative.

Could one also argue that the Monastery and all the lost lives might be preserved and saved? Certain German officers have taken upon themselves the salvation of the Monastery. They befriend the priests and do not wish death upon the civilians inside. They are even trying to keep up a three-hundred meter neutral unmilitarized area

around the Abbey walls (violated by their troops to some extent, using a cave for refuge, for example, and placing a couple of cannon there for a time; but, recall that the Abbey itself is pockmarked by Allied shelling). They arrange for the art treasures of the Naples museum and the Abbey itself to be transported to safety. All of this is known to the Pope at the Vatican. There are also means of making the facts known to the Allied Command through diplomatic agencies in the Vatican and even in Washington.

It would be simple and not even exceptional for a Commission of Church, Allied, and German representatives to enter the Monastery under a truce and reside there for the duration of the battle, assuring both sides that the Monastery is not being used to military advantage. Here the Pope errs. He should contact both sides and propose the arrangement. Both should probably accept. Only the great fool General Freyberg might obstruct the idea. Perhaps nothing will placate the many soldiers and their journalist mouthpieces, however, except an effort at destroying the Abbey. Still, once more, my answer is affirmative.

Our Lieutenant is not of an infantry battalion, hence his own chances of survival are excellent, and we can expect to have him with us for a while longer. Never does he intimate in his letters home any doubt of this, and is often gabbling about the great future He and She and now all Three will have together. Early in his stint, on a call at the 34th Division, the Artillery Officer asks him how he got there. "I went up to St. Pietro, and turned off where those three tanks of ours are burned out, and cut back down." "That road is under fire; why don't you take the lower road? Why take chances?" The Major's concern was touching. "I will." But he doesn't. The lower road is rough, as well as long. Nothing happens, of course; the chances are against it. He figures it out as he drives around. In a single day-long infantry attack, anywhere from 10% to 60% casualties would occur (before the troops would, if they could, break and withdraw). On his milk route it would take him all year to accumulate a considerable chance of getting hurt. Occasionally you can see incoming bursts ahead or behind. Almost all of it is counter-fire to the sides here and there where the enemy believes he can hit a battery or group of men. Actually, if you want to estimate the number of troops engaged in combat, even over a whole

war as for an engagement, you need only double the number of casualties. For if you come near to getting hit, you'll get hit sooner or later.

"Am I rash?" He never thought so of himself. "Am I brave?" Whatever that means: the word is obsolete. Not likely. "Do I believe, as someone asserts, that it can't happen to me?" Not at all; on the contrary, he carries at all times a conviction that he is likely to catch it. Why is he comfortable under long-lasting fairly risky conditions; perhaps there is a sort of nihilistic sense of freedom and also a possessiveness, that you have something that is precious and that almost no one else wants (except the poor guys who are laying around out there and must stay where they are come what may.)

End of March (first of two parts) 1944 letters

